Latin Americans in London: language, integration and ethnic identity.

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Thesis summary

This thesis studies the links between language, migration and integration in the context of the 'new migrant' group of Latin Americans in London. It reviews the many ways in which language impacts the integration processes of migrants by influencing people's access to jobs, services, social contacts and information. By focusing on migrants' experiences this research also investigates the ways in which language and identity articulate, as well as the affective variables that are at play in the acquisition of the local language.

With a large sector trapped in a cycle of poor command of English and labour market disadvantage, many Latin Americans experience exclusion and poverty. In reaction to this, a sector of the community is campaigning for ethnic minority recognition. This work reviews the debates for recognition and the strategy of organising around ethnicity, paying special attention to the role language plays in the process.

The study is based on over two and half years of qualitative research, which included interviews, surveys, and long-term participant observation within a community organisation and a recognition campaign. Its interdisciplinary perspective allows the recognition of both the intimate links between language and identity, as well as the social and structural forces that influence migrants' linguistic integration. It unveils the practical and symbolic value that the *mother* tongue has for Latin American migrants and provides a broader account of their experiences.

This research calls attention to the need for a more comprehensive approach to the study of language and migration in order to acknowledge the affective and social factors involved in the linguistic practices of migrants. By studying the community's struggles for recognition, this work evidences both the importance of visibility for minority groups in London and the intrinsic methodological limitations of monitoring through ethnic categorisation.

Keywords: 'new migrants' in the UK, experiences of language barrier, language and disadvantage, ethnic identity and disadvantage.

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List of Abbreviations

AIU   Alianza Iberoamericana del UK

BIS   Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

CARILA   Campaing Against Racism in Latin America

FIS   Federation of Irish Society

ESOL   English for Speakers of Other Languages

GLA   Greater London Authority

IPS   International Passenger Survey

IRMO   Indoamerican Refugee Migrant Organization

LARC   Latin American Recognition Campaign

LAWA   Latin American Women's Aid

LAWAS   Latin American Workers' Association

LAWRS   Latin Amercian Women's Rights Service

LAYF   Latin American Youth Forum

NHS   National Health Service

ONS   Office for National Statistics

OPCS   Office of Population Censuses and Surveys

Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the past few decades, and with the arrival of heterogeneous new migrant groups of different origins, London has become 'superdiverse' (Vertovec, 2007). In this evolving context, emphasis is increasingly being placed on the importance of the integration of migrants for social cohesion (Castles et al., 2002; Berkeley, 2003).

Due to its direct and indirect influences, language plays a key role in the integration of migrants, enabling (or hindering) people's access to jobs, services, social contacts and information. As one of the new migrant communities of multi-ethnic London, Latin Americans have started settling in the United Kingdom (UK) in significant numbers over the past few decades. With a large percentage of them experiencing language difficulties, many Latin Americans face social exclusion and disadvantages in the labour market, taking low-paid jobs in unregulated areas of work, which makes them a target for discriminative practices and exploitation.

Having a strong linguistic barrier makes it extremely difficult for migrants to overcome obstacles and access new information on their own. However, as often happens with other minority sectors of 'superdiverse' London (see ONS, 2009), ethnic monitoring fails to account for Latin Americans.

Based on the rapidly growing new migrant group of Latin Americans in London, this thesis focuses on the many links between language and integration, paying special attention to actors' perspectives and thoughts. It explores migrants' experiences and

ideas about their home and host country languages, taking into account the links between language and identity, the context of immigration and language policy, as well as the affective and social variables that influence second language acquisition.

This study also reviews this group's immersion in the situation of statistical 'invisibility' and its struggles for recognition through campaigning for ethnic minority status. The aim of this thesis is therefore to contribute to the expansion of knowledge about the new migrant group of Latin Americans in London, a community that remains widely unknown despite its increasing presence.

Finally, the need for the development of a more comprehensive approach to the study of language and migration will be demonstrated. From an interdisciplinary perspective, this work acknowledges both the intimate links between language and identity, as well as the social and structural forces that influence migrants' integration; it also frames the linguistic situation of Latin Americans in the social context of contemporary migration in London.

Brief review of London's immigration history

Although people have migrated to and from the UK for centuries, migration is often portrayed in political and media discourse as a new and alarming threat to national unity and social cohesion (Van Dijk, 1993; Berkeley et al., 2005), a position that, in Bhikhu Parekh's words, is based on a fictional assumption of a unified past of Britain (Parekh, 2000).

Immigration to the UK is not a recent phenomenon. Its long history can be traced back to Roman times when people of diverse origins, such as Gauls, Greeks, Germans, Italians and North Africans, were part of London's population (Vertovec, 2007). In spite of this, the UK has been a country of net emigration for centuries. In fact, it wasn't until 1983 that the UK's net immigration turned from negative to positive for the first time (Somerville et al., 2009).

Nonetheless, the 1950s and 1960s saw large numbers of West Indian immigrants, and in the 1970s, people from South Asia, particularly India and Pakistan started migrating into the UK to fill the gaps in the labour market (Berkeley et al., 2005). However, this process led to the emergence of racial conflict and violence, and to subsequent demands for limiting the numbers of immigrants (Bulmer, 1986).

This situation led these immigrant groups to organise themselves around campaigns to lobby and demonstrate against racist attacks, discrimination and disadvantage for decades (Sivanandan, 1990). On the other hand, the government

started to put restrictions on the incoming flows of migrants through the introduction of migration policies and by modifying the British nationality law. Thus, in order to control the numbers of people from West India, East Africa and Asia, the Commonwealth Immigration Bill of 1962, and its amendment in 1968, restricted the entry of those who did not have passports issued by the Government of the United Kingdom (O'Keeffe, 2003).

This bill was later replaced by the 1971 Immigrants Act, which put an end to the distinction between Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth migrants (Berkeley et al., 2005; Somerville et al., 2009). Migrant workers were henceforth required to comply with the regulations of the Work Permits Scheme. Notably, these did not apply to the Irish, who had been granted citizenship rights by the 1949 Ireland Act (Hickman, 1998; O'Keeffe, 2003).

After decades of struggle and campaigns, "the fight against racism moved from the streets and the shop-floor to the town halls and the committee rooms" (Sivanandan, 1990: 61). By 1965, the first Race Relations Act made it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of skin colour, and by 1975 the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) started developing the first ethnic monitoring form. The ethnicity question was finally introduced in 1991, with the aim of combating discrimination against ethnic minority groups (Sillitoe and White, 1992; Dobbs et al., 2006).

This period was followed by an increase in asylum applications, which were triggered by international conflicts around the world and the enforcement of human rights legislation, which enabled endangered people to seek asylum (Massey, 1998). The government responded by introducing a new legislation in order to control these numbers.

On the other hand, after 1997, a selective strategy of 'managed migration' was adopted. This strategy encouraged immigration from certain groups, such as international students, highly-skilled migrants and workers for particular sectors from all over the world (Somerville et al., 2009). In addition, the expansion of the European Union (EU) of 2004 also contributed to the arrival of new groups of migrants.

In consequence, whereas in the period that followed the Second World War, migrant groups came from former colonies or Commonwealth countries, recent years have seen the arrival of more heterogeneous groups of migrants who have started coming from more diverse and numerous origins into London in particular. This unprecedented migratory landscape has been conceptualised by Vertovec (2007) as

'superdiversity'. In addition, reasons for migrating have also changed. While people continue to migrate because of persecution, these 'new migrants' also leave their countries for economic reasons, which has given rise to a number of new immigration trends.

These changes were accompanied by the birth of British-born generations of ethnic minorities and an increase in immigrants of European descent. In this context, public discourse on immigration shifted its focus from race relations to social cohesion and integration (Berkeley et al., 2005). However, this change in discourse does not necessarily mean that racism is no longer an issue, as minority groups continue to combat discrimination and struggle for equality. In 2001, for example, after decades of campaigning against discrimination, the Federation of Irish Societies (FIS) finally saw the inclusion of the 'Irish' category in ethnic monitoring, becoming the first officially recognised white ethnic minority group in the UK. This issue is further discussed in Chapter 6, as it is particularly relevant for this study.

In recent years, following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 on the United States (US) and the London bombings of 2005, discourses about migration and ethnicity shifted their focus to home security (Clarke and Garner, 2010) and border controls were extended to other countries. In 2005, a citizenship test about 'Life in the UK' and increasingly restrictive language requirements were introduced by the Home Office for applicants, including those coming to work or study. Since 2010, further changes have been introduced to immigration law which continue to restrict the entry routes of migrants and introduced economic requirements to applications for UK citizens' family members wishing to migrate to the UK.

As can be deduced from the above, the UK's immigration and citizenship law has gone through major changes which have made the experiences of contemporary migrants very different from those of immediate post-war Britain, making it increasingly difficult to migrate through authorised paths. In addition, the activities of those who migrate are regulated by a much wider variety of legal statuses; this complex system of legal statuses distributes different levels of entitlement and access to work, welfare, services and political participation. The hierarchical distribution of rights has significant consequences for migrants' experiences, particularly for those in situations of irregularity or 'semi-compliance', a term coined by Ruhs and Anderson (2010) to refer to those who are authorised to stay but infringe their employment restrictions. In this framework, the study of irregularity, disadvantage and modern labour market exploitation has been one of the main foci of scholars researching these groups.

On the other hand, changes in the global context, such as the development of the communication and transportation systems, and supranational institutions have also contributed to the development of migrant practices and the emergence of 'transnational' activities (Portes, 2001). Indeed, the study of transnationalism has provided valuable insights into the current economic, cultural, social and political activities of migrants across national borders.

Although it has been noted that transnational practices are not new, their current scope and impact is unprecedented. Remittances, for example, inject new flows of money to local economies of the countries of origin. There is also evidence that transnational activities can facilitate the integration of immigrants into their new societies (Portes, 2001), and that they play an important role in the shaping of Global Cities and new processes of identification (Sassen, 2005).

Transnationalism also allows migrants to engage in political activities in more than one country. New strategies of political engagement have also emerged within this framework, with migrants participating in new forms of social, cultural and political activism, thereby influencing decision-making processes from outside the voting system (Però and Solomos, 2010).

In spite of the importance of new migrant communities' integration processes, experiences and practices, these groups remain largely under-studied. Latin Americans in London are one of these 'new migrant' groups. As is the case with other migrant communities, such as the Vietnamese, Romanians and British Moroccans, there is still little known about Latin Americans. This is largely due to a lack of reliable statistics and an outdated ethnic monitoring process that fails to account for current diversity (Sveinsson, 2010).

New Migrants from Latin America

Historically, Latin America has been a region of immigration from the time of its colonisation up to the mid-20th Century. In fact, the last large influx of European migrants arrived during the years that followed the Second World War, with the largest numbers coming from Italy and Spain, but also from other countries such as Poland, Germany and France. Although there are records of Latin American emigration from Mexico to the US from the 1880s, it was not until the 1960s that the "Latin American Diaspora" started to develop through a continuous process of mass emigration (Marfleet and Blustein, 2011). Due to its scope and historical presence, there is extensive research on Latin American migration to the US.

With respect to London, small flows of Latin American migrants arrived during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Most of these people came as political refugees, particularly from Chile and Argentina, fleeing dictatorships. Until the 1980s additional flows were also able to come through a work permit scheme that encouraged migration to cover vacancies in unskilled jobs, such as cleaning and catering. It is estimated that between 4,000 and 10,000 Colombians migrated during this period (Bermudez Torres, 2010). These migrant workers were later followed by their families in chain migration (Cock, 2009; McIlwaine, 2007; Sveinsson, 2007).

These initial small groups organised a number of solidarity campaigns against repression in different nations of Latin America. The collaborative work between these campaigns represent the first solidarity networks and the base upon which many of the current Latin American organisations were established (Bermudez Torres, 2010).

The following period saw a major increase in the numbers of Latin American migrants in the UK. This change is partially explained by the implementation of more restrictive policies for migrants in the US, the traditional destination country for Latin Americans. Since the 9/11 bombings, changes to US immigration law and the tightening of border controls have progressively limited the numbers of Latin American migrants into the country. In fact, net migration of Mexicans, the single largest immigrant group, dropped from over two million to zero between 2005 and 2010 due to changes in immigration law and law enforcement (Passel et al., 2012).

In this context, Latin Americans have turned to alternative destination countries in Europe. While most people migrate to Spain, there has been a major increase in the Latin American population of London, which climbed from 46,325, according to the 2001 National Census, to 186,500 in 2008 according to recent estimates (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

Latin Americans in London are a highly heterogeneous group, with people coming from different nationalities and backgrounds. Brazilians, Colombians and Ecuadorians make up the largest national groups, but there are also immigrants from Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela, among other countries. In line with this, people migrate for many different reasons, including asylum, work, study and to reunite with families. This group also presents a wide range of legal statuses, which include a large sub-group with citizenship status, either by acquisition of a UK or EU second nationality, different types of visas, and approximately one fifth of the group which is undocumented (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

In spite of this diversity, most people came and continue to come to escape

political instability and economic crises (Cock, 2009; McIlwaine et al., 2011). Nonetheless, despite good educational backgrounds and encouraging rates of employment, the socio-economic situation of many Latin Americans in London is still very poor. There are families living in overcrowded homes, many outside of the health system, with little access to social services or welfare. There is also extensive evidence of the disadvantaged situation and frequent exploitation experienced by many Latin Americans in London's labour market (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

On the other hand, the growth of this community is also reflected in London's street life through popular cultural events like *Carnaval del Pueblo* in Elephant and Castle or the *Colombiage Festival* in South Bank; its growth is also evident in the development of Latin American commercial areas in Elephant and Castle, Seven Sisters and Brixton. However, the group remains largely invisible as there are still no reliable official statistics that can provide an accurate snapshot of the socio-economic situation of this community.

In recent years, scholars and organisations researching Latin Americans in London and their practices have greatly developed the profile of the community. However, knowledge about this group is still limited, with many studies focusing on single national groups (Bermudez Torres, 2003; 2010; Cock, 2009; James, 2005; McIlwaine, 2005, 2008; McIlwaine and Bermudez Torres, 2011; Sveinsson, 2007) and only one large-scale quantitative study, which included 1,000 Latin Americans, published in 2011 (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

Focusing on Language

Coming from non-English speaking countries, the important role that language plays in the social, cultural and economic integration of Latin Americans is frequently recognised by both researchers and respondents as a central issue for this group (Carlisle, 2006; McIlwaine et al., 2011; McIlwaine and Carlisle, 2011). Studies of language and migration have recognised that language has both direct and indirect influences over issues such as earnings, jobs and social networks (Esser, 2006). Nonetheless, studies of the Latin American community have paid little attention to this topic.

There is much to learn about Latin Americans in London, not only because of the unique characteristics of this Diaspora, but also because its moment, routes, and reasons for migrating make the study of this community highly relevant for the understanding of contemporary migration. The experiences, practices and strategies of

Latin Americans in London provide important insights for the understanding of new migration landscapes and processes.

This thesis deals with language and integration in the context of the new migratory group of Latin Americans in London. It explores the perspectives and ideas that Latin American people express about the use and knowledge of their first language, Spanish. It also reviews experiences of the language barrier and the different types of motivation to learn the destination language, English, as well as the main challenges that obstruct people's learning. Based on empirical research, this thesis provides a broader account of the importance and impact of language in these migrants' lives by including their perspectives and contextualising these findings in the current state of the labour market, migration and language policy in the UK.

It seeks to call attention to the exploitation, inequality and invisibility of this new migrant group, which seem to remain largely unnoticed. It also aims to contextualise language within other social processes and re-establish the links between language and identity when addressing the linguistic integration of migrants, both in academic research and national language policy.

The most significant question driving this study is the following: Why is a group of qualified migrants in London trapped in a cycle of disadvantage and lack of English language knowledge, and how can they break out of that cycle? The hypothesis of this thesis is that, apart from the limited availability and high cost of classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), there are also social and affective factors directly influencing Latin Americans' acquisition of English.

In addition, due to its enormous impact on the structural integration of Latin Americans, this thesis looks into the links between language and the emergence of a Latin American ethnic identity. With language increasingly being employed as part of the legal system that regulates migrants' access to rights and entitlements, it may become an influencing factor leading migrants to organise collectively. In this context, organising around ethnicity and the claim of minority status becomes an alternative path to gain access to political participation and integration.

Ethnic identity is a key element to this research. Barth's (1969) conceptualisation of 'ethnic group' in terms of the development and maintenance of social boundaries both by in-group and out-group members, shifted the focus of the field from an objective to a subjective criteria, "from group characteristics to properties of social process" (Eriksen, 1991b: 128).

However, Barth (1969) found culture to be merely a means through which in-group

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members express distinctiveness and maintain their "subjective sense of groupness" (Edwards, 1985a: 22). In contrast, Eriksen (1991b) argues that cultural practices are not empty signs of groups' differences, but symbolic practices that express different sets of criteria. Following Eriksen's perspective, the understanding of ethnic relations and the production and maintenance of ethnicity itself demand the study of the cultural and historical context (Eriksen, 1991b).

Research Questions

While it also acts as a key factor for the integration of migrants, language is entangled with people's identity. This study explores how language is related to the identity and integration processes of Latin American migrants in London, and examines how their linguistic situation affects and is affected by their broader social conditions. In doing so, the study will answer the following research questions:

1. How do Latin American migrants experience the links between language, identity and integration?
2. What attitudes and ideas do these migrants express towards their first language and towards the acquisition of the destination language?
3. Is learning English perceived as a key factor for integration?
4. How do their perceptions translate into action: do Latin American migrants seek integration through learning English?
5. What are the links between language, ethnicity and collective action in the context of migration?

In order to address these issues in their own complexity, it was necessary to explore people's views and ideas about the impact and importance of language in their life, but also to gain first-hand knowledge of their experiences. The use of ethnographic methods through long-term participant observational work within two different Latin American organisations, allowed me to participate in people's daily lives and to witness some of the concerns and challenges many Latin Americans face in London, as well as their strategies for overcoming them. It also allowed me to meet countless people from very diverse backgrounds and experiences, including those reached through interviews and surveys.

Since Brazilians have developed separate networks for leisure and services, most of the people encountered during fieldwork came from other Latin American countries. In this sense, this study is limited to the accounts of the group of Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants met during fieldwork. In addition, although religion appears to be

important in the literature, it did not emerge as important during fieldwork for this study. In fact, only two survey respondents and two interviewees referred to their religious practices in their statements.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to ask people about their background, personal experiences of migration, and to explore their views and opinions about the issues covered by this study. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews also allowed issues that emerged during the conversations and that were not contemplated in the initial project to be taken into account.

In addition, a survey was conducted in order to gather more specific answers regarding people's English language knowledge as well as their experiences in learning and using English. It also aimed to explore whether people are motivated to learn English for integrative or instrumental purposes (Gardner and McIntyre, 1993); that is, whether their interest in learning English comes from an interest in their social integration or in solving practical issues. Respondents of this survey were mainly people with a basic level of English and half of the respondents were attending an English course of some kind at the time of the survey.

As pointed out by Esser (2006: 2), "the topic of language acquisition and its consequences are studied by very different and often highly segmented (social) scientific disciplines, such as linguistics, (social) psychology, education, sociology and economics". In order to better understand how language, through the home and host-country varieties, is involved in the processes of identification and integration of Latin American migrants, it was necessary to develop an interdisciplinary perspective and to draw on theories from the fields of Linguistics and Social Sciences.

Thesis structure

Chapter 2 provides a review of the main concepts and debates raised by the study of language and migration within different disciplines, including Sociolinguistics, Social Psychology and Economics. It examines the relationship between language and ethnic identity, the impacts of host-country language acquisition in migrants' experiences, and the core ideas in second language motivation theory. It also provides an overview of relevant contextual factors influencing second language acquisition and establishes a link between language and the emergence of collective identity in the context of migration. Looking closely at the intricate articulation of language, identity and integration, this chapter argues that the intimate links between language and identity must be acknowledged in the study of the role language plays in the

integration processes of migrants.

The third chapter discusses the use of ethnographic methods and describes the process of fieldwork. It justifies the methods and instruments applied, which include long-term participant-observation, interviews and qualitative surveys. Additionally, it describes the practicalities and tools involved in the data-collection process. The chapter also reflects on some of the challenges and ethical dilemmas that emerged through a fieldwork process that was marked by the researcher's assumption of different roles which involved active participation in community development and activism.

Chapter 4 starts with a review of current debates regarding the use of a minority language and its effects on the integration of migrants. Drawing on fieldwork data, it looks at the importance attributed to speaking Spanish by Latin American migrants in London by exploring its social functions and the links between language use and social networks. It unveils the practical and symbolic value that the mother tongue has for this group in terms of linking people with their cultural heritage and origin.

The relevance of learning the local language for migrants' successful integration into the labour market may seem obvious. However, Chapter 5 shows that in a context of disadvantage and exclusion, the ability to speak English is also linked to issues of power and exploitation. Based on the experiences of language difficulties and language learning, Chapter 5 looks at the affective and social factors involved in the acquisition of English.

Chapter 6 looks into a recent and ongoing debate that is taking place among this group regarding the inclusion of a 'Latin American' category in ethnic monitoring. It shows how this emerging community is organising around ethnicity as a strategy to gain recognition and achieve inclusion. This is a process which highlights both the importance of statistical visibility for minority groups in their struggles for integration, and the practical and methodological limitations of ethnic monitoring through ethnic categorisation.

Chapter 7 examines the relationships between language, recognition and the fostering of a collective identity based on ethnicity. It argues that promoting a common identity and organising around ethnicity is a form of political strategy that allows this highly heterogeneous new migrant group to act as a political collective in its quest for integration and inclusion.

The concluding chapter presents an argument for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of language and migration. The fact that language is deeply grounded in people's identities is not a new premise in the field of sociolinguistics. However, when it

comes to migration studies and even ethnicity studies, language is frequently treated as a mere cultural element, overlooking its symbolic power and its strong links to identity issues. This chapter argues that policy debates surrounding English for Speakers of Other Languages should acknowledge the social functions fulfilled by language as well as the affective variables involved in second language acquisition.

Chapter 2

Language, migration and integration

When it comes to the integration of migrants, language is a hot topic. People often speak about language as the core aspect for the social integration of the different ethnic minorities. In April 2011 the UK Prime Minister David Cameron referred to the problem of receiving high numbers of immigrants who do not speak the local language and who occasionally are "not really wanting or even willing to integrate" (Cameron, 2011).

As in Cameron's speech, migrants are often accused in public discourse of not doing enough or not being motivated enough to learn the local language. Although this view is often expressed in far-right discourses, it should be acknowledged that it is also a common theme in speeches of non-extremist parties, as well as in "mundane discourses" (Garner, 2010: 3). Studies of 'Whiteness' in Britain have identified that one of the white British "middle-class immigration topics is the development of linguistic and cultural segregation" (Garner, 2010: 11). Speaking the language is seen as a sign of goodwill from migrants, as can be read in the 'new approach' for ESOL published by the Department for Innovation Universities & Skills in 2009: "More than any other factor, learning and using English demonstrates to the wider community an individual's commitment to adapting to life in the UK" (DIUS, 2009: 2). Conversely, people's use of their first language is often seen as evidence of their lack of interest in belonging to the host society.

Furthermore, a BBC poll (BBC/MORI, 2005) reported that "90 per cent of

Muslims, compared to 82 per cent of the national sample agreed with the statement, 'Immigrants who become British citizens should be made to learn English'" (Garner, 2010: 11). The same poll reported that the statement 'Muslim clerics in Britain should be made to preach in the English language' was agreed to by an overwhelming 65 per cent of Muslims against 39 per cent of people from the national sample. In addition, members of ethnic minorities may also face discrimination in the labour market based on their non-native English accent (Piller and Takahashi, 2007). In my fieldwork, it was frequently found that community organisations would struggle to provide English language lessons for those excluded from ESOL funding.

Academics have also found that "most minority groups are, above all, pragmatic and this usually implies a considerable assimilationist sentiment" (Edwards, 1985b: 141). In line with this, minority languages are normally lost by the third generation (Alba et al., 2002; Portes, 2011). It seems that everybody wants migrants to learn the local language and integrate, so why does this continue to be a recurring issue in immigration policy? What makes it so hard for people to switch languages? Why is this topic so controversial?

Language is a sensitive topic, and this is so largely because of its symbolic power. It is an element strongly linked to identity, and as such, practices and attitudes toward language, language shift and language retention are often attributed symbolic meanings. The links between language and integration are very complex, as they connect aspects that are related to different dimensions and functions of language. This chapter reviews some of the main concepts of the interactions between language and the social situation of migrants as examined in this study.

It is important to clarify at this point the way in which the word 'integration' is used here. In their review of integration research in the UK, Castles et al. (2003) stress that although it is an issue of major importance in academic, governmental and non-governmental research, there is no consensus regarding the meaning of 'integration'. This translates into inconsistencies in the methods and indicators used to measure it. Integration has been interpreted in different ways depending on the "interests, values and perspectives of the people concerned" (Castles et al., 2003: 117).

Castles et al. (2003) review some cases in which integration is used as a synonym of 'assimilation'. This perspective implies that there are things that migrants need to do in order to 'achieve' integration. In other cases, it is used to discuss policies and practices that the host society can implement in order to facilitate

migrants' access to work, housing, public and private services, welfare and education, participation in political processes, religious and cultural freedom, etc. From this perspective, integration "involves a wide range of social players: public officials, political decision-makers, employers, trade union officials, fellow-workers, service providers, neighbours and so on" (Castles et al., 2003: 118).

In this research, 'integration' is considered as "a 'two-way' process involving both the newcomers and the receiving society" (Castles et al., 2003: 117). In this sense, a person is not considered to be either integrated or not integrated, but is expected to experience different types and levels of integration. Integration is thus not understood as a goal, but as a process that attempts to provide migrants with similar outcomes as those of the average population in terms of quantifiable indicators such as employment and education. These outcomes also include aspects related to people's social life and wellbeing. In this sense, this research pays special attention to people's perspectives regarding their integration experiences, "such as feelings about one's own situation or achievement" (Castles et al., 2003: 139).

Language is a key element in this process, as it plays an important role in our daily life, fulfilling many functions. One of the most evident roles of language is that it is the means through which most of our social interactions take place. Language is thus a key element in our social life, as it provides the coding through which we are able to express ourselves and exchange ideas, thoughts and feelings with others (Trudgill, 2000).

In the context of migration, not only does language connect people, but it may also set them apart and raise barriers between them. Destination language skills are highly important for migrants, not only for the development of their social networks, but also for accessing vital information about life and jobs in the new country. As part of a person's human capital, and as happens with other forms of knowledge, language fluency may also have a direct impact on people's earnings (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002). In this sense, language proficiency is an important asset for migrants in the labour market.

Further, language also fulfils a number of functions that are strongly linked to social identities, and it is often one of the elements that allow people to develop a sense of belonging to a certain group. In other words, language can acquire the symbolic power of distinguishing groups and becoming an identity marker (Dorian, 1999; Edwards, 1985a; Trudgill, 2000).

It might be necessary to clarify at this point that "the two aspects of language

are separable – the communicative from the symbolic –", as happens with languages that are not necessarily used for communication purposes but still hold their symbolic power (Edwards, 1985a: 18). However, when a single language fulfils both functions, these aspects come into play simultaneously during social interaction.

As it emerged during fieldwork, the link between language and identity is sometimes so close that it may become extremely difficult for people to refer to one without mentioning the other. In my fieldwork, migrants' experiences of their linguistic situation prove the existence of connections and associations between the different dimensions of language.

As it is strongly related to the identity and survival of immigrants, language raises questions about ethnic relations, integration and discrimination. In the context of migration, language may become a highly influential factor in encouraging processes of collective identity based on ethnicity. As a core component of migrant experiences, the impact of language would be extremely difficult to interpret without considering the perspectives of migrants themselves. In order to avoid the common risk of considering "broad matters from narrow perspectives" (Edwards, 1985a: 3) when studying language issues, this research which deals with language and integration required an integrative approach that could take into account concepts and theories developed in different fields of study, as well as migrants' ideas and perspectives.

Latin American migrants in London

Studies based on the Latin American community in London have dealt with a wide range of issues. Several studies focus on single national groups, such as Colombians (Bermudez Torres, 2003; 2010; Cock, 2009; Guarnizo, 2008; McIlwaine, 2005; McIlwaine and Bermudez Torres, 2011), Ecuadorians (James, 2005), Peruvians (Wright, 2011) and Bolivians (Sveinsson, 2007). More recently, however, there have been more studies looking at Latin Americans as a group (Briggs, 2010; Carlisle, 2006; Hearn and Bergos, 2011; Icaparà, 2011; McIlwaine, 2007; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c; 2008d; 2009; 2010; 2011a; 2011b; 2012; McIlwaine and Carlisle, 2011; McIlwaine et al., 2011; McIlwaine and Velazquez, 2007; Però, 2008; Però and Solomos, 2010). Most of the available studies are based on data gathered through the use of qualitative methods.

One of the main issues facing researchers conducting studies on this migrant group is the difficulty of retrieving reliable statistical information from official sources.

As will be discussed in Chapter 6, this is strongly linked to the length of time this community has been settled, its composition and range of legal statuses. According to the 2001 Census, there were 46,325 Latin Americans in the UK[1]. However, the literature quotes estimates of about "85,000 to 150,000" (Carlisle, 2006: 237), around 500,000 (Però, 2008) and even "between 700,000 and 1 million" (McIlwaine, 2010: 285). Arguably, the most reliable estimate on the Latin American community of London is provided by the *No Longer Invisible* report, which was published in 2011. According to this study, which includes a cross-analysis of statistics from different official sources and 1,000 surveys, there are 113,500 Latin Americans in London and about 186,500 in the UK (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

In spite of the statistical invisibility of this community, the literature documents the history of migration of this migrant group. Latin Americans started settling in the UK during the 1960s and 1970s, with most people coming from Argentina and Chile, although smaller groups also came from Bolivia (Sveinsson, 2007) and Colombia (Cock, 2009; Guarnizo, 2008). Until the 1980s, people migrated from Latin America through a work permit scheme for unskilled workers (McIlwaine, 2007; Román-Velázquez, 1999). This group, which was mainly made up of Colombians, was later on followed by their families in chain migration (Cock, 2009). Since then, Latin Americans have continued to arrive from various origins, many escaping political instability and economic crises (Carlisle, 2006; Cock, 2009). According to the latest study, the largest national groups are Brazilians, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians and Peruvians, many of whom have had previous experience of migration in Spain (McIlwaine et al., 2011). The same study reports that Latin Americans reside throughout London, although there are concentrations of this demographic in the boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth and Haringey.

There is also extensive evidence of the disadvantaged situation of Latin Americans in London's labour market. Although Latin Americans are generally educated and employed, there are large percentages working in manual jobs, particularly in cleaning and catering (for example see Bermudez Torres, 2010; Carlisle, 2006; McIlwaine, 2007; McIlwaine et al., 2011). The poor conditions and low pay offered in these sectors of the labour market translate into a number of issues affecting this community, including poor living conditions, exploitation and lack of access to services and welfare. In addition, many people face a language barrier, difficulties securing legal status, discrimination, and a lack of knowledge of the local

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[1]   Figures presented in this section include people from Brazil.

system (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

These issues are particularly problematic for certain sectors of this community, such as women, irregular migrants and young people. Although these groups remain largely under-studied, there are a few studies that focused on Latin American women. On one hand, these studies show that in the UK women are able to receive similar pay and find work relatively easier than men (McIlwaine and Carlisle, 2011). However, as part of the Latin American community, they share the general experiences of the group. In addition to these problems, women may also face gender-based discrimination (Carlisle, 2006) and domestic violence (McIlwaine and Carlisle, 2011).

There are several migrant organisations catering to Latin Americans, which provide advice, social projects and informal education, acting as a much-needed support system for migrants facing the issues discussed above. Many of these community organisations have evolved from solidarity campaigns organised by the first flows of political refugees and migrants (Bermudez Torres, 2010; Cock, 2009). There is also a growing range of cultural and commercial activities, particularly in the Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters areas. These commercial areas also represent an important space for community practices, socialisation and, as will be further discussed in Chapter 7, the construction of an emergent yet contested Latin American identity (Cock, 2009; Román-Velázquez, 1999). Nonetheless, the literature also identifies a lack of trust by Latin American migrants towards other Latin Americans, and even further identifies envy and fear within the group, issues that are often associated with the commercial areas mentioned above (Cock, 2009; McIlwaine, 2007).

Transnational activities are also common among Latin Americans. In spite of their low income and limited access to welfare, many Latin Americans send remittances to their home countries, either to support their families or for investment (McIlwaine et al., 2011). In his study of Colombian migrants, Cock (2009) found that transnational practices enabled people to maintain "social relations and a sense of belonging across borders" (Cock, 2009: 180). In her comparative study of the transnational political practices of Colombians in the UK and Spain, Bermudez Torres (2010) also found that Colombian migrants frequently participate in both home and host country politics. Although engagement is more active in Spain, Colombians in London also participate in formal and informal politics as individuals or through organisations (Bermudez Torres, 2010). In line with these findings, Però (2008) points out that Latin American migrants in London participate in both transnational and local

political activities. In particular, his study dates the emergence of "integration" politics among Latin Americans in the year 2004 through the emergence of a campaign called the 'Latin Front' that sought ethnic minority status for the community, and the engagement in trade union work through the Latin American Workers Association (LAWAS) (Però, 2008). Both the campaign and the efforts of LAWAS represent new forms of political engagement outside the voting system (Però and Solomos, 2010).

Although during the past decade the Latin American community of London has received growing attention from researchers, there are still no studies focusing on the impact and importance of language for this community. This is particularly striking when both researchers and actors have identified a lack of English language knowledge as one of the main problems for this community (Carlisle, 2006; Hearn and Bergos, 2011; James, 2005; McIlwaine, 2007; 2011; McIlwaine et al., 2011; Sveinsson, 2007).

Nonetheless, the *No Longer Invisible* report provides an overview of the community's English language knowledge. Out of the 1,000 people surveyed for the study, "nearly one-third (29%) were able to understand very little English or none at all. Less than half (41%) were able to speak, read and write very well, with a further 30% doing so at an intermediate level" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 35).

The impact of language in the labour market situation of these migrants has also been acknowledged in various studies. In this sense, the cited report suggests that a large sector is unable to find work within their professions due to lack of sufficient English-language knowledge. The literature also points out that the working conditions of people in manual sectors of the labour market greatly limits the opportunities to learn the language (Carlisle, 2006; Sveinsson, 2007).

The link between poor language skills and a lack of access to services is also identified as important for this community, especially regarding people's access to health care: "20% of Latin Americans are not registered at the GP and 40% are users of private health services because of the unsatisfactory quality of the public service (41%), as well as lack of papers (14%), having more confidence in private doctors (12%) and because of language problems (9%)" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 99).

Since language has not been the focus of previous studies on Latin Americans, there is little known about the different ways in which language difficulties impact other aspects of these migrants' experiences in London, such as their daily lives, social networks or family life. There is also little information about the experiences of English language learning and use among Latin Americans, which are, as explained

below, greatly determined by the opportunities and cost of English language classes, the motivation to learn and factors derived from the broader context. Additionally, the availability of opportunities for first language use and its importance for practical, social and symbolic reasons are issues that are missing in previous studies.

The social functions of language

Languages can be defined as socially constructed communicative systems of symbols, which are attributed meanings arbitrarily and that differ from one another in "how they assign meanings to sounds and symbols" (Edwards, 1985a: 16). However, "closely tied up with the social structure and value systems of society" (Trudgill, 2000: 8), languages also fulfil non-instrumental symbolic functions, such as establishing social relationships and conveying information about the speaker's background and origin, or acting as 'emblems of groupness' (Edwards, 2009). This section will depart from this distinction and will focus on the various social functions of language in order to look into the links between language and identity:

> "[These] intangible symbolic aspects are intertwined with the instrumental function [and] provide a rich underlay for every communicative interaction, a powerful underpinning of shared connotations. It is in this way that we are always 'translating' and 'interpreting' when we speak, and our ability to read between the lines, as it were, depends upon a cultural continuity in which language is embedded" (Edwards, 2009: 55).

Ethnic identity and language

Before looking into the complex relationship between language and ethnic identity, it would be useful to briefly revise some key ideas around the concept of ethnic identity. From a social psychology perspective, a person's self-image is determined by his or her personal and social identities (Liebkind, 1999). A person may identify as a member of various social groups depending on different factors that are considered characteristic to those social groups. In line with this concept, ethnic identity is one of the dimensions of group identification.

The study of ethnicity provides various definitions of 'ethnic groups'. These definitions often emphasise cultural and geographical elements (Sanders, 2002). Following objective criteria, ethnic groups have been defined in terms of the cultural characteristics that distinguish one group from another, such as particular linguistic, geographical or religious elements (Edwards, 1985b; Fenton, 2003). According to this

approach, sharing certain characteristics, such as a geographical origin or a language variety, is the determinant that separates members from non-members.

However, the literature points out significant problems in this conceptualisation, particularly as it fails to acknowledge change. For instance, this approach does not account for those situations in which the distinguishing cultural characteristics of a group are transformed or abandoned without affecting their identification (Barth, 1969). The idea that ethnic identity is ascribed to the individual at birth also fails to recognise the importance of self-determination. From Barth's perspective, a person is only a member of an ethnicity as long as there is identification. This argument is based on the fact that, given particular circumstances, people may decide to shift from one ethnic identity to another (Barth, 1969); although ethnicity can feel very primal it "rests on social rather than biological underpinnings. As a socially constructed category, it is subject to change" (Dorian, 1999: 25).

In keeping with this view, ethnic groups should not be defined by their cultural or historical characteristics, which are circumstantial. Instead, the focus should be placed on the social processes through which ethnic boundaries are maintained (Barth, 1969: 14). From Bath's (1969) perspective, culture is only important as a means through which in-group members express their distinctiveness and maintain their "subjective sense of groupness and the continuation of group boundaries" (Edwards, 1985a: 22).

It must be further noted that the boundaries within which ethnic members maintain their patterns of interaction may not be defined by the practices of the ethnic members alone. In the context of inter-ethnic contact, as it happens "with many minority situations", "the boundaries of pariah groups are most strongly maintained by the excluding host population" (Barth, 1969: 31). In this sense, Edwards (1985a) points out that Barth's emphasis on the importance of individuals' self-identification emphasises the flexible and subjective character of the 'sense of groupness' and does not imply that only the practices of in-group members create and maintain ethnic boundaries (Edwards, 1985a: 22).

Following these arguments, ethnicity studies shifted their attention from the study of the characteristics of different ethnic groups to the study of social processes (Fenton, 2003). However, for some, "emphasis on ethnic boundaries at the cost of giving less attention to the cultural content within those boundaries is an example of a good idea pushed too far" (Cornell paraphrased by Sanders, 2002). According to Eriksen (1991), cultural practices are not empty signs of group differences, but

symbolic practices that express different sets of criteria (Eriksen, 1991). Perceptions of cultural differences may, for instance, provoke stereotypes that determine ethnic relations in the labour market. Studying the cultural and historical context of groups is indispensable to understanding the organisation of ethnic relations and the production and maintenance of ethnicity itself (Eriksen, 1991). In this sense, Edwards argues that "what is essential for the continuation of a sense of groupness is the continuation of a sense of distinctiveness that allows perceptual boundaries to be maintained" (Edwards, 2009: 9).

Language plays a key role in this process. At the individual level, the link between ethnic identity and language begins with their simultaneous acquisition. People normally identify themselves as members of a certain ethnicity through primary socialisation with family, teachers and friends and these social interactions take place through the group's language (Padilla, 1999). Language thus, becomes highly "significant to the individual as an instrument for naming the self and the world" (Liebkind, 1999), for "the expression of the self and the emotions" (Riley, 2000: 12).

Language and social identity are thus historically linked, as "social identity and ethnicity are in large part established and maintained through language" (Gumperz, 1982: 7). In this sense, language is a vehicle for the transfer of culture and ethnicity, while at the same time provides the means for there to be a history that distinguishes one ethnicity from the other (Haarmann, 1999).

Language as a vehicle for culture and history

As a product of social interaction, which is maintained and remade through interaction, language has the particular function of carrying cultural content which reflects the history of a given group. This is evidenced not only through the highly symbolic traditional stories, songs and legends that are passed down from generation to generation, but also through their lexicon. The vocabulary of each group's linguistic variety often reflects important historical episodes or elements that are characteristic to the group's landscapes, such as fruit, animals, geographical features, and mythological or supernatural associations (Dorian, 1999: 32). When a geographical area or important events for the history of a certain group are named in a language variety, it is very difficult to translate it into a different language: "environments differ and, therefore, the things that must be detailed in language differ" (Edwards, 1985a: 19).

The cultural content of language may also include elements that relate to a

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more recent history and exhibit the influences received by other cultures. Thus, in their constant practice of language, speakers knit together cultural elements that reflect their origin and history, including the influences received from other cultures, placing individuals in a shared space of interaction, while linking their present with a common past. In this way, language links people together with a common origin and is entangled with the history of each group in a way that is inseparable: "language is what we use to transmit our culture from one generation to another" (Padilla, 1999: 111).

Language is in a constant process of development, changing through time and following the dynamics of society, incorporating new elements and leaving others behind. As a result, "each language describes the world quite literally in its own terms forming a unique mode of thought and expression" (Riley, 2007: 9). It is this aspect of language, the fact that it interacts with other elements of people's culture allowing each version to acquire particular and distinctive characteristics, that allows people to distinguish between different groups of speakers and enables language to become one of the most salient elements of people's social identities.

Language as an identity marker

Language is not the only marker of ethnic identity, nor is it indispensable in this regard. There are many cases in which language is lost or shared with other groups; societal multilingualism is in fact a very common scenario around the world (Trudgill, 2000). However, linguistic varieties are often important markers of ethnic identity. This happens because, as pointed out above, language is continuously evolving through social interaction which takes place within specific contexts. This process results in the development of significant differences, even between varieties of the same language. In interaction, these particular meanings and sounds, accents and other language variations "reveal speakers' memberships in particular speech communities, social classes, ethnic and national groups" (Edwards, 2009: 21). Thus, language fulfils the function of conveying information about the speakers' origins and backgrounds (Trudgill, 2000).

These significant differences between language varieties allow one group of speakers to be distinguished from another. In this way, language can act as an identity marker and become an emblem of the group. In situations of interaction, using a specific variety can be a way of expressing belonging to a particular group and solidarity with co-ethnic members:

> "Languages can be a very important factor in group identification, group solidarity and the signalling of difference, and when a group is under attack from outside, signals of difference may become more important and are therefore exaggerated" (Trudgill, 2000: 13).

The use of the own group's variety – whether this is a different language or dialect, and which happens with different levels of consciousness and control – evidences and reaffirms group membership, while reproducing the group's unique perspectives on the world. Sadly, vertical differences between ethnic groups often correlate with differences in the status of their languages, which in turn may influence their linguistic practices:

> "Frequently [...] people abandon the language which is repository of their culture and history and which has been the language of their communities for generations because they feel ashamed of it" (Trudgill, 2000: 193).

As shall be seen in this study, the social and symbolic importance attributed to the language of the home country, as well as attitudes and representations about the home and destination languages, emerge during conversations with migrants about their experiences and may be key in situations of language shift and language maintenance.

Before turning to considerations regarding attitudes, it should be noted that although some versions of a given language are considered 'more appropriate' or 'correct', linguistically speaking, no language is better than another. Standard varieties are normally granted more prestige through the predominant roles they occupy in society, especially when designated for administration and official education. However, sociolinguistic studies of dialects, or vernacular varieties such as African-American Vernacular English or Luxemburgish (before it was granted 'language' status), demonstrate that "all varieties of language are structured, complex, rule-governed systems which are wholly adequate for the needs of their speakers" (Trudgill, 2000: 8). In this sense, "value and judgements concerning correctness and purity are social rather than linguistics" (Trudgill, 2000: 10).

Language attitudes

The concepts of 'language attitude' and 'linguistic representation' build upon the concept of 'variation', which refers to the existence of different ways of saying the same thing. In a study about pronunciation conducted in New York, Labov (1996) showed that the speakers of a certain community may choose to make use of one or another

variety depending on the communicative situation and their intention to show or hide their belonging to a certain group (Labov, 1966). In this sense, the way speakers make use of language is related to its social functions.

The concept of 'language attitude' can be defined as what people express about a certain language or variety. Examples of linguistic attitudes are: 'linguistic loyalty', which is expressed when a language is defended even when it is considered a lower variant; 'linguistic pride' that usually consists of perceiving of one's own language as superior to others; and 'linguistic self-hate', when one recants from a language that identifies the person with a non-prestigious group (Ninyoles, 1972). These attitudes can be revealed by the way speakers evaluate the different language varieties (e.g. if they find them 'useful', 'beautiful', 'ugly', 'correct', or if they sound 'lazy', 'smart', etc.).

These language attitudes are explained and generated by 'linguistic representations', which are defined as ideological constructions about language that circulate among a community (Fasold 1996: 231). These representations can be exemplified in statements such as "the language used in country A is inferior to the variety used in country B", or "Spanish is superior to Guaraní"[2]. Another concept related to these is the concept of 'language fetish', which occurs when a language is attributed essential characteristics; 'language fetish' is often apparent in statements such as, "As long as people speak this language, the community will remain united" or "Speaking this language will get you in work" (Bein, 2005).

To understand the social reach of these ideas, and in line with the social functions reviewed above, attitudes and representations about language also reflect perceptions about their speech communities: "The definition of language attitude widens to include attitudes towards those speakers of a language or towards the particular dialects" (Fasold 1996: 231). Considering the entanglement of language and ethnic identity, it is clear that common statements about specific languages or varieties and "language-attitude ratings reveal social perceptions" (Edwards, 1985b: 149).

In this sense, language attitudes may have important consequences on people's linguistic practices and other aspects of social life. Positive attitudes towards a foreign language, for instance, may contribute to the learning of that language (Gardner, 2004). On the other hand, language loyalty – as happened with the proscription (and resurgence) of languages such as Catalan or Basque, which were once perceived as threats for the national unit – "can be a powerful weapon, and has often been manipulated to political advantage" (Trudgill, 2000: 129).

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[2]   A native South American language.

In general terms, and due to the greater prestige attributed to the language of authority and administration, minority language speakers are at a political disadvantage. When discriminated against on the basis of language, speakers may also suffer economic and occupational disadvantage (Trudgill, 2000): "it is important to realize that the power of perceptions creates its own reality, and that dialects broadly viewed as inferior *are*, for all practical intents and purposes, inferior" (Edwards, 2009: 5). In this way, the linguistic and social situation of minority language speakers may reinforce each other and become important factors influencing 'language shift':

> "If rich and powerful people more technologically advanced than yourself tell you frequently enough that your language is inferior and backward, you may end up believing them and come to think that way yourself. If you also see that people who speak your language are treated unfavourably and discriminated against, then that too will obviously be a powerful disincentive against using it" (Trudgill, 2000: 193).

Language attitudes and representations can reveal important aspects of people's social situation. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter 4, attitudes and representations towards different varieties of their home language among the Latin American community in London may provide important insights into the ways this group perceives themselves and others. In addition, as will be studied in Chapter 5, attitudes toward English language learning may also reflect the broader situation of those experiencing the language barrier.

Language and migration

As highlighted in the introduction, the integration of migrants is an issue of major importance for immigration societies, as "one of the most obvious consequences of international migration is the emergence and consolidation of vertical ethnic inequalities" (Esser, 2006: 1). This section will build on this by reviewing the main debates surrounding the role of language in the integration processes of migrant communities.

As much of the available literature is centred on the power language has in influencing migrants' situation in the labour market, this section will start by reviewing some of the main findings in this area of study and then move on to frame these findings within debates on ethnic inequality, social networks and legal statuses.

The impact of language in labour market experiences

When it comes to the labour market, migrants normally find themselves at a disadvantage (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002; Heath et al., 2000; Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009). This disadvantage is evidenced, for example, by migrants' higher rates and longer periods of unemployment, lower earnings and greater difficulty in accessing managerial and professional jobs (Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009).

Unemployment rates at the moment of arrival, for example, are strongly linked to the socio-economic context of migration. However, this situation is not limited to recently arrived migrants. The literature identifies many factors that contribute to generating this marginalisation. Some are linked to the host society, like the presence or absence of discriminatory practices and the limitations imposed by different immigration schemes, while others are related to migrants' profiles, such as their type and level of educational background or work experience. Among these many factors, language emerges as particularly important not only because many jobs require the ability to speak the language of the host society, but also because of its more indirect influences (Esser, 2006).

Schooling and labour market experiences are strongly related to the types of jobs migrants can access. In this sense, the literature has extensively shown the relevance of migrants' educational backgrounds and linguistic skills for their labour market incorporation (Borjas, 1994; Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002; Heath et al., 2000). Several studies have reported relatively lower levels of education among migrant groups (Borjas, 1994), demonstrating that migrants' human capital may explain their under-representation in high-status jobs.

However, this does not apply to all cases or migrant groups. In their study of the experiences of different ethnic groups in Britain's labour market, Heath and his colleagues (2000) identified interesting differences among various ethnic groups. Their comparative analysis of the 1991 Census data and the Labour Force Survey (LFS) found that, when compared with the British-born white population, migrants present a strong polarisation in terms of educational backgrounds. There are higher proportions of migrants with either degrees or low levels of education, than there are holding intermediate qualifications, which are common in the UK. Their study also showed that even though Chinese and Indian men are three times more likely than any other ethnicity, including British-born whites, to hold higher education degrees, they still present higher levels of unemployment (Heath et al., 2000).

When considering high rates of unemployment among qualified migrants,

Kanas and van Tubergen (2009) point out that the analysis of these types of situations should take into account the origin of these qualifications. The authors argue that migrants find it extremely difficult to transfer the qualifications and work experience acquired before migrating "because these initial skills are of lower quality, difficult to transfer, or employers are more uncertain about these skills" (Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009: 893). Moreover, their study shows that this effect is greater for those who acquired experience or certificates in rural areas and in certain countries. Thus, years of education and labour market experience have very different effects depending on whether they were acquired in the country of origin or destination (Chiswick and Miller, 2002; Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009).

In this sense, unemployment among highly qualified migrants may respond to real differences in the quality of the education attained in the origin versus the destination country, but it may also respond to the fact that employers are not familiar with the different types of foreign certifications and thus attribute higher value to local education (Borjas, 1994).

In consequence, even in those cases where an applicant's foreign qualifications may be equivalent to or higher than those of a local applicant with local qualifications, employers may still feel reluctant to hire migrants without local schooling because they "are familiar with those diplomas [i.e. local], and the education more strongly matches the needs of the labour market" (Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009: 899). Conversely, obtaining labour market experience, skills and education in the host country can thus have an enormous positive impact on migrants' position in the labour market.

In their study of four different migrant groups in the Netherlands, Kanas and van Tubergen (2009) found that not only does it improve the chances of being employed, but "host country schooling has a much stronger positive effect on the status of the jobs immigrants occupy than origin-country schooling". This conclusion is reached leaving aside the "well-documented role of host-country language skills" (Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009: 910).

Proficiency in the destination language is a key element of host country-specific human capital. In their study of the earnings of migrants in the United States, Chiswick and Miller (2002) report that those who speak fluent English earn 14 per cent more than those migrants who do not. The authors find a complementarity between English Language Skills and other forms of human capital demonstrating that "even the best education is of little help in the case of poor language skills"

(Esser, 2006: 99). In this sense, the positive impact of the level of education, as well as years of local labour market experience, duration of residence, and residence in "linguistic concentration areas" are all dependent on one's level of English language knowledge (Chiswick and Miller, 2002).

Language is a key factor not only because knowing the local language is indispensable for carrying out most jobs and accessing information about new employment opportunities, but also because language is the main means through which other host country-specific human capital can be acquired. In this sense, the authors conclude that there is an 'endogenous' relationship between English language skills and earnings among immigrants from non-English-speaking countries (Chiswick and Miller, 1995).

Ethnic differences in the labour market

Educational background and language knowledge are not the only factors that play an important role in determining the situation of migrants in the labour market. In fact, Heath and his colleagues (2000) show that in the UK the second generation of most migrant communities – with the exception of male Indians – experience the same unemployment rates as their first generation. This happens in spite of the fact that a lack of English language fluency and overseas qualifications are no longer influencing factors, as second generation communities are born and raised in the UK.

There is extensive evidence about the higher rates of unemployment and lower earnings among ethnic minority groups in the UK (Blackaby et al., 2005; Heath and Cheung, 2006; Li, 2010). A 2005 study reported that male British-born ethnic minority members "are more likely to have a degree and less likely to have no qualifications" than British-born whites. Nonetheless, ethnic groups in the UK earn up to 16 per cent less than whites and experience higher rates of unemployment (Blackaby et al., 2005).

In consequence, explanations of migrants' disadvantage in Britain's labour market should not rely on arguments of a lack of English language fluency or transferability of overseas qualifications alone, as these do not necessarily ensure equality for the following generations. In the UK, second generations of migrant communities experience "ethnic penalties" (Heath and Cheung, 2006; Heath et al., 2000).

There are, of course, other factors that influence this process of 'ethnic penalisation'. For instance, some groups may prefer not to participate in the local

work culture; while linked to age of migration, there is less local labour market experience among migrants. However, these factors only explain some of the differences found between specific ethnic groups and the rest of the population (Blackaby et al., 2005). The relevance of social networks to the process of immigrants' labour market integration will be discussed in the following section.

It is important to stress at this point that "the ethnic-minority link is not a necessary one, but rather one reflecting power and status relationships" (Edwards, 1985a: 6). Although current literature provides a broader definition of ethnic groups, which includes the majority group, initial definitions of the term referred to those groups that were "foreign to the host society" (Sanders, 2007: 327). More derogatory versions defined the term as "heathen, pagan, not Christian, not Jewish" (Edwards, 2009: 38). The origins of the term, and its rather common, unflattering way to name outsiders (Edwards, 2009), installed a distinction between 'them' as those who are considered 'ethnic groups' and 'us', as people without ethnicity. This ethnocentric point of view is often maintained outside academic discourse. In fact, Clarke and Garner (2010) found that in Britain, "many people have never thought of themselves as having some form of white identity or ethnicity" (Clarke and Garner, 2010: 155). In this sense, Fenton stresses that, as "not all ethnic groups are in the same structural position", the history of ethnic minorities is not so much about the numerical or cultural differences between groups "but about structural inequality and a hierarchy of difference" (Fenton, 2003: 111).

Situations of 'ethnic stratification', where vertical differences between ethnic groups persist systematically (Esser, 2004), become ever more problematic in the UK as the presence of ethnic minorities in the working aged population increases (Blackaby et al, 2005). Employers' discriminatory practices, which may be more or less conscious, are a key factor when it comes to ethnic inequality (Heath et al., 2000; Pager and Quillian, 2005).

The role of social networks

Along with the characteristics of migrants and those of the local labour market, social networks are also part of the complex set of factors that influence migrants' employment situation. Social networks represent important sources of new information on employment opportunities. Studies of social networks demonstrate that the characteristics of these networks in terms of types of ties or connections, resources, as well as a level of solidarity, can directly impact on people's employment

situations (Granovetter, 1973; 2005; Montgomery, 1992).

Based on the assumption that people share the same qualities as the rest of their close social circle and that they share more contacts with them than they do with acquaintances, the 'Strength of Weak Ties' theory (Granovetter, 1973) suggests that new information, including employment opportunities, is more likely to be reached through weak rather than strong ties. This is based on the argument that when a network is mostly made up of strong ties, it is less probable that new resources can be accessed, not only in terms of information, but also in terms of influencing direct and indirect contacts. Thus, weak ties may become 'bridges' to more diverse contacts and employment opportunities, which may in turn favour economic and social mobility (Granovetter, 2005)[3].

However, people are not necessarily able to manipulate their networks: "the personal experience of individuals is closely bound up with larger-scale aspects of social structure, well beyond the purview or control of particular individuals" (Granovetter, 1973: 1377). This is particularly relevant to migrants, as social networks also provide migrants with information about life in the host country and play a key role in the development of communities' political organisation (Granovetter, 1973; Zetter et al., 2006). In this sense, a social structure that hinders migrants' access to diverse social networks also impedes their broader integration.

Interestingly, there is no agreement in the literature regarding the impact of ethnic networks on migrants' integration. For instance, Chiswick and Miller (2002) have found in their study of migrants in the US that living in areas of ethnic concentration generally has a significant negative impact on people's earnings, which is particularly worse for those who speak English (Chiswick and Miller, 2002). In this sense, in his review of research on language and integration, Esser (2006) concludes:

> "There are almost no indicators that ethnic resources, such as the maintenance of the native language or access to ethnic networks, play a significant role when it comes to structural integration. Instead, ethnic bonds and relationships tend to hinder structural integration and can at best attenuate existing disadvantages in case that the relevant groups, ethnic enclaves and markets are large enough" (Esser, 2006: 100).

On the other hand, ethnic networks facilitate the understanding of the local system and may provide economic opportunities. For instance, ethnic enclaves help build community networks as well as a "distinct structure of economic opportunities as

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[3]   Although Montgomery (1992) found that more job offers are reached through weak ties, these "could be associated with lower wages" (Montgomery, 1992: 593).

an effective alternative path to social mobility" (Zhou, 2004: 1045). Moreover, the benefits of these networks may not only be important for migrants but also for their second generation; Portes and Rivas (2011) argue that maintaining bonds in the native language prevents migrant children "from assimilating to the disadvantaged segments of the host society" (Portes and Rivas, 2011: 225); while Alba and his colleagues (Alba et al., 2002) find that, for ethnic members who were born in the host country, migrant networks represent an additional resource.

Legal status and entitlements

In addition to this, the opportunities for migrants in the labour market are conditioned by their legal status (Anderson, 2008; Castles et al., 2003; Wills et al., 2009). In the UK, the range of statuses from citizenship to irregularity encompass a number of different entry permits, including residency, student visas, dependent visas and others which make up a complex system of entrance requirements.

In addition to providing permission for entry, legal statuses also regulate people's access to work and public funds. There is, of course, a radical difference in the labour market experiences of those who have permission to reside and work, and those who do not. On one hand, by not having permission to reside in the host country, irregular migrants are not covered by work-related rights, such as receiving the agreed paid, working under conditions that conform to minimum standards, or having access to work-related programmes. Consequently, "the work that irregular migrants do is often dirty, difficult, and dangerous" (Carens, 2008: 174).

When hiring irregular migrants employers risk having to pay high penalties. However, as work-related rights represent costs for employers, "in certain industries, employers are irresistibly attracted by the opportunity to pay low basic wages and to avoid social security charges, taxes and overtime pay" (Marfleet and Blustein, 2011: 383). In this sense, those who are in an irregular situation are more vulnerable to experiencing exploitation at work (Wills et al., 2009).

Nonetheless, being an authorised migrant does not ensure entitlement to work or access to labour rights. The different types of documents migrants are granted may dictate the type of job, the maximum weekly hours of work and even the minimum earnings that a person is required to receive in order to maintain the same status. In this sense, "visa holder's residence depends on compliance with certain conditions" (Anderson, 2008: 199). In some cases, this means that people are allowed to reside in the UK as long as they do not engage in work, while for those

allowed to work, these documents may grant or decline permission to change employers (Anderson, 2008). Such is the case of overseas domestic workers who are not allowed to change or work for more than one employer.

The intricacy of this legal system is further complicated by the fact that these conditions are not only dependent on the type of visa issued, but also on when it was issued. For instance, although recent changes have completely revoked student visa holders' permission to work, there are still a number of students who can either work up to 20 or 10 weekly hours as they hold visas that were issued prior to the implementation of these changes.

Any violation of these conditions could subject authorised migrants to legal penalties. The presence of migrants in 'semi-compliance' complicates the "apparently easy distinction between 'regular' and 'irregular' migrants" (Anderson, 2008: 200). Furthermore, by making workers highly dependent on their employers, strict regulations also make compliant migrants vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In practice, it is "not only irregular migrants who are unable to challenge violations of labour laws and standards but also those working legally" (Anderson, 2008: 202).

In summary, it is clear that the restrictions imposed by the immigration system may overpower other variables affecting the labour market situation of migrants. In other words, the employment regulations implemented by the immigration system greatly influence which groups will occupy the different sectors of the labour market. In London, "intersecting decisions of government, employers and workers constantly remake the labour market, increasing opportunities for some while eroding them for others" (Wills et al., 2009: 268).

Indeed, there are several interrelated factors that significantly affect migrants' situation in the labour market. Among these, the restrictions imposed by the immigration legal system in distributing entitlements and rights are particularly powerful (Anderson, 2008; Castles et al., 2003; Wills et al., 2009). In addition, this combination of factors also includes migrants' skills, qualifications, knowledge and labour market experience (Borjas, 1994; Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002; Heath et al., 2000); the characteristics of migrants' social networks (Granovetter, 1973; 2005; Montgomery, 1992); employers' discriminatory practices (Heath and Cheung, 2006; Kanas et al., 2009); and the level of ethnic differences in the host society (Blackaby et al., 2005; Heath et al., 2000).

Whereas all of these factors play important roles in determining migrants' labour market situation, there are certain 'interaction effects' that make linguistic

competence particularly critical (Esser, 2006). On the one hand, language knowledge has a direct impact on the type of employment migrants can secure and their level of income (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002). Learning the language of the host country brings important opportunities for migrants' mobility, as it increases the types of jobs migrants can access in order to improve their income and labour status. In addition, language is also an indispensable tool to acquire additional host country-specific education and skills, and access new sources of information (Esser, 2006). This is particularly relevant as host country educational qualifications are normally attributed a higher value (Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009). The acquisition of the host country language is an important step for migrants' integration.

Host-country language acquisition

The literature identifies a number of factors that influence second language learning. Leaving aside the particular intellectual aptitudes of each individual, these factors can be classified in three broad categories: opportunity, cost and motivation. The content of each of these categories may vary depending on the perspective adopted and whether we understand second language acquisition as a type of learning or as an investment (Esser, 2006). In broad terms, 'opportunity' refers to the availability and frequency of access to learning situations; the 'costs' acknowledges the money and time invested in learning, but also the potential emotional and social costs that learning a certain language may carry, for example, in situations where learning the language of the dominant ethnic group is considered a threat to one's own culture, "the pressures of group identification and peer-group solidarity are very strong" (Trudgill, 2000: 201). Finally, 'motivation' refers to the expectations or incentives of language learners.

In addition, there are also contextual aspects, specific to each case, that also influence the learning process. An important initial distinction needs to be made between the context of learning a foreign language, one that is not spoken in the country where the student normally resides, and learning the local language in the context of migration. This last situation is the context upon which this thesis is based. In the UK, the models of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), which are targeted at people who come to live and work in the UK, reflect this difference (Williamson, 2009).

Opportunity and cost

In order to acquire a second language, people need to have opportunities for learning, "which can be quantified on the basis of the frequency of access to corresponding environmental reinforcements" (Esser, 2006: 16). On the other hand, opportunities alone do not ensure people's access to language education, as it is also necessary to be able to afford the cost both in terms of time and money.

In the UK, the government-funded programme of English language lessons for adults is called English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). This programme is funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and is currently delivered as part of the national strategy 'Skills for Life', which started running in 2001 to provide literacy, language and numeracy education for adults.

ESOL is targeted at specific priority groups "for whom English language is a significant barrier to getting or keeping work" (DIUS, 2008: 6), and is mainly delivered through further education colleges, schools and independent learning centres. It was initially funded by the Home Office in the 1960s in response to the educational needs of Commonwealth migrants (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009: 6). In 1999 a report known as *The Moser Report*, drew attention to the need for skills education for adults (Brooks et al., 2001), and by 2001 ESOL started running as part of the Skills for Life Strategy for adults.

The programme was more successful than expected. Between 2001 and 2006 the number of enrolments tripled (DIUS, 2008: 6), which also translated into an increase in government spending (Hubble and Kennedy, 2011). In response to this, in 2007 the government introduced cuts to ESOL funding, putting an end to automatic fee remission (DIUS, 2008). People in employment were the most affected by this change, as only those receiving Jobseeker's Allowances, Council Tax Benefits, Housing Benefits, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Pension Credit and income-related Employment and Support Allowances qualified for full fee remission from then on (Hubble and Kennedy, 2011: 3).

Following a consultation conducted in 2007, a discretionary Learner Support Fund for spouses and low-paid workers was introduced. Additional changes were introduced and ESOL providers were made responsible for developing their own strategy of funding allocation and for identifying priority groups locally (DIUS, 2009). For this reason, the cost of ESOL varies greatly depending on the service provider and their priorities. At the time of writing, following additional funding cuts introduced

September 2011, only people receiving 'active' benefits are able to qualify for ESOL funding (Hubble and Kennedy, 2011).

Motivation

The study of motivation was introduced in the late 1950s by social psychologists Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert in their study of individual differences in second language learning in Canada (Spolsky, 2000). Since then, motivation has been considered "a key component of a model of language learning" (Spolsky, 2000: 158) and "one of the main determinants of second/foreign language (L2) learning achievement" (Dörnyei, 1994: 273). The connection between motivation and achievement has inspired decades of research both in multicultural societies and foreign language educational settings (Gardner, 1985; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993; Dörnyei, 1994, 2003; Spolsky, 2000; Noels et al, 2003; Lamb, 2004), including online courses (Ushida, 2005).

According to the conceptualisation of Gardner's socio-educational model, there are two main types of affective variables influencing language learning: motivation and situational anxiety. In terms of motivation, the socio-educational model identifies two broad orientations or reasons for people to engage in the study of a second language: an 'instrumental' and an 'integrative orientation' (Gardner and McIntyre, 1993). The 'instrumental orientation' reflects the interest in learning a second language in order to reach a practical goal, such as passing an exam or improving one's own employment situation (Dörnyei, 1994). The concept of 'integrative orientation', though vaguely defined (Dörnyei, 1994), refers to "the individual's willingness and interest in social interaction with members of the other groups" (Gardner and McIntyre, 1993: 159). It corresponds to those who wish to learn a second language "to have contact with, and perhaps to identify with" members of the language speech community (Noels et al., 2003: 36) or "even become similar to valued members of that community" (Dörnyei, 1994: 5).

Initial studies suggest that students who showed more effort in learning were those with a higher integrative orientation (Noels et al., 2003). Following these findings, the socio-educational model developed by Gardner and his colleagues emphasised the relevance of an 'integrative orientation'. However, studies carried out in foreign language classrooms provided different results. In many cases the instrumental orientation seemed to be the one that was most relevant to L2 outcomes, while in other cases "the integrative orientation had a negative correlation

with proficiency" (Noels et al., 2003: 36). In this sense, it has been argued that although an emphasis on 'integrativeness' seemed to be in line with the characteristics of a multicultural setting like Canada, it did not correspond to a foreign language educational environment. It was necessary to develop a "more pragmatic, education-centred approach" (Dörnyei, 1994: 273), which could contribute to developing strategies to motivate students in foreign language classrooms.

Thus, in the early 1990s, researchers started formulating alternative models that aimed to complement the one developed by the Canadian group. These new conceptualisations aimed to expand the model in order to acknowledge aspects that are characteristic of the foreign language classroom setting, such as the teacher's role and learners' attitudes towards the learning environment (Lamb, 2004; Ushida, 2005). The results of these studies confirm that "there are complex reasons for studying another language and potentially more than two basic orientations" (Gardner and McIntyre, 1993: 168). In addition, studies have shown that motivation may also be influenced by previous experiences of success or failure in language learning (Dörnyei, 2003; Spolsky, 2000).

An important contribution to the study of language motivation was the application of the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Drawing on self-determination theory, two broad types of language motivation were distinguished: "one based on intrinsic interest in the activity per se and the other based on rewards extrinsic to the activity" (Noels et al., 38). A person is intrinsically motivated to perform a certain activity if that individual finds it enjoyable and interesting. On the other hand, when the activity is carried out because it may lead to a desired "separable outcome", the person is moved by an extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

There is a close relation between Ryan and Deci's concept of 'extrinsic motivation' and Gardner's 'instrumental orientation'. However, this perspective reveals that people develop different levels of commitment towards externally motivated activities; while some people may only attempt to accomplish a specific activity because of external control, others 'internalise' the value of carrying out such activity and adopt a personal commitment (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In this sense, extrinsic motivation is not different to intrinsic motivation but "divided into four types along a continuum between self-determined and controlled forms of motivation" (Dörnyei, 1994: 276).

'External regulation' is the least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation. It refers to cases in which activities are conducted purely due to external control. The

concept of 'introjection regulation' refers to cases in which "people perform such actions with the feeling of pressure in order to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego-enhancements or pride" (Ryan and Deci, 2000: 62). When the importance of the activity is recognised, a person may internalise the regulation and thus 'identify' with the extrinsic motivation. Finally, a person experiences an 'integrated regulation' when "identified regulations have been fully assimilated to the self" (Ryan and Deci, 2000: 62). This continuum of different sub-types of 'extrinsic motivation' is preceded by 'amotivation', or the complete absence of motivation, on one end, followed by 'intrinsic motivation' on the other.

The study of motivation both in the context of foreign language classrooms and multilingual societies has provided important insights into the diverse reasons why people engage in language learning with different levels of commitment. The heterogeneity of these results had led scholars to acknowledge the importance of the specificities of each case: "the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of L2 motivation is always dependent on *who* learns *what* languages *where*" (Dörnyei, 1994: 275). Nonetheless, this progress enabled the development of strategies and tools that encourage specific types of motivation in order to achieve better outcomes.

However, motivation studies have traditionally focused on groups of people who were already attending a language course, neglecting to address the motivation and 'amotivation' levels of those outside of language education. Since this research is concerned with the linguistic integration of Latin Americans in London, it was equally important to learn about the levels or lack of motivation of those not attending English language classes. For this reason, at the time of developing a methodology for this study, it was necessary to adapt the models developed in previous literature in order to allow for the inclusion of factors relevant to this specific context.

In addition, the purpose of this research was not to identify the most relevant types of motivation for the competent acquisition of English among Latin Americans in London. Rather, it aimed to explore different types of motivation and see whether English is associated with ideas of integration or specific practical goals. It also sought to approach a better understanding of the contextual and affective variables influencing the learning process of Latin American migrants. In this sense, motivation theory provided this study with a theoretical and methodological framework for the analysis of the different ways in which Latin American migrants in London perceive English language learning and use.

Contextual factors

Apart from considerations regarding the opportunity, cost and motivation for language learning , the study of migrants' competent second language acquisition has dealt with a wide range of factors, including age and reason for migration, linguistic and cultural distance, access to the second language prior to migration, and the availability of the native language in the host country. In order to systematise the available empirical findings of the wide variety of second language acquisition literature, Esser (2006) organised these factors into four different contexts: "family and migration biography, country of origin, receiving country and ethnic group" (Esser, 2006: 18).

The main findings regarding the first context of second language acquisition, namely family and migration biography, are the negative "effects of *involuntary* or *temporarily* planned migration", while "extended duration of stay, low age at migration and good education have a positive effect on second language acquisition" (Esser, 2006: 22). When analysing the origin context, studies highlight the importance of the linguistic distance between the languages of the origin and the host society, as well as the level of access to the second language prior to migration. Regarding the context of the receiving country and ethnic group, studies show that residing in areas of ethnic concentration hinders language acquisition. Moreover, there is an important interaction effect between ethnic concentration and other factors: "the substantial result is easy to summarise and rather alarming: the effects of the unfavourable conditions of lower educational attainment, shorter duration of stay and advanced age at migration are particularly heightened by increased ethnic concentrations" (Esser, 2006: 42).

Another important contextual aspect for migrants in the UK is that English language knowledge has been progressively introduced as a requirement for the naturalisation and settlement processes, as well as for various paths of immigration since 2005. These changes take place in a context where multiculturalist policies are increasingly being put under question (McIlwaine, 2011b).

When discussing multiculturalism, the literature points out that there is a "confusion" regarding its use and meaning, as the term has been used to refer to different, yet interconnected, issues (Wieviorka, 1998). Employed in its adjectival form, the term has been used to give a "descriptive account of a society or state" (Wieviorka, 1998: 881). That is, to refer to the coexistence of a plurality of cultures, ethnicities or identities.

The term has also been used to refer to an ideological position, to discuss "in what way it is desirable or undesirable, what it contributes, and what it costs society, in the light of criteria which may be moral or ethical, but also economic" (Wieviorka, 1998: 883). Finally, multiculturalism may be used to refer to its legal implementation as "a political principle which materializes in the working of some institutions" (Wieviorka, 1998: 886).

Depending on whether its social, economic or political implications are discussed, the term multiculturalism may refer to "the diversified structure and working of society, or a position as to what would be desirable for society, or, finally, a reference to a specific institution or law" (Wieviorka, 1998: 884). Wieviorka (1998) provides a comprehensive definition of the term that allows for the acknowledgement of its different dimensions:

> "Multiculturalism – by which I mean the existence of cultural identities under tension in a democratic society which they may possibly contribute to destructuring – is not so much the problem, as a response to the modern production of identities with a proposal for a political and institutional procedure for dealing with them" (Wieviorka, 1998: 892).

In the context of the UK, critiques of multiculturalist models argue that "multiculturalism reifies communities, ignores internal tensions and diversity within groups and gives too much power to ethnic leaders" (McIlwaine, 2011b: 127). These critiques also emerge in media and political discourse, "fuelled by concerns that accommodation of diversity has gone too far, that community cohesion has been undermined, as well as by fears over home grown terrorism" (McIlwaine, 2011b: 127).

In line with this, and as shall be studied in Chapter 5, the government has introduced increasingly restrictive language policies for migrants that focus on increasing 'community cohesion'. At the moment, people applying for naturalisation and settlement or indefinite leave to remain are required by the Home Office to pass a 45-minute citizenship test in English about "Life in the UK" (UKBA, 2011). In addition, those applying for student, work or dependant visas need to demonstrate an intermediate level of English and it has been announced that those applying for settlement "will also have to pass an English language test at an intermediate level" by October 2013 (The Guardian, 2012).

In this sense, only those who are speakers of English are able to secure their legal status in the UK. By being part of the distribution of entitlements and rights, language has thus assumed another instrumental function. In line with this, ESOL has been attributed the role of supporting 'community cohesion' and people on the

path to citizenship became a priority group for funding (DIUS, 2009).

Language and collective identity

As a multidimensional social process that fulfils symbolic and instrumental functions, language directly and indirectly influences the integration processes of migrants. Moreover, in a context where language is employed for the distribution of entitlements and rights – as is increasingly the case in the UK and other European countries – its powerful impact on migrants' living conditions may become an important factor in leading groups to organise collectively. The debate surrounding the role of cultural productions in the emergence of collective actors is central for an understanding of how language may encourage migrant groups to mobilise.

In his conceptualisation of collective action, Melucci (1985) distinguishes his perspective from two traditional approaches. On the one hand, Marxist views provide an explanation of collective action as the inevitable result of structural crisis derived from inherent contradictions of a given system. Understood as an effect of the system, these perspectives "take for granted the actors' ability to perceive, evaluate and decide what they have in common [and] ignore the processes which enable actors to define a 'situation' as a field of shared action" (Melucci, 1996: 16).

Other perspectives see collective action as the result of shared "actors motives, beliefs, discourses and individual differences" (Melucci, 1996: 16). From this point of view, a shared concern over issues such as environmental injustice or social inequality leads people to act collectively.

However, such a narrow focus on the actors' beliefs results in overlooking the impact of structural factors: "the system of relationships in which goals, values, frames, and discourses are produced" (Melucci, 1996: 15). In other words, they are insufficient to explain the formation of shared identities.

Understanding collective action as one possible result produced by the structure or as the outcome of actors' beliefs alone does not allow for the understanding of the relationships between actors, contextual forces, and the historical developments that lead people to act together. Instead of basing the analysis on preconceived ideas of causality, a "sociological explanation must, therefore, identify the point at which the analysis of 'structures' and 'systems' and the analysis of forms of behaviour meet" (Melucci, 1996: 43).

In this sense, collective action is best understood as a system of actions that results from a series of processes that involve ongoing internal negotiations leading

to a shared understanding of the group's identity, field of action and aims (Melucci, 1996: 39):

> "[as a] set of social practices (i) involving simultaneously a number of individuals or groups, (ii) exhibiting similar morphological characteristics in contiguity of time and space, (iii) implying a social field of relationships and (iv) the capacity of the people involved of making sense of what they are doing." (Melucci, 1996: 20).

This definition emphasises the importance of looking into the processes behind the formation of collective actors, which always involves an internal debate between different orientations co-existing within movements, in order to avoid the oversimplification of considering them 'starting points' for analysis. Developing a shared identity thus implies a 'dynamic' process through which a series of elements are negotiated:

> "Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups at a more complex level) concerning the *orientations* of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place" (Melucci, 1996: 70).

Developing a shared collective identity is indispensable for all types of collective action. It allows actors to define their boundaries, distinguishing group members from non-members in order to recognise themselves as a unified entity, and be able to claim the outcomes of their action (Bernstein, 2005; Melucci, 1996). In addition, groups need to be acknowledged by non-group members as well in order to gain access to or challenge existing structures. Melucci (1996) refers to this as the "relational dimension" of collective identity (Melucci, 1996). Yet, how do collective identities emerge in the first place?

The resource mobilisation and political process theories provided models for the analysis of the structural conditions that enabled collective action. However, the emergence of 'new' social movements, such as the peace or nuclear energy movements, could no longer be explained in terms of class differences or the pre-existence of a unified homogeneous group awaiting an opportunity to act collectively. In this sense, the study of contemporary or new social movements leads to these models being called into question as they "presumed an already-existing collective actor able to recognize the opening of political opportunities and to mobilize indigenous resources for political participation" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 286).

In addition, these studies demonstrated that collective identities may be constructed through the process of collective action, as evidenced by movements'

"efforts to define, celebrate, enact, and deconstruct identity" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 287). They may also be imposed by outsiders, which is at least partially the case for groups organised around "status identities", "where the identity itself forms a part of the basis for grievances" (Bernstein, 2005: 58).

The fostering of these identities has been disregarded in neo-Marxist approaches as apolitical celebrations of cultural specificities. From these perspectives, this type of collective action is only part of the cultural field, as it relates to socially constructed characteristics. However, Bernstein (2005) argues that socially constructed cultural differences have concrete structural consequences: "these differences create distinct social groups, which justifies demands for group-differentiated citizenship rights and challenges to negative representations" (Bernstein, 2005: 50). In this sense, claiming a minority status can also become a goal, as it allows groups to push for fairer representation and overcome stigmatisation.

Movements that foster externally imposed "status identities" have also been criticised by postmodernist views which claim that identity politics fails to challenge 'real' power relations:

> "In these views, the existence of status categories constitutes a form of regulation. Therefore, any activism in the name of those categories will not alleviate inequality but will reify those categories, which will increase the use of those categories to regulate and dominate subordinate status groups." (Bernstein, 2005: 56).

However, Bernstein (2005) also argues against critiques of identities presented as essentialist, pointing out that these may be claimed for strategic and practical reasons, and stating that these claims "overlook the difficulties in eliminating social categories as a political strategy" (Bernstein, 2005: 58). In this sense, stigmatised groups experiencing disadvantaged conditions may strategically adopt socially constructed, externally imposed identities in order to enable themselves to act upon them. The strategic use of social categories may thus respond to "the pressure to join a system of beliefs and rules from which one has been excluded" (Melucci, 1996: 7).

This is not to say that the claim of minority status responds solely to groups' strategic interests. The process of "collective experience" (Melucci, 2006: 80) implies a great deal of emotional investment in collaborative work. Collective identity is therefore also constructed and adopted through the experience of collective action (Melucci, 2006).

It is also important to acknowledge that although identity may be claimed for

strategic purposes, or developed through the process of collective experience, there may also be emotional factors leading groups to embrace excluded social categories. Having to face not only the external resistance of out-group members, but also the inner heterogeneity within the groups as well as confronting forces from non-participant in-group members, a shared collective identity represents a source of stability. "The construction of a 'we', is then a necessity also for the emotional balance of social actors involved in conflicts" (Melucci, 1996: 83).

In addition to this, although many movements may appear to seek instrumental purposes, their motivation is often linked to a desire to recover respect and dignity, to counterbalance stigma and gain recognition as valid social actors (Jasper, 2011). In the context of multicultural societies, claiming an ethnic identity "may become the driving force behind a mobilization which asserts the right of peoples and cultures to the self-determination of their difference" (Melucci, 2006: 159).

In conclusion, the crucial role of shared identities in the process of collective action should not be considered in casual terms. In order to understand the emergence of collective actors, it is necessary to understand "the relationship between experience, culture, identity, politics and power" (Bernstein, 2005: 48).

Summary

The important role language plays in the integration of migrants has been identified in the discourses of the media, academics, politicians, members of the host society and migrants. While academics often call attention to the richness that cultural and linguistic diversity bring to countries of immigration (CILT, 2007; García, 1992; García, 2003; Trudgill, 2000), the use of minority languages is often perceived in UK public discourse as a sign of migrants' lack of interest in integration and, increasingly, as a threat to social cohesion.

This research will explore the linguistic practices of Latin American migrants in the context of London. In line with the different ways in which language and social life influence each other, this study will show that the linguistic situation of Latin American migrants in London is not only linked to language proficiency but also to a series of social, affective and contextual factors.

Historically linked with ethnic identity, considerations regarding migrants' language maintenance and language shift require an investigation of the symbolic, social and affective value attributed to language. In addition, being one of the most salient markers of identity, differences between language varieties are often used to

express ideas about one's own group and others (Fasold 1996). In this way, the study of language attitudes among Latin American migrants will allow for the unveiling of important links between language and group identity, as well as ideas regarding internal distinctions within this highly heterogeneous group. In addition, this research demonstrates that language attitudes also provide important insights for the understanding of people's social conditions and how these may, in turn, affect people's views and use of language.

Furthermore, debates around language and migration are widely centred on migrants' acquisition of the language of the host country. It has been extensively shown that migrants' knowledge of the destination language has an important direct and indirect influence on their experiences in the labour market (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002; Esser, 2006; Heath et al., 2000; Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009). This is primarily due to the fact that the majority of the opportunities in the local labour market require the ability to communicate in the local language, an issue that may be further exacerbated by homogeneous social networks (Granovetter, 1973: 1377).

Learning the local language thus has important consequences in migrants' experiences in the host country. However, there are many factors influencing language learning in the context of migration. These include opportunities for learning and cost, but also learners' motivation (Esser, 2006). The following analysis of Latin Americans' experiences of English language learning and use will reveal some of the affective and contextual factors influencing the process.

Due to its different dimensions and its distinctive instrumental and non-instrumental functions, language has often been studied in compartmentalised ways. Following the sociolinguistic principle that "any investigation of language that considers only language will be deficient" (Edwards, 2009: 1), this problem-driven research on language and migration draws on a multidisciplinary theoretical and methodological framework that incorporates concepts developed within both the broad fields of migration and ethnicity studies and the sociology of language and second language acquisition.

Chapter 3

Methodology

As discussed in the previous chapter, the study of language and the way in which it affects the lives of migrants encompasses different areas of study and a variety of perspectives. It has been shown, for example, that language skills may affect migrants' type of employment and position in the labour market (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002) as well as their success in education. There are also social conditions that benefit the process of destination language acquisition, while others tend to restrict it (Dörnyei, 2003; Noels et al., 2003.) In this sense, "language acquisition and its consequences are studied by very different and often highly segmented (social) scientific disciplines, such as linguistics, (social) psychology, education, sociology and economics" (Esser, 2006: 2). In accordance with these different perspectives, the study of language and migration has benefited from a wide range of methodological approaches, which includes the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

This research deals with the role that language plays in the identification and integration processes of the Spanish-speaking Latin American community of London. Although Brazilians, who speak Portuguese, represent the largest Latin American national group (McIlwaine et al., 2011), this research focuses on the Spanish-speaking sector. There are two important factors that led to the decision to focus solely on Spanish speakers. On one hand, there is limited interaction between the two sectors of Portuguese and Spanish speakers; furthermore, as I do not speak Portuguese, I would

have been greatly limited in my access to this group of speakers.

My interest in studying the ways in which language articulates issues of identity and integration in the migratory context was motivated by a previous research experience conducted in Argentina, my country of origin. I had the chance to carry out a study that dealt with the interaction between the linguistic situation and the social condition of a migratory group. This research was conducted in collaboration with fellow researcher and friend Florencia Alam, and it reviewed and analysed certain aspects of the sociolinguistic situation of the Chinese-Taiwanese migrant community of Buenos Aires.

Our communication with most of the people we initially approached was inhibited by a language barrier. Consequently, fieldwork for that study was conducted with second generation or young migrants who were attending official education courses in Argentina, while they were also pupils of a language institute that was partly funded by the Taiwanese Government. Every Saturday, children of Taiwanese and Chinese origin in primary and secondary school would attend Chinese language classes at that institute. The institute aimed to provide the level of Chinese that would satisfy the requirements of Chinese official education should they ever consider 'returning' to their families' original country.

The data gathered revealed a number of linguistic attitudes and representations that circulated among the studied group with reference to the status of the Taiwanese variety and whether it should be considered a dialect or a separate language. On one occasion, while going through the questions included in the project survey, one of the teenagers asked why "Taiwanese" was not included in the survey among the list of "known languages". Notably, an immediate response came from another pupil who, from the end of the classroom, shouted, "Because Taiwan is not a country!" This explanation was silently accepted as a valid argument not only by the rest of the students but also by their Taiwanese tutors. The relative statuses of the linguistic varieties were perceived to be strongly related to the political situation of the region.

It became evident through the analysis that ideas about language were often used as a means of expressing people's perceptions about members of the different speech communities (Fasold, 1996). In addition, these ideas about language often reflected the historical and political situation that separated and united Taiwan and China. The study also revealed a tension between a high esteem for the Taiwanese and Chinese students' and teachers' own ancient culture and a tendency to integrate through the fostering of an Argentine national identity. (Alam and Granada, 2008).

Additionally, fieldwork allowed us to learn about some of the strategies that non-bilingual migrants had developed in order to cope with their linguistic isolation and their integration into the labour market.

Although this initial approach to the study of language, identity and integration was greatly limited by our lack of knowledge of the respondents' first language, it served to illustrate the importance and implications of the linguistic situation of migrants in relation to both their integration in the host country and the maintenance of their group identity. The study also showed that the ambiguous political status of the subject group's region of origin was strongly related to a rather uncertain identity that was reflected in the groups' ideas about language. The presence of an identity linked to a territory of origin that does not correlate with a national identity is something that also emerged during this study of Latin Americans in London.

The methodological framework presented in this chapter departs from a theoretical understanding of language as a multidimensional social process that simultaneously acts as a constitutive aspect of migrants' social identities and a key factor of integration. This study explores how language is related to the identity and integration processes of Latin American migrants in London and examines how their linguistic situation affects their broader social conditions. In doing so, it will address the following questions:

- How do Latin American migrants experience the links between language and identity?

- What attitudes and ideas do these migrants express towards their first language and towards the acquisition of the destination language?

- Is learning English perceived as a key factor for integration?

- How do Latin American migrants' perceptions translate into action? Do Latin American migrants seek integration through learning English?

- What are the links between language, ethnicity and collective action in the context of migration?

Focusing on the experiences, attitudes, perceptions and actions of individuals, this thesis follows a theoretical understanding of social reality that fits within the "complex set of ideas clustered under the term interpretivism" (O'Reilly, 2009: 120). Following the conceptualisation developed by academics of the Chicago School that "meanings are constructed between individuals through the process of interaction" (O'Reilly, 2009: 121), this study looks into everyday social experiences of Latin Americans with the aim of interpreting the meanings attached to language as part of their integration and

identification processes in London. Thus, in order to tackle the questions stated above, I needed to develop an approach that would enable me to gain an in-depth knowledge of the ways in which people "understand and interpret their social reality" (Bryman, 1992: 8).

In order to learn about the diverse ways in which Latin American migrants in London experience their linguistic situation, it was necessary for me to have direct contact with their daily lives and to witness the different aspects that were linked to their language knowledge in order to better interpret those views. In this sense, an approach that would greatly rely on qualitative methods and the "borrowing" (Wolcott, 1999) of ethnographic techniques seemed to be particularly suitable for the type of data that this research required. In addition, quantitative analysis of survey data was also employed in order to compare the survey sample with the results of the previous study.

This chapter will describe the methodological techniques implemented in this research, and will justify the use of those methods while presenting some of the issues and challenges that were faced during the process of fieldwork. It describes what, in many ways, was a learning process that was enriched by the humbling experience of learning about other people's lives.

The choice of ethnographic methods

Studying the social functions of language and the importance they have for Latin American migrants in London required a kind of "near experience" (Adler and Adler, 1987) that would allow me to take into account relevant contextual elements. The use of ethnographic methods were particularly appropriate for this purpose, as they imply gathering and interpreting data in its own context in order to generate "thick description", a term used by Geertz (1973) to describe a type of knowledge that takes into account the symbolic meaning of social practices. It implies the study of different social issues "in terms of which they are produced, perceived and interpreted and without which they would not in fact exist" (Geertz, 1973: 7) through experiencing, enquiring and examining (Wollcott, 1999). This study was carried out through long-term engagement in participant observational work, in-depth semi-structured interviews and surveys.

In addition, quantitative methods were employed through the inclusion of dichotomous, multiple choice, and Likert scale questions in the surveys. This allowed for the examination of whether the profile of the survey sample was in line with the findings of previous studies of the Latin American community in terms of age, legal

status, occupation, etc. In addition, a quantitative analysis served to evaluate the significance of the issues analysed, including the levels of motivation to learn English, the relative importance of the different reasons to study the language and the most common obstacles hindering access to courses. The survey also included unstructured questions that addressed these issues. The use of mixed qualitative and quantitative questions in a single survey facilitated the integration of both types of findings through the subsequent analysis (Bryman, 2007).

Although further use of quantitative methods would have allowed the analysis of statistical data to measure, for example, the impact of language knowledge in the occupation of Latin Americans in London, the interest of this research lies in the ways in which the impact of English language knowledge is perceived, in order to interpret the attitudes and behaviours of migrants in their use of the original and the destination language. The use of quantitative methods alone would have made it extremely difficult to explore the diverse ways in which these migrants perceive language to be related to other aspects of their lives.

On the other hand, an analysis of large-scale quantitative data would have been hindered by the fact that there are still no reliable statistics about the Latin American community of London and the UK. This lack of information is strongly related to the characteristics of this group and to the way in which population data is gathered in the country. Until this day, it is still not possible to accurately identify the Latin American population through the data provided by the UK census, and it is therefore extremely difficult to design a reliable sampling method that would ensure the selection of a representative group.

The statistical invisibility of these migrants has significant consequences in their daily lives. This problem has inspired a series of debates and the emergence of two different associations that are currently engaged in campaigning for the official recognition of Latin Americans through a series of strategies, such as the inclusion of a suitable category in ethnic monitoring (see Chapter 6 for an analysis).

No Longer Invisible (2011), a recently published report, attempts to overcome this lack of information by estimating the size of the community. By combining data from a number of different sources, including the National Census, the Labour Force Survey, the registry of children born to foreign mothers, as well as academic reports on London's irregular population, the report estimates that there were 113,500 Latin Americans living in London in 2008 (McIlwaine et al., 2011). Although this challenging statistical analysis resulted in the most accurate estimate on the size of the Latin

American community of London, as highlighted in the previous chapter, there is still little known about this migratory group.

Conducting surveys, in-depth interviews, and long-term participant observation activities within two different Latin American organisations allowed me to gather the appropriate type of data to learn about the importance language has for these migrants. Moreover, opinions and attitudes about language are not always easy for people to express. As became evident through fieldwork, people are often not aware of the meanings and functions that they sometimes attribute to language. In this sense, relying solely on the use of surveys and interviews may not have allowed me to explore and witness the many ways in which language and social conditions are intertwined in this particular context.

Participant observational work, as a means of "prolonged immersion in the field" involves sustained interaction with respondents within their own environment, which allows researchers to gain "an intimate view" of people's experiences (Fox, 2004: 4). Through this long-term engagement, researchers may "attain the intuitive empathy necessary to grasp their subjects' perspective on the social world" (Adler and Adler, 1987: 12). Immersing oneself in a community through active participation raises many challenges for the researcher, such as those that come from dealing with a sample that is "constantly shifting", as well as engaging in "different degrees of association with each person" (Bryman, 1992: 9). In this sense, this type of experience also requires the research to take into account the feelings and impressions that emerge during the process when using oneself as an instrument (De Leine, 1997).

On the other hand, conducting in-depth interviews allowed me to ask people directly about their background, history of migration, living situation in London, as well as their views and opinions about topics that were relevant to this study. This methodology allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of many of the issues that the fieldwork set out to investigate. At the same time, the interviews have also brought to light important aspects of people's lives that would have been impossible to acknowledge through observation alone.

Finally, surveys were conducted towards the end of this fieldwork in order to gather more specific answers regarding people's English language knowledge, learning experiences, reasons for learning English, and opportunities to use the language. These surveys also aimed to explore the relevance of different affective variables involved in second language learning and use, including motivation and situational anxiety (Gardner and McIntyre, 1993).

In summary, this fieldwork was a process that developed through the wide range of activities encompassed by long-term participant observational work, surveying and interviewing.

Fieldwork as a process

When discussing the effects of the observer and the related benefits, Monahan and Fisher (2010) point out that the research environment is not the only element of fieldwork that is modified through the presence of the participant observer. In ethnographic work, the observer's perception and understanding of the situations are often changed by the interaction with those who are observed (Monahan and Fisher, 2010).

At an initial stage, this study focused on the ways in which ideas about language served to express identity and perceptions about other groups. As I came to know this highly heterogeneous group, tensions between identification and differentiation led me to the unsettling question of whether there was such a thing as a 'Latin American community' and whether language played any role in setting boundaries or unifying the group – all issues that were also connected to the direct and indirect role of language in the integration-isolation of migrants. In this sense, I regard the fieldwork conducted for this research as a process of continuous development in which the methodology used was shaped by both my research interests and the interaction with the people met in the field.

On the other hand, this process was both a research and a personal experience, as it was shaped not only by the impressions gained through fieldwork, but also by my own experience of becoming a Latin American migrant. During these four years of migration and research in the UK, I became committed to the empowerment and integration of Latin American migrants. This has led me to engage in different roles within different settings. During this period, I have been a research student, a volunteer, a community worker and an activist. In this sense, this research draws on data gathered through ethnographic techniques and on my own experiences as a community worker and activist campaigning for the visibility and inclusion of Latin Americans in London.

Witnessing and participating in the lives of Latin American migrants who came from a number of countries and heterogeneous backgrounds has situated me within a dual process of continuous movement between identification and distancing, which I have found to be indispensable for the development of a better understanding of the

issues reviewed by this work. This fluctuating identification aided in the development of a closer connection with the respondents and in the practice of what Fox refers to as the use of "one's self as an instrument in a self-reflexive but non-narcissistic way'" (Fox, 2004: 311).

It should also be mentioned that the choice of the city of London as the setting for this research was a response to the more visible presence of Latin Americans in the area. The apparent concentration of Latin Americans in London has also been ratified by recent studies (McIlwaine et al., 2011). For this reason, three weeks after my arrival in the United Kingdom, I moved from Birmingham to London with the intention of building up a network of potential respondents and conducting fieldwork through participant observation.

The initial network of contacts was mainly composed of work colleagues at what was then my part-time Spanish-speaking job, at a bilingual customer service department for the Spanish branch of a phone company. This was followed by a long-term ethnographic engagement through participant observation at a migrant community organisation through voluntary work. This experience allowed me to gain a more in-depth understanding of the situation of Latin Americans and their type of 'invisibility', which put me in contact with members of one of the recognition campaigns. These organisations represented the main gateways through which I contacted the rest of the respondents who appear in this study.

After two and a half years of fieldwork through participant observation activities and interviewing, I conducted a series of surveys in order to gather ideas about English language, including migrants' experiences and motivation to learn. The survey aimed to explore the reasons why people want to learn English and to determine whether these were linked to integrative or instrumental purposes.

It should be mentioned that this research does not intend to account for the wider Latin American community, in large part due to the limited resources and time of a single researcher. Nor does it claim to exhaust the analysis of the many meanings that language may adopt for the Latin American migrants who have participated in this fieldwork. As we should remember from Geertz (1973), all aspects of cultural reality and social life are subject to further interpretation and change. However, it follows the understanding that "small events speak to large issues" (Geertz, 1973: 23) and that the ideas and thoughts expressed by this sector of the community contribute to our general understanding of the implications and causes behind migrants' language knowledge and use.

Before turning to a more detailed description of the activities carried out during the fieldwork process, I would like to note that because of the type of 'invisibility' that characterises this migrant community of London, the sample that appears in this work was partly determined by my own integration in the labour market, and participation in community activities through voluntary work and campaign activism. In this sense, the different activities I engaged in as a researcher have only allowed me to partially explore certain areas of a bigger picture that continues to be greatly obscured.

Interviews

One of the main benefits of conducting unstructured interviews lies in the fact that it "offers access to people's ideas and thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher" (De Laine quoting Reinbarz, 1997: 171). Interviewing also allows us to establish a connection with people and to know them at a deeper level through the use of surveys or conducting observational work. Following the insights of feminist researchers, it also reminds us of the heterogeneity that lies in the ways in which people look at things. In this sense, the set of interviews conducted for this research not only allowed me to gather more in-depth information about people, but it also brought to light some relevant issues that were not envisaged in the initial stages but that were later incorporated into the analysis.

Nonetheless, whereas interviewing was certainly an effective way of gathering in-depth information about people's backgrounds, experiences and perceptions, it also required me to make a number of decisions carefully with regards to the use of the different research strategies and their ethical implications. The practice of interviewing also raised some methodological challenges, particularly when asking people about topics they were not expecting.

In this sense, although in the context of migration there can be a number of ways in which language may have a visible impact on migrants' lives – for example, when experiencing a complete language barrier – people may not always be used to speaking or even thinking about it. In fact, during the interviews, respondents often expressed surprise and sometimes did not understand why someone would ask them how they felt about an unusual topic of conversation, such as their impressions about the different varieties of Spanish. In this sense, the effectiveness of the interviews demanded the development of my conversational skills to learn to monitor key aspects of each interaction, such as the respondents' level of comfort.

As I did not have any Latin American contacts in London prior to the start of this

study, the development of this research's sample of respondents was highly dependent on my own experiences as a recently-arrived migrant. In this sense, most of the initial respondents for interviews were people that I met through a bilingual English-Spanish-speaking part-time job. As time went by, and thanks to my engagement in the voluntary sector, I was able to get in touch with people with a wider variety of backgrounds, legal statuses and living conditions in London.

The interview sample (Appendix 1) included people that were born in seven different countries of Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru. It also included two second generation migrants who were born in England, one from Ecuadorian parents, while the other has a Cuban parent. Although it was a relatively young group, with an average age of 33, their age range was from 22 to 68 years old. They also presented a variety of legal statuses, including spouse, dependant and student visas, European citizenship, British citizenship, and undocumented status. This aspect is particularly important, as legal status determines the different sets of rights to which each person is entitled, including the conditions for staying, the type and hours of work allowed, their recourse to public funds, and access to political participation, including the ability to vote in local elections. Finally, their time in London varied from four months to 35 years. The respondents that made up this sample were chosen because of their immigration experiences, roles and connections in the community.

At the beginning of all interviews, respondents were assured that the anonymity of their statements would be maintained. For this reason, pseudonyms were assigned to all interviewees, with the exception of two participants who preferred their real names. The decision of offering key participants the option to maintain their identities stemmed from the importance these actors attributed to the visibility of the Latin American community and to their own visibility as community development workers and activists.

As shall be seen throughout this study, the current situation of exclusion and disenfranchisement of the Latin American community is directly linked to its invisibility. To tackle this issue, a number of organisations and activist groups have started campaigning for the official recognition of Latin Americans as an ethnic group in London and the UK. After gaining a solid understanding of their struggles and efforts through my own active engagement in campaigning for recognition, I came to realise that anonymity was not necessarily considered as beneficial by these actors. As Crossley (2006) points out, "activists, by definition, generate publicity for their causes

and, by default, for themselves. Moreover, they write, sometimes prolifically, attaching their own names to what they write" (Crossley, 2006: 7). This was the case of respondent Claudio Chipana, who was a founding member of the Latin American Recognition Campaign, and who frequently collaborated with community media with articles about issues relevant to Latin Americans.

Although the second participant who chose to maintain his identity, Diego Peñaloza, was not involved in activism, he shared the same interest in encouraging others to step up and raise awareness of the community's situation. The decision to use their own names was therefore not associated with personal gain. On the contrary, expressing their own commitment to the betterment of the community was aimed at encouraging others to do the same.

Moreover, as stated above, these respondents were chosen due to their key role and links with the community. Although I was an active participant in these groups throughout the fieldwork, these respondents had been "in the struggle" for a much longer time. Their work often involved a great deal of research and analysis, which I was able to draw on during numerous discussions. The undeniable contribution of their own conceptualisations led me to the ethical dilemma of whether it was fair for their identity to be obscured. How could I, as an activist, seek recognition for a community without recognising the agency of these actors? Furthermore, how could I, as a researcher, not acknowledge their intellectual role? Denying these actors the possibility of maintaining their identity would have meant overriding their agency and role in the production of knowledge (Chesters, 2012, Gillan and Pickerill, 2012), which I found to be in great contradiction with the ethics of my work. In this sense, this realisation required me to reflect on existing ethical guidelines in order to adopt a "more relational and reflexive understanding of what might be beneficent or harmful" (Cordner et al., 2012: 173).

However, it must be noted that not all key respondents chose to maintain their identities. This was mostly the case for those whose interviews touched aspects of their personal views and lives. As Crossley points out, "anonymity can be empowering" (Crossley, 2013: 157). Nonetheless, they were all given the choice to be named as who they were, "public and critical agents, not anonymous objects of research" (Cresswell and Spandler, 2013: 149).

Although I had met most of the interviewees through my paid and voluntary work, none of these respondents were close to my personal social network at the time of our interviews, with the exception of those working at Indoamerican Refugee

Migrant Organisatin (IRMO) or the Latin American Recognition Campaign (LARC). As such, most of the interviews were conducted in public spaces like cafés near the person's workplace or home. The rest of the interviews were either carried out at my residence or at the respondent's. All of the interviews were conducted in London, each one lasting approximately 50 minutes, and all except one were carried out in one-on-one sessions. With the informed consent of all respondents (BERA, 2004; 2011), a digital recorder was used to record the conversations. All interviews were conducted in Spanish and translated into English by me, with only one exception: a respondent who felt more comfortable speaking in English. All interviews were transcribed and translated by me.

The interviews themselves were semi-structured. After introducing myself and explaining very generally what topics would be covered during our talk, I would begin by asking the respondent to share a memory from when they were newly arrived in London. This descriptive question invited respondents to construct their own narrative, and in doing so aimed to make them feel comfortable by establishing an attentive and positive atmosphere. In this sense, it was used as a "threat-reducing strategy" which aimed to increase respondents' level of trust (De Laine, 1997).

Afterwards, and with the aid of an interview guide that was revised after each interaction (Appendix 2), these semi-structured interviews aimed to cover the following topics which evolved over the course of the interviews: nationality, family history, age, reason for emigrating, reasons for choosing London, time in London, anecdotes of migration, social life, knowledge of languages and ideas about the different versions of Spanish, time spent studying English, self-evaluation of English language knowledge, ideas about language learning and integration, and their own experiences of migration.

The flexibility that characterises this methodology allowed me to prioritise and emphasise certain topics depending on the person interviewed and the progress of each interaction (De Laine, 1997). It has also enabled me to enquire about issues that emerged spontaneously during the conversations, without restricting responses to a limited number of categories as a more formal, quantitative approach would have required (De Laine, 1997).

In addition, this methodology allowed me to explore issues that were not contemplated in the initial design of this project. The non-systematic 'appearance' of semi-structured interviews provided our encounters with a less formal atmosphere which also helped it to resemble a more 'natural' conversation. This context further encouraged some respondents to speak about highly personal and sensitive issues.

In such situations, as pointed out in the literature, it was also important to carefully reconsider each question in the context of each interviewee and to identify what should not be asked, to mentally 'stand in the inverviewee's shoes' in order to avoid generating discomfort and reduce intrusiveness (De Laine, 1997). This aspect of holding a rather personal conversation with a complete stranger proved to be quite challenging, as some people found it extremely hard to speak about themselves or the situation they were going through, while others seemed to be happy to get a chance to tell their version of the story.

It is advisable to carefully consider how to introduce oneself to the interviewee (De Laine, 1997). However, "like any other social role, it is shaped in part by the persons with whom one interacts" (Fox, 2004: 320). No matter how carefully I would introduce myself and the aims of the research, most people had very specific references about me and my involvement in community work.

This occasionally led to confusion or tension between my interests and those of the interviewee. In one case, a respondent indicated that she had agreed to the interview because she was under the impression that she would receive immigration advice. The misunderstanding generated a rather uncomfortable situation, as after telling me the detailed story of how she struggled to regularise her legal situation, I had to give her the disappointing news that I could not offer her legal advice, as I was not qualified to do so. I only knew about her expectations at the end of the interview, but they explained her insistence in driving the conversation in a very specific direction.

Overall, a total of 23 Latin American people participated in these in- depth, semi-structured interviews, including community workers and activists. In addition, an English teacher from Luxemburg working within a Latin American community organisation and a representative from the Trade Union Congress (TUC), an expert in race and equality issues, were also interviewed.

Additionally, it is common in participant-observation research to draw on numerous casual conversations and 'unstructured' interviews (De Laine, 1997) held during fieldwork, and this study was no different. These types of interactions differed from the other participant observant activities, as they enabled me to ask people about their perceptions and thoughts about general aspects of their lives; these interactions were also different because they required me to introduce myself as a researcher and request permission to take notes of their statements.

Participant Observation

Originated in Social Anthropology, this method was developed and codified by urban researchers of the Chicago School in order to observe social life 'in situ' (Adler and Adler, 1987). It has been argued that 'participant observation' can be a rather ambiguous and thus confusing concept (Wolcott, 1999). This section will therefore provide a detailed explanation of exactly what was done during the experiences of participant observation fieldwork conducted for this research in order to avoid any ambiguity (Wolcott, 1999). It will also present the benefits and downsides of this methodology for this research, as well as the ethical issues that it raised.

As mentioned above, this research began when I moved to London with the intention of building up a network of potential respondents and observing/participating in the Latin American community. As more contacts were made, it became increasingly evident that I was only accessing a sector of the community, which was comprised mostly of young people who were in London to study. It became apparent that it was necessary for me to participate in other circles to start making contact with other sectors of the community. For this reason, fromin November 2009 and until May 2012, I carried out participant observation activities in two different settings. First, I started working as a volunteer for a registered charity called the Indoamerican Refugee Migrant Organisation, and in 2011, I started participating as a member of the Latin American Recognition Campaign.

Indoamerican Refugee Migrant Organisation (IRMO)

The Latin American migrant organisation, IRMO was originally founded as *Chile Democrático* (Democratic Chile) in 1985 by Chilean exiles who mainly came to the UK during the 1970s fleeing Pinochet's dictatorship. As time went by, and with the arrival of people from other countries in the region, the organisation changed its name to IRMO and focused on developing services to accommodate the needs of the wider Latin American community of London.

IRMO assists over 2,500 people a year. Its activities are organised around six projects: Legal Advice, Social Welfare, a youth group called the Latin American Youth Forum (LAYF), English for Work, Parental Support and a discussion group for women called *El Costurero* (the sewing basket). These projects, according to IRMO's annual report, aim to "support the community in its access to legal assistance, employment, education, housing, welfare and health [and to] help them integrate into UK society while maintaining and celebrating a distinct cultural identity" (IRMO, 2011).

IRMO's main area of work is the provision of legal advice and casework on immigration and social welfare for Latin American migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. This service is coordinated by a community worker from Colombia, a lawyer who came as a political refugee during the 1970s and whose good reputation brings people from all areas of London solely on word of mouth, without the need for any type of promotional strategy.

LAYF aims to foster critical thinking among young Latin Americans through the provision of artistic and educational workshops. The Parental Support project consists of a weekly workshop to help those parents who cannot speak English to follow their children's progress at school through educational and recreational activities. The organisation also offers English language classes, interpreting and translation services and short courses to foster wellbeing and professional development, which have covered areas such as job hunting, hairdressing, CV writing, English for interviews, yoga and mental health.

IRMO is located in Brixton, Lambeth, which is one of the main areas of Latin American concentration in London and the UK (McIlwaine et al., 2011). Because of the financial struggles that followed the economic crisis of 2008, during my time at IRMO, the organisation went through many changes: it reduced the size of its premises and general expenses, and it started to ask clients for a contribution when using certain services. Despite its economic struggles and extremely limited budget, IRMO continued running thanks to voluntary work. Out of the approximately 50 people who work at the organisation, there is only one person with a permanent contract and one project coordinator whose part time salary is paid by temporary funding. The rest of the workers, which includes legal advisers, English teachers, receptionists, fund-raisers, translators, youth workers, etc., work on a voluntary basis. This provides the organisation with an ambience of great solidarity and a flexible structure that facilitated the progress of my participation through different roles.

During the first year, my time as volunteer involved working at the front desk, organising client's case files, helping with the translation of short documents and letters, and assisting people with phone enquiries, letters, applications and registration forms. This period allowed me to come into contact with numerous people, develop a wider perspective on the community and witness the many obstacles these migrants often face. Gaining a first-hand experience of the struggles faced by the people who approached the organisation encouraged me to advance my level of participation by first becoming the organisation's Volunteer Scheme Coordinator, and later on, a

member of its directive board.

Being part of this migrant organisation had an important effect both on the characteristics of the people whom I met and on the way that they perceived me. Most of the people that I met during my time at IRMO were either people needing help, or community workers who tried to address those needs. In this sense, the data collected through this experience does not claim to represent those of the wider Latin American community, as the results would presumably differ if I had conducted fieldwork in a different setting, such as a language school or a sports club. That being said, thanks to its positive reputation, being part of IRMO greatly facilitated my access to Latin American migrants in many cases.

The Latin American Recognition Campaign (LARC)

The second experience of participant observation conducted for this research was carried out within the Latin American Recognition Campaign (LARC). This initiative brings together people and organisations interested in fostering the visibility of the Latin American community through the official recognition of Latin Americans as an ethnic minority. In this sense, one of its objectives is the inclusion of a 'Latin American' category in ethnic monitoring both at a national and local government level.

LARC was formed in April 2010 to provide an alternative to a campaign called *Alianza Iberoamericana* (Iberoamerican Alliance), which was lobbying for an official category for all Spanish and Portuguese-speaking people. LARC argued that a more appropriate official category would be 'Latin Americans'. Through a series of events, conferences and newspaper articles, these campaigns engaged in a debate about Latin American identity and the type of visibility that would benefit the community. Having learned about these different perspectives, I approached LARC to gain an insight into the issues that were being raised in this debate.

LARC is made up of 42 activists, including community workers, artists, teachers and journalists. Many of LARC's members have been politically engaged for a long time and participate in other activist groups and organisations, either working for projects in the UK or Latin America. LARC is also supported by other organisations, including IRMO, the Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS), the Latin American Workers' Association (LAWAS) and the Lambeth Spanish and Portuguese Speaking Community Forum. It is also a member of the Southwark Refugee Communities Forum (SRCF) and Community Action Southwark (CAS).

The campaign organisers are informally divided into small groups that focus on

the different campaign activities, which include participating in events and demonstrations, distributing informational material in public spaces and gathering supporters for its petitions, contacting and meeting relevant authorities, organising conferences and cultural events, and promoting political participation among Latin Americans. At the time of writing, the campaign was also part of the consultation process for the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle area, and in a coalition of that aimed to encourage collaborative work between organisations called the Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK).

Initially, I witnessed LARC's meetings as a passive observer. After a few meetings, I started participating more in the discussions and acquired a "peripheral membership" role, through which I progressively became an insider (Adler and Adler, 1987: 36). Within a few months, and with my involvement in more public activities, I became an active member of the campaign. During this period, and in collaboration with the Office of National Statistics (ONS), LARC held its second public conference and a series of workshops about the 2011 Census for Latin American people. My involvement in these activities contributed to the deepening of my own understanding of the importance of LARC's objectives and their potential benefits for the Latin American community. For this reason, I decided to strengthen my support and deepen my involvement by accepting the opportunity to become LARC's Campaign Coordinator.

This role involved coordinating different activities and contributing to the development of the campaign's action plan in order to achieve its short and long-term goals. Through this role, I had access to conversations and debates regarding ethnic monitoring and other important issues for Latin Americans. It also allowed me to discuss these topics with people in the charity sector, academics, journalists and politicians. Their views and understandings have greatly contributed to shaping my own perspective regarding the visibility and integration of the Latin American community.

Before taking on this role, I had to carefully evaluate the potential positive and negative influences that this type of involvement would have for this research. The acknowledgement that I was introducing visible changes to the fieldwork environment often made me reflect on the validity of this approach. In many cases, I found myself wondering whether I had become 'too involved', as I was attempting to explore ideas and perspectives about identity and language while campaigning for the group's visibility. I therefore questioned whether my activism was shaping the data that I

wanted to gather and (inadvertently) distorting the study.

Although I often had to evaluate my position, I am certain that the ideas and activities developed during this time remained aligned with the goals that were present at the beginning of my engagement. I took on a participatory role that contributed in "collaboratively shaping discourses and practices" (Monahan and Fisher, 2010: 357). In this sense, I came to accept the inevitable influence of my work for LARC on the study whilst remaining diligent about its impact. Indeed, as Jong points out, "the ethics regarding positioning should be approached as a continuous dynamic process" (Jong, 2012: 194).

Another challenge was to make sure that I maintained an advisable intellectual distance that would allow me "to move back and forth between involvement and detachment" (Wolcott, 1999). There were many moments in which this balance was challenged and I felt the risk of "going native" or "abandoning the task of analysis and failing to return from the field" (Adler and Adler, 1987: 17). This would become evident, for example, when I was required to act as LARC's representative, as I was then personally responsible for the group's public discourse. In fact, I was so 'near' the setting of the study that I was interviewed for a study on the strategies of political participation among migrants.

While limiting myself to 'simple' observation would have allowed me to partially avoid what could be perceived as undesirable 'observer's effects' on the fieldwork environment (Kellehear, 1993); being an 'unobtrusive' researcher would have denied me access to the first-hand experience gained through active participation. On the other hand, because of the dynamics of LARC and its frequent debates, an attempt to restrain my involvement would have seemed unnatural and possibly disruptive. Moreover, maintaining my distance while learning about the struggles and the importance of active participation in LARC would have brought up an internal ethical conflict for me. In my evaluation, I had to consider the personal cost of remaining a passive observer.

Being part of these Latin American organisations through these functional roles provided me with both the space and the 'excuse' for me to make formal and informal contact with a large number of Latin American migrants. It also enabled me to share in moments of their daily lives and to learn about some of the strategies, challenges and obstacles of being a Latin American in London, many of which would have passed unnoticed through other methods, as there are many things in daily life that one perceives as too minor or too immediate to mention in surveys or even interviews.

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Moreover, some of the important aspects of the Latin American migrant experience would have been shut to an outsider, as I often encountered issues and concerns that may have been too difficult or painful to tell or think about in front of a complete stranger.

Overall, this research draws on over two and a half years of approximately seven weekly hours of participant observational work conducted at a migrant community organisation, and uncountable interactions during collaborative work over a period of more than a year within the recognition campaign. Although there were benefits and disadvantages to consider regarding the characteristics of these contexts and my level of engagement, these experiences have allowed me to meet and interact with a large number of Latin American migrants of different nationalities and sectors, who trusted me with their life experiences, views and perspectives, precisely because of my belonging and level of commitment to those organisations.

Surveys

Finally, 60 surveys were conducted in order to collect opinions and ideas about English language knowledge and learning experiences among Latin Americans, including reasons and motivations to learn English. The use of a survey allowed these issues to be addressed directly and for more specific and comparable responses to be collected.

The survey used was paper-based, anonymous and written in Spanish. It required approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. A pilot test was conducted to ensure that questions were specific, understandable and avoided ambiguity. Following the pilot period, two different versions of the same survey were produced in order to adapt it for two sub-groups. One version was prepared for people who were attending an English language course and the other for people not attending English classes. Using two versions of the same survey allowed relevant questions to be incorporated, and all non-applicable ones to be removed, making the survey shorter and clearer. Survey responses are sensitive to wording (Kalton and Schuman, 1982), so for this reason, in order to avoid influencing respondents due to differences between the two versions, the order, layout and wording of the questions were maintained as much as possible (see appendix 3).

Respondents were mainly accessed through fieldwork at the Latin American charity. They were invited to participate in this research when they visited the organisation either to attend English classes or to use other services. This non-

probability sampling method was implemented as it allowed sub-groups (people studying and people not studying English) to be targeted. Whenever possible, surveys were conducted in person by me, although some were completed by respondents on their own.

In general terms, the sample reached through these surveys differs from that of the interviews, in that the latter was mainly made up of people who had been migrants in the UK for a longer period of time. Although many of them had had previous experiences of instability in terms of legal status and occupation, only a minority of the interviewees were still facing similar conditions to those who participated in the survey. As stated above, the interviews also included a few key respondents who were chosen due to the relevance of their role as activists or community development workers. In this sense, the survey sample, which will be further explained in Chapter 5, was mostly comprised of a more recently arrived group, with low levels of English language knowledge.

The survey questions were divided into four sections. The first section asked about respondents' knowledge of languages, the language spoken at home, and asked for a self-evaluation of their written and spoken English language knowledge. The following section asked about experiences of learning English, including place and length of study, perceptions of progress, satisfaction, expectations, motivation and 'amotivation' (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

A third section covered the following topics: importance of learning inside the classroom as compared to outside the classroom; opportunities to use English; efforts to learn English on their own; obstacles and difficulties in learning; and experiences of English language use which included anxiety and satisfaction. Finally, the fourth section gathered basic profiling information about respondents' age, gender, country of birth, ethnic group, occupation, length of time in London, educational background, intention of stay, legal status, place of residence, social circle, and access to health. This last section also retrieved ideas about Latin American identity and provided a space for respondents to make any additional comments.

The questionnaire combined dichotomous, multiple choice, unstructured and Likert scale questions, which are most suitable for studies of motivation (Gardner and McIntyre, 1993; Kalton and Schuman, 1982). Two positive, two negative, a neutral alternative, and a "does not apply" category were included in all Likert scale questions to maintain a balanced rating and avoid forcing people to either agree or disagree with the statements. An "other" option was also provided in all multiple choice questions.

The questionnaire also combined questions about facts with non-factual questions about preferences, opinions, and perceptions. These types of questions bring up the challenge of demonstrating validity and consistency. Testing the validity of factual responses, which were mostly profiling questions, would have required respondents' personal documents and certifications to be revised. In order to encourage honest responses, the survey was kept anonymous.

On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that even simple factual questions are liable to receive different interpretations and to be influenced by a social desirability bias (Kalton and Schuman, 1982). In order to avoid ambiguity and influencing responses as much as possible, questions were carefully worded, ordered and routed. For example, an open question included on the first page asked respondents to write down their reasons for studying, wanting or not wanting to study. This question was introduced before a Likert question on the second page which asked them to rate their level of agreement with different pre-coded statements about motivation. This aimed to make people reflect on their own reasons before providing different options in order to avoid people uncritically agreeing to all. The open question included on the first page also aimed to gather answers that were not contemplated among the given options.

Similarly, it was noted during the test period that when respondents encountered statements such as "I am embarrassed not to speak English" or "I need it to keep studying", they would revise their responses to previous statements. In this sense, these statements also served to control 'agreeing response bias' or people's tendency to agree with statement questions (Kalton and Schuman, 1982: 51). For this reason, one of these statements was employed as the opening one.

Another important concern was ensuring clarity and avoiding possible misinterpretations. Although in most cases the questions were understood, alternative interpretations or comprehension problems did affect a few of the responses. The question "What makes someone Latin American?", for example, was introduced as a simplified version of a previously used question about Latin American identity. However, in some cases, instead of referring to what makes people Latin American, respondents referred to what they believe Latin American people are doing in London (e.g. "working as a cleaner", "looking for opportunities", etc.). This seemed to happen because the same verb is used in Spanish for 'make' and 'do'; and although the phrase employed does not allow for the second interpretation, the use of this particular verb generated comprehension difficulties in some cases.

Answers in pre-tabulated questions were codified and assigned values for analysis and calculations, and issues mentioned in response to unstructured questions were categorised. Taking into account the consideration that "survey questioning is not a precision tool" (Kalton and Schuman, 1982: 54), it was stressed during the analysis that even factual responses, such as 'level of English' or 'obstacles to study', do not necessarily reflect the facts, but rather people's perceptions of their reality, which was the main interest of this study.

Reflections on researching from within

As mentioned above, being a researcher and community worker/activist has had important consequences in terms of both the way in which I was perceived by others and the types of relationships that were established during fieldwork. When it comes to a position as a member or an outsider, according to Kusow (2003) there seems to be "shared understandings of who has insider or outsider status on the basis of certain categories such as race and cultural" elements (Kusow, 2003: 8). However, although being an Argentine national should qualify me as Latin American, the definition of my research role in terms of the insider/outsider dichotomy is not necessarily unproblematic, as the setting for this research was never completely "unfamiliar nor fully familiar" (Ergun and Erdermi, 2009: 5). In this sense, this process also raised important challenges and ethical dilemmas that stemmed from conducting research from within a social group that was my own and, at the same time, new to me.

Insiderness/Outsiderness

There were many aspects of my own identity that immediately characterised me as 'one more' among other Latin Americans, such as sharing a language, a regional origin and having a similar cultural background. This identification was also encouraged by our shared status as immigrants in London. In fact, I often found that I had also experienced some of the issues that concerned them, such as experiencing the loss of occupational status or visa-related work restrictions. These types of issues highlighted the subsequent challenge of imposing distance between myself and those elements that I genuinely identified with (Wolcott, 1999).

This sense of proximity was particularly evident and even problematic at times, when people seemed to feel that I already knew what they were experiencing, which they expressed through comments such as, "I haven't said anything you didn't know already," or through becoming impatient when asked to explain something they were

expecting me to have experienced as well, such as the difficulties with customs at the airport or experiences of linguistic barriers. In some cases I felt compelled to explain that I was asking for these narratives for data collection purposes. Overall, in many cases, I felt a level of mutual identification that authorised me to interact, ask questions and participate as an uncontested insider.

Nonetheless, this position was rather ambivalent, since elements of my background simultaneously positioned me as an outsider, such as my presence as a researcher and my history of migration. As the vast majority of the people met through this research were either Colombians or Ecuadorians, the most immediate distinguishing aspect was my nationality, which would become evident through my accent. When people heard my Argentine accent, it was very common for them to ask where I was from. Although in most cases this was a confirmation question or simply a conversation starter, some people were unfamiliar with my accent and genuinely seemed to not know where it could be from. A few times I was taken for a Spanish person and I was told twice that I had "a good level of Spanish for being Italian". These questions and comments made me realise that because of certain aspects of my identity, my status within the community was not always clear.

Through this experience I also realised that there is a preconception about Argentines being arrogant, while at the same time they seem to be attributed a certain prestige. This was normally expressed through humorous comments such as, "You are so nice, you don't seem Argentine at all," or with comments that were meant as a compliment, such as, "You are not the typical Argentine, you mix with the rest of the community". These types of comments spoke about a sense of belonging and 'outsiderness' that I experienced throughout this research.

In this sense, Kusow (2003) argues that the insider/outsider "status emerges from the interaction between the researcher and the participants as well as the social and the political situation within which the interaction occurs" (Kusow, 2003: 597). My level of 'insiderness' or 'outsiderness' during the fieldwork was relative to the context and often dependent on the topic of conversation. When compared to or surrounded by people of non-Latin American origin, I felt that the other Latin Americans clearly considered me a fellow community member. However, when surrounded by people of the most numerous Latin American groups, issues with which I was already familiar were sometimes explained to me as if I were an outsider (e.g. poverty in Latin America, beautiful landscapes).

As happens with "all social roles and statuses, [the insider and outsider roles] are frequently situational, depending on the prevailing social, political, and cultural values of a given social context" (Kusow, 2003: 592). I was neither a full insider nor a full outsider, and my role was defined in each interaction through a "dialectical process involving constant negotiation" (Ergun and Erdemir, 2009: 20). I was a partial insider conducting research from within.

On the other hand, as I came to know most people through a community organisation that gathered people from different Latin American countries and whose activities promoted this supra-national identity, the types of relationships that I established were also tailored by the inherent conditions of these organisations (Adler and Adler, 1987). Although the relative position of power of the researcher can lead to 'staged performances' by informants (Wolcott, 1999), the friendly environment of IRMO made it very easy for me to talk to people. Overall, in this context, I was normally perceived as a community worker or activist who happened to be researching the community, instead of a research student who was carrying out fieldwork through those organisations.

Every social interaction is shaped by the interests and expectations of all the people involved. In most cases, people seemed to have agreed to engage in a conversation because they were eager to explain their situations and thoughts. However, in a few cases, some participants seemed to interpret it as an initial stage for the development of a friendship. I realised that this sometimes led to a certain discomfort when the conversation appeared to be too inquisitive. In order to make sure that respondents were informed, it was necessary to provide a more detailed explanation of the aim and context of the encounters.

Being a female researcher in a context of "migrant machismos", where gender identities may go through challenging shifts (McIlwaine, 2010) sometimes made it difficult for me to arrange interviews outside IRMO with male respondents. My impression is that in the Latin American environment it is somewhat accepted that men may behave in a flirtatious and sometimes imposing way when speaking with women, especially when the latter look younger. In fact, this type of behaviour is so common that is normally tolerated as 'harmless'. As a result, there were a few male clients of IRMO whom I chose to avoid and on two occasions I decided to cancel interviews when it became apparent that the person was demonstrating this type of behaviour.

I must also acknowledge that some of the people I met through my involvement in community activities ended up becoming part of my personal social circle, which

made it difficult to draw a line between what could be included in this research and what belongs strictly to our personal relationships. The criterion applied was to only quote the recorded or authorised material; however, it seemed impossible to alienate myself as a researcher from the feelings and thoughts I was exposed to as a colleague or friend.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that my active engagement as an activist seeking recognition for Latin Americans through LARC also brought some challenges and limitations to this research. As will be further discussed in Chapter 6, during the fieldwork period of this research, there were two conflicting campaigns seeking official recognition for Latin Americans. Although these campaigns shared the same objective, they disagreed in what they considered a fundamental issue: the limits of the group for which they sought recognition. Whereas LARC campaigned for the inclusion of 'Latin Americans', the Iberoamerican Alliance (AIU) promoted the category 'Iberoamericans', with the purpose of including Spanish and Portuguese speakers from all continents.

At the time of my engagement in LARC, the campaigns were engaged in a hostile media debate and had no direct communication. These opposing campaigns had developed a strong sense of solidarity within their groups, which made it extremely difficult to find opportunities for "mutual understanding and tolerance of alternative strategies" (Sounders, 2008: 250). In this sense, although I did not participate in these debates, my efforts to contact some of the members of the AIU were unsuccessful. There could have been any number of reasons for this; however, considering the resentment between the two groups and my explicit support for LARC's cause, it is very probable that my active and public engagement in the campaign may have led AIU's members to disregard my interview requests.

Learning to listen

Another important challenge had to do with learning to pay attention to what people meant and not necessarily to what they said (Fox, 2004). For instance, in the early stages of this work, it struck me how much people tried to separate themselves from the category of 'migrant'. It was not unusual for people to say things like, "I am not a migrant because I can pay for my things," or, "I am not a migrant because I am legal in this country". At that time, these types of statements made me feel resentment towards those who had expressed them. In retrospect, I realise that my disappointment stemmed from the feeling that I was trying hard to combat negative

stereotypes against migrants, especially Latin American migrants, through activism whereas these informants seemed ready and eager to reaffirm those prejudices.

Having had the chance to spend a considerable amount of time amongst them, I learned to interpret the meaning behind those statements and to recognise that what people meant was not as straightforward as what they said. In many cases, people also tended to emphasised their motivation to learn and their culture of hard work. This made me realise that when people used the word 'migrant' in this way, they were not necessarily trying to appear closer to locals, perhaps through mentioning their legal status, as I had originally thought. Their real concern was to separate themselves from the negative portrayal of migrants that often appears in public discourse (Van Dijk, 1993). As such, while I understand that the statements continue to reproduce negative stereotypes of migrants that I feel strongly against, my understanding of people's perspective completely changed.

In this sense, identifying with this highly heterogeneous group made it difficult for me to accept and portray some of the findings, such as the use of derogative terms to refer to certain nationalities or particular versions of Spanish. I had to overcome what Fox describes as feeling "alienated from certain individuals or particular groups encountered in the field and from aspects of the culture that they seem to incarnate" (Fox, 2004: 315). The exercise implied in participant observational work of using oneself as an instrument (Fox, 2004) and the constant attempt to analyse the different issues and processes in relation to the contextual situation, made it significantly easier to accept and manage these types of situations.

Some of the ethical issues were related to decisions that needed to be made during fieldwork, whilst others had to be made during the analysis. Since most of my research was conducted with people in need, it was difficult for me not to see them as passive victims of an unfair system. I had to overcome this in order to collect and analyse the data without oversimplifying the issues or misrepresenting the people who had participated in the study.

There is also much to consider when asking people to disclose very personal information. In this sense, "participant-observation and in-depth interviews place responsibility on the researcher to be sensitive toward interviewees […] when dealing with sensitive topics and issues" (De Laine, 1997: 181). The interviewer attempts to keep each conversation in control by making use of different types of questioning, probing techniques and "threat-reducing strategies"; however, it must be kept in mind that the interviewee might leave the conversation with the psychological "burden of

having 'opened up'" (De Laine, 1997: 175). In this sense, and as mentioned above, it was also important to consider what not to ask. For instance, during one of the interviews, a respondent broke down in tears after explaining that her son had been recently convicted in Spain. Although the issue was related to her future perspectives as a migrant in London, it was evidently a source of great pain for her and an unnecessary intrusion. At that instance, I decided to change the subject as soon as the conversation allowed, in order to avoid leading her to more troubling thoughts.

Disengagement

Another difficult thing to recognise was when to stop. There were two factors that made it extremely difficult to end the fieldwork process. On one hand, there was the responsibility acquired through my engagement in activities for which my continued participation was expected. After almost three years of developing bonds with a number of community workers through collaborative work, I could not disengage myself from all activities at once. This happened not only because active members may be pressured not to leave the group by other members of the setting (Adler and Adler, 1987), but also because of my personal attachment to the roles I took on both at IRMO and LARC, and my genuine concern for the community.

The second aspect that delayed the conclusion of my research was that through volunteering I had found an effective way of dealing with the anguish caused by witnessing the struggles and desperation of those in need. After speaking with people who were going through problems I could not help to solve, after watching someone cry because of their struggles or things they had to go through, I would often ask myself: "Was it worth it?", "What do I do with this now?" Volunteering made me feel that I was in fact doing something with it. Not only did it inspire me to persevere in trying to understand the issues that were important for this research, but it also allowed me to contribute and strengthen the community through my work.

In summary, this research draws on the use of different ethnographic techniques for gathering data, which involved long-term engagement in participant observation through active membership in two different contextual settings, informal and formal in-depth semi-structured interviews, and surveys. Overall, this process involved over two and a half years of fieldwork, 60 surveys, and 25 recorded interviews that combined closed and open-ended questions and which were conducted in order to gather more

in-depth information about Latin American migrants from different nationalities and backgrounds. All names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

The methodology used was progressively shaped alongside the experiences gained through fieldwork and my personal experience of being a recently arrived Latin American migrant. My involvement as a researcher, community worker and activist greatly contributed to the shape and scope of these findings. The different levels of involvement also brought up important challenges and ethical dilemmas regarding my self-presentation to the community and the types of relationships that were established during fieldwork.

Chapter 4

The mother tongue: Latin Americans in London, language and identity

The political, social and cultural integration of migrants is an issue of major importance for immigration societies (Castels et al., 2003). Linked to the different types of integration, language is a key aspect in the debates surrounding integration because of its direct and indirect influences (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002; Esser, 2006).

Migrants are often accused of not wanting to learn the language in UK public discourse. This alleged attitude is often perceived as a sign of lack of interest in achieving integration beyond the limits of immigrants' own ethnic group. In a speech delivered in Hampshire on 14 April 2010, Prime Minister David Cameron referred to "significant numbers of new people arriving in neighbourhoods, perhaps not able to speak the same language as those living there, on occasions not really wanting or even willing to integrate" (Cameron, 2011). The idea that people are not interested in integrating also emerges as an important immigration topic in the discussions of middle-class white British people (Garner, 2010).

This happens contrary to available evidence. The BBC 2005 Multiculturalism Poll reported 90 per cent of Muslims agreeing to the statement 'Immigrants who become British citizens should be made to learn English', which supports that "the acknowledgement of the need for English is a majority one, among Muslims and non-

Muslims" (Garner, 2010: 11). The same poll reports 65 per cent of Muslims also agreeing to the statement that 'Muslim clerics in Britain should be made to preach in the English language' (BBC/MORI, 2005), indicating a strong commitment to this belief.

It could be argued that opinion polls do not reflect actual behaviour, that "there is often inconsistency between assessed attitudes and actions" (Edwards, 1985b: 140). However, studies of migrant communities report a clear tendency towards language shift in the second and third generations (Alba et al., 2002; Portes and Rivas, 2011; Rumbaut et al., 2006). In the UK, demands for ESOL provision over the past decade have continued to rise consistently, tripling between 2001 and 2005. Notably, this 'disproportionate' growth in the numbers of adults interested in attending English classes is identified as the main argument for the funding cuts introduced by the Cameron administration to the ESOL programme in November 2010 (BIS, 2011).

Nonetheless, when it comes to language and integration, attention is often placed on migrants' lack of knowledge or negative attitudes towards learning English. In line with this, the use of minority languages is often addressed in negative terms as well. Presented as further evidence of migrants' lack of interest in being part of the host society, monolingual speakers of ethnic minority languages are perceived to only be interested in interacting within their own ethnic group.

The question of the impact that speaking the ethnic language has on migrant integration is very complex. Available research findings are inconsistent, and to a great extent the findings seem to depend on the perspectives adopted and the outcomes that are considered most important (Esser, 2006; Portes and Rivas, 2011). On one hand, it is argued that speaking their first language is beneficial for migrants' personal and educational development (Alba et al., 2002; Portes and Rivas, 2011) and for the cultural richness of the 'host' countries (García, 1992). Others argue that there is no statistical evidence of a positive influence on migrants' economic progress (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002; Esser, 2006), that it hinders second-language acquisition (Chiswick and Miller, 1995) and that, consequently, it could strongly impede migrants' structural integration.

However, others argue that different groups of people have different needs and that speaking the first language may be more or less important depending on the group considered and its specific context (Portes and Rivas, 2011). For example, Portes and Rivas (2011) found that first language maintenance does not seem to be indispensable for Asian children in the US, whereas it seems most important for

Mexican migrants to avoid integrating into disadvantaged sectors. When it comes to Latin Americans in the UK, evidence suggest that a similar trend towards maintaining full monolingualism is underway (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

Chapter 5 will look into Latin Americans' English language knowledge, experiences of the language barrier and education. It will also explore their level of motivation and the main types of motivation to learn English whilst identifying their most challenging obstacles. The following two chapters will establish a relationship between the linguistic situation of this community and emerging initiatives to organise collectively as a political actor.

Before moving on to issues linked to the language of the host country, this chapter will look at the importance attributed by Latin American migrants in London to speaking their first language. It will present fieldwork results that suggest that language is an important symbolic element of identity that serves as a connecting bridge with family origin and an irreplaceable means of transferring family values. In this sense, maintaining the language becomes a way of defending one's own identity and dignity. When people are overpowered by authority, the first language or mother tongue also emerges as a form of protection: an element that provides a sense of safety.

The next section will review the main perspectives and debates on minority language and integration. The following sections will present fieldwork findings which will focus on language use and social networks, ideas about language and belonging, attitudes towards the different versions of Spanish and other factors that generate identification among Latin Americans. The analysis will show that speaking their first language is an important practice to combat isolation and find help. However, language maintenance is perceived positively and negatively by different individuals; these views are associated with ideas of identity and integration. The conclusions argue that language is an important element on which many of the ideas expressed about identity are based. The data used for this chapter is based on the interviews conducted for this research and on long-term participant observational work carried out at the Latin American community organisation, the Indoamerican Refugee Migrant Organisation (IRMO). In addition, some of the results of a survey further explained in the next chapter will also be included.

The language of migrants

As introduced above, it is apparent that non-native speakers of English in the

UK consider it important to learn the English language. However, when it comes to the positive or negative consequences of migrants' first language maintenance, there is no clear consensus. On one hand, it is generally understood that linguistic diversity is an asset for multicultural countries (CILT, 2007; García, 1992; García, 2003; Trudgill, 2000). The cultural richness that each language variety brings (Trudgill, 2000) represents a linguistic, educational, intellectual, cultural, and economic resource for individuals, families and countries (CILT, 2007).

On the other hand, it is often argued that the maintenance of the languages of minority groups discourages people from learning the language of the host country, hindering migrant integration, damaging social cohesion and threatening the educational system. For instance, in 2007 *The Telegraph* published an article entitled "English a minority language in 1,300 schools", which informed about how the rising levels of immigration were "undermining educational standards" (Kirkup, 2010). In the speech quoted above, Cameron speaks about the "kind of discomfort and a disjointedness", that the presence of people who do not speak English generates in some neighbourhoods (Cameron, 2011).

In spite of these concerns, migrants have habitually shown a strong tendency towards linguistic assimilation (Alba et al., 2002). In fact, "there is little evidence that children of immigrants avoid learning English, or that they continue to use their native languages past the second generation" (Portes and Rivas, 2011: 223). In Edwards' words, "most minority groups are, above all, pragmatic and this usually implies a considerable assimilationist sentiment" (Edwards, 1985b: 141).

When it comes to the impact on migrants themselves, studies about the outcomes of maintaining their first language also present very diverse results. To a great extent this inconsistency is explained by the differences in the perspectives adopted in the studies, as these determine which outcomes are to be considered most important (Esser, 2006; Portes and Rivas, 2011). For instance, when looking at people's earnings and access to high-status jobs, it has been argued that foreign language skills do not contribute to migrants' economic situation (Esser, 2006). This is because, whereas work experience and education – including language knowledge – may be indispensable to access high-status jobs, they appear to have little impact unless accompanied by local language fluency (Chiswick and Miller, 2002).

Moreover, studies have shown that in the US "those who live in linguistically concentrated areas have lower earnings" (Chiswick and Miller, 2002: 49). In this sense, the availability of migrants' first language in areas of high ethnic minority

concentration is associated with lower earnings, while higher earnings appear to be linked to English language fluency. In the US, "the foreign born from non-English speaking countries who are fluent in English earn about 14% more than those lacking this fluency" (Chiswick and Miller, 2002: 42).

Although they provide indispensable data to identify correlations, causality and trends, studies about language and migration that rely solely on statistical data risk oversimplifying the diversity and heterogeneity of migrants' linguistic practices. In addition, studies about the economic impact of lack of destination-language knowledge provide important insights that contribute to explaining migrants' economic disadvantage. However, this study on Latin Americans' linguistic situation shows that in order to approach an understanding of the influential factors leading to these negative economic outcomes, it is necessary to consider relevant aspects of the wider social context, as well as the social and emotional forces that may influence the processes of language acquisition and language maintenance among migrants.

Language is normally thought of as a means of communication. However, as highlighted by Trudgill (2000) language may not only enable but also block communication:

> "The idea of language as a concealment may seem contrary to the more obvious communicative function, but it should be remembered that communication is a within-group phenomenon, while the 'concealment' is a linguistic attempt to maintain inviolate a particular grasp of the world" (Edwards, 2009: 54).

Contrary to what happens in many multilingual societies, which naturally or through state intervention develop the use of one or more lingua francas (Trudgill, 2000), when migrants are not able to speak the majority's language, their access to information, employment, the legal system and health care in the host country are greatly hindered (Piller and Takahashi, 2007). The issue of migrants' exclusion from social services and employment due to linguistic reasons is an important topic in policy debates. In immigration countries,

> "the extent to which the state is under an obligation to ensure equal access for non-citizens and the extent to which resources of the state should be diverted away from citizens is often a matter of fierce contestation and mediated by other state interests" (Piller and Takahashi, 2007: 588).

Of course, this is not to say that language is the only factor affecting the situation of ethnic minorities. In fact, discrimination against these groups in the labour

market may prevail even when fluency in the local language has been achieved. In their study of ethnic minority groups in Britain, Heath and his colleagues (2000) found that the marginalisation of ethnic minority adults in Britain's labour market is maintained even when their educational background and English language knowledge are comparable to those of the majority. According to these authors, discrimination in the labour market appears "to be the most likely explanation for the persistence and, indeed in the case of unemployment, the worsening of ethnic penalties" (Heath et al., 2000: 360). Nonetheless, discrimination on the basis of language may affect even those with language proficiency: "even if migrants acquire a functional or even advanced level of proficiency in the local language, they are often still discriminated against on the basis of their accent" (Piller and Takahashi, 2007: 589).

As one of the most salient markers of social identity, language variations convey information about a speaker's origin and background (Edwards, 2009; Trudgill, 2000). Language thus acquires the social function of distinguishing social groups, which may lead to different outcomes. On the one hand, "social identity and ethnicity are in large part established and maintained through language" (Gumperz, 1982: 7). This entanglement between language and identity also fosters identification among co-ethnic members: "The assumption here is that those who know your language are also members of your group, and this is clearly an assumption that is often incorrect" (Edwards, 2009: 54). On the other hand, as pointed out by Piller and Takahashi (2007), this aspect of language may also serve as the basis for discrimination.

Language can thus create a wall around monolingual speakers of minority languages and isolate them. In this context, when migrants are not able to communicate fluently in the language of the host society, being able to speak their mother tongue can become crucial for their wellbeing: "Humans are social creatures and being able to communicate with one's fellow humans is clearly a basic human right" (Piller and Takahashi, 2007). The development of areas of ethnic concentration, ethnic media and social circles where migrants can meet and find information in their own language can thus serve instrumental as well as social purposes.

Since language can act as an identity marker when different language varieties are associated with particular groups of people, attitudes about language expand to express "attitudes towards those speakers of a language or towards the particular dialects" (Fasold 1996: 231). In this sense,

> "Studies of language evaluation show that speech can evoke stereotyped reactions reflecting differential views of social groups. Standard accents and dialects usually connote high

> status and competence; regional, ethnic and lower-class varieties
> are associated with greater speaker integrity and attractiveness.
> The trust and liking apparently reflected in such varieties may be
> related to conceptions of in-group solidarity" (Edwards, 1985b:
> 149).

In this sense, as will be shown below, the Latin Americans who participated in this study often expressed ideas about language to refer to different types of identification and social differentiation.

Alternatively, the literature has pointed out that the "value and role of parental languages" are often overlooked (Portes and Rivas, 2011: 228). Embedded in the history of each speaking community, language carries cultural content (Dorian, 1999). In the context of migration, efforts for maintaining the family language may respond to an intention of maintaining or transferring a group identity to the next generation. Fieldwork has shown that Latin American parents often make daily efforts to keep the family's first language alive at home: "parents want their adolescent children to preserve at least some elements of their own identity and culture, while the host society, particularly schools, pulls in the opposite direction." (Portes and Rivas, 2011: 228).

The findings presented in this chapter explore how Latin American migrants in London regard their first language, its maintenance and use. The following sections look into attitudes towards the different variations of Spanish and consider their relationship with people's self-identification and issues of prestige distribution. The findings discussed here support the practical and symbolic importance of maintaining a group identity and a sense of belonging through language in migrant London.

The mother tongue: situations of language use

The home language: towards language maintenance or language shift?

In contexts of language contact where people's native language is different from the dominant more prestigious language, steady differentiations are normally made between the spaces and functions of the different varieties (Fishman, 1967). Typically, the native language is maintained as the home language, while the dominant national language is used in most activities outside the family environment. This appeared to be the case of most of the respondents who participated in the survey (72 per cent), who were met through a community organisation and therefore presumably facing difficulties. However, this was not always the case among the Latin Americans

interviewed. In fact, while Spanish was the most common language of work for both groups, English was one of the languages spoken at home for many interviewees. This appeared to be strongly related to their history of migration and age, but also to the limited opportunities they found in London's labour market, which will be further discussed in a section below and in Chapter 5.

During the interviews, most respondents indicated that they mainly have Spanish-speaking friends. These included other Latin Americans and sometimes Spanish people. They often referred to people they worked with, with whom they shared other contacts. Only a few people mentioned having friends from other migrant groups, and a minority expressed having at least one British friend. In fact, only three respondents indicated that they have a group of friends that is not predominantly Latin American. Among these, only one was a recent migrant. He came from Argentina, was working at a chain café and shared a flat with a Malaysian friend he had met in a previous flat share. He was the only respondent who indicated that he speaks English both at home and at work.

In most cases, people stated that they mostly speak Spanish with other Latin Americans. Although, as mentioned above, in many cases this was not the language they spoke at home. Respondent Rodrigo, for example, said that he speaks "half and half": English at home with his Irish partner and Spanish at work and when speaking to friends. When respondents had migrated on their own, they were usually renting a room in a shared household found through estate agents or websites like Gumtree or SpareRoom. In these cases, the most frequent home language was English, as this is normally the shared language of migrants from different origins.

Nonetheless, flat sharers' socialisation at home did not emerge as important, as these interactions can be very limited. In contrast, work colleagues and Spanish contacts were often emphasised. Peruvian respondent Julia, for example, was living in a house she shared with English-speaking people in Hammersmith. However, when asked about her use of English, she responded, "At home? No, it's all with Spanish speakers. I don't know, I identify a lot with Latin Americans – I don't know if it's because of the culture – with the people from Colombia, Argentina." (Julia's interview). Similarly, Andres explained, "At home and uni [I speak] in English, but not much. Practically, yes... my daily life, at work and all that, is in Spanish. I don't use Spanish at home, but yes... mostly Spanish." (Andres' interview).

For those who migrated with their families, Spanish is the main language at home. However, it is common for young migrants and second generation family

members to often code-switch between Spanish and English:

> "To my mom, always in Spanish, I never speak to my mom in English. My dad, mostly Spanish, but sometimes if I can't express myself in Spanish or if I can't find the words like sometimes happens, I would say it in English" (Alejo's interview).

> "To my brothers, who have been brought up here, I speak English usually. They do understand Spanish; my youngest brother speaks a lot better Spanish than I do... with my parents, with my gran, my auntie, just Spanish" (Alejo's interview).

Alejo, age 28, was born in Chile and then brought to London at the age of one. He only spent three more years in Chile before his family returned to England when he was five years old, joining his grandmother who was a refugee in London. At that age, he spoke fluent Spanish. Although he is fully bilingual, he is most comfortable when speaking English, which he learned at school. However, in the interview, he explains that he always speaks Spanish to his mother and grandparents, but might switch to English when speaking to his father and younger generations.

As in Alejo's case, strong networks of Latin American friends and family are linked to the history of migration of many Latin Americans who came in patterns of chain migration (Cock, 2009; McIlwaine, 2010; 2011a). Such was the case of Manuela's family. Initially, Manuela's mother had come on her own to work in London as a housekeeper. Her plan was to only migrate temporarily. However, the family was struggling with their economic situation in Ecuador and decided to join her four years later. Manuela was born in London, but presents a similar case:

> "We only speak Spanish at home and the majority of the people that I relate to speak Spanish. [Although] sometimes you mix English with Spanish, just like in that film *Spanglish*, something like that is very common in many of the houses where people speak Spanish and English.
> - Does this happen in your house?
> With my sisters, it does. Between me and my sisters, because we mix the words and we speak in English and Spanish all together" (Manuela's interview).

The film *Spanglish* (2004) tells the story of the daughter of a Mexican woman who starts working as a housekeeper for a family in the US. In the quote, Manuela refers to the different ways in which English and Spanish are mixed throughout the film, particularly as the girl's mother learns English. As words in the foreign language are adopted by the different characters, they progressively incorporate them into their

sentences until it becomes difficult to identify a main language of conversation. Manuela's reference to this movie will be further considered below, as it may illuminate her continuous reference to language as a central component of identity.

Similar situations were frequently found with other respondents and during participant observation with young members of the Latin American Youth Forum. The group, which I encountered through voluntary work, was made up of approximately 17 young people of different Latin American origins. Some of them were brought to London at a young age, while others had recently arrived either from their family's country of origin or from a previous experience of migration in Spain. This situation resulted in a wide range of linguistic skills, from competent English-Spanish bilingualism to Spanish monolingualism, including different levels of knowledge and confidence in both languages. All members of this group understood Spanish.

Code-switching and code-mixing was a constant in this group of young people. As happened with Alejo's family, it was observed that younger people of this forum would try to communicate in Spanish when speaking to older generations. However, in some cases, they were able to understand Spanish but could only respond fluently in English. In turn, because of their frequent contact with spoken English, many adult migrants expressed having much better listening than speaking skills. In this context, full conversations would take place with adults speaking in Spanish and young people replying in English, normally fully understanding each other.

In many cases, people expressed wanting to maintain Spanish as one of their languages. For instance, Laura made daily efforts to maintain Spanish as their home language. She was 36 years old, came from Argentina and had been living in London for three years with her husband and Teo, her son. Although Teo was only five years old, he was already a fluent speaker of both English and Spanish. As happens with most migrant children, he spoke English with a native-speaker's accent. After learning English at school, it became the language he used when speaking to friends and while playing alone. However, Laura and her husband had set an unspoken 'Spanish only' rule at home, so he would always be asked to "say it in Spanish" when speaking with them and their Latin American friends. She explained the reasons in this way:

> "We want him to keep our culture [...] we want him to maintain our roots. I think that this idea of maintaining our roots and culture is to share values and those values I can only share in my language, which is Spanish or feelings; I can't express my feelings to my son, no matter what my level of English is, in a language other than my own, in my mother tongue [...] I can't do it in a different language, and because I think it is very

important for him not to lose our language, because I need him
to keep talking with his family [abroad], to keep communicating
with his family, to keep having contact with the people there."
(Laura's interview).

Laura's ideas about language are strongly linked to cultural identity. For her,
Spanish is evidently the language of affection. It is the only language that could allow
her to express her feelings, providing a link to something that is very primal. Spanish is
the language of family and intimacy, and maintaining the language is important
because it allows for the retaining of affective bonds with the rest of the family abroad.

Laura's case also illustrates how language serves to carry cultural content
(Padilla, 1999). For her, language has become an indispensable tool to pass on the
family's cultural heritage to her son. Only her mother tongue can allow Laura to pass
her culture's "values" on to her son. Their efforts to preserve the language at home, to
"connect him" to their culture at every chance they have, are thus seen as
indispensable to transferring the family's cultural identity.

However, these efforts are permanently threatened by the strong influence of
mainstream society (Portes and Rivas, 2011). In this sense, teaching her son to
connect with his family heritage in a positive way through language is seen by Laura
as a "responsibility":

"That was another of my responsibilities, to make him speak
Spanish... and we knew that we were the ones who would
teach him, and we are the ones who teach him. It is us, at
home we teach him to speak Spanish and at school he will
speak English, but yes I saw it as another responsibility of
mine, trying to keep a lightweight situation, because he is still a
child" (Laura's interview).

As often happens with children in migrant communities (Portes and Rivas,
2011), Laura recognises that her son's ability to speak Spanish depends on her efforts
to maintain the language in their home. The success of this process is something she
measures through his ability to communicate well with the family in Argentina and
through his level of comfort with this part of his identity. Her son's linguistic confidence
is a source of pride for Laura, particularly as she witnesses how not being part of the
'mainstream' society affects other children:

"... at school [there are] kids that are embarrassed of speaking
their mother's tongue. He speaks to me in Spanish being right
next to his friends and it has no impact on him. He turns around
and keeps talking to his friends in English and that doesn't
happen with the other parents. And I am also proud because
he speaks to his grandmother, he speaks to his cousins by

phone, and the other kids at school can't do that. They are not communicating with their relatives, so in that sense I feel well" (Laura's interview).

It must be clarified that these ideas do not contradict a positive attitude towards English education. In fact, fieldwork experience made it clear that Latin American parents feel a great sense of pride that comes from their children's ability to speak English fluently. This became most apparent when parents of young children would speak to them in English to show their fluency and native accent to others. During these interactions, both parents and audience would always demonstrate their support and a positive attitude towards children having native English accents.

Occasionally, this was associated with the idea that once the children learn English, parents find a means to overcome their unsettled situation: "Once my daughter learns English, no one can kick me out of here" (fieldwork notes). Notably, the quote corresponds to a Latin American migrant from the Dominican Republic with European nationality, which demonstrates the feeling of vulnerability and instability that appears to be a constant across different legal statuses, and which is discussed further in Chapter 6.

On the other hand, there were also parents who made efforts to speak English with their children at home, although this seemed to happen less frequently. In these cases, speaking English at home was seen as beneficial for both their children's school education and their own learning of the language. These findings seem to support the idea that minority groups tend to be assimilationist (Edwards, 1985b). In this sense, in many cases, the maintenance of Spanish as the home language seemed to be related to the fact that parents were unable to speak English.

It must be kept in mind that the living conditions of many Latin American families make it very difficult for parents to control their children's language use. In many cases, people were sharing rooms in houses that did not have a living room or a large enough kitchen where children could sit down to study. In this sense, no matter what their beliefs or preferences were regarding their children's language skills, parents' actual practices were greatly limited by their living conditions. In this sense, home language practices "may not always reflect ideal preferences. They *do* reflect practical and necessary choices" (Edwards, 1985b: 142).

On the other hand, it was also found that English-speaking young members of this community would make efforts on their own to learn, use and maintain their Spanish language skills. For instance, Alvaro, age 24, who migrated with his family

from Colombia when he was seven years old, included Spanish as part of his university studies, studied grammar at home on his own, and volunteered with Latin Americans in order to practise his Spanish. Another respondent, Julián, who was born in the UK to a British mother and a Cuban father, also wanted to improve his Spanish. He explained his reasons as follows:

> "Because it is part of who I am. My father is the only member of my family on his side who speaks English. Spanish is his language. He moved here when he was 30 years old. He speaks perfect English; I don't know anyone else who can speak English better as a second language, but [Spanish] is his language, it's part of his culture and part of my culture. It was only when I went to Argentina that I realised that there are things I do, ways in which I think, that are very Latin. Things that I've always considered characteristic of my family and that I then realised are really Latin (…) You find these things through language, [when you are listening to] music, speaking with your family, reading the news... otherwise there is always the filter of the English language. There are words that are so different..." (Julián's interview).

In summary, Latin Americans make conscious decisions to either maintain or switch languages at home. Affective bonds and cultural heritage emerged as important factors for language maintenance, while lack of English language knowledge and a high regard for English appeared to be behind situations of language switch.

Social networks and solidarity

Ethnic networks are often migrants' main source of support and information in the host country. However, there is no definite agreement in terms of whether they hinder or facilitate migrant integration. On one hand, studies in the US have demonstrated that living in areas of ethnic minority concentration generally has a significant negative impact on people's earnings, particularly for those who speak English (Chiswick and Miller, 2002).

Others argue that these networks are of great importance for gaining access to services and general information about the host country. From this perspective, migrant networks facilitate the understanding of the local system and consequently have an important role in migrant integration. For the second generation, migrant networks are considered an additional resource to which minority members have access in addition to those available to all natives (Alba et al., 2002). Furthermore, Portes and Rivas (2011) argue that maintaining bonds in the native language, particularly with their parents, can play an important role in preventing children "from

assimilating to the disadvantaged segments of the host society" (Portes and Rivas, 2011: 225).

An in-depth analysis of social network patterns among Latin Americans would require a more systematic study of individuals' social contacts and types of connections. However, a clear predominance of networks made up mainly of other Latin American people emerged throughout fieldwork. Most of the people met through participant observation and interviews seemed to mostly know other Latin Americans. Survey results show that 70 per cent of the people married or in a relationship had Latin American partners, 34 per cent only had Latin American friends and 78 per cent were working with other Latin Americans (see Table 1 below). These results are in line with the findings of previous studies (Cock, 2009; McIlwaine, 2010; 2011a; McIlwaine et al., 2011).

Origin	Partner	Friends	Colleagues
Latin America	70%	34%	39%
Latin America and other origins	-	45%	39%
British	8%	8%	15%
Other origins	22%	13%	7%

Table 1. Survey sample's social circles

Social networks can become a great source of information and solidarity. For example, interviewee Joaquín came to London fleeing political prosecution in Colombia. During our talk, he explained that he was not able to decide where he would go. In fact, when he sought help, he initially thought he would end up in the Netherlands but was offered to be taken to London instead. He explains that the difficulties he encountered were greatly ameliorated by the fact that he had contacts in London:

> "It was very helpful for me that I already had a brother living here and so I was able to contact him and he helped me a lot. He helped me find a job and with the language... because you get here with your eyes closed and you arrive here as if you were newly-born, my brother helped me a lot" (Joaquín's interview).

The impact of social networks can be particularly important in people's work life, as "all social interaction unavoidably transmits information, details about employers, employees and jobs flow continuously through social networks that people maintain in large part for non-economic reasons" (Granovetter, 2005: 4). According to the 'strength of weak ties' theory, the more diverse a person's network of contacts is, the more information and opportunities for innovation it will provide.

In correlation to this, it was common among the people interviewed to have found jobs through other Latin American friends and to mostly work with other Latin American people, making Spanish the most common language at work. This is greatly related to the type of jobs Latin Americans are accessing. As stressed in the literature, there are large proportions of Latin Americans in low-paid, unskilled jobs (Bermudez Torres, 2010; McIlwaine et al., 2011). As mentioned, most of the people I met through fieldwork were working in different roles in the cleaning and catering industries. Jobs in these unregulated areas of the labour market offer poor conditions and little stability, with many people employed casually or only for a few weekly hours (see Chapter 6).

When it comes to accessing jobs, the solidarity among Latin American migrants is very strong. Diego Peñaloza, IRMO's Coordinator of a project called 'English for Work', summarises it in the following terms:

> "They come to this project to get help at finding a job and I stress the importance of taking English classes... but they sign up for the classes, they get into the classroom and they leave that day with a cleaning job. When I see someone is desperate for a job, I tell them 'stay for the English class'" (fieldwork notes).

Similarly, Carlisle (2006) identifies that, thanks to their social networks, women are often "better placed to begin paid domestic work", which normally also offers better working conditions (Carlisle, 2006: 241). While cleaning provides a solution to the urgency of finding a job, the easier access to and tough conditions of cleaning jobs make it extremely difficult for people to continue learning English in order to access other opportunities. Of course, this situation is not exclusive to Latin Americans. According to an officer from the Trade Union Congress interviewed for this study, "when migrant workers come into the UK they normally come around specific kinds of work" (TUC officer's interview). This partly happens because most people in these sectors do not find jobs through filling out application forms, but through what he calls "labour brokers" or informal labour providers. In this sense, Latin Americans' homogeneous social networks seem to play an important role in pre-determining the

type of work these migrants will access, which may explain their concentration in specific areas of the labour market.

Nonetheless, the impact of social circles on immigrants' employment situation should not detract from other important factors that contribute to this disadvantage. In this sense, the officer argues that "when it comes to non EU citizens, the UK's labour market has traditionally been a very racialised one". Importantly, the words "non EU citizens" are not referring to people's legal status, but to their actual origin. Regardless of people's citizenships, and in some cases in spite of their white European looks, "one of the things that is important to recognise in the UK is that Latin Americans aren't regarded as white" (TUC officer's interview).

In the context of a racially segregated labour market, it is very difficult for a community that is 'not regarded as white' to break out of the area of work that people originally migrated into. The officer argues that after following previous migrants' experiences and advice, migrant communities in London are often linked to specific types of work and that, in many cases, there is no acceptance in other areas of the labour market. A racially segregated labour market makes it extremely hard for minority groups to participate in other areas of work.

These networks of Latin American contacts are also important sources of information and help. Drawing on a sample of 1,000 Latin American respondents, McIlwaine (2011a) distinguishes between formal and informal networks of support among Latin Americans. Informal networks include friends, neighbours and acquaintances. "Formally, these included accessing the services of migrant community organisations (32 per cent), most of them oriented towards Latin Americans in particular such as LAWRS (Latin American Women's Rights Service) and IRMO (Indoamerican Refugee and Migration Organisation)" (McIlwaine, 2011b: 140).

Access to information is often dependent on social contacts and word of mouth. For instance, IRMO's 2009 Annual Report states that 81 per cent of its clients found out about the organisation through friends, 3 per cent through a Latin American newspaper and only 6 per cent through the Internet (IRMO 2009). In 2010, over 150 people registered for the initial period of IRMO's 'English for Work' project, which was only promoted through printouts that were hung on the windows and walls of the organisation. In addition, Latin American shops in areas of Latin American concentration, such as Elephant and Castle or Seven Sisters, often help people find information about rental opportunities and various services (see Plate 1 below).

More recently, during the first half of 2012, two groups of Latin American

activists joined other minority groups and created All Londoners Anti-Raids Mutual Aid (ALARMA), an anti-raid campaign that emerged in response to the increase in UK Border Agency raids (Anti-raids' blog, last accessed June 2012). In June 2012, the campaign launched a 'bust card' which informs migrants of their rights when approached by an immigration officer. The card suggests people to help those being detained by informing them of their rights, filming and recording the details of the detention.

The campaign also developed a 'phone tree', which consists of a chain of text messages that is activated by the person in possession of the 'ALARM phone'. The text messages are sent to people on a list of subscribed phone numbers, who can then pass it on to their contacts, in order to notify people immediately about any migration raid taking place. In this sense, the campaign relied greatly on Latin American support networks.

Aston University

Illustration removed for copyright restrictions

Plate 1: Handwritten signs announcing different services and room rental opportunities in Spanish hanging from a shop window in Elephant and Castle.

Nonetheless, and although having a network of Spanish-speaking contacts may provide these migrants with a reliable source of solidarity and information, having

limited contact with out-group individuals should also be understood as a situation of exclusion.

First language and isolation

As pointed out above, although some conversations take place in English or 'Spanglish', most people's social circles were clearly made up of other Spanish-speaking Latin Americans. Notably, this often translated into the perception that 'there aren't any British in London'. In this sense, Julia jokes about how instead of learning the language, she was actually losing her English in London, while Esteban hypothesises that the British "live in England, not in London" or that "the British that are in London are very high up, working the strings" (Esteban's interview). This is particularly significant when considering that this respondent's workplace was located in London Bridge, a very central location surrounded by offices and white-collar jobs, where he is presumably in contact with many British workers. As suggested by this common representation, there are not many British people in Latin London:

> "It's hard to meet British people; it's super difficult to have British friends. I don't have any British friends. This city is like Babylon, there are people from everywhere but from here. The funny thing is that, while in Spain, I lived with a British friend for two or three years, while here I couldn't make a single British friend. I'm not looking for one – that has to happen spontaneously – but it's a contrast" (Matías' interview).

Whereas Matías expected to meet locals spontaneously, Alfredo migrated from Spain determined to immerse himself in an English-speaking environment in order to learn the language. Seven months after arriving in London, Alfredo regretted being surrounded by Spanish-speaking people: "I should have found an English-speaking environment by now" (Alfredo's interview). Not speaking English fluently, he was only able to find a job in the cleaning sector and has since lived surrounded by Spanish-speaking people. He had been studying English at two different places; however, he was not satisfied with his progress and thought that the main issue delaying his learning was his social circle.

Language, belonging and identification

The link between language and identity emerged several times during the interviews. In fact, in some cases the two concepts appear to be almost interchangeable, leading people to refer to language use or language skills when trying to answer questions about their levels of identification with other Latin

Americans:

> "[Do I feel] Latin American? Well, perhaps because of the
> language. I believe that your language is your country and that
> it is a fortune to be able to understand each other being from
> so many different countries" (Matías' interview).

In this sense, people often refer to language as an element that links them together with other Latin American people, generating a sense of mutual understanding, familiarity and membership. Respondent Laura, whose ideas about language retention were discussed above, compares how she feels when socialising with her Spanish-speaking co-workers versus parents from her son's school who are not Spanish speakers:

> "It does happen to me, for example at work, the fact that we
> speak the same language, that we share that point in common.
> Language makes me belong and makes me feel comfortable
> and I see how the other (…) is going through very similar things
> or sometimes you have a certain impression that the next
> person shares or can see from the same point of view, so
> maybe when speaking with a [non-Spanish-speaking] mother [t
> school], we may speak about the same thing, but I don't feel
> connected in that way. She may have the same worries I have,
> but there is something that is different. That's my experience
> (…) We are worried about the same thing, but there is
> something that doesn't connect us" (Laura's interview).

Although she is able to express herself in English, sharing the same native language makes Laura feel a sense of connection with other people. Importantly, recognising each other as part of the same group implies acknowledging a shared understanding that goes beyond the meaning of words and a similar experience. Whereas people may refer to the same issues, there is something that cannot be translated into English, what the respondent identifies as the same "point of view".

In this context, language represents a familiar zone, a safe space where people feel comfortable to express themselves with the certainty that the other person will understand not only what they say, but also where it comes from. The idea of language as a safe zone emerged as a topic when discussing experiences of the language barrier (see Chapter 5). In such cases, interactions with other native speakers of Spanish are recognised as (lost) safe zones. When facing the language barrier while interacting with a figure of authority, the inability to ensure full mutual understanding may become a serious threat. As will be analysed in Chapter 5, meeting immigration officers while entering the UK is often an example of this.

Sharing a language creates a non-threatening space of mutual understanding.

The importance of participating in these Spanish-speaking 'comfort zones' emerged frequently during fieldwork. For instance, as IRMO was an open-door organisation, beneficiaries would often visit the offices only to chat to other service users, volunteers or staff. This is most common among those who have migrated recently. In one occasion, a Colombian woman brought her two nephews to the organisation simply to have them 'speak Spanish to other people'. They had arrived in London from Spain two months before and had spent most of their time at home with her. When she brought them, she provided this explanation: "I want them to speak Spanish, so that they feel contented" (fieldwork notes).

Another example is the case of Antonio, a regular user of IRMO's services. Antonio is in his 60s; he is from Peru and, as many other Latin Americans who have only recently arrived, he came to London from Spain where he lived for almost 10 years. In Peru, he used to work in the oil industry, but as the situation in Peru became increasingly dangerous, he had to consider migrating. He made up his mind the day a woman was shot dead while standing next to him at a bus stop in his city. As frequently happens to people working in cleaning jobs, Antonio's schedule does not allow him to engage in daytime activities. He works Monday to Friday from 5 a.m. to 3 p.m. He then sleeps for two hours and goes to IRMO twice a week for his English classes from 6–8 p.m. After the class, he goes back home, eats dinner, takes a nap, and wakes up at 3 a.m. to go to work.

Antonio visits IRMO at least twice a week for his English classes and to make general enquiries. On one occasion, when he seemed more interested in staying outside the classroom, he explained to me that the real reason he would come to IRMO's English classes was to talk to "other Latinos", that he was there "just for the fun". Thanks to its late closing hours, IRMO was probably one of the very few opportunities that Antonio and many others had to find a space for socialisation.

This was the case for Luisa, a 59-year-old Colombian migrant who was granted humanitarian protection after years of irregular status. During the interview, Luisa explained that, after years of hiding and moving while residing in the UK irregularly, and although she was able to speak English and attend various skills courses, she ended up having no friends and feeling very lonely. In order to overcome this, she started volunteering for a Latin American community organisation:

> "To volunteer for the community, to be around Latin Americans, it's a bit of a relief. Right now I need to find a job, so I can't really spend much time with the community or at a community centre, but at least the day I spend working for the community

helps me, the mere fact that I can speak and express myself..."
(Luisa's interview).

Speaking their first language and participating in a space of mutual understanding made these migrants feel at ease. Spanish-speaking environments thus represented a relief from loneliness and isolation. These testimonies also reflect that the alienation of not being able to use their native language is experienced by people with different levels of English language knowledge and who have been in London for varying lengths of time.

Attitudes towards Spanish: exploring the internal distinctions

It should be mentioned that although all of the Latin Americans interviewed for this research speak Spanish, it would be untrue to say that they all speak the exact same language. There are many variations of Spanish in Latin America which present differences in their vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. Although people may refer to the 'Colombian Spanish' or the 'Bolivian Spanish', there are also differences within each country that depend on a number of factors such as geographical region or social class.

Although all of these varieties are part of the same Spanish language and normally allow full inter-comprehension, each one carries the culture and history of its region. This is evidenced, for example, in the different names certain objects receive. For example, the word 'avocado' in some countries of Latin America is called '*aguacate*', a word that comes from the Native American language Nahauatl; while it is called '*palta*' by people from the Southern Cone, a word in Quechua, which is one of the native languages of the area. There are also, for example, a number of words in the *Rioplatense* version of Spanish that derive from the Italian language, which reflect the particular immigration history of the region. In this sense, each version is strongly linked to the particularities of each region and its history (Dorian, 1999). Thus, speaking Spanish with a particular accent locates that person in a map and provides others with information that may lead them to make assumptions about the speaker's identity and origin, thus functioning as an identity marker (Dorian, 1999; Edwards, 1985b). As expressed by a respondent, "your accent says a lot about you" (Alejo's interview).

Alejo's testimony refers to how people are normally categorised through their accent. Alejo was brought to London from Chile at a very early age. He is fully bilingual and although he is able to understand and speak Spanish fluently, his accent is not

native to Chile. This has led people to question his identification as a Chilean:

> "...If someone asked me where I'm from I say I'm Chilean, so I feel I'm Chilean, but I go over there and they say I'm not Chilean, because I've got a different accent, I haven't got a Chilean accent, so they say 'oh, you are a foreigner'" (Alejo's interview).

Alejo speaks English with a "London accent" and although his level of Spanish is fluent, he prefers to do the interview in English as it makes him feel more comfortable. Despite this, he speaks Spanish at home most of the time. A few months before the interview, he started working in a Spanish-speaking role in order to be able to practise it. At work, he met several native Spanish speakers who were intrigued by his accent:

> "When I'm at work and I'm trying to speak Spanish, they can't quite put an accent on it. I had loads of people asking 'where are you from? I don't understand what accent you are speaking', because I haven't got a Chilean accent then people think 'you are not really from Chile'."

> "People judge I guess on how you look, how you speak. It is confusing for me. I like to think of myself as Chilean, but for example at work, a lot of people say to me 'Ah, you are not Chilean, you are English'. I guess I am in a certain way, but I don't see myself that way" (Alejo's interview).

Alejo's Spanish accent is Chilean, but not Chilean enough to pass as one. Nonetheless, Alejo strongly identifies with Chileans. He attributes this to the fact that his family has kept their culture alive at home:

> "My parents always kept the same traditions; at home we have Chilean food, Chilean parties, the way we speak, we always try to be Chilean, the humour [...] I mean the accent or the humour, Chilean humour is very distinct from others I guess, my parents and grandparents have always tried to keep that sort of Chilean customs" (Alejo's interview).

It should be clarified that in Latin America, a person's national identity is commonly defined by their place of birth. However, people often perceive language and identity to be so strongly interrelated that they may find it difficult to separate the two. In this case, the association of language with a specific national identity has led Alejo to feel insecure about his Chilean identification:

> "If you've got anything from this interview it's the confusion I go through [...] whether I'm British British or Chilean Chilean. I feel Chilean but at the same time most of my friends are British, so yes, it's a big confusion and that's been going on for long. I'm 28 now, and I'm still not sure" (Alejo's interview).

In spite of the fact that he considers himself Chilean, when confronting his own identification as a Chilean with the way other people perceive him, he falls into a state of "confusion". In this sense, language becomes a powerful identity marker, one that may become indispensable in order to be recognised as a member of a group.

Panamanian respondent, Rodrigo, age 30, establishes a connection between the way in which he perceives the different varieties of Spanish and the economic development of Latin America's inner regions:

> "Your culture can also be reflected in the way you talk, in the way you express yourself, how you see things. I think that in the South there is evidently more development. Those countries have more history, so they are very proud of their history, their culture, their identity and the way they express themselves, the way they talk really says a lot about them. They are very confident, very expressive, very proud people of who they are, of their culture, [...] but if you go up, for example to Nicaragua, or probably Panama, or Costa Rica, these smaller countries where the development has not been as extensive as in the South, you see people whose accents or ways of expressing themselves are a bit more timid, their voice is a bit lower" (Rodrigo's interview).

Similarly, Matías found the Argentine accent "a bit pretentious, arrogant, haughty, a bit aloof, bragging"; while he found the Peruvian accent seemed "very humble", the Ecuadorian "a bit less humble", and the Bolivian accent was seen as "the most humble of all". This same mapping of the continent seems to be behind an Argentine respondent's ideas about the different versions of Spanish in Latin America:

> "I always say [mine] is Spanish with an Italian accent (…) Latin American Spanish in general, except for Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay, is a whole other language. Chilean is a language, and Argentina and Uruguay have this Italian accent, which is the *Rioplatense* Spanish" (Esteban's interview).

It is interesting to note how he draws a linguistic map that classifies the Latin American varieties of Spanish in three main "languages": "Latin American in general", Chilean, and his own variety. Moreover, the variations he finds between the different varieties of the Spanish language are also extended to the speakers of those varieties: "People's reactions to language varieties can reveal their perceptions of the speakers; in this way, language attitudes are linked to views of identity" (Edwards, 1985b: 146). In this sense, when asked how he felt about the Colombian variety of Spanish, Esteban replied:

> "Very... flirty, soft, relaxed, too... like I said before, lacking character. I can't imagine a Latin American with that language,

        having a strong drive in a personal and professional level as I
        feel I have being Argentine, Italian and bad tempered"
        (Esteban's interview).

This statement seems to be reproducing a predominant negative stereotype of immigrants which characterises them as lazy; while at the same time, it also functions to reinforce this respondent's identification with Italians, which is further discussed below. Most importantly, this categorisation of the different accents also reflects the internal diversity of the community.

There are, of course, other important cultural elements apart from language that may also act as identity markers for Latin Americans, such as traditions, food, holiday celebrations, music and symbolic objects (Lane, 2009). When explaining why, even though she was born and raised in London, she identifies more with the term "Latina", Manuela explains that it is "because my grandparents and my parents aren't from here, so I have the roots, I have the colour, I have the way of speaking, I have the culture. I can't really say I'm from here. I was born here, but I don't have the culture" (Manuela's interview).

Legal status and physical features

Another important factor at the moment of expressing identity was legal status. As introduced above, in some cases the national identity expressed by those who grew up in London was not related to their birth or life experiences but to the origin and cultural identity of the family. Notably, it emerged during fieldwork that sometimes people who have lived most of their lives in Latin America but have acquired European citizenship by heritage, may present both nationalities as part of their identities, or may even chose to emphasise their European nationality over their original one. As analysed below, this is often a strategic decision that depends on the context.

As outlined in Chapter 6, a relatively high proportion of Latin American migrants have acquired a second European nationality. This nationality is most commonly Spanish or Italian (McIlwaine et al., 2011). People in this sample who had dual nationality had acquired it because of their ancestors' origin, through marriage or because they have reached the years of residency stated by the country's immigration laws. In all cases, people are linked to the country of their second nationality through heritage or personal life experience.

As can be read in the quotes presented in this section, the nature of these bonds may vary; whereas in some cases people have direct connections with the

country of their second nationality, in many others the linkage is rather limited or indirect. This may mean that the experience is limited to a few years of residence or visits as tourists; or that the connection is made through an ancestor that was never met. Although it is probable that the European cultural heritage has been kept alive in the respondents' family environment, this was never mentioned as a relevant factor in generating the identification of this group of respondents. In this sense, the choice of one national identity over the other is often made by overlooking real life experience and emphasising other important aspects of people's lives: the entitlement allowed by legal status.

Legal status has a great significance for migrants' experiences in the UK. Holding an EU nationality has a tremendous impact on people's lives in terms of their mobility, entitlement to work and access to the welfare system. European citizens benefit from free movement, enabling them to move and reside within the European Union without being subject to the control of the immigration system. It also allows people to bypass work regulations imposed on other migrants, which restrict the hours and type of work allowed (Anderson, 2008). Finally, it also provides them with full access to the welfare system and to other sources of financial help, such as government funding for university and skills development programmes.

In other words, having a European or UK nationality is extremely relevant for the experience of these Latin American migrants. In this context, it is not surprising that those with dual nationality will normally prioritise their EU/UK nationality when making enquiries, running errands, applying for jobs, benefits and registering at services and education courses.

When talking to other Latin Americans, this flexibility at the moment of expressing national identity can sometimes translate into uncertainty and even discomfort, which can be observed in the way the choice is justified. For instance, when asked where he was from, respondent Andres, age 26, said, "I am Argentine and Spanish, both things. I was born in Argentina and I lived there for 18 years and then, like many other Argentines, I processed my Spanish nationality and I moved to Spain" (Andres' interview). After living in Spain for two years, he moved to Glasgow to study English for a year and then he went back to Madrid for another four years. At the time of our interview Andres had been living in London for four months and was taking a three-year course in Photography. He explained, "I don't normally say I'm Spanish; I mean I feel that I identify more with Spain because I lived there for a long time, but normally when I'm asked I say I am Argentine. Well, it depends on the context."

As happened with this interviewee, identifying as a European national often serves as a quick way of providing information about people's conditions in the UK. On the other hand, although Andres only lived in Spain for six interrupted years, he feels strongly bonded to the country and its culture. He explains it in these terms:

> "I've lived in these two places [Buenos Aires and Madrid] at two crucial moments of my life: I spent my childhood in Argentina and then I moved to Spain when I was 18. I've lived there during some very important years of my life. Many of the things that have made me the person I am now, I have learnt there. I care about both places a lot" (Andres' interview).

Whereas Andres' life experiences are crucial for his self-identification, there are also other cases in which the ties are not as direct. Esteban's case may exemplify this point. He also came from Argentina and at the moment of our interview, he was 31 years old and had been living in London for a year and a half. He was the only member of his family living abroad. His Italian passport allowed him to work and study like any other EU citizen. He has never met his Italian grandfather, has never been to Italy, does not speak Italian and neither does his family. However, his level of identification with Italians is very strong. In fact, his identification with Italians is so strong that it is behind his reason for choosing to migrate to the UK: "I wanted to know a completely different culture from the culture that generated my country and Latin America, which are basically the Latin countries: Spain, Italy, Portugal" (Esteban's interview).

During the interview, Esteban talked repeatedly about his dual nationality, and he stressed the level of linguistic inter-comprehension and understanding he finds between himself and Italians, as well as his identification with this group. Strikingly, as is frequently the case in Latin American countries, both Andres and Esteban are of mixed European heritage. Andres' maternal side of the family is Italian, and Esteban has no information about his mother's side, although he believes that one of his grandmothers might have been French. In both cases, they identify with the part of their heritage that provided European citizenship, which seems to be more of a reflection of the importance legal status has in migrants' lives rather than a strong identification with cultural heritage.

During Esteban's interview, this identification was put several times into a third person voice, which may work to provide authority for his statement, while at the same time mitigates his agency:

> "… I feel closer to Italians, not so much Spanish people or Latin Americans and I feel that when they talk to me the first time

they identify me as European; whether it is English, Italian or European, but they don't identify me as Latin American and I don't know why" (Esteban's interview).

When asked again about this issue, Esteban replied that most Latin Americans, even people from his own country, would say he is Italian "because of my physical aspect (…) that I *look* European" (Esteban's interview).

As is evidenced through Esteban's words, assumptions about physical features are sometimes seen and presented as unquestionable proof of origin or heritage, even when this is mixed or uncertain. Moreover, physical features may enable or inhibit people from expressing identification with a certain group. Nationality, physical features and linguistic inter-comprehension are presented by Esteban as elements that explain or even defend his identification with Italians. In this example, Esteban's looks made people perceive him as Italian; Julia's words provide a similar example of the opposite case.

Julia was born in Italy. Although she lived in Peru most of her life, her father is Italian and her Peruvian mother lives in Italy with her younger sister. She visits them regularly. For Julia, going to Italy means returning to the safety of the family environment: "I don't feel like an immigrant in Italy because when I get to Italy [...] I have a very established situation; I have a house, food, if I get sick I have insurance" (Julia's interview). When asked why she identified more with Peru, in spite of having such strong ties with Italy, she immediately replied, "Well, of course... my looks? [...] I couldn't really pass as European" (Julia's interview). Having the facial features of Native Americans from the Peruvian area, Julia feels prevented from identifying as Italian or even mixed Peruvian-Italian.

Similarly, 23-year-old Manuela explains that even though she was born in the UK and has lived there all her life, she considers herself solely Ecuadorian: "Although I wasn't born in Ecuador, I would never say I'm British". She explains that she feels Ecuadorian not only because her social circle is mostly composed of other Latin Americans, but also because of her blood, colour and culture:

> "I don't feel like I belong here because I have Latin blood and
> because my grandparents and my parents aren't from here, so
> I have the *roots*, I have the *colour*, I have the way of speaking, I
> have the *culture*. I can't really say I'm from here. I was born
> here, but I don't have the culture, I'm not drawn by it."
> "The fact that I carry their *blood* makes me Latin American"
> (Manuela's interview).

It is striking to find how commonly people refer to their bloodline to explain what

makes them Latin American. Although ideas of bloodline and purity may often be associated with ethnocentrism (Fenton, 2003), it is frequently used by Latin Americans as a metaphor that refers to a stereotypical 'Latin American character'. This common view was referred to yet again by another representation: 'I am Latin American because I am hot-blooded'. Nonetheless, this perspective is not supported by everyone, as is apparent in Andres' comments:

> "Being 'Latin American' or being 'Argentine' are generalisations, they are clichés. What does it really mean to be Latin American? What does it really mean to be Argentine? It will really depend on each person and on their own personality; there are obviously certain values that are shared with the culture you've grown up with that will ultimately define you, but feeling Latin American? I don't know, maybe. On one side, I really care about Argentina, but not because it is Argentina or Latin America, but because it is where I grew up and I have a lot of memories from there. If I feel more Argentine or Latin American it is because of that, because you feel nostalgic. That is what calls me there; it is the place where I developed who I was in many aspects" (Andres' interview).

Like Manuela, respondent Alejo, age 28, was raised in London by his Latin American parents. Although he was born in Chile, his family moved to London when he was a year old and has been living in the Brixton area ever since. They came because his grandmother was flown over to the UK by Amnesty International as a political refugee escaping Pinochet's dictatorship in 1981. Alejo and his mother followed her a year after. Uncomfortable with having the conversation in Spanish, Alejo introduces himself as Chilean in English:

> "If someone asked me where I'm from I say I'm Chilean. I feel I'm Chilean, but I go over there and they say I'm not Chilean, because I've got a different *accent*, I haven't got a Chilean accent, so they say 'Oh.. you are a foreigner', [...] so it's weird, because sometimes here, I don't *look English* I guess, people think I'm not from here so it's like I'm neither from England nor Chile, so it's a bit weird, but I feel Chilean" (Alejo's interview).

The experiences of Julia, Andres, Esteban, Manuela and Alejo show how language, legal status, and their own as well as other people's perception of physical features may be determining aspects for Latin Americans with dual nationalities at the moment of developing and presenting their identities. These cases illustrate how the identification processes are not only dependent on people's inner self-perception but are also constructed in tandem with other people's perceptions. Identity is not something we can determine on our own, but also depends on the perception of others

(Trudgill, 2000) and the concept of 'difference': "cultural identities are marked by a number of factors – race, ethnicity, gender and class to name but a few – yet the real locus of these factors is the notion of difference" (Clarke and Garner, 2010: 110).

Although nationality, physical features and linguistic proximity may enable these participants to strategically present the different aspects of their identity, there is at times an element of discomfort which could be read in Andres' words: "Sometimes it sounds a bit *fake* for me to say I'm Spanish, at the end of the day I'm only Spanish because I have a paper"; in Esteban's irony "because I'm Italian, in between inverted commas"; and in Julia's need to "re-write" her biography: "Let's see, I was born in Italy, in Turin specifically. I lived there for two years, so I don't remember anything. For the next 20 years I lived in Peru, so I was *born* in Lima".

The UK immigration system draws a sharp distinction between European, Commonwealth and Non-EU immigrants. Their distribution of entitlements and rights establish a hierarchical order that influence ideas of prestige. In addition, a person from Europe may not be seen as being as distant as someone who comes from one of the so-called 'third world countries' in terms of their culture and socio-economic background. In this context, fostering a European identity may not only reflect the development of personal bonds with the country and culture of the second nationality, but also an integrative orientation that suggests proximity by downplaying differences.

Migrants' mother tongue: shelter from isolation or barrier to integration?

Minority groups generally distinguish spaces for language use. Typically, ethnic-minority languages are kept alive within the home environment, while the majority language is the one used at work (Fishman, 1967). However, this is often not the case among Latin Americans in London, who may speak Spanish in their work places but not often at home. When renting rooms in flat shares, English – sometimes broken English – is often the language shared when speaking with migrants of other origins. Whereas Spanish is the home language of people who migrated with their families, 'Spaniglish' or a mix of Spanish and English is also common in houses with children of school age. On the other hand, due to difficulties accessing other areas of the labour market – an issue that will be further discussed in the next chapter – Spanish is often the language of work. Situations in which adults and young people mix and switch between the languages indicate differences between listening and speaking language skills that would be hard to address through binary or closed questions. In this sense,

it is highly probable that statistical data on migrants' language use oversimplifies the diversity and heterogeneity of these migrants' linguistic practices.

As shown in this chapter, Latin Americans associate the daily use of Spanish with positive and negative outcomes. On the one hand, the predominant use of Spanish is often perceived as the evidence of a migrant's own inability to 'make progress' in the UK. In line with this, people often regret participating in social circles mainly comprised of other Latin Americans, as this is considered to work against personal development, social integration and economic progress. This situation often generates frustration among Latin Americans, and even the common representation that 'there are no British in London'. This is particularly important for those who migrated to London at least partly because of an interest in learning English, many of whom expected to experience a full immersion in an English-speaking environment. As reflected in these feelings of regret, frustration and group isolation, people often do not have the power to manipulate or develop their social networks, as may be more or less constrained by social structures (Granovetter, 1973).

In one respect, as usually happens with minority groups (Portes and Rivas, 2011), some parents make daily efforts to maintain Spanish as the home language. The reasons behind this interest in language maintenance are strongly linked to the transfer of family values, as well as the maintenance of a cultural identity and transnational affective bonds with the family abroad. In other cases, parents find that shifting from Spanish to English has been beneficial for their children's integration as well as their own. In these cases, however, parents often continue to speak Spanish to their children because of their own insufficient knowledge of English.

Nonetheless, while there are also other important factors affecting identification (e.g. physical features, legal status, etc.), language emerged as one of the main elements that contributes to different levels of identification. In this sense, ideas associated with the different Latin American accents are often employed to reveal internal differentiations within this group.

On the other hand, Spanish-speaking networks represent sources of information and social solidarity, as well as a space where people find emotional relief from isolation through socialisation and mutual understanding. Participating in Latin American environments provides migrants with opportunities to fulfil their basic communication needs. These testimonies highlight the importance of having opportunities to express feelings and thoughts in the first language. Far from common representations in the media and political discourse that regard the use of minority

languages as evidence of a lack of interest in integration, communication should be regarded as a human right (Piller and Takahashi, 2007).

Overall, for the group of Latin Americans reached through this research, maintaining their native language is linked to basic practical and emotional needs. It is also strongly linked to ideas of belonging, of sharing a common origin, and the transfer of the identity and values of the family. Nonetheless, although there is a high regard for Spanish, many people felt trapped in Spanish-speaking environments. In these cases, its predominant use is often regretted and is perceived as a personal failure. Notably, and in sharp contrast with common representations in public discourse (Cameron, 2011), the maintenance or use of Spanish was never linked to the comfort of effortless communication.

Conclusions

Most of the people interviewed for this study have found it useful to refer to language when discussing their identification with other Latin Americans. Interestingly, these references were made without any prompting, as there was no reference to language in the questions given. In this sense, language appears to be strongly linked to ideas about culture, belonging and identity among Latin American migrants. Although many of the respondents in this sample were bilingual and had friends from other nationalities, their social networks were mostly made up of other Latin Americans.

Sharing the use of Spanish was identified as an element that generates familiarity and comfort among speakers. Having a common language was said to generate the 'impression' of having a shared perspective, of being able to see things from the same point of view. In this sense, language provides a safe common ground in which speakers may express themselves with the certainty of being understood by other members of their speech community. Language links people together with other speakers who are perceived as similar and familiar; language thus becomes a space of mutual understanding that counteracts part of the negativity of a situation that is otherwise marked by isolation.

However, the respondents in these interviews also stressed the importance of using their first language, Spanish, to transmit their culture and heritage. In this context, Spanish appears to be an irreplaceable tool through which the values that are particular to each culture are transferred, as well as an indispensable element allowing migrants to provide second generation Latin Americans with a connection to their

family history. These aspects of language often allow people to think of themselves as a social group, particularly where emphasis is found on highlighting language among the shared cultural elements.

Yet the attitudes towards the different Spanish varieties demonstrate the group's internal distinctions whereby language is sometimes used as evidence of proximity to other social groups. These references are often strongly linked to people's legal status, which could signal an intention to move away from the minority status category. Such cases not only reinforce the symbolic power of language at the moment of expressing ideas about identity, but also reflect the important impact that the hierarchical distribution of entitlements and rights imposed by the immigration system has on people who are not European or British by origin. In this sense, attitudes are used to express opinions, perceptions about the different social groups with which people are in contact in order to link or distinguish their own identity from that of others.

These real life testimonies also show how important it is for migrants to keep their culture alive and to be able to do so through the use of their first language. Spanish, for Latin Americans, is a tool that allows them to express their origin and membership within a distinctive culture, as well as a way of maintaining the internal distinctions of such a highly heterogeneous group. In this sense, language is an important element of people's identity which has the social function of maintaining the unity and plurality of Latin American identity.

As opposed to negative representations given in public discourse, migrants' high value for their native language does not necessarily contradict with a positive attitude towards education in the host country language. The following chapter, which will examine the experiences of English language knowledge, use and motivation to learn among Latin Americans in London, will address the influencing affective and structural factors involved in migrants' local language acquisition. It will also argue that migrants' linguistic situation is strongly linked to power relations. The links between language, identity and power at the core of migrants' collective efforts to gain ethnic recognition will be analysed in the last chapters.

Chapter 5

The destination language: Latin Americans in London and linguistic integration

As discussed in Chapter 2, language acts as a vehicle for culture. Imprinted with spacial and historical elements that link speech communities with a shared past, language is historically entangled with ethnic identity (Haarmann, 1999). Following the examination of the practical and symbolic value Latin American migrants in London attribute to the use of their first language, the previous chapter argued that considerations regarding migrants' language maintenance and shift require the study of the symbolic, social and affective functions language fulfills.

This chapter will study the ways in which the linguistic situation of Latin American migrants in London impacts their living conditions, and will further explore their level and types of motivation, as well as the emotive factors involved in their experiences of host country language acquisition. In order to address relevant contextual factors affecting this process, the following section will provide an overview of the UK's current strategy of English language provision for adult migrants.

English for Speakers of Other Languages

In the UK, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is the government funded programme of English classes for adults. It is particularly targeted at a number

of priority groups of people living in the UK whose first language is not English and "for whom English language is a significant barrier to getting or keeping work" (DIUS, 2008: 6). In addition, English language knowledge has been introduced as a requirement for naturalisation processes and various paths of immigration through the 'Life in the UK' test. For this reason, ESOL materials include a citizenship pack with information about the political structure of the UK as well as work-related content.

Background

In their chronological review of the history of ESOL, Hamilton and Hillier (2009) explain that funding for English classes was first introduced by the Home Office in the 1960s to tackle the educational needs of immigrants from Commonwealth countries. During this initial period, it "was largely developed by local practitioner activists, frequently in people's homes or in local adult community settings" (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009: 6).

In 1999, *The Moser Report* "highlighted the problems in adult basic skills in England, began to identify some of the gaps in existing knowledge, and recommended a detailed strategy for improvement" (Brooks et al., 2001: 1). Further research confirmed these conclusions. In 2000, the ESOL Working Group study argued that "1-1.5 million people need to improve their English language skills if they are to participate in education, work and society" (2000 ESOL Working Group quoted in Brooks et al., 2001: 17).

In response to this situation, in 2001 the Skills Strategy Unit was set up as part of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). ESOL was then included under the Skills for Life strategy as part of adults' 'basic skills', along with literacy and numeracy. From then on "staff were required to undertake teaching qualifications and learners were expected to gain qualifications in language which had been specified in a national curriculum" (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009: 2).

On the other hand, the characterisation of English language learning as a basic skill also "represented a big shift from earlier learner-centred approaches to curriculum development" (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009: 5). The concept of "Basic Skills" was defined as "the ability to read, write and speak in English and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general" (Brooks et al., 2001: 7). More recently, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills were added as a fourth component to this programme (Williams et al., 2003).

In 2005, the Home Office introduced 'Life in the UK', a 45-minute citizenship test

for people applying for naturalisation, who were henceforth required to demonstrate "knowledge of language and life in the UK" (UKBA, 2011). Since 29 November 2010, "those entering with the intention of marrying someone settled in the UK" were also required to demonstrate a basic level of English. Further changes were introduced in April 2011. Since then, "those coming to the UK from outside the EU to work or study" are required to demonstrate intermediate level English, while "those applying for indefinite leave to remain in the UK" are required to pass the 'Life in the UK' test (BIS, 2011: 23).

Currently, the UK Border Agency continues to review the English language requirements for applicants (BIS, 2011) and it was recently announced that by October 2013, those applying for settlement "will also have to pass an English language test at an intermediate level" (The Guardian, 2012).

Availability, aims and access

ESOL is delivered by further education colleges, schools and other learning centres. However, those required to demonstrate English language knowledge for immigration processes must attend their ESOL course at a Home Office accredited college and their qualification must be granted by an "approved awarding body" (UKBA, 2011).

Within the first five years of the new policy, the number of ESOL enrolments tripled (DIUS, 2008: 6). The 'Skills for Life' strategy was then considered "a great success, with over 2 million people engaging in ESOL provision and improving their skills" (DIUS, 2009). However, this also meant a proportional increase in government spending, which led some to argue that "ESOL arguably became a victim of its own success" (Hubble and Kennedy, 2011: 3).

As a result, and in line with an increasingly restrictive policy for migrants, in 2007 the government introduced changes to ESOL funding, which included a discretionary Learner Support Fund for spouses and low-paid workers. These changes cut funding for those in employment, based on the belief that "those who benefit economically from migration should also bear some of the costs" (DIUS, 2008: 4). Automatic fee remission was then limited to categories of people on Jobseeker's Allowance, Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Pension Credit and income-related Employment and Support Allowance (Hubble and Kennedy, 2011: 3).

Changes to eligibility for fee remission were accompanied by a "shift towards

aligning ESOL with social cohesion" (Williamson, 2009: 2). In this sense, a consultation document of 2008 argues that the national "priority is to focus funding where it will have the greatest impact on community cohesion." (DIUS, 2008: 9). Nonetheless, in September 2011 further changes were introduced to ESOL funding. From then on, only people receiving 'active' benefits have been able to receive full funds (Hubble and Kennedy, 2011).

The history of ESOL provision has been marked by a tension between an educative self-development approach and one of "'functional, instrumental social control'" (Brooks et al., 2001: 13). Constructed as an immigration problem rather than an educative one, it has "wrestled between several political agendas" (Williamson, 2009: 1). Since it was introduced by the Home Office and progressively associated with ideas of national identity and cohesion, ESOL "was treated as a social 'problem' resulting from immigration rather than primarily as an educational issue. This framing of ESOL as an immigration issue affected the boundaries of who can be served by it" (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009: 7). As a result of this process, "discussions about the language needs of these groups have been framed by strong opinions about national identity and the English language" (Hamilton and Hillier, 2009: 4).

The English of Latin Americans in London

Information about the linguistic situation of Latin Americans in London is very limited. Existing research mainly emphasises both the high qualifications and the lack of English language knowledge that characterises a large sector of the community (Carlisle, 2006; Sveinsson, 2007 McIlwaine, 2011; Hearn and Bergos, 2011; McIlwaine et al., 2011). In fact, the *No Longer Invisible* report states that "the majority (70%) had achieved some form of education beyond secondary level, with 13% attaining a technical education while the rest achieved undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 35). Nonetheless, the study reports that the level of English language knowledge of a large proportion of Latin Americans is not sufficient for them to find work within their professions: "nearly one-third (29%) were able to understand very little English or none at all. Less than half (41%) were able to speak, read and write very well, with a further 30% doing so at an intermediate level" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 35).

As explained in a previous section, changes to the funding policy of ESOL provision have limited the availability of free English classes to those on unemployment benefits. Since colleges are now responsible for identifying priority

groups in their areas and for developing their own strategy for allocation funding (BIS, 2011), the cost of taking an ESOL course will vary depending on the provider and circumstances of the student.

The study has shown that Latin Americans in London are mainly employed (71 per cent), in low income jobs and that there is an irregular sector of approximately one-fifth of the total group. In line with this, 20 per cent of Latin Americans are receiving benefits, and only six per cent are on out of work benefits (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 95). Given recent funding changes, and the fact that irregular migrants are normally unable to present the required proof of address, most Latin Americans have been excluded from accessing free ESOL classes in London. However, according to the cited report, one-third of Latin Americans have attended adult education, which mainly includes ESOL.

Language difficulties have an important impact on people's lives. McIlwaine and her colleagues (2011) report how struggling with the host country language leads to problems in accessing services and welfare. When it comes to public health, for example, 20 per cent of Latin Americans are not registered at the GP and 40% are users of private health services because of the unsatisfactory quality of public health services "(41%), as well as lack of papers (14%), having more confidence in private doctors (12%) and because of language problems (9%)" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 99).

The literature points out the relevance language skills have in influencing the situation of Latin American migrants in the labour market, which in turn greatly hinders their opportunity to learn English, making people fall into a "vicious circle" (Carlisle, 2006), "working unsociable hours in an environment where they are not able to routinely practice their English means that they have little possibility of improving their language skills, which, in turn, offers the primary opportunity to develop professionally" (Sveinsson, 2007: 16).

Latin Americans in London's labour market and language:

Although most Latin Americans in London are working, underemployment is a big problem for this community. Employment rates for Latin Americans are reported to be very high – up to 71 per cent (McIlwaine et al., 2011). Nonetheless, because of their areas of employment, a large portion of this community experience high levels of disenfranchisement and discrimination in the labour market.

As mentioned in the previous section, it is not easy for people in this group to find jobs that meet their qualifications. In this sense, a large proportion of Latin

American workers in London are concentrated in low-skilled jobs, with most people filling cleaning or catering positions (Bermudez Torres, 2010; McIlwaine et al., 2011). As one of the respondents put it, "everybody gets here and start cleaning, doing the most humble types of jobs" (Cecilia's interview).

Experiences of downward mobility

Whereas it is true that by moving to London migrants experience some level of economic progress, in many cases this is accompanied by a loss in social and professional status (Bermudez Torres, 2010; Guarnizo, 2008; McIlwaine, 2007; McIlwaine et al., 2011). For those who come seeking work, economic upward mobility and social "downward mobility" frequently take place simultaneously (Gangs, 2009).

In this sense, many of the people met through this study, including some community workers and activists, were working or had experienced working in the cleaning or catering sector. Such was the case of Ezequiel, a Colombian respondent who had obtained a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering before migrating to France, where he completed two Masters degrees. When he finished his postgraduate studies, Ezequiel moved to London, attracted by the opportunity of learning English while working in a city that he perceived as being "in fashion". Despite the high level of his qualifications, when he arrived in London, Ezequiel started working as a cleaner for a hotel, experiencing an "abrupt" change of circumstances: "At the beginning it was a super abrupt change, because in France I had a good job in a bank – an office job. It was nice. Then I came here and I worked at a hotel [cleaning rooms]" (Ezequiel's interview). At the time of our interview, Ezequiel had recently been able to move forward into a somewhat better paid role in customer service. However, many of the interviewees had spent many years unable to break out of the lowest-paid sectors.

As often happens in London's division of labour, migrants meet boundaries that are shaped by the activities of the government, employers and workers as a collective (Wills et al., 2009). Manuela's family provides an example of this situation. Manuela was born in London, but her family came from Ecuador, where her mother owned a retail shop and her father worked as a Physics and Maths lecturer at a university. When the family was facing economic difficulties, Manuela's mother moved to London to work as a cleaner in what she thought would be a temporary situation. However, as their economic situation was not improving and they had already spent three years apart, Manuela's father and her two older sisters migrated permanently to the UK to join their mother. After 27 years of living in London, Manuela's mother continues to

work as a housekeeper, while her father experienced some mobility by moving forward from cleaning to supervising other Latin American cleaners for an agency.

Manuela links this directly to a lack of knowledge of English: "I don't think that it's just them but the majority of Latinos here; they can't develop here because they don't speak the language" (Manuela's interview). In this sense, being "stuck" in the lowest sector of London's labour market is strongly related to insufficient knowledge of English for accessing information, as well as for transferring the knowledge and skills acquired in the country of origin (Chiswick and Miller, 2002)

The loss of occupational status and instability that stems from working in sectors such as cleaning and catering, can seriously affect people's self-esteem. For Cecilia, a 37-year-old respondent from Bolivia, "feeling inferior" is one of the issues that keep people tied to low paid jobs. When speaking about why people would work as cleaners for decades, she argued that in many cases, people "don't feel like they are able to take a job when they see that locals are taking those jobs" (Cecilia's interview).

Before migrating to London, Cecilia had been living in Spain for 13 years. While working in different types of unskilled jobs in Spain, she managed to study Human Resource Management and was able to work in her profession for five years. However, when her company shut down because of the economic crisis, she had to move to London to seek new job opportunities, leaving her son and partner in Spain. She characterises working in cleaning as "starting from scratch": "When the crisis came, I had to start from zero again. I went back to cleaning houses" (Cecilia's interview).

On the other hand, it must be noted that some of the people met who had migrated from within Europe were already working as cleaners before moving to the UK. In this sense, some people had experienced downward mobility before migrating. In addition, it was found through fieldwork that some people had finished their studies decades before moving to London and did not have relevant or recent work experience in their professions. Nonetheless, de-skilling is an important issue for many Latin Americans in London (McIlwaine et al, 2011). A survey respondent was able to capture this issue quite graphically. When asked about her 'occupation', she wrote down: "I'm a cleaner in London :(" (survey response, underlined by the respondent).

Disadvantage and language

Migrants' disadvantaged position in the labour market may result from a combination of different factors, including having poor skills, knowledge and labour

market experience (Borjas, 1994; Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002; Heath et al., 2000), participating in limited social networks (Granovetter, 2005; Montgomery, 1992), and experiencing discrimination (Heath et al., 2000; Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009).

Due to its "interaction effects" with other factors, language emerges as a key factor in generating migrants' disadvantaged position (Esser, 2006). On one hand, language is an important asset for migrants in the labour market. As part of a person's human capital, and as with other forms of knowledge, language fluency may have a direct impact on the earnings and types of jobs people can access (Chiswick and Miller, 2002). Having difficulties communicating in English pushes people into manual work, forcing them to take roles that do not require English language knowledge. Joaquín, a 53-year-old Colombian refugee who worked for a supermarket chain in Colombia as a refrigeration technician before migrating, explains how his language skills led him to leave his profession. He speaks about his 13 years of experience in London's labour market in the following way:

> "It's been very hard, very difficult, but I've always managed to find just enough to eat, pay my rent and help my family […] I've been working as a cleaner. I also worked two years as an electrician for a contractor, but the language didn't help me. Although I tried and I struggled to learn, at my age I couldn't. It's hard for me because I have to work to survive, to pay my rent, to support myself, to send money to my family and the money is not enough. If I would have started studying, I would have starved to death. I have to work and then take advantage of the time I have left to study. For example, I study on Saturdays" (Joaquín's interview).

Even though Joaquín works 10 hours per day, "from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and then from 6 to 10 p.m." (Joaquín's interview), he only manages to earn enough money to survive. Cleaning and catering allow people who cannot speak English to secure work, as they require limited interaction with other people. However, these sectors have very poor working conditions, and it is extremely difficult for Latin Americans working in low-pay sectors of the labour market to be able to pay the high fees for formal ESOL courses. The language barrier therefore has a tremendous impact on the economic situation of immigrants (Chiswick and Miller, 1995, 2002). Migrants then fall into a "vicious circle as the only jobs available to non-English speakers are 'hidden' jobs, which offer no opportunity to socialise or network with other English speakers" (Carlisle, 2006: 239).

Considering these issues, it is not surprising that Latin Americans themselves identify English as their main problem. This was noted by respondents from Ecuador

(James, 2005), Bolivia (Sveinsson, 2007), and Latin America in general (McIlwaine et al., 2011). In fact, it was found that 58 per cent of Latin Americans identified "the inability to speak English as their main problem" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 125). This issue is particularly relevant for women (James, 2005; McIlwaine et al., 2011) who, when facing situations of abuse, are unable to go to speak out because of their poor language skills (McIlwaine and Carlisle, 2011).

As cleaning is done before and after normal working hours, people are often hired to work for a few hours, which forces people to work split shifts. People employed in this industry therefore often work for different employers and are contracted on a casual basis:

> "I work from 6 to 8:30 a.m., then I come to the English class until 1 p.m. I used to work from 4 to 6 p.m. and then in the evenings from 6 to 8:30 p.m., but I've left the afternoon job to have some rest, though I clean houses some days" (Cecilia's interview).

In line with the instability that characterises the financial lives of people in this type of work, jobs are very easy to find in the cleaning and catering sectors. In many cases, people find out about new vacancies through friends and acquaintances (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 59). As already referenced in the previous chapter, one of the community workers interviewed for this research refers to the availability of these jobs as follows:

> "They come to this project to get help finding a job and I stress the importance of taking English classes... but they sign up for the classes, they get into the classroom and they leave that day with a cleaning job. When I see that someone is desperate, I tell them 'stay for the English class'" (extract from fieldwork notes).

Having a network of Spanish-speaking contacts may provide these migrants with a reliable source of solidarity and information. However, having little contact with out-group individuals should also be understood as a situation of exclusion. These "patterns of isolation", as defined by a respondent (Dario's interview), need to be understood in the context of the hierarchical order that migration legislation establishes among the population in terms of immigrants' entitlements (Anderson, 2008).

Exploitation

Cleaning and catering are unregulated sectors of London's labour market, where instead of being employed directly, workers are normally contracted by

agencies who may be hired by other agencies to provide and manage workers for companies and institutions. Not being protected by collective agreements, people become vulnerable to exploitation, forced to accept work on any terms: "When having to deal with a discrimination claim, the most difficult question to respond to is 'who is the employer?'" (TUC officer's interview). This situation becomes particularly difficult for irregular migrants and workers. Without a permit to work, people are not protected by labour rights and are therefore even more vulnerable to exploitation (McIlwaine, 2007: 26):

> "The number of Latin American cleaners keeps growing, and it is growing because that industry is more and more irregular; it exploits people more. The working hours are less and less. You find one hour jobs, for example. For a person to accept a one hour job... you spend more on transportation" (Diego's interview).

With both parents working in the cleaning sector for over 27 years, respondent Manuela is familiar with experiences in the sector: "There are many people who work night shifts because they don't have papers or they don't know the language" (Manuela's interview). Working mostly alone or with people who share their situation of exclusion makes it very difficult for workers to learn and implement their rights to defend themselves from exploitation: "It is harder for those who came as adults, because I think they feel undermined, because they have to keep cleaning and they can't say 'no' to anything because they need the money" (extracted from Manuela's interview). The following three quotes from Joaquín's interview speak about these experiences:

> "At the beginning I had to work with other people's papers, and then those people sometimes would pass my money to other people, or sometimes they would want to keep your money."

> "I couldn't say anything because I was a ghost. I was a ghost and I had to work. I never got any holiday and I always had to work without having the right to say anything."

> "[Once,] I was told 'don't come back on Monday, the manager said we don't need you any more', but it was only to get one of the manager's friends or family members in... and you were left with nothing […] and if you are illegal, where do you go? You can't go to the authorities, because you don't have any rights, you don't have papers, you are dead. You are a ghost" (Joaquín's interview).

In contrast with the traditional understanding that migrants are less educated

than the people of the host country, this migrant group is highly qualified. However, it faces a very significant barrier that hampers its access to information and its ability to transfer its knowledge to the new setting. Regardless of their linguistic situation, those who are not entitled to stay or work simply cannot speak, a characteristic that often makes employers in certain sectors prefer to hire them over people with work permits (Wills et al., 2009).

In this sense, although fieldwork shows that the labour market disadvantage for this group is closely related to people's linguistic situation, there are also other important factors that contribute to the disenfranchisement of this group as workers. Among these, the economic profit employers make from the lack of regulation of these sectors seems particularly important. Exploitation in the labour market, as well as the hierarchy of entitlements generated by the distribution of rights (Anderson, 2008), are most important in the shaping of these migrants' lives. In this framework, those who experience language difficulties frequently feel that they cannot "defend themselves".

Experiences of language barrier

Coming from non-English-speaking countries, it is clear that language plays an important role in shaping the situation of Latin American migrants in London's labour market. The strength and importance of this link explains why previous literature has paid relatively more attention to this aspect.

However, the language barrier impacts people's lives in many ways. In effect, it is because of the language barrier that migrants meet most obstacles in their daily lives. Speaking little English, people lose control over interactions and have limited or fragmented knowledge of their own circumstances. The language barrier makes people dependent on those who can speak English, such as friends, family and acquaintances. When people are dependent on their English-speaking children, this sometimes erodes parental authority in the family. These are only a few of the various ways in which the language barrier impacts people's lives.

For those who do not speak English, the language barrier becomes a permanent threat. It makes people vulnerable to misunderstanding their own circumstances and making wrong decisions as a result. It may also lead to dependency and isolation, having a detrimental impact on people's self-esteem. In this context, language is often thought of as a weapon.

Language as a weapon

The instance of being interviewed by an immigration officer at customs when arriving in the UK is often described as a traumatic, threatening experience where the relevance of speaking the language of the authority becomes most salient. In order to visit the UK, "non EU/UK" people are required to go through a visa process that, when successful, allows them to enter the country for a specific purpose and for a specific period of time. This permit also regulates people's activities in the country by conditioning their activities in the labour market and their access to welfare (discussed further in Chapter 6). People are required to present these permits at the airport before entering the country. However, immigration officers at customs may revoke the permit if they find reasons to suspect, for example, that the person will commit a criminal offence (UKBA online, Policy and Law), such as overstaying their visas or working irregularly.

The duration of this screening varies greatly from a few routine questions to an interview that could last hours. When required by the officers, people are taken to a separate room, where they are further interviewed while their documents and luggage are checked. Occasionally, people had to go through mandatory inspections, which have recently been replaced by full body scanners; sometimes stomach X-rays are taken when officers suspect that someone may be smuggling drugs hidden inside their body.

> "...and you are sitting there retained, and you think that they will not let you in... and the shame... 'What will people say when I get back to Panama?'" (Rodrigo's interview).

The first time respondent Rodrigo came to the UK to meet his partner, he was detained for six hours at Heathrow airport and had to face the risk of being deported. Although Panamanians do not need tourist visas to enter the UK for short visits, he argues that his language difficulties generated suspicion among the immigration officers: "[I was not] able to explain myself properly with regards to how I was coming, what my situation was and what I was going to do." Rodrigo was coming as a tourist to meet his partner, with whom he had a long distance relationship. As he spoke very basic English, he found it difficult to answer questions he was not prepared for, such as what his living conditions in Panama were or why he had gotten his passport many months before travelling:

> "In that context, I wasn't able to explain anything as I would have liked to have done it in my language. That leaves room for misunderstandings. You leave room for the doubts they

> could have about you and you get nervous, too. That is when you feel that the immigration officer realises that you are nervous, so they doubt what you are saying and it is not because what you are saying is false, but because of the attitude" (Rodrigo's interview).

After a few hours, Rodrigo was assisted by an interpreter, but he was then forced to accept words that did not reflect his statements with accuracy: "A person who can speak Spanish but doesn't understand the sense of the things you are trying to express, and you hear the person translating and what he says is not what you are trying to express. You feel everything is wrong" (Rodrigo's interview). After six hours of questioning and a series of phone calls made by the officers to his partner who was waiting for him on the other side of the gate, he was finally allowed to enter the country as a tourist:

> "They retained me precisely for not being able to explain myself properly in terms of how I was coming, in which situation I was coming and what I was going to do. Then [...] how to demonstrate to a person that in your country there are 45 days of 'vacation'? Or 30 days of 'vacation'? And for them they are 'holiday', and you don't know what 'holiday' means or the difference between 'holiday' and 'vacation'" (Rodrigo's interview).

As in Rodrigo's case, when facing the authorities the language barrier can put people in difficult and vulnerable situations, where the power over their own speech and at times over their own body is lost due to that barrier. Isolated, uncertain of what was happening, unable to explain himself or express his intentions, Rodrigo "learned" that language is also a protection, a shield that enables the speaker to defend himself from the accusations and disbelief of others:

> "...you feel the security that your language gives you at the moment of expressing yourself, and when you go somewhere else, where you don't understand what people tell you, where you don't know how you are going to say something, you want to express something and you cannot do that, you feel so powerless [...] but you learn that the safety you felt, that the world that you were previously living in, the one you considered safe, is completely different. You are not there anymore. I mean you don't feel safe; that is what I've learned at that moment" (Rodrigo's interview).

While it is impossible to confirm whether it was Rodrigo's lack of language skills that sparked suspicion at Customs or not, his case provides an example of how language often represents a shield that allows people to protect themselves in

threatening encounters with authority. Language skills provide the means to anticipate accusations, clarify situations and counterbalance negative impressions.

It is thus clear that, when overwhelmed by the pressure of authorities, such as Immigration officers or superiors at work, people at administrative bodies and even fluent speakers in general, migrants' ability to explain their case and understand the questions asked of them is crucial in order to maintain a sense of control over the situation. In this context, it is not surprising that one a common response by interviewees when asked about their motivation to learn English is "to be able to defend myself". In this metaphor language is represented as a defensive weapon that provides protection from the potential harm that can be inflicted by those in a position of power.

The language barrier in daily life

There are, however, other less significant but more frequent situations in which migrants face the limitations imposed by the language barrier. The many and important ways in which the language barrier affects the daily lives of Latin American migrants in London became more salient for this research during the period of observational work conducted at IRMO. This is because many people would approach the organisation to use their interpreting and translation services, and to have volunteers help them with enquiries in English.

The interpreting services are mainly used for attending formal appointments such as trial hearings, or appointments at the Job Centre, the police station or doctor's surgeries. However, people may also use this service to deal with other important tasks such as setting up bank accounts, registering children at school or visiting non-Spanish-speaking organisations.

The translation services that these types of organisations provide are also very important for Latin American migrants. As visas are granted for a specific period of time, it is common for these migrants to go through different temporary legal statuses before acquiring permanent residency (McIlwaine et al., 2011). The different application processes often require them to translate documents and letters that were issued in their home countries. In some cases, for example when dealing with legal procedures related to marriage, divorce, or employment rights, people need to explain their case by telling their story in writing through a cover letter and by handing out their private correspondence for translation, to then be sent along with the application form. In this sense, migrants often depend on anonymous translators and interpreters who

help them take care of tasks that are crucial for their lives in London.

On the other hand, apart from the use of professional services, it is not unusual for people to approach community organisations looking for informal translations of their correspondence or help with phone enquiries in English. In fact, during observational work at IRMO, as the organisation did not have a service for general enquiries, it was common to see people wandering around the organisation, sometimes waiting for hours, to receive help dealing with very simple issues, only hindered by their lack of English language knowledge. Notifying landlords about things that need to be repaired in their residences; contacting institutions to ask about fees and registration dates; finding an address; figuring out whether a bank or NHS letter is important or not; or even having someone explain a mysterious text message are some of the many simple tasks that people normally deal with on a daily basis and that can become challenging and very time-consuming for non-English-speaking migrants.

Having partial access to information also results in people having little control over every day issues. Again, in this framework of disempowerment, it is not surprising that people want to learn the language to 'defend' themselves. An example derived from participant observation work at IRMO may better illustrate this point. Juan was a 62-year-old Ecuadorian man who approached the organisation to receive help with his recently granted disability pension. Although he had been waiting for his pension for months, Juan came to the office to put the payments of his pension on hold. He explained that he had just received a letter from the bank which stated that his account was closed. He was visibly troubled as he was expecting to be able to start paying back the money he had borrowed from friends and family to pay his rent while his application was being processed.

The man had with him an account closure letter from his bank, but not speaking English, he could not fully understand the content of the letter and ended up misunderstanding his situation. Although he had been living in London for over 10 years, his level of English was very poor. As a result, he was not able to provide consent for having someone else deal with the bank over the phone on his behalf. Fortunately, it was possible to accompany him to the bank, where he was informed that the account the letter referred to was a secondary account he had never used. On the way back, Juan told me he never knew that he had another account. As it turned out, the letter had no consequences for him and he could expect the payments of his pension to start normally as expected. If he had not brought the letter with him, he would have made someone put his disability pension on hold, which would have

forced him to increase his debt.

Unfortunately, not everybody finds help in time. Marta, for example, approached the organisation with two 10-year-old credit card debts she had been trying to pay for the past five years. Although she had been living in London for 25 years and was still attending English classes in her 70s, she was not able to speak English. She explained that her debts came from small amounts she had borrowed over the years in order to send money to her family in Colombia while she was working as a cleaner in London.

She was upset and confused as she had been making monthly payments of £80 for the previous five years, but could not see any changes in the total amount she owed. A quick phone enquiry to her banks explained the situation: with the advice of her daughter, who was able to speak English, Marta had signed up for the services of a debt management company which was taking money from her pension, charging her £30 per month as a fee, and distributing the remaining money between the two lending banks. In those five years, her monthly payments had only covered the interests and a small proportion of each debt. With the help of a volunteer speaking on her behalf, Marta was informed by the bank that her payments had only allowed her to carry her debt throughout the years. In tears, she decided to cancel the services of the debt management company immediately and start paying directly to the banks herself.

As exemplified through these cases, not having access to the full information and having to depend on others because of the language barrier, leaves people little control over important decisions. These daily problems can have important consequences for other aspects of their lives as well, including their employment situation, but also their mental and physical health. Cases of this kind show how frequently people are unaware of their own situation and how their options are greatly limited because of the language barrier.

Language and isolation

On the other hand, the language barrier normally accompanies a process of adaptation to a number of new things. Respondent Rodrigo explains that when he first arrived, he faced many relatively minor challenges in his daily activities. Since his English was not good enough to ask other people around him, he had to overcome these challenges on his own.

In his interview, Rodrigo explains that the transport system in his home country, Panama, is a lot simpler. After a few trips, he soon realised that using the underground

would not always cost the same price. In order to figure out the complicated pricing chart of London's underground transport system, which is split into zones and varies depending on the time of the day, he would count the money he had spent after each journey and write the figure down on a notepad. Adjusting the shower water temperature was another challenge. He explains that in Panama people do not need to regulate the shower temperature as room temperature is hot enough. In many cases, he would also find it difficult to understand public signs and would always end up asking his partner for help.

Although Rodrigo remembers these episodes with humour, these insignificant daily experiences of short frustrations, silly mistakes and a lack of understanding are so numerous that they may build up to affect people's self-esteem:

> "I had to go to the toilet in Victoria station, and I didn't know how to get in […] I saw people getting coins from a machine, which I didn't know how to use because I didn't know how to read the instructions. I had to call my partner and ask him [...] I felt so stupid at the time, subnormal" (Rodrigo's interview).

Not knowing how many things work in the new setting and not knowing the local language to be able to ask for help can generate the feeling of being isolated among the crowds, a feeling of "living in a separate world" (Rodrigo's interview): "Not being able to express yourself, not being able to exchange a word... it isolates you, takes you out of all contexts" (Laura's interview).

The need and inability to communicate with others makes people feel impotent and sometimes even desperate. Laura describes the difficulties she found while "trying to integrate in conversations or going somewhere and trying to make a complaint" in the following terms:

> "...it's like feeling that you have an inner voice that is screaming and is getting desperate, and then on the other side they cannot hear you. It's like being inside a bubble. You can see yourself screaming, trying to express something and the other person is looking at you but without seeing you, without seeing what is really going on. It's mortifying" (Laura's interview).

It is important to note that experiencing linguistic difficulties is not restricted to those who cannot speak English. Eduardo, for example, was able to speak and understand basic English. He did not normally have problems understanding signs and had a few English speaking friends. However, language difficulties were particularly frustrating for him when socialising in English. In his case, he emphasised how the language barrier affected social interaction and the ability to project an accurate

representation of himself through his speech:

> "It is often very frustrating, because you want to express a lot of things sometimes and you can't always do it because you still have a language barrier. I can communicate, but with a lot of mistakes, with a lot of things that cause misunderstanding, or without expressing exactly what I mean" (Eduardo's interview).

The Language barrier and the family

As mentioned above, when depending on others, people often turn to their children for help, as they normally learn English at school. It is not uncommon for migrant children and children of migrants to accompany their parents when visiting doctors, negotiating conditions with the bank, making enquiries at the Job Centre or discussing issues with their employers. In this sense, children of migrant communities often deal with issues that normally belong to the world of adults. In Manuela's experience:

> "I was the one they would call to come to the bank. 'Oh, there's been a problem with the phone, come with me, translate for me', or 'Let's look at this bank statement', or 'Let's talk with this person from work'. Up to today, they still call me to speak for them" (Manuela's interview).

This role marks their childhood experience, both positively and negatively. Manuela, the London-born respondent who defines herself as "Latin American", grew up helping her Ecuadorian parents with their English. Although she finds the experience to have been rewarding, she also stresses the emotional impact it has had on them by comparing their dependency with a disability:

> "You feel good but at the same time you feel bad, because I can imagine that they feel bad as well having to stand there saying 'Help me, help me'. It's like being incapable of moving their hands or their feet; in this case it's their mouth. So they have to depend on me, on my help. It feels good to help them, but I think they must feel impotent as well" (Manuela's interview).

Manuela's parents migrated to London 27 years ago and although they have both taken English classes in the past, they still find it difficult to manage in the language. These issues are also related to confidence and trust:

> "Sometimes when they are left a letter or a note, they call me to ask 'What does this mean?' or 'How do you write this?' or 'How do you do this?' Up to today. Yes, they still depend on me because they don't trust themselves. They need to call and make sure whether they understood well or not" (Manuela's interview).

Whereas on one hand children help their parents fulfil important tasks, this situation also alters traditional relations at home. In this context, children become figures of authority, as they manage important household information and it is they who explain things to their parents and speak on their behalf.

Alvaro, a Colombian man who migrated with his parents when he was seven years old and often acted as an interpreter for his parents, explains how this experience affected his relationship with them:

> "I stopped listening to my parents. I stopped following them in some things. I've already learnt to respect their advice now, but when I was growing up I didn't really pay attention to what they said. I stopped respecting their judgement" (Alvaro's interview).

Furthermore, parents find it very hard to help their children with their challenges. When it comes to education, for example, those parents who speak little or no English find it very hard to help their children with homework or maintain good communication with teachers and school. This situation is often worsen by the fact that many Latin Americans are living in overcrowded conditions, which means that in many cases there is no desk or living room at home where children can sit down to study. In fact, "almost one-third of Latin Americans share their home with other families (with an average of 2 other families)" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 77).

As was observed through observational work at IRMO's youth group, parents with adolescent children seem to face an even greater challenge. It is very difficult for them to make sure their children are up to date with school, but they also find it very difficult to monitor their activities, as they cannot fully understand what they say to their friends or keep track of the way they use family computers.

In brief, the language barrier at home can have disruptive consequences in the family environment. Parents often have to share their problems with their children, who acquire the responsibility of helping to solve them, while parents are greatly limited when encouraging children's personal development and progress as students. In fact, data extracted from the survey conducted for this research shows that among those who 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with "To understand what my children say" (20 people out of 60) as one of their reasons for wanting to learn English, this was a stronger motivation than "To improve my employment situation".

Motivation to learn English

As shown above, language plays a key role in influencing the situation of social exclusion and disadvantage that Latin American migrants face in London. Language plays a key role in migrants' integration into host societies because of its direct and indirect influences (Esser, 2006). Speaking the local language increases the scope of jobs migrants can access and has a positive effect on income and status (Chiswick and Miller, 1995, 2002).

On the other hand, the relevance of English language skills for Latin American migrants in London also becomes apparent through their daily experiences of the language barrier. However, McIlwaine and her colleagues (2011) have found that only a minority can speak, read and write English fluently. In fact, out of 1,000 people surveyed, "nearly one-third (29%) were able to understand very little English or none at all. Less than half (41%) were able to speak, read and write very well, with a further 30% doing so at an intermediate level" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 35).

Although this situation may reflect the fact that most people have migrated very recently, it was found through fieldwork that it is common to find those who can only speak very basic English among Latin American immigrants who have resided in the UK for decades. How can someone live in England for over 20 years and not learn the language? Is it a lack of interest or opportunities? Are there other factors that could explain this situation?

In his literature review of language and migration, Esser (2006) categorises the many factors that influence second language acquisition in three broad groups: opportunity, cost and motivation. This categorisation leaves aside individuals' intellectual capacity. As discussed above, it is important for people to have regular access to learning situations (Esser, 2006). On the other hand, people need to be able to handle the cost of learning a second language in terms of money and time. In addition, there may also be emotional and social costs attached to this process. Finally, in order to acquire a second language, people should want to learn it. Motivation is "one of the main determinants of second/foreign language (L2) learning achievement" (Dörnyei, 1994: 273).

According to a basic formulation of motivation theory, people may want to learn the language in order to integrate or to achieve a practical goal. Although there is no consensus in terms of the associations between either type of motivation and student achievements, studies conducted in multicultural settings "suggested that individuals with an integrative orientation would demonstrate greater motivational effort in learning

an L2, and, thus, achieve greater L2 competence" (Noels et al., 2003: 36).

The focus of this research was not to study whether this is the case among Latin Americans in London. With the aim of exploring experiences and motivations to learn English among Latin Americans, the survey conducted for this section gathered self-reported evaluations of language level[4]. Considering the issues analysed in this chapter, one should expect migrants to want to learn the language, but what are their motivations? Do people want to learn the language to integrate or merely to solve their most immediate problems? If they want to integrate, what kind of integration are they looking for?

There are many ways in which the language barrier impacts people's lives, such as impeding educational and labour market success, and generating dependency, impotence and isolation. Learning why people want to learn English allows for a better understanding of which of these issues are most important for them. The survey used aimed to explore these issues and provide insights into Latin American migrants' perspectives about English language acquisition. In line with this, the people who completed this survey were met through participant observation work at IRMO, as this group reflected the findings reported by large-scale research on the community.

However, it must be borne in mind that the people who approach the charity do so because they need help, in many cases because of the language barrier. In this sense, it is greatly due to their economic and employment situation that those attending the charity's English course are unable to access more formal or resourceful language education. In this sense, the survey does not attempt to be representative of the community as a whole, but focuses on the sector that is experiencing the challenges posed by the language barrier.

Survey sample profile

In order to explore the experiences and motivation to learn English among Latin Americans in London, a survey was conducted with 60 people, half of whom were attending an English course, while the other half were either not studying English or only studying on their own.

The sample's countries of origin were nine different Latin American nationalities, with most people from Colombia (45 per cent), Ecuador (17 per cent) and Bolivia (12 per cent). The rest of the people were born in Peru (8 per cent), the Dominican Republic (7 per cent), Venezuela (5 per cent), Argentina (3 per cent), El Salvador (2

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4   Although most of those attending an English course (half of the sample), were studying a basic level at the organisation where observational work was conducted.

per cent) and Honduras (2 per cent). The group was made up of 31 women and 27 men (two people did not specify their gender). The average age was 42 and ages ranged from 22 to 70 years old. Almost half of the people were married (48 per cent). A similar percentage had migrated to London less than a year ago (45 per cent), while a quarter had over 10 years of residency.

Reflecting on the impact of immigration law in determining who can migrate and how (see Chapter 6 for discussion), the vast majority had European nationality (25 in total). There were also six people with British citizenship, eight with spousal visas, another eight were staying irregularly, four had ILR residence permits, three had student visas, one had a highly skilled migrant visa and five had other kinds of visas (Figure 1).

Legal Status

Legend:
- ■ EU citizen
- ■ British
- ■ Irregular
- ■ Spousal visa
- ■ ILR
- ■ Student visa
- ■ Highly Skilled Migrant visa
- ■ Other visas
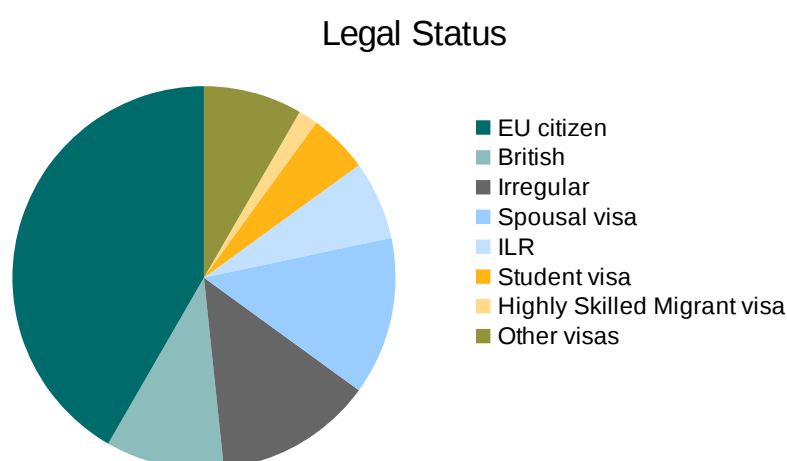
Figure 1: Legal statuses in the survey sample

Employment

The majority of the people who answered this survey were employed (75 per cent). Among the rest, 12 per cent were unemployed, 5 per cent were full-time students (this figure does not count working students), and the rest were either homemakers, full time carers or retired.

Out of those who were employed, most who stated their working hours said they worked full-time (44 per cent), while one-third reported working part time (33 per

cent)[5]. However, a large percentage was in an unstable employment situation, with 29 per cent were contracted casually, 13 per cent worked without a contract[6], and 4 per cent with temporary contracts. Half of the employed sector sample (53 per cent) was in a steady situation of employment, either with a permanent contract (49 per cent) or self-employed (4 per cent) (Figure 2).

Over half of this group was working in the cleaning sector (58 per cent), and a large proportion was also working in catering (11 per cent). Out of the rest, three people were in sales (7 per cent), two were in administration, two in education, and one in each of the following: construction, building maintenance, graphic design, and childcare. Only one person had a managerial role.

Occupation

- Employed: permanent contract
- Employed: casual contract
- Employed: no contract
- Employed: temporary contract
- Employed: self-employed
- Unemployed
- Homemaker
- Full-time Student
- Full-time Carer
- Retired
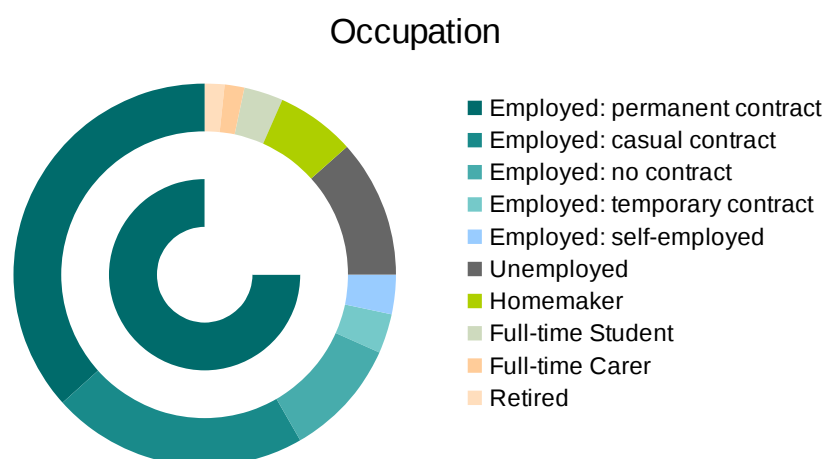
Figure 2: Survey sample occupation

In addition, a substantial percentage said they had various employers (29 per cent). Having multiple employers brings additional difficulties for workers, particularly those working in the lowest paid sectors of the labour market, such as cleaning and catering, as they are typically contracted by each employer to work very few weekly hours. In addition, many of the people working in these sectors reported having split shifts, working very early in the morning for a few hours and then very late in the evening (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

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5   The rest (22 per cent) were either self-employed or did not state working hours.
6   This figure includes those who reported not having a contract and those who did not know.

Education

In terms of their education, almost a third of the sample had university qualifications (28 per cent), five people had finished further education studies (eight per cent); most people had obtained secondary school qualifications (45 per cent), and nine people completed primary school (15 per cent), whilst two people had not completed their primary education (3 per cent) (see Table 2).

Following a comment made by a community worker during fieldwork, the survey also asked people to state their last year of education. The community worker in question had pointed out that in many cases people are unable to transfer their qualifications into the local labour market because their certificates are 'out of dateper cent , as they had been gained many years before. In the case of this sample, out of the 36 people doing manual work, only six people (17 per cent) said they were still in school or that they had stopped studying within the last five years. Nonetheless, these figures should be treated carefully, as the question used may have discouraged respondents from considering development courses as part of their education.

Another related aspect covered by the survey was language knowledge. Studies in the field of second language acquisition have long identified that previous experiences of language learning greatly benefit the acquisition of further languages (Ushida, 2005; Birdson, 2006). Leaving English aside, over 30 per cent of the sample were able to speak at least one other language apart from Spanish (19 people in total). Among these, six people were able to speak a third or fourth language. The known languages of this group included three native Latin American languages: Quechua with nine speakers, and Aymara and Guaraní each with one. The rest of the languages included Portuguese with eight speakers; Italian with four, French with three, and Valencian with one speaker.

	People studying English	People not studying English	Total sample
No certificates	0	2 – 7%	2 – 3%
Primary school	6 – 20%	3 – 10%	9 – 15%
Secondary school	12 – 40%	15 – 50%	27 – 45%
Further education	3 – 10%	2 – 7%	5 – 8%
University	7 – 23%	5 – 16%	12 – 20%
Postgraduate	2 – 7%	3 – 10%	5 – 8%
Knowledge of other languages	11 – 37%	8 – 27%	19 – 32%

Table 2: Survey sample's formal education and knowledge of languages

English language knowledge

In order to gather information about English language knowledge, the survey asked people for a self-evaluation of their English speaking and writing skills. When examining the sample's English language knowledge, it is important to stress that the people who completed this survey were met through observational work at a community organisation and that in many cases they had approached this organisation seeking help because of the language barrier.

In addition, as mentioned above, half of the survey was completed by people who were attending an English language course at the charity. These students had taken a registration exam within the previous three months, which had evaluated their level as ESOL Entry 1 or lower (beginners). In line with this, most people in this sub-group (77 per cent) expressed having 'basic' or no speaking skills; only one person evaluated both speaking and writing skills as 'intermediate', and none as 'advanced' (see Table 3).

On the other hand, of the other half of the survey (people not studying English), most participants reported having 'intermediate' or 'advanced' speaking and writing skills (74 per cent and 57 per cent respectively). In contrast with the other group, only a minority said that they had 'basic' or no skills in English. In addition, whereas most of the people studying English had only a few months of learning experience (only five people said they had studied for 12 months), this second sub-group encompassed a more diverse range of learning experiences, from zero to over 10 years of study. Overall, most people in the total sample had some experience of English language learning (87 per cent).

	People studying English		People not studying English		Total sample	
	Speaking	Writing	Speaking	Writing	Speaking	Writing
No knowledge	2 – 7%	7 – 23%	4 – 13%	7 – 23%	6 – 10%	14 – 23%
Basic	21 – 70%	10 – 33%	3 – 10%	4 – 13%	24 – 12%	14 – 23%
Intermediate	1 – 3%	5 – 17%	8 – 27%	5 – 17%	9 – 15%	10 – 17%
Advanced	0	0	14 – 46%	12 – 40%	14 – 23%	12 – 20%
No response	6 – 20%	8 – 27%	1 – 3%	2 – 7%	7 – 12%	10 – 17%
Total subgroup	30		30		60	

Table 3: Survey sample's self-evaluation of English language speaking and writing skills

In summary, this in-depth survey involved 60 Latin American people residing in

London many of whom, despite being highly qualified (36 per cent with university or further education certifications; 32 per cent bilingual or multilingual), experienced language difficulties (less than a quarter had advanced speaking skills) and were disadvantaged in the labour market, with 72 per cent working in unqualified areas of the labour market.

Motivation to study English

Considering the many ways in which the language barrier impacts migrants' lives, it is not a surprise that most of the people surveyed wanted to learn English. Apart from those already studying, 73 per cent of those not attending an English language course expressed a desire to study. The few who did not wish to study the language had already achieved an advanced level, had no time to study or were planning to leave the UK. In line with this, most of the people in this sub-group expressed dissatisfaction with their English skills (73 per cent).

This high motivation for learning English is also reflected in the frequency of people's independent learning. In total, 92 per cent of the people surveyed said they carry out activities such as practising English at home; listening to local radios; reading books or magazines; or watching films in English in order to learn the language. Out of this total, 60 per cent said they carry out these activities on a daily basis; 30 per cent at least once a week; and only 7 per cent said that they never try to learn on their own.

In order to learn more about their motivation to learn English, the survey asked respondents about their reasons for studying or wanting to study English through two different types of questions. First, an unstructured open question that asked directly: "Why do you study English?" This was posed to people attending the course, and the second question, "Why do you wish/not wish to study English?" was posed to the second sub-group. These questions were introduced early in the surveys in order to retrieve less regulated answers.

As this type of question could generate very limited and ambiguous answers, a 5-point Likert Scale question was included on the following page of the survey which asked respondents to express their level of agreement with a total of 18 statements. The statements presented various reasons for studying English. This question aimed to determine whether people felt more inclined to study English to achieve social integration or to improve their economic situation. Apart from allowing us to identify which factors are considered most relevant, this question showed which reasons seemed least important for the group's motivation.

Gardner's initial models for the study of motivation presented two main types of orientations: integrative and instrumental (Gardner, 1985). However, posterior findings have suggested "that there are complex reasons for studying another language and potentially more than two basic orientations" (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993: 162). Clément and Kruidenier found that four orientations could be identified as "common to all groups of learners", as "the integrative orientation appeared only in multicultural contexts among members of a clearly dominant group" (Noels et al., 2003: 37). These orientations were labelled as 'travel', 'friendship', 'knowledge', which were included the integrative category (Dörnyei, 1994); and the 'instrumental orientations'. However, "the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of L2 motivation is always dependent on who learns what languages where" (Dörnyei, 1994: 275).

Following these constructs, the statements provided in the survey were divided into six different categories, according to the type of orientation or reason to study English. Statements with an instrumental orientation provided a total of six practical reasons or goals to learn the language. As this research was conducted in a migratory context, an integrative orientation was included, which emphasised social integration and communication. As London is a multicultural setting, this category included the statement "to speak to migrants of other origins" in addition to the traditional argument of learning the destination language to meet native local people.

The 'Knowledge' category was included as observational work had shown that people would frequently refer to their intention of improving themselves and to the value of making a personal effort to improve their living conditions. The 'travel' orientation was included because, when explaining why people had chosen to migrate to England, some interview respondents referred to the easy access London provides to visit other countries in Europe.

In addition, a 'Leisure' category was included through three statements, as fieldwork had shown that some respondents would attend English classes in order to spend their spare time in the company of other Latin American migrants. In these cases, the activity seemed to be considered as similar to other leisure or recreational workshops, which typically provide both initial knowledge in a subject of interest and a space for socialising. Finally, being "embarrassed" not to speak English and studying because English was appealing, were grouped together under the category 'Other affective' as they refer to an intention to learn which is derived from internalised beliefs about English (see Table 4).

Type of orientation	Statement provided
Instrumental	1. To improve my employment situation 2. I need it to keep studying 3. It will help me use the computer 4. I need it for the citizenship test 5. To understand what my children say 6. To be able to defend myself
Integrative	1. I want to meet more British people 2. To speak to migrants of other origins 3. To be able to express my ideas 4. To understand how London works
Knowledge	1. I want to expand my knowledge 2. I want to speak English properly
Leisure	1. I enjoy practising English 2. I like learning new things 3. I enjoy studying in general
Travel	1. In case I travel
Other affective	1. Because I am embarrassed not to speak it 2. Because I like how it sounds

Table 4: Survey motivation statements by type of orientation

The five statements most respondents agreed with were: because "I want to speak properly", "I like learning new things", "I want to expand my knowledge", "To be able to express my ideas", and finally, "I enjoy studying in general". These statements, along with "To understand how London works", were also among the ones which received the strongest support (see Figure 3 below). People's support for the statements related to knowledge reflects their interest in improving themselves.

Although most statements were generally supported by respondents, these were the five statements most disagreed with: "I need it to keep studying", "I am embarrassed not to speak it", "To use it in case I travel", "I like how it sounds", and "It will help me use a computer". It must be stressed that disagreement with these statements does not mean that people do not want to use English when travelling or dislike the way it sounds, but that these are not the most popular sources of motivation for learning English among this group at the time that this survey was conducted. The options "Because I need it for the citizenship test" and "To understand what my children say" were not considered for these results as they only applied to a portion of the sample.

Reasons to study English

Statement	Value
I want to speak properly	55
To be able to express my ideas	48
To understand how London works	47
To use in case I travel	46
To improve my employment situation	45
I want to expand my knowledge	45
I enjoy practising English	45
To defend myself	45
I like learning new things	45
I enjoy studying in general	44
I need it to keep studying	42
I want to meet more British people	41
It will help me use a computer	35
I like how it sounds	34
To speak to migrants of other origins	32
I am embarrassed not to speak it	23
I need it for the citizenship test	22
To understand what my children say	17

Figure 3: Motivation statements by level of support. Source: survey sample

Answers to this question report that people feel motivated to learn English for different simultaneous reasons. In fact, out of the 18 statements provided, people agreed to an average of 13. In this sense, although certain statements were more supported than others, these corresponded to different types of orientations and it was not possible to identify a single orientation as predominant (see Figure 4). As such, the survey showed that people want to learn English for instrumental, integrative reasons, to travel, for leisure and because of the way they feel about the language.

On the other hand, responses to the open question "Why do you study/want to study English?" referred to 11 different topics. These included: to improve one's employment situation; for personal development and knowledge; to communicate with others; for everyday life in London; because it is appealing; to use when travelling; to study; to help others; because it is a global language; to access services; and to defend oneself (for a full list of answers please refer to Appendix 4).

Motivation statements by type of orientation

- ■ Instrumental: To defend myself
- ■ Instrumental: To improve my employment situation
- ■ Instrumental: It will help me use a computer
- ■ Instrumental: I need it to keep studying
- ■ Instrumental: To understand what my kids say
- ■ Instrumental: I need it for the citizenship test
- ■ Integrative: To be able to express my ideas
- ■ Integrative: To understand how London works
- ■ Integrative: I want to meet more British people
- ■ Integrative: To speak to migrants of other origins
- ■ Knowledge: I want to speak properly
- ■ Knowledge: I want to expand my knowledge
- ■ Leisure: I like learning new things
- ■ Leisure: I enjoy studying in general
- ■ Leisure: I enjoy practising English
- ■ Travel: To use in case I travel
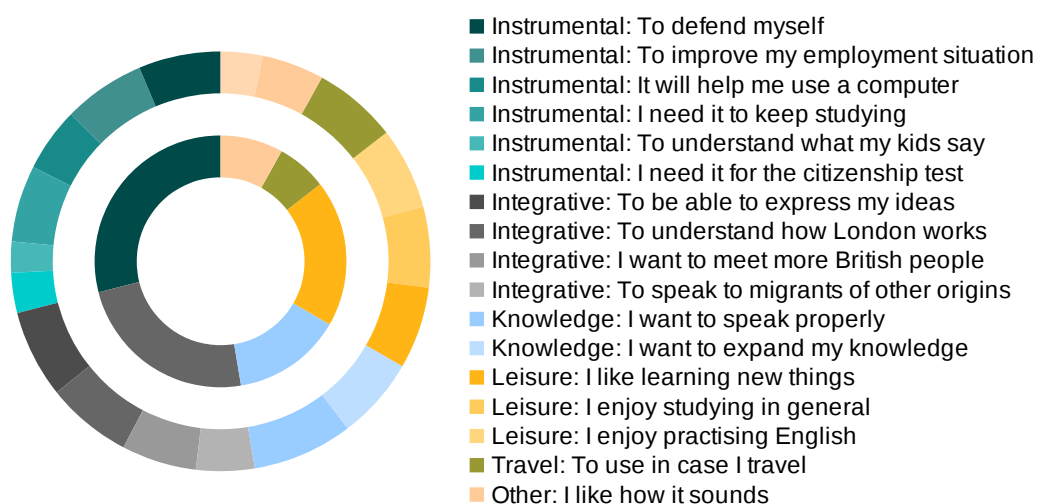- ■ Other: I like how it sounds

Figure 4: Most supported motivation statements by type of orientation

The variety of these topics again reflects the many ways in which language is linked to different aspects of people's lives. Moreover, the heterogeneity of responses within each of these categories provides insights into people's personal experiences and feelings towards learning English. For instance, whereas some of the responses that referred to employment reflected a feeling of being forced to learn, such as "Because we need it in this country, otherwise it is very difficult to work"; others presented it as an opportunity: "To improve the quality of my life; when you speak English you access better jobs".

The feeling of being obliged to learn is also present in statements such as "Because living in an English-speaking country, I should learn to speak it better". These types of statements seem to reproduce a common argument in public discourse which strongly suggests that 'migrants should learn the language'. Whereas it is clear that learning English is to their advantage, the effects of social pressure in people's learning process can be very negative.

Among those who mentioned communicative purposes some people referred to an interest in developing their social networks, as indicated in the response "Because I want to improve my communication with everybody". Other suggested responses

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provided respondents with ideas associated with 'correctness', which is commonly used in equivalence with fluency: "To be able to communicate myself properly ". Other answers referred to the importance of English as a global language: "Because it is the universal language and it is important everywhere in the world".

However, in most cases (23 out of 60), people expressed having mixed reasons for studying English. These responses included a wide range of combined reasons. For instance, employment and personal development (e.g. "To learn and to be able to develop in London; it is indispensable to work"); employment and communication, (e.g. "To be open to work opportunities and understand people"); personal development and interest in helping others, (e.g. "To develop myself, to help others and to be useful"); English language as appealing and daily life in the UK, (e.g. "Because I like it; besides it is indispensable in this country"); personal development, general needs in the UK and employment (e.g. "For my personal development, to reside in this country and get a good job"); and others.

Considering English language learning as a process, it could be the case that as complete beginners or having very little knowledge of the language, participants were not considering moving on to content learning or socialising with native speakers yet, but are more motivated by the desire to develop their knowledge and improve their ability to express themselves.

Overall, these answers show that people consider it important to learn English for multiple different reasons. Although the motivation of those who are attending courses is, on average, higher than that of people not attending classes, the survey generally shows high levels of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation linked to work, social integration and personal development. In other words, English is considered as an asset inside and outside the UK, as well as an enjoyable activity that makes learners feel good about themselves. As was observed during fieldwork, these statements show that Latin Americans greatly value English language knowledge and considered it important for their personal, economic and social development and integration.

Main obstacles

The survey also asked those who were not attending classes whether they had identified issues that made it difficult for them to access English language courses. Although the survey for those already attending classes did not include the same open question, this sub-group was asked whether they had found any issues that made it

difficult for them to learn. As both questions generated similar responses, they are discussed together in this section.

As observed through fieldwork and during the interviews, the obstacle most respondents faced when trying to attend classes or continue to learn English was related to their employment situation (see Figure 5 below). Indeed, 21 out of the 57 people who provided an answer to this question referred to their employment situation (37 per cent).

As mentioned above, most people in this sample were working as cleaners and many were in unstable employment. Since the cleaning of offices and public spaces offers very low pay and is normally done outside usual business hours, it is typical for workers in this sector to have contracts of only two to five hours of work per day. For this reason, many people doing cleaning have to take more than one job and work split shifts. In addition, because this is an unregulated sector in London's labour market, many workers are only contracted casually or temporarily without sick pay or annual leave. This makes it very difficult for people to commit to attending a full course with a fixed schedule, an issue that was mentioned in many responses: "Because of my work schedule"; "The time I have between jobs"; "Because of my work, I spend most of my time working"; "Because I work as a housekeeper. Living with employers, I only have Sunday off" (survey responses).

On the other hand, even when on permanent contract, people working in this sector frequently have to wake up very early to work for a couple of hours, go home for the day and then work again late in the evening. In addition, some people also work for a few hours during the day, in many cases cleaning houses. This type of schedule, even when relatively stable, leaves people too tired to concentrate or learn. This is reflected in the following response: "Because I work 10 daily hours. I find it difficult because I work and when I arrive at home I am tired and don't feel like doing anything else" (survey response). Having a highly demanding work schedule was also a concern for those attending English classes. A respondent from this group, who had been studying English for two years, living in London for four, and who had only achieved 'basic' speaking and writing skills, explained her biggest obstacle to learning in these words: "Work, because of the effort that I make every day for work. I am tired; I wake up very early and go to sleep late" (survey response).

'Lack of time' was the second most common obstacle, although considering the issues stated above, it is very probable that this issue is also linked to their employment situation. Learning obstacles were also mentioned by a few respondents

(five), including difficulties understanding, pronouncing, and memorising. Out of these, two people referred to difficulties associated with learning at an adult age. For instance, a 48-year-old Colombian man who had been living in London for two and a half years and was working as a cleaner responded, "At this age it is very difficult. I want to leave" (survey response).

Having little contact with English speakers was mentioned by four respondents, as "Not having a lot of contact with people that speak English" and "To get together with people who don't speak English". In addition, four respondents referred to suffering from loneliness and fear as their main obstacle.

The reference to 'fear' as an issue impeding their learning was made by three people from the group attending classes. In two cases fear was associated with the learning process: "Fear not to pronounce well" and "Fear of not learning and bullying"; while in the other case it was associated with the respondents' general experience, expressed as "The fear that surrounds me". Other responses about emotions affecting the learning process referred to embarrassment, being sad, and feeling loneliness, as in the following: "Not being able to pronounce properly is embarrassing. Not being able to be useful makes me sad. I want to be at the same level as the rest" (survey response).

As with motivation, some respondents (six) identified various issues simultaneously impeding their learning, as in the following responses: "Lack of time, fear not to pronounce well, I don't know many people that speak English or they only speak to me in Spanish, I don't practise daily", "Money and age", "Being tired from work, because of my age, loneliness and having friends that speak Spanish" (survey responses).

Other issues identified by respondents were being disabled, lack of money, lack of will and living far from the city. Notably, although people in this survey were mostly working in low-pay sectors of the labour market, only three people (five per cent) mentioned 'lack of money' as an obstacle for learning English. Out of the sample, 11 respondents said they found no obstacles to learning the language.
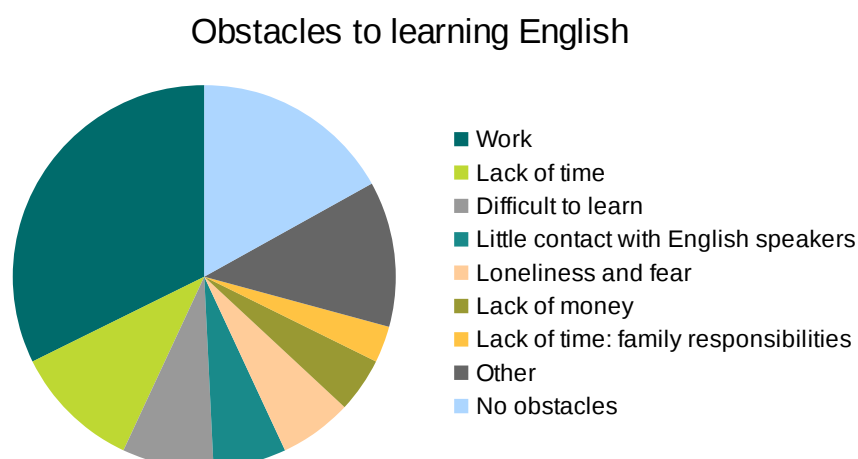
Obstacles to learning English

Figure 5: Survey sample's main obstacles to learning English

The power of the local language

Although studies have identified that migrants generally experience higher rates and longer periods of unemployment (Heath et al., 2000; Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009), this is not the case for this new migrant group in London, who have much higher rates of employment than the London average, with up to 85 per cent being gainfully employed (McIlwaine et al., 2011). In line with previous studies on Latin Americans, this research has found that most people are in work. Nonetheless, they continue to be at a disadvantage in terms of their income, areas of work and employment conditions, due to a combination of influencing factors.

On the other hand, as has been shown in previous studies, Latin Americans are a highly qualified migrant group (McIlwaine et al., 2011). In addition, this research shows that bilingualism and even multilingualism are common among Latin Americans, with 32 per cent of the survey sample able to speak at least another language other than Spanish or English. However, there are still large numbers of Latin American migrants in low-pay, manual areas of work, particularly in cleaning and catering (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

The literature points out that due to differences between their level of qualifications and their type of work, Latin Americans generally experience 'de-skilling' in London's labour market. Nonetheless, fieldwork findings suggest that many have foreign qualifications: out of the 46 people who provided responses to the question on their 'last year of education' in the survey, 74 per cent had left education while still

abroad. The fact that years of education and labour market experience have very different effects depending on whether they were acquired in the country of origin or destination (Chiswick and Miller, 2002; Kanas and Van Tubergen, 2009) may partly explain the concentration of highly skilled Latin Americans in unqualified or semi-qualified areas of work.

Moreover, it is necessary to evaluate whether people have experienced downward mobility in previous migration experiences. This possibility was pointed out by a community worker engaged in an employability project and becomes particularly relevant as people are increasingly migrating from other European countries into the UK. Thus, it is possible that in some cases these qualifications were not kept up to date through work experience, which could discourage people from seeking qualified work.

On the other hand, the study of language and migration has demonstrated the relevance of host country language knowledge for migrants' employment opportunities and experiences. This issue has been central to this study. Lack of fluency in the destination language affects both the types of jobs that migrants can access as well as their earnings (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002). Although this research did not gather information about respondents' earnings, it was found that not speaking the local language greatly limits Latin Americans' access to jobs. In many cases, a lack of English language knowledge confines people to manual jobs, which normally offer low pay and, as extensively proven through this work and previous literature, very poor working conditions.

However, considering that out of the six advanced speakers who participated in the survey only one was working at a job related to his educational background (and was doing so through self-employment), it is clear that host country language skills alone do not ensure access to better jobs.

Nonetheless, throughout this research, a lack of English language fluency emerged as a highly influential factor affecting the labour market experiences for Latin Americans in London. This study also demonstrates the impact of the language barrier in migrants' daily lives, and in circumstances when they are confronted by authorities as well as other fluent English speakers. In addition, language issues can also influence the community's access to services, education and information.

According to the 'Strength of Weak Ties Theory' (Granovetter, 1973) new information is normally accessed through more distant and diverse contacts. Following this premise, having social networks that are mainly made up of people with similar

profiles could greatly limit migrants' access to new information, including more diverse employment opportunities. This research has found that, among the 83 people reached through surveys and interviews, social networks are mainly comprised of other Latin Americans, which could partly explain the concentration of this community in specific sectors of London's labour market.

Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that people can only manipulate their networks up to a certain extent, as these largely depend on their experiences which are "closely bound up with larger-scale aspects of social structure" (Granovetter, 1973: 1377). In this sense, it was identified through fieldwork that, although residing and working across London, the Latin American migrant community experiences isolation, as many people appear to be confined to the boundaries of their community, both through limited access to jobs and exclusion from service provision. This issue transpires from the common representation that 'there are no British people in London' and from complaints about losing English language skills in London. In line with this, in spite of living in an English-speaking country, many people have said they find few opportunities to use their English (a third of the survey sample).

When it comes to the positive or negative impact of ethnic networks on migrants' integration, the literature does not offer a consensus (Esser, 2006). In the case of Latin Americans, solidarity networks among co-ethnics represent important sources of help when seeking housing, employment and general advice about London. Nonetheless, participating in homogeneous social networks represents an important obstacle when accessing new information about the host country, new employment opportunities and opportunities for political participation (Zetter et al., 2006).

Another very relevant aspect influencing the general situation of this community is legal status. The immigration system not only determines who can legally reside in the UK but it also determines what people are entitled in term of access to work, welfare and labour rights. Following the progressive tightening of immigration regulations, only those who have citizenship status are free to work and access welfare. The rest, including irregulars, but also students and those holding various visas, need to comply with strict requirements and regulations. In this sense, when confronted with these limitations, many Latin Americans fall into irregular practices or "semi-compliance" (Anderson, 2008). These include not only residing without documents, but also working longer hours than allowed by the legal status acquired, or even receiving benefits to which people are not entitled. Moreover, in some cases people who are entitled to welfare apply for benefits that harm their dependants' future

citizenship applications.

With respect to migrants' host country language acquisition, and leaving aside individual intellectual capacities, studies have identified three distinctive factors in determining how easily migrants can access English language classes: opportunities, cost, and motivation (Esser, 2006). This study has taken a detailed look into Latin Americans' motivation focusing on a sector finding difficulties accessing mainstream services, by focusing on those who are actively seeking help (i.e. those approaching a Latin American community organisation for various reasons). In doing so, this research has gathered information about migrants' reasons for wanting or not wanting to study English, experiences of language learning, as well as affective factors influencing these practices.

The surveys showed high levels of motivation among people with low levels of achievement in terms of language learning, and further identified several ways in which the language barrier affects migrants' lives. These findings support the hypothesis that migrants' lack of English language knowledge is not necessarily linked to a lack of motivation. Notably, among people with very little English language knowledge, the instrumental motivation of improving one's own employment situation was not the predominant motivating factor. In contrast, and reflecting the group's general situation of disempowerment, other types of motivation, such as an interest in knowledge and communication, appeared to be equally if not more relevant.

In addition, these findings indicate that poor language learning achievement among Latin Americans should be explained by factors other than motivation. In fact, survey results suggest that poor language skills are associated with a combination of factors that distinguish the target group from the structural characteristics of the host society. Among these, the poor conditions of work offered by the cleaning and catering sectors of London's labour market emerged as particularly important.

In terms of the opportunities for host country language learning, this research found that although ESOL provision is made available through numerous educational institutions and projects within a number of organisations, including most Latin American community organisations, accessibility is greatly limited by ESOL funding policy. Over the years, ESOL provision has been linked with increasingly restrictive immigration policies. Currently, funding is provided to 'priority groups', which are those on active benefits, although funding may be allocated to specific groups identified locally by service providers. While low-pay workers may be partially funded (BIS, 2011), these do not qualify for automatic fee remission. Considering the fact that most

Latin American migrants are employed and that "despite the large concentration of Latin Americans in low paid and temporary jobs, only 1 in 5 [receive] some form of state benefit or assistance" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 95), ESOL funding policy significantly overlooks the situation of ethnic minority groups in low-pay jobs, as is often the case of Latin Americans.

On the other hand, as entitlement to benefits depends on immigration status, ESOL funding for 'priority groups' is not defined by people's educational needs or circumstances, but largely by their legal status and entitlement. In line with the development of ESOL as an immigration issue rather than an educational matter (Williamson, 2009), its funding policy and requirements have been aligned with the requirements of different immigration processes. Following recent changes to the immigration system and ESOL funding policy, ESOL knowledge is now mandatory for many non-EU-migrants to secure residency or dependant status, while residency or dependant statuses are required in order to access ESOL funding. Non-EU workers and students residing in the UK thus find themselves trapped between the need to learn English to avoid falling into irregular status, but lacking access to ESOL provision as they are not considered 'priority groups'. For those working towards gaining British citizenship, regardless of their interest in learning, the cost of language learning has thus become an obstacle when trying to secure legal status in the UK.

In line with the predominant approach, many of the issues considered in this study, such as the affective variables and social elements affecting language learning – all matters that are intrinsic to second language education in an immigration context – are absent in ESOL funding policy, and frequently missing from debates about language and migration. This research demonstrates that in the UK, English language acquisition is intertwined with issues of entitlement and ethnic inequalities. The relevance that contextual, emotive and social elements have in framing the linguistic situation of migrants demonstrates that the language barrier may be greatly dependent on the structural characteristics of the receiving context. As shown by this research, in the case of the UK, these include the immigration system, the labour market and the funding policy for ESOL.

In conclusion, by studying language as a social process immersed in a specific context, this research aims to provide a broader understanding of the issues affecting migrants' linguistic integration. In this sense, studies of the linguistic integration of migrants should depart from the view that language is embedded in the social practices of society and that host country language acquisition does not only depend

on migrants' ability and willingness to speak or learn the destination language, but also on their access to mainstream education provision, on their level of incorporation into the labour market, the types of jobs they are able to access, and on the immigration system which regulates their activities.

Conclusions

Latin American migrants in London present a heterogeneous picture in terms of educational background, linguistic skills and work experience. However, in general terms, it is a young, qualified community that experiences downward mobility in London (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

Their situation of marginalisation and discrimination in the labour market and their experiences of social exclusion are strongly related to their linguistic situation. English language knowledge influences migrants' position in the labour market, both directly and indirectly (Chiswick and Miller, 2002). Having sub-optimal levels of English language skills can have a strong effect in determining migrants' position in the labour market and their access to information and new opportunities. On one hand, it limits the types of jobs Latin Americans can do, while it also plays a role in allowing people to access other types of host country specific human capital, such as local qualifications and work experience. Not speaking English fluently leads people to fall into unregulated areas of the labour market. These provide few opportunities to learn English and, due to a demanding schedule and low pay, impede people's access to available ESOL courses.

Additionally, experiencing language difficulties in daily life may generate dependency and further complications for Latin American migrants and their families. It is also common to find feelings of isolation and powerlessness associated with this situation, which can affect people's wellbeing and create substantial obstacles to their social, cultural and structural integration. Within this framework, learning English is broadly recognised as a substantial issue for this community.

In line with the many ways in which language difficulties affect their lives, Latin Americans are motivated to learn English because they have a high regard for knowledge, for integrative and instrumental reasons. Their learning experiences, however, are sometimes marked by feelings of embarrassment, fear and low self-esteem, which seem to be strongly linked to the legal and social status associated with their experiences of downward mobility.

When looking at Latin Americans' poor conditions in the labour market, it must

be stressed that even though not speaking the local language can create many relative disadvantages for this group, the ability to speak English does not ensure a solution to underemployment by itself. When studying why many Latin Americans are stuck in the low-pay sectors of London's labour market, it is necessary to take into account the general functioning of unregulated areas of the labour market and the important impact the different legal statuses have in shaping migrants' employment access and opportunities.

This chapter shows the importance of considering language when studying new migrants' situation in the host society, taking into account people's levels of fluency, but also the many affective and social aspects involved in language learning. In this sense, the analysis of the experiences of the linguistic situation of Latin American migrants in London shows that host country language acquisition greatly depends on structural factors that are beyond the cost and availability of ESOL courses, such as labour market exploitation and the immigration system, issues on which individuals' motivation and interest in learning and integrating have little effect.

In this sense, many of the factors that determine the success of English language acquisition among this new migrant community in London are strongly linked to the socio-economic context of migrants, such as the ability to afford course fees, but most importantly having the time to attend classes. In this sense, the study of language and migration should not only focus on the linguistic situation and motivation to learn among migrants, but also on the strong influence of structural factors, including the labour market situation, the host country's immigration system and ethnic inequality.

Chapter 6

Campaigning for recognition: a debate about identity and integration

As addressed in Chapter 5, a lack of host country language knowledge among migrants can have a dramatic impact on their economic and social situation (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002), which in turn may affect their self-confidence and wellbeing. Due to the language barrier, many qualified Latin Americans end up in poorly paid, unregulated areas of work, such as cleaning, hospitality and catering. These jobs offer extremely poor working conditions where situations of exploitation and discrimination are endemic (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

The analysis presented in the previous chapter, of the combined effect that the current labour market situation, ESOL funding policy, and immigration law have on Latin Americans' linguistic situation in the UK, demonstrated the impact that factors from the broader context may have on migrants' English language acquisition. In spite of expressing high levels of motivation to learn the local language, the interplay of powerful contextual factors leave Latin American migrants stuck in a vicious circle of poverty and lack of access to English language provision, experiencing poor access to information, public services and the welfare system (McIlwaine et al., 2011): a situation that remains widely unnoticed by decision-makers and service providers. This is happening in spite of the growing size and history of the Latin American community of London.

Latin Americans have been part of London for over 40 years. The first flows of Latin American migrants came to settle in the UK in the late 1960s. This initial group was mainly made up of Chileans and Argentines; however, it also included small groups of Bolivians (Sveinsson, 2007) and Colombians (Cock, 2009). During the following decades, Latin Americans from other countries, especially Brazilians, Peruvians, Bolivians and Ecuadorians, have continued to come to the UK for various reasons, but mainly due to political and economic instability (Carlisle, 2006; Cock, 2009; McIlwaine et al., 2011).

Although this community has decades of history in London, there is still little known about Latin Americans in the UK as there is no reliable official statistical data on the size or characteristics of this group. This problem has been identified throughout the years both by academics and non-governmental organisations (Cock, 2009; James, 2005; IRMO, 2011; George, 2008; McIlwaine, 2007; 2011, McIlwaine et al., 2011; Sveinsson, 2007; LARC, 2011).

This chapter will reflect on how the ethnic minority population of London is monitored and the impact that this process has on the groups that are not yet included. It will review the limited information available on Latin Americans, acknowledging the particular difficulties their composition brings to statistical research and analysis as a highly heterogeneous, new migrant group. It will also analyse the activities and debates that are taking place among Latin Americans in London in order to overcome this issue, namely a process that reflects both the invisibility imposed on the community by the lack of information. These issues will be considered in the context of the intrinsic limitations of ethnic monitoring in super-diverse London.

The origin of the Latin American community of London

The first flows of Latin American migrants started coming to the UK, and particularly to London, during the 1970s, fleeing dictatorships in South America, particularly those of Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. The literature also reports small numbers of Bolivians and Colombians settling in London since the late 1960s (Cock, 2009; Sveinsson, 2007).

This initial group of Latin Americans was less numerous than more recent flows of migrants who have been the main focus of attention for charity organisations and academic research. However, the commitment and activism of these first groups of political exiles was of major importance for the formation of the Latin American community currently residing in London. This is because most of the Latin American

organisations that now provide services for migrants in London were either set up by political refugees from this period or resulted from their initiatives (Bermudez Torres, 2010).

Political refugees and migrants from the 1970s set up a number of solidarity campaigns and community organisations that aimed to support victims of repressive governments in different Latin American countries. Although many of these groups were formed in order to generate awareness of the situation in specific countries, they occasionally joined forces to demonstrate against political persecution in the region. These circumstantial alliances represented the first, though often informal and fragile, solidarity networks between activists from different Latin American countries (Bermudez Torres, 2010). With time, this group started running community organisations that aimed to assist recently arrived migrants, establishing the foundations of many of the current Latin American community organisations (Bermudez Torres, 2010; Cock, 2009).

Although these are now consolidated registered charities, the process of their formation was often unplanned, encouraged by contextual circumstances. In many cases, these were initially set up as demonstrating campaigns. According to Pablo, a Colombian man met through fieldwork who participated in several campaigns and community initiatives over his 40 years of activism, the Solidarity Campaign for Colombia was formed by a group of Colombian migrants who were supporting Chilean protesters while Pinochet was under arrest in London from October 1998 until March 2000. According to this respondent, witnessing and supporting Chileans in their demands for justice was what encouraged this group to raise their own solidarity campaign. With the development of these connections and the growth of the community, these groups dropped their national focus and progressively transformed into organisations that now assist the wider Latin American community. CARILA represents an interesting example of how these community organisations emerged.

Together with IRMO and LAWRS, CARILA is one of the most trusted organisations for Latin Americans (McIlwaine, 2007). It is located in Seven Sisters, Islington, which is one of the seven areas of highest Latin American concentration in London (McIlwaine et al., 2011). CARILA stands for Campaign Against Repression in Latin America'. It was funded by British activists and Latin American exiles, mainly Chileans, in 1977. Originally, it was a shop:

> "It was a store that sold cultural products: handbags, books in
> Spanish, things from Central America, Nicaragua, El Salvador,
> some pre-Columbian items from Colombia and Peru, and there

> was protest music of Silvio Rodriguez and Mercedes Sosa. It
> was a store for the Latin Americans here" (Alma's interview).

CARILA staff member, Alma explains that as the Latin American community started growing, a collective was built in collaboration with a few other Latin American groups. This collective was called the Latin American Welfare Group and was mainly made up of human rights campaigners who were running their activities in different offices of the same building. The collective included "the Central America Solidarity Group, Group Support of Peru, Colombia, Argentina and Uruguay and the Centre of Help for Cuba, and the Committee for Human Rights of Paraguay" (McIlwaine, 2007: 6). This collective represented the origin of CARILA:

> "People would start going to the store asking about housing, English classes, etc. They were coming more and more, so in 1985 CARILA received funding to have an assessor and eventually a coordinator. In 1985 the Latin American Welfare Group, which provides assessment in housing, rights and benefits, started running officially" (Alma's interview).

As is the case with CARILA, other Latin American organisations have a similar history of political activism (Bermudez Torres, 2010; McIlwaine, 2007). For example, the Latin American Women Rights Services (LAWRS), founded in 1983, "was also established by a group of women who had also been active in the solidarity movements of the 1970s" (McIlwaine, 2007: 6), while IRMO was initially organised as a campaign called *Chile Democrático* (Democratic Chile) in 1985.

This initial flow of Latin American migrants was followed by another "wave of migration of people displaced by conflict", particularly from Colombia (Carlisle, 2006: 236). During this period, and until the 1980s, most people arrived in London through a work permit scheme that allowed them to work in unskilled jobs, such as cleaning and catering. During this period, the UK received between 4,000 and 10,000 Colombian workers (Bermudez Torres, 2010). This group was subsequently followed by their families in chain migration (Cock, 2009; McIlwaine, 2007; Sveinsson, 2007). Since then, Latin American migration has mainly consisted of people escaping political instability and economic crises (Carlisle, 2006; Cock, 2009; McIlwaine et al., 2011).

As discussed in previous chapters, the increasingly restrictive policies implemented in the migration system, including the increases in work regulation and entry requirements, have "slammed-shut" (Wils et al., 2009: 258) many of the routes previously available for authorised migration from regions like Latin America. Perhaps the most dramatic example is that of asylum seekers. Although it is still legally possible

for Latin Americans to apply for political or humanitarian asylum, the introduction of policies oriented towards the reduction of asylum claims has made it virtually impossible to do so.

As Nigel Harris (2002) points out, in the last two decades immigration countries have started to extend the control of their borders to foreign countries, where visas and permits are prerequisites to board a plane. This is common practice in Latin American countries and, as a result, it is now virtually impossible for asylum seekers to get on a plane without having legal permission to enter the UK. Whereas a person may apply for refugee status once arrived if, "for example, [they] have entered the country illegally or legally on a student, visitor or business visa" (Refugee Council website, 2009), these types of visas are often rejected and applications require a great deal of time and money. In this sense, permits are often not accessible in urgent circumstances.

In addition, community workers argue that asylum seekers are now required to provide more documentation than ever before in order to prove that they are victims of a life-threatening situation in their countries of origin. A member of IRMO's Legal Advice team stressed that many of the people who are presently staying irregularly would have been granted refugee status only years ago. In this sense, the discouragement of asylum claims through the implementation of more restrictive policies plays a significant part in forcing people into other statuses, including irregularity (Anderson, 2010).

In spite of this, the UK has continued to receive increasing numbers of Latin American migrants, becoming "one of the fastest-growing migrant groups in the UK" (Bermudez Torres, 2010: 78; McIlwaine, 2007; McIlwaine et al., 2011). Although most Latin American migrants have traditionally travelled to the USA, many people opted to migrate to Europe, and particularly to Spain, as a consequence of the tightening of border controls that followed the 9/11 attacks on New York City in 2001 (Carlisle, 2006; Sveinsson, 2007). Sveinsson points out that in the case of Bolivians, this shift was also encouraged by "the unstable economic situation in Argentina", which had previously been the other main destination for this group of migrants (Sveinsson, 2007: 3).

In fact, the London-based Latin American migrant group is comparable in size to the Polish migrant group (122,000), and the Chinese ethnic migrant population (111,500) and "is around two-thirds the estimated size of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic groups around 170,000" (McIlwaine et al., 2010: 29). It should also be noted that the latest Latin American immigration flows included a larger number of

irregulars and holders of European passports.

The different patterns of Latin American immigration into the UK illustrate the impact immigration and asylum policies have in determining who is able to enter the UK and through which path. Over the course of only 40 years, the UK has closed most doors to non-EU workers and asylum seekers, and is moving towards even more restrictive rules for student and dependent visa holders. In other words the poor, the low skilled and the needy are being left behind in what Liz Fekete calls the "new socio-economic Darwinism" of "Managed Migration" (Fekete, 2001: p. 3).

In relation to this, the Latin American community presents a wide range of statuses, with 25 per cent having British citizenship; 19 per cent having EU passports; 19 per cent unauthorised migrants; 11 per cent with residency status (Indefinite Leave to Remain or Exceptional Leave to Remain); 11 per cent student visas holders; and 9.6 per cent with either tourist, marriage or other types of visas (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, "the presence of these groups can clearly be seen and felt on the streets of London. Cafés, bars, clubs and restaurants run by Latin Americans are steadily on the increase; money transfer agencies catering to Colombians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians, etc." (Sveinsson, 2007: 1); yet this community has remained largely invisible. As happens with other new migrant groups in London (Sveinsson, 2010), there are no reliable statistics about Latin Americans. The nature, causes and important consequences of this invisibility are discussed in the sections below.

Statistical data and visibility

As noted above, Latin Americans have been settling in London for over 40 years; however, there is still much about them that remains unknown, as there are no reliable official statistics about the population's size or characteristics. Indeed, the estimates provided in the literature vary greatly. James (2005) reports that according to the 2001 Census, there were 2,301 people born in Ecuador residing in London. However, there were between 30,000 and 75,000 Ecuadorians according to NGO and community organisations; and 70,000 according to the Ecuadorian Consulate (James, 2005). Sveinsson (2007) reports a total of 525 Bolivians in London according to the 2001 Census; "around 10,000" according to the Bolivian embassy; while following "calculations based on remittances sent to Bolivia from London, there are 15–20,000 Bolivians living in London, the majority of whom have arrived in the last 5 years." (Sveinsson, 2007: 1). Quotes for Colombians go from 26,000 to 150,000 (Cock, 2009).

In terms of the community as a whole, according to the 2001 Census there were only 46,325 Latin Americans living in London (McIlwaine, 2007). On the other hand, Carlisle (2006) quotes figures "from 85,000 to 150,000" (Carlisle, 2006: 237), yet there are also estimates of 500,000 (Però, 2008b), while "other estimates suggest that there are between 700,000 and 1 million Latin Americans in the UK" (McIlwaine, 2010: 285). These wild discrepancies are largely explained by the fact that the 2001 Census could not have accounted for the large flows of migrants who arrived during the 10 years following the Census (McIlwaine et al., 2011) and for the large percentages of irregular migrants (James, 2005).

A recent report on the community provides an estimate of 113,500 Latin Americans in London (McIlwaine et al., 2011). According to this report, the Latin American community of London has increased nearly four-fold between the years 2001 and 2008, growing from 31,211 to 113,500 people, making it one of London's significant new migrant communities[7]. This process is largely explained by the arrival of Latin American EU passport holders, many of whom have migrated from within Europe, pushed by the economic crisis. In fact, "among all migrants who had arrived in the last 5 years, 1 in 5 came via Spain" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 43). However, community workers met through fieldwork stressed the fact that the community continues to grown significantly.

The estimate provided in said report also accounts for irregular migrants and for a portion of second generation Latin Americans, each representing one fifth of the total. The total estimate was therefore produced by combining three components which corresponded to regular, irregular and second generation Latin Americans respectively[8] (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

The Annual Population Survey (APS) enables the formulation of an estimate of the number of regular Latin Americans because its datasets are updated quarterly. This survey retrieves data from the Labour Force Survey and from a sample survey conducted with economically active individuals. The authors explain that the APS was chosen over other sources that provide less reliable information, such as the International Passenger Survey (IPS), which can provide data on the flows of people arriving and leaving, but not residing in the UK. Administrative data sources, such as the Home Office, the Department for Work and Pensions, the National Health Service

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[7] This data corresponds to the year 2008.
[8] The subdivision of the group into regular, irregular and second generation Latin Americans seems to be in accordance with the compartmented way in which the information is presented in the sources used.

(NHS) and the Department for Education and Skills as well as National Insurance Number (NINo) records, were discarded, as this type of data "only covers those individuals who use the services and [doesn't account for] those leaving the country" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 20).

On the other hand, as it is "assumed [that] irregulars have an incentive to remain hidden and that the APS contains no irregulars in this estimate", this sub-estimate was based on the 2009 Greater London Authority (GLA) report on irregular migrants, which was prepared by the London School of Economics (LSE). The GLA report presents an estimate of irregular people for the year 2007, while the projection of this figure provided a central estimate of 442,000 undocumented people in London in 2008. In this sense, to calculate how many of these are Latin Americans, "the share of Latin Americans as a proportion of all non-EU foreign-born people in London was applied to the GLA/LSE's updated estimate", which resulted in a central estimate of 17,100 for the year 2008. (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 24).

Finally, the sub-estimate of the second generation of Latin Americans was calculated using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data on the number of live births by year and the mother's country of birth, which is available for the period 2002—2008 (data for previous years was extrapolated using a linear trend). However, this data presents a few problems: it "does not account for deaths, people leaving the UK or children born of Latin American fathers with non Latin American mothers"; nor does it cater for those born in other parts of the UK who migrated into London. In order to discount the people moving out of London, 0 per cent, 10 per cent and 20 per cent parameters were applied to the lower, central and upper estimates respectively, which produced a central estimate of 17,200 second generation Latin Americans for the year 2008 (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 26).

As can be deduced from the above, calculating the scope of Latin American community through existing available data is extremely difficult. Given the fact that a large percentage of the Latin American community is not registered, whether it is because people prefer to make use of their UK/EU passports or because they have no papers and therefore cannot register their activities, data on the Latin American community can only be estimated with considerable speculation.

This inconsistency and lack of reliable statistical data about this community makes it invisible in many ways. Latin Americans are an invisible migrant group because of the high proportions of irregular migrants and the types of work in which they are engaged (McIlwaine, 2007); the result is their subsequent "lack of 'ethnic'

status" (Bermudez Torres, 2010) and lack of acknowledgment in "policy terms" (McIlwaine, 2010). The language barrier and the lack of recognition as a minority group mean that people are consequently unable "to claim rights" (Carlisle, 2006: 243):

> "While the numerous Latin groups are highly visible as participants of and contributors to the everyday life of London, they remain both hidden and unrecognised in political, economic and social discourse" (Sveinsson, 2007: 1).

In other words, Latin Americans have not yet been acknowledged as a collective political actor in London. In the framework of policies that encourage a cohesive, single society, which overlooks the particular needs of the different ethnic communities, there seems to be little hope of this situation changing in the near future.

Ethnic monitoring and minority status

Statistical data on ethnic groups is gathered in the UK through ethnicity monitoring. The information retrieved through the National Census every 10 years is updated regularly with the data gathered through the different institutions that produce the ethnic questionnaires for national censuses. This information is intended to provide enough information for the development of programmes targeted at improving situations of disadvantage in relation to access to work, services and discriminative practices (Sillitoe and White, 1992; Dobbs et al., 2006).

The ethnicity question was first introduced in the National Census in 1991. However, its history dates back to the 1950s, when large flows of migrants from new Commonwealth countries started arriving in the UK during the country's post-war reconstruction boom. "The resulting competition for scarce jobs led not only to considerable racial discrimination but to political demands to limit numbers", making immigration control and race relations important matters on Britain's political agenda (Bulmer, 1986: 472). This is how, in 1962, in order to control the numbers of people coming from the West Indies, East Africa and Asia, the government introduced the Commonwealth Immigration Bill which put restrictions on the entry and settlement of Commonwealth migrants (O'Keeffe, 2003). On the other hand, legislation intended to improve the state of race relations was also introduced by successive governments.

Up until 1971, it was possible for the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) to use data on own or parents' birthplace for this purpose, as most people were first or second generation migrants. However, the reliability of this method

decreased dramatically with the growth of the third generation. To tackle this matter, in 1975, the OPCS carried out a series of sample surveys to develop a direct ethnicity question that would suit the local population in terms of demographic characteristics and acceptability. These surveys tested the effectiveness of different categories by asking people about their race, ethnicity and origin. However, people feared that the data would be used to impose further limitations to migrants' already difficult conditions and were therefore less cooperative in their responses (Bulmer, 1986; Sillitoe and White, 1992).

For this reason, the 1981 Census did not include an ethnicity question and failed to provide reliable information on minority groups[9]. Finally, after another period of sampling, it was decided that a direct question about ethnicity would be included in the 1991 Census in England, Scotland and Wales, which was then extended in 2001 to the entire UK territory (Bosveld and Connolly, 2006). The categories included in the 1991 Census were: "White", "Black-Caribbean", "Black-African", "Black-Other" (space provided to specify), "Indian", "Pakistani", "Bangladeshi", "Chinese", "Any Other Ethnic Group" (space provided to specify), (Bosveld and Connolly, 2006). Finally, the 2011 Census rephrased some of the existing categories and included two additional ones "Gypsy or Irish Traveller" and "Arab" (ONS, 2009).

As noted, it took decades of tests and debates to develop the ethnicity question. According to Blumer, this difficulty was partly due to the controversial nature of race debates. On the other hand, the methodology has also been questioned because of its lack of "conceptual clarity", in the sense that classification of people in subjective characteristics such as "race" or "ethnicity" provides data of an "ineluctable fuzziness" (Kruskal as cited in Blumer, 1986: 476).

Overall, ethnic categories appear in official forms in order to gather the necessary data to monitor minorities, to combat exclusion and inequality, and "to identify diversity issues and the need for positive action" (*About the 1991 Census*, ONS website). This is why, when filling out forms, whether it is while filling out the Census or applying for a visa, a course of study, or a job vacancy, a question on ethnicity is often asked. However, when coming from Latin America, it is usually not an easy one to answer, as there are Native Americans, whites, blacks, Asian, and Latin Americans whose ethnicities are made up of any possible combination of those backgrounds. It should be therefore expected that answers to questions on ethnicity

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[9]   Other reasons included: budget limitations and the authorities' concerns with respect to putting the whole purpose of the census at risk by provoking the scepticism and hostility of the population.

will differ greatly, and it can thus be concluded that the current ethnic categorisations in the UK do not account for Latin Americans[10]

> "One of the big difficulties that Latin Americans in the UK and obviously in London in particular have is that there aren't very good statistics about how many Latin Americans there are here [...] when they fill any form in about ethnic background, they go right through a very long list of possibilities and they are nowhere to be seen and then they have no choice but to tick the box at the bottom that says 'other'. Which means that if there is no recorded statistics about who is here, how many are here, are they elderly, are they young, then it wouldn't be surprising, would it? if there aren't services provided which are targeted at assisting these people" (George, 2008).

As ethnic monitoring through statistical data allows government and local authorities to allocate resources efficiently, a community that is not quantified is not statistically visible and therefore cannot receive official support by identifying situations of inequality, nor can its particular needs be addressed. In this sense, because of how information on minorities is gathered in the UK, the level of exclusion and discrimination experienced by the Latin American community is not being monitored. In other words, when it comes to improving the conditions of minority groups in the UK, Latin Americans are not considered.

To overcome this situation, two campaigns have emerged in the past two years in the voluntary sector of London's Latin American community with the goal of gaining recognition for the community as an ethnic minority. Latin Americans are neither the only, nor the first community to demand monitoring. The experience of the Irish community, the first recognised 'white' ethnic minority group in the country, has set a precedent for a similar path to gaining recognition. Until an Irish category was included in 2001, this group was included under 'white', which meant that their particular situations of marginalisation were being overlooked.

In her studies of the Irish community of London, O'Keeffe explains that since Ireland had withdrawn from the Commonwealth in 1922, the Commonwealth Immigration Bill of 1962 no longer applied to Irish migrants. Neither did further legislation, as according to the Ireland Act (1949), they were "still to be treated with the same rights as British citizens". According to the author, Irish migrants were excluded from migration controls as it was considered that "they would integrate much more

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[10] Latin American people may identify with the categories "Mixed origins", "Other", as well as with any of the categories that include racial terms. People are also said to often make the mistake of ticking the category "'Indian'", as this word is commonly used to refer to Native American groups (*Análisis Global*, 2009).

easily, sharing the same skin colour and language" of the local population (O'Keeffe, 2003: 34).

In this sense, O'Keeffe states that "the exclusion of the Irish from immigration controls has contributed to their invisibility and to the myth that racism concerned only those minorities visibly different from the mainstream population" (O'Keeffe, 2003: 38) In Mary Hickman's terms, there was a "'forced inclusion' of the Irish within a 'myth of homogeneity' which developed in Britain from the 1950s onwards" (Hickman, 1998: 288). Although Irish people were facing substantial disadvantages and discrimination, their plight was ignored as they were considered 'the same' as the British. The invisibility of the Irish community was therefore 'constructed' (O'Keeffe, 2007). In her text *The Irish in post-war Britain – What kind of representation?*, O'Keefe states that:

> "monitoring of the Irish community is needed as Irish-born people are statistically more likely to be socially disadvantaged, experience high levels of physical and mental health problems and long-term disability and are also over represented as users of psychiatric services" (O'Keeffe, 2007: 8).

Problems of isolation, unemployment, lack of housing, homelessness and mental health are, according to the author, strongly related to anti-Irish stereotypes "fuelled by anti- [Irish Republican Army] IRA fears", which stem from the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974 and the consequent Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act, which according to Prof. Paddy Hillyard "constructed the Irish as 'suspected people'" (O'Keeffe, 2003: 35). Notably, discrimination was also linked to language, as the Irish accent was represented in the media as an 'inferior' form of English. Their demand to be considered a separate ethnic group responded to their need to monitor their access to the different spheres of social life and lessen their marginalisation.

In response to this situation, the Federation of Irish Societies (FIS), followed by the Irish voluntary sector, started lobbying for the recognition of the community as a distinct ethnic minority group in the UK. As a result of their work, a number of councils started counting their Irish population during the 1990s, and by 2001, a category for the "Irish", a national identity, was included in the UK Census for the first time, along with four other 'mixed' ethnic categories: "Mixed White and Black Caribbean", "Mixed White and Black African", "Mixed White and Asian" and "Other Mixed". These mixed categories reflect how group identities are subject to change in accordance to the development of society (Dobbs et al., 2006).

Another important tool introduced to monitor the situation of minorities was the

inclusion of a voluntary religious question in the 2001 Census, which provided several categories, namely "Buddhists", "Hindus", "Jewish", "Muslims", and "Sikhs". Prior to the inclusion of this question, these groups were also "concealed within all-encompassing social categories in the Census" (Graham et al., 2007: 16).

Some religious organisations were active in their support of the question, such as the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, which welcomed the ONS decision and collaborated with the analysis of the data on British Jews. However, the inclusion of this question has also raised extensive debate, dealing with sensitive issues such as personal privacy, and the level of government's control over information and religious freedom. The main reasons for opposing the inclusion were that, given the voluntary nature of the question and the fact that it is a self-identifying question, it would fail to accurately reflect the religious landscape; it was also seen as a violation of European human rights law in its protection of the personal sphere and an exaggeration of control by governmental institutions that resembled that of Nazi-occupied Europe (Graham et al., 2007; Piggott and Lewis, 2006).

Nevertheless, though in a rather ambiguous way[11], the decision to include enquiries about religion in the Census is was based on the fact that information about religion had been routinely gathered both in other countries and in the UK through the NHS and the armed forces, without leading to increased discrimination and/or oppressive actions from governments. It was also considered that it would allow religious groups to become visible; provide better data to the health service for the appropriate distribution of resources; and allow governments to better measure situations of disadvantage and the effectiveness of equal opportunity programmes (Graham et al., 2007).

Regarding the lack of accuracy of the data, it is argued that it is an intrinsic problem of any census to fail to mirror reality in its complexity. It is true, however, that a self-identifying voluntary question about religion brings the additional difficulties of having to deal with the different interpretation of 'belonging', which is also subject to change, as a person is not necessarily fixed to any identity; it also leads to greater chances of people not responding. Nonetheless, according to the authors (Graham et al., 2007; Dobbs, Green and Zealey, 2006; Piggott and Lewis, 2006), and in light of previous research on the Jewish community based on surveys, the data provided by the Census should be regarded as the most comprehensive, sophisticated data that it

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[11] The question 'What religious group do you belong to?' can be subject to various interpretations. For instance, there is an ethnic dimension to Judaism, whereby some people may feel ethnically Jewish without identifying with the Jewish religion (Graham et al., 2007).

is possible to gather on the selected religious groups. In this sense, Dobbs et al. (2006) argue that:

> "these groups by no means capture all of the ethnic and religious diversity within the UK […] Measurement of ethnic and religious identity must take account of practical issues surrounding data collection and presentation. [Also,] numbers in many groups would be too small for reliable analysis" (Dobbs et al., 2006: 2).

Moreover, the fact that people may identify with different groups makes it methodologically impossible to fully account for every group. For instance, a person that ticks "White other" may also feel ethnically Jewish and yet not identify with any religion. In this sense, the authors mentioned above argue that each category simplifies the within-group diversity and that not every group is significantly big and different enough to be counted.

At the moment, a sector of the Latin American community of London is seeking the inclusion of their own category in ethnic monitoring, following the path of these minority groups. Over the past two years, the voluntary sector of the community has been organised around two campaigns aiming for the recognition and inclusion of an ethnic category for Latin Americans in ethnic monitoring in the UK.

The processes and influencing factors leading to the emergence of 'Latin American' as a collective identity based on ethnicity, including internal practices as well as historical and contextual elements, will be addressed in Chapter 7. The following section will compare the causes and expected outcomes relating to the Latin American plight for recognition with the experiences of the Irish community.

Latin Americans in London and their struggles for recognition

According to the Trust for London report (McIlwaine et al., 2011), two thirds of Latin Americans migrated into London after the year 2000, which suggests that Latin Americans are one of London's 'new' migrant' groups. According to the report, Latin Americans are young (average age 36), well educated, employed, and live in different areas of the city, with concentrations in the boroughs of Southwark and Lambeth. It is significant that "migration to London involves a marked decline in occupational status for the vast majority of Latin Americans" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 59). Through questions about migrants' last job in their home country, first job upon arrival and current job in the UK, the study shows that although some mobility is possible, it is

usually very limited. For 70 per cent of the people surveyed, their first employed position in London was in an unskilled job although very few were engaged in this type of work in their home country. The study states that this figure drops to 40 per cent with regards to 'current job', which implies that a sector of the community does experience some mobility. However, it "is often restricted to different jobs from those held back home". Moreover, most Latin Americans work in low-skilled jobs (55 per cent) and over a fifth work in an irregular status, "which implies that basic rights and benefits such as sick pay and annual leave are being denied to many workers" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 52).

As reviewed in Chapter 5, there is also extensive evidence of the many challenges Latin Americans currently face in London, including exploitation and discrimination. These issues appear to affect people regardless of their legal status. In this sense, the Trust for London report demonstrates that having EU citizenship or residence status, does not allow Latin Americans to overcome discrimination, as 60 per cent of second generation Latin Americans, all holders of EU citizenship or residential status, claim to be facing discrimination at school (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

In summary, and very much in line with the very reason for there to be an ethnic and a religious question in the Census, the situations of exclusion and disadvantage outlined above have led the Latin American community to seek acknowledgement as a minority group. Interestingly, although this migrant community first arrived during the 1970s, these debates have only gained support very recently. This may be explained by the fact that most people started coming after 2001. In fact, "the population growth has been nearly four-fold among Latin Americans in London since 2001" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 15).

On the other hand, there are of course other elements that have undoubtedly contributed to the intensification of debates about recognition, such as the fact that immigration policies have made it progressively harder for migrants to secure legal status (Anderson, 2008; 2010). There are also the many consequences of the 2008 economic crisis and the subsequent cuts to government spending, which have had significant effects on migrants' lives. They have, for example, restricted their access to welfare funds, while simultaneously imposing substantial restrictions on the work of migrant organisations that now face an exponentially more difficult funding market. The relevance of these issues for the understanding of the emergence of a Latin American ethnic identity will be further discussed in the following chapter.

The first documented group that sought the recognition of Latin Americans as an

ethnic minority in the UK was called Latin Front, an initiative described by Però (2008c) as a "collective and inclusive initiative by people of diverse political socialization, sensitivities, and identities" (Però, 2008c: 79). This group also campaigned for the regularisation of the irregular sector. The activism of this group helped the community gain more visibility and confidence. However, their success was greatly hindered by the fact that many Latin American organisations refused to support them, as they had "reservations about the LF's ambiguous political nature and the personal agenda and political affiliation of part of its leadership" (Però, 2008c: 81).

At the moment, there are two groups campaigning for the recognition of this community and the inclusion of Latin Americans in ethnic monitoring, which is expected to provide community workers and social organisations with enough reliable data to help push the most important matters of this community onto the agenda of policy and decision-makers.

One community, two campaigns

As mentioned above, a number of London-based organisations and community leaders have recently established two different recognition campaigns: *Alianza Iberoamericana de UK* (AIU) and the Latin American Recognition Campaign (LARC). Interestingly, although these two groups aim to gain recognition for this migrant group, they are currently running two separate, opposing campaigns. In this sense, based on the shared understanding that monitoring is of great importance to this community to, both campaigns focus on a common goal: getting a box for the community in London's and the UK's ethnic monitoring forms. Nevertheless, at the time of writing they are immersed in a debate about which category should be used and, more importantly, whom it should encompass.

The AIU's initiative started running as a campaign in November 2009 and aims to provide political representation for the community by calling for meetings and conferences with local authorities. Their slogan reflects their three main objectives, "Regularization, Respect and Recognition for the community". They currently campaign for the introduction of *Mes Amigo*, a London 'Iberoamerican' cultural month, and for the inclusion of the category 'Iberoamerican' in ethnic monitoring.

The coordinator of this campaign explains that the category 'Iberoamerican' encompasses "people from Latin America, the Iberian Peninsula and [Portuguese and Spanish-speaking] countries in Africa" (Bigio in *LatinTV*, 2010; my emphasis). According to the AIU, the main reason for this grouping is that Brazilians, who are the

biggest Latin American community in the UK, do not identify with the term 'Latin American'. Isaac Biggio, coordinator of the AIU, argues that Brazilians feel closer to other Portuguese speakers from countries like Angola or Portugal for "linguistic and cultural reasons", as they make up the local Portuguese-speaking community:

> "It is not possible to achieve recognition for our community if we divide ourselves by language (Spanish or Portuguese speakers) or by continent (old or new) because Spanish speaking people from the American continent socialise a lot with Brazilians and Spanish (also with the Portuguese and Angolans), and Brazilians feel strongly linked to Portuguese people and Portuguese speakers from Africa, as their country has 85% of all Portuguese speakers of the world[12]" (Biggio in *Análisis Global*, 2010).

Thus, in order to include the highest number of people possible and to be shown in the census as an ethnic group with "significant weight", the AIU proposes 'Iberoamerican' as the most suitable term (Bigio in *Análisis Global*, 2010):

> "Being a large number will give us a stronger electoral power, which will benefit our requests for regularization for undocumented people. If we know how many we are, we can then say how many votes we have, then we'll be able to participate in local politics and political parties will be interested in the issues that affect us. We need to demonstrate that we vote in order to gain respect." (Bigio in *Análisis Global*, 2010).

The AIU campaign argues that this grouping will bring important benefits for Latin Americans. As European citizens can vote in local government elections, being part of a larger group that includes all Spanish and Portuguese-speaking people would increase Latin Americans' electoral power. According to the AIU, this should also work to the advantage of the irregular sector, as they would become a minority within a powerfully represented group. On the other hand, the AIU argues that differences in legal status between people from Europe and Latin America should not be part of these debates, as "we shouldn't create an ethnicity based on migratory issues" (Bigio in *Análisis Global*, 2010):

> "In each region, ethnic groups define themselves following different criteria. Although in other regions people from the Andes and Brazilians might want to differentiate themselves, here in the UK we all belong to the same larger group, we are defined by the same aspects and we share many problems" (Bigio in Analisis Global, 2010; translation is mine).

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[12] Original text: No es posible reconocer a nuestra comunidad dividiéndonos en idiomas (españoles o portugueses) o por continentes (viejo o nuevo mundo) porque los hispanos de América socializamos mucho con los brasileros o españoles (y también portugueses y angolanos) y los brasileros se sienten muy ligados a los portugueses y luso-africanos pues su país tiene al 85% de los lusófonos del mundo.

The AIU's activities include strong lobbying activity with the GLA and participating in numerous demonstrations and Latin American public events. They have also held numerous meetings with community leaders and local authorities, developed strong links with various churches and contributed to the development of the Metropolitan Police Ibero-American Association'. They have run several events including various conferences, such as The Iberian American and Latino American and Caribbean Summit 2011 held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and the Gang Culture and Language' Conference held in September 2012 at Scotland Yard.

In opposition to these statements, the Latin Americans' Recognition Campaign' (LARC) started in April 2010 in support of the category 'Latin American' as the most suitable one for the community. The campaign was launched after the 'Are we Latin Americans or Ibero-Americans?' Conference at SOAS on 17 April 2010. Although they have focused on campaigning for the inclusion of the ethnic category in monitoring forms, their main objective is to achieve the official recognition of Latin Americans as an ethnic minority in the UK. In an interview conducted for this research, Chipana, one of LARC's members, explains the type of 'recognition' they seek:

> "[Recognition means] that [Latin Americans] appear in the forms, that we have representation, that we are considered in different levels – social, cultural – in the implementation of local policies of education, health [...] It means that Latin Americans are [considered] part of the community" (Chipana's interview).

LARC's perspective is centred on identity. According to Monica del Pilar Uribe, one of LARC's members and the Director of the London-based publication called *The Prisma Newspaper*, 'Iberoamerican' is merely a bureaucratic term, and not an existing identity. The journalist explains the position of the group in the following terms:

> "This is an ethnic issue, we need to refer to our ethnic background [...] we have a distinguishable identity, we come from indigenous communities, which should not be forgotten and should always be expressed" (del Pilar Uribe in *LatinTV*, 2010).

Chipana stressed that the campaign was born as a reaction to the proposals of the AIU and in defence of the value of the Latin American community. From his perspective, Latin Americans make up a distinguishable group with a common identity based on the shared history of the region:

> "What makes us Latin Americans is our history, there is no other aspect in particular that makes us Latin Americans, nothing related to a specific country, but the fact that we are

> unified by a historical reality. We come from a situation of common aspiration of our nations towards the independence or a more autonomous and sovereign development. We are also united, not only by our past, but also by our future, because we aspire the same, because we have the same threats, threats that are global and that also come from a common historical situation" (Chipana's interview).

On the other hand, he points out that this group of migrants is also brought together by issues linked to their experiences as migrants in London:

> "There are other reasons that are related to migratory issues. For example, the fact that we are Latin Americans implies that we are not Europeans. We don't have the same rights that the Europeans have […] We might be Spanish or Portuguese because we have the passport, but the fact that we have a cultural identity, also a linguistic identity, which also unites us" (Chipana's interview).

Thus, having a distinct 'cultural' and 'linguistic' identity, and not having "the same rights that the Europeans have" has created important differences between the two groups. In this sense, the campaign argues that the problems Portuguese and Spanish people experience in the UK differ greatly from those of the Latin American community, as EU citizens are not required to have work permits or visas: "there is a difference in terms of rights of living and permit to work between European Spanish or Portuguese speakers and Latin Americans" (*LatinTV*, 2010).

As a result, LARC argues, if Spanish and Portuguese speakers are all 'put in the same bag', the problem of Latin Americans' invisibility will persist. From this perspective, the category 'Iberoamerican' will not ensure recognition or monitoring of the Latin American community, while being monitored as a separate group would be the only way to address the struggles and needs of the community, and support the irregular sector.

LARC called for a public demonstration on 1 May 2010 and developed links with various organisations, formalising the support of eight Latin American associations: *Encuentros Latinoamericanos*, IRMO, Lambeth Spanish and Portuguese Speaking Communities Forum, LAWAS, LAWRS, LAYF, Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, and *The Prisma Newspaper.* It also became a member of three different umbrella organisations: Community Action Southwark, the Southwark Refugee Communities Forum and the Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK).

LARC has also participated in various cultural events to inform the community about their petition and gather signatures from supporters. They also ran a campaign

that promoted the political participation of Latin Americans in the London elections of May 2012 and ran a series of workshops in collaboration with the ONS and the Southwark Council during the 2011 Census period. The campaign also worked on increasing media coverage on the topic to generate awareness about the importance of recognition and to reach both Latin American and mainstream publications (see Plate 1 below).

Plate 2: Column from The Guardian about Latin Americans seeking recognition

The pressure exerted by other groups was also important for raising the profile of Latin Americans in mainstream media and politics. For instance, the pressure of the joint campaign *Latinos juntos con Ken*, led to the inclusion of the recognition for Latin Americans in Ken Livingston's campaign manifesto for the 2012 London elections.

At the moment, the progress made by the AIU and LARC is limited and rather

contradictory. On the one hand, in the first months of 2010, the AIU attended their first of two meetings with Richard Barnes, Deputy Major of London, and on 2 September they were received by Boris Johnson at the City Hall, where it was publicly announced that the community would soon gain recognition by the GLA (see Plate 2 below). In a letter addressed to the Director of LAWRS, dated 10 September 2010, Richard Barnes stated that: "After extensive consultation and weighing up all the available evidence, I have decided that the label for the additional category of ethnic origin will be Latin American/Iberian American" (Barnes, 2010). On 9 November 2010, the newspaper *El Latino Americano* informed:

> "From now on, in every (ethnic monitoring) form for Transport for London, the Olympic Committee and dependent entities of the largest European city, there is an ethnic box that reads Latin American/Iberian American[13]" (*El Latino Americano*, 2010; my translation is mine).

Following the announcement, LARC published a response to express their disagreement and according to LARC's members, during a meeting held at the City Hall on 6 May 2011, Richard Reddie and Terry Day from the GLA informed them that no category would be chosen without the community's consent. Nonetheless, in correspondence received in August 2012, LARC was informed by Richard Reddie that the GLA continued to support the 'Latin American/Iberian American' category. Nonetheless, this decision has not yet been implemented: the category is not included on the Transport for London (TFL) form or the Mayor of London's ethnic monitoring forms.

On the other hand, LARC has also focused their lobbying activities on developing links with Parliament and local authorities. In November 2011, various members of the campaign participated in a deputation to members of Southwark Council with representatives of three other Latin American organisations. In February 2012, Member of Parliament (MP) Jeremy Corbyn became an honorary member of the campaign and in September of the same year, the campaign ran the Latin American, Recognition and Inclusion Conference at the House of Commons (see Plate 2 below).

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[13] Original text: "A partir de ahora en todos los formularios del sistema de transporte del Gran Londres, del Comité Olímpico y de todas las entidades dependientes de la mayor comuna europea existe una casilla que dice Latin American/ Iberian American."

Plate 3: Latino Times announcing recognition for 'Iberian Latino Americans'

As a result of these campaign and lobby activities, and greatly aided by the active engagement of various organisations and informal groups, such as LAWRS, LAWAS, and the Gabriel García Márquez and Notre Dame schools, in September 2012 Southwark became the first council to officially recognise 'Latin Americans' as one of the borough's ethnic minorities and gave their commitment to include the category in their monitoring forms.

Plate 4: LARC's 'Latin Americans, Recognition and Inclusion' conference poster

Categories and self-identification

Overall, both groups have gained support from sectors of the community and various political authorities. However, because of the self-identifying nature of ethnic monitoring categories, even if one of these categories gains official recognition, the success of these initiatives would depend on the level of response from the community.

For the further consideration of this matter, it is relevant to revisit the experience of the Irish. As mentioned above, an Irish category was introduced in the 2001 Census for the first time. Notably, "the number of people who chose to tick this category was much less than expected" (O'Keeffe, 2006: 1). In clear contrast to the main argument of their campaigning, the community's low response rate questioned the existence of a distinguishable Irish identity. Following studies by Mary Hickman, O'Keeffe analyses some of the factors that may explain such unexpected results in relation to the different levels of identification fixed ethnic categories may generate.

On one hand, the author explains that Irish people have been affected by negative stereotypes linked to the IRA's violent acts mentioned above. Moreover, this misconception was also present in official discourse as evidenced by the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act which contributed to the perception of the Irish as 'suspicious community'. In this sense, for those "who came over in the 1950s or the 1960s, playing down their Irishness became a feature of their lives in England" (O'Keeffe, 2007: 2).

As these negative stereotypes were deeply rooted in public opinion, the Federation of Irish Societies distributed posters throughout Great Britain with the slogan "Feel Irish? Be Irish! Census 2011", through which "a very loose interpretation of Irish ethnicity was encouraged […] to bring together the maximum amount of people under the Irish ethnic umbrella" (O'Keeffe, 2007: 8). Reaching a large number of people was of primary importance not only to prove that a distinguishable Irish identity existed, but also to demonstrate that they represented a significant community in the UK.

On the other hand, in *To tick or not to tick* (2006), O'Keeffe explains that studies of second generation Irish children (those born to at least one Irish parent) have shown high levels of identification as "Irish-British". Through surveys conducted in Catholic schools, "it was found that they would feel Irish in situations in which this identity was salient and English in situations where that identity was most appropriate,

thus, favouring a *situational identity*" that was in line with their sense of belonging to both cultures (O'Keeffe, 2006: 8).

This "situational identity" can be partly explained by children's awareness of anti-Irish stereotypes, which were related to the difficult period that Northern Ireland was going through at the time and following the IRA's violent acts in England. In this sense, O'Keeffe (2006) states that on many occasions, people would "play down" their Irishness with the intention of merging with the English. Second generation Irish migrants, "being white and having English accents, have the option to choose which part of their identity they wish to make public". Following this data, the author states that "the choice of 'Irish' alone on the census form was too restrictive for those with hyphenated identities, who would feel that the 'Irish' category did not address them fully (O'Keeffe, 2006: 2).

In the case of Latin Americans, *No Longer Invisible* (McIlwaine et al., 2011) reports a high level of identification with a "British-Latino" category among second generation Latin Americans (23 out of 52). Although to a lesser extent, the study found that many also identified with the terms "Latin American" (11) and "Mestizo/Mixed" (10). On the other hand, the presence of 'hyphenated identities' may not be limited to second generation Latin Americans, as most first generation people have a European, African, native or mixed heritage, and may therefore identify with different ethnic categories, even if provided with one specific to their group.

The diversity of the responses outlined above is directly linked to the fact that Latin Americans are a highly heterogeneous group. In this sense, the call for identification with an ethnic category presents the AIU and LARC with the additional challenge of promoting a type of identification that overcomes national and racial serlf-identification. To tackle this issue, both groups have made substantial efforts to inform the community and promote their objectives. However, as demonstrated by the Irish case, a shared cultural origin is not the only factor influencing people's self-identification.

The challenges of political integration

Ethnic monitoring was introduced in the National Census in order to identify situations of exclusion, disadvantage and discrimination affecting ethnic minorities. The data collected through monitoring serves to develop programmes that aim to improve these situations and to allow authorities to efficiently allocate resources to this end (Sillitoe and White, 1992; Dobbs et al., 2006). However, as shown in this chapter,

ethnic monitoring fails to account for new migrant groups such as Latin Americans (Sveinsson, 2010).

The 10-year campaign activity of the Irish and their efforts for recognition demonstrate that discrimination and disadvantage are strong factors influencing people to collectively organise around shared identities. Similarly, the emergence of the Latin American recognition campaigns are strongly linked to the situation of exploitation experienced by a large sector of the community as well as their exclusion from public and private services. The efforts of these activists demonstrate that visibility and inclusion in ethnic monitoring continues to be of major importance for minorities in the UK and that although identity is evidently a powerful element in these debates, recognition is strongly linked to contextual factors which are largely determined by structural aspects of the host society.

As stressed in Chapter 5, language plays a significant role in this process, as it directly and indirectly influences the development of Latin Americans' economic and social situation in London. On the other hand, as analysed in Chapter 4, through its symbolic functions, language is an important factor for group identification. In this sense, language is also an important part of the identity debate in which these campaigns are engaged.

On one hand, the AIU's definition of the 'Iberoamerican' group follows a linguistic criterion. From their perspective, the use of the Spanish and Portuguese languages represents the element that glues the group together and allows it to develop a sense of commonness that overcomes differences of background, history, culture, status and rights. In contrast, LARC argues that the use of the Spanish and Portuguese languages should not be the determining criterion for the definition of the ethnic group, as many Indoamerican languages are also spoken by Latin Americans. In this sense, in an interview published in 2010, Chipana argues that in this debate "ethnicity is being confused with linguistic community […] and that dissimilar ethnicities are reduced to a single aspect: being 'ex-colonies of Portugal and Spain'" (del Pilar Uribe, 2010).

This discussion reflects the challenges of defining the identity of the Latin American community through the identification of a distinguishable characteristic that separates this group from the rest, a matter that will be considered in the following chapter. On the other hand, the fact that both positions receive the support of different sectors of the community reminds us that identification is contextual and fluid, and that individuals may identify with different categories and groups simultaneously (Parekh,

2000). It also draws attention to the methodological problem of using 'subjective categories' to monitor the population (Blumer, 1986), as the same group of people may respond differently to different names. Nonetheless, as noted above, this explicit and conscious debate about identity is motivated by clear practical outcomes.

In this sense, this process is greatly affected by the intrinsic limitations of the process of ethnic monitoring. As identified during participant observation work with LARC, decision-makers are often reluctant to include a new category in ethnic forms. Apart from the economic cost that the extension of the monitoring process would imply, the diversity of the current migratory landscape and the increasing emergence of mixed identities raise the question of whether it is possible to monitor everyone, and whether people can fit themselves into categories. In this sense, an information bulletin from the ONS gives a detailed discussion of the reasons for prioritising the inclusion of "Gypsy or Irish Traveller" and "Arab" in relation to another eight 'high profile groups': "African", "Black British", "Cornish", "Eastern European", "Jewish", "Kashmiri" and "Sikh". In addition, during the consultation period for the 2011 Census, "the ONS also received requests for additional tick-boxes for East African Asian, Greek/Greek Cypriot, Non-European White, Iranian, Kurdish, Latin American, Mixed: Black and Asian, Mixed: White and Chinese, Nepalese, Sri Lankan, Turkish/Turkish Cypriot and Vietnamese groups" (ONS, 2009: 28).

This process thus signals two very relevant issues for super-diverse London. On the one hand, it highlights the importance of visibility for minority groups, but at the same time it raises the question of whether it is possible to account for all existing groups through ethnic monitoring. There are thus practical and methodological limitations hindering the inclusion of new ethnic minorities in equality monitoring.

It is also important to stress that although the inclusion of an ethnic category for the group is of major importance as it would allow for the singling out of the problems affecting the community, the objectives of the campaigns are not limited to ethnic monitoring. In this sense, through these types of political engagement – which are increasingly important among migrants who do not participate in the voting system (Però, 2008a; 2008c; Però and Solomos, 2010) – these campaigns ultimately seek recognition for Latin Americans as a collective political actor. The objective is therefore to enable Latin Americans to be active participants influencing political processes in order to improve the conditions of the group.

In this sense, although migrants have traditionally been "treated as 'objects of policy' and not as political agents" (Però, 2008c: 76), these efforts demonstrate

adaptation to the local system and their "political agency and active collective engagement in the improvement of their conditions" (Però, 2008c: 73). In this sense, campaigning for recognition is not necessarily a celebration of the own culture but a strategy for political participation and a step towards the integration of Latin Americans. Organising around ethnicity thus becomes a strategy for accessing rights.

Conclusion

In response to an "overwhelming association of ethnicity and blackness in Britain" (O'Keeffe, 2007: 7), the campaigning of Federation of Irish Societies (FIS) brought to light the fact that sharing a similar physical appearance, legal status or the language of the locals, does not grant a fair integration. The experience of the Irish demonstrates the impact of negative stereotypes and migration policies for migrants and settled minority groups.

Although there are important aspects that distinguish the experiences of the Irish and Latin American migrant communities of the UK, such as time of settlement, historical and political linkage to the country, and linguistic and racial matters, both communities have turned to campaigning for their recognition as ethnic minorities in order to overcome the invisibility of their respective experiences of marginalisation. It should also be noted that they have both found it difficult to gain official support in their quest: the Irish provided consistent data and campaigned for over 10 years before they gained recognition; Latin Americans have only been granted limited support from the GLA, while recognition has been confined to only one London borough.

The arrival of 'new migrants' has made the set of ethnic categories that appear in the 1991 National Census monitoring forms insufficient to account for a more complex ethnic landscape. Although several categories of "Mixed" identity were progressively incorporated into the Census ethnic monitoring form, it continues to fail to acknowledge those who identify with more than one group; ethnic monitoring therefore fails to account for current diversity. This issue brings important challenges to the integration processes of these migrants. Considering the methodological and practical limitations of ethnic monitoring, it is worth raising the question of whether it is an effective or fair tool to use for the development of programmes and the distribution of funds.

In this context, it is no surprise that many 'new migrant' and ethnically mixed groups are seeking recognition (ONS, 2009). The acknowledgement of their specific problems but also the importance of gaining visibility as part of society may very well

be one of the challenges of super-diversity.

The debate raised by these recognition campaigns reflects two very important issues that will be further analysed in Chapter 7. On the one hand, the fact that there is no clear consensus in terms of the group name and the boundaries of this community reflects the difficulties that the heterogeneity of Latin Americans as a group brings at the moment of delineating its boundaries and designating its unifying elements. On the other hand, the efforts made by this group of migrants to organise collectively reveals part of the process through which ethnicity is fostered for political purposes (Fenton, 2003).

Chapter 7

Latin Americans in London and ethnic identity

In the previous chapter I reviewed and analysed an ongoing debate that has recently emerged within the Latin American community regarding the introduction of an ethnic category for the group. The last chapter also framed the debate within the context of the statistical invisibility and exclusion that Latin Americans face in London (Bermudez Torres, 2010; Carlisle, 2006; McIlwaine, 2007; 2010).

Furthermore, Chapter 4 emphasised the role of language as an important aspect of ethnic identity. As discussed, this is not only due to the fact that language is a cultural element that acts as an identity marker, but also because it is inextricably entangled with the history and world-view of ethnic groups. In other words, language has provided the means for there to be a history that distinguishes one ethnic group from the other and should therefore not be regarded as a mere by-product of culture (Edwards, 1985a).

As studied in Chapter 5, as a communicative tool language links people, but it also serves to separate them and express differences and divisions. It is a symbolically powerful social product that people maintain and develop through daily practices within specific contexts. For Latin American migrants, language can also represent a form of protection and a weapon, and it can also become a barrier to socialisation and integration. Chapter 5 reviewed some of the ways in which the language barrier may

impede the positive integration of this highly educated migrant group. It also showed how an approach that includes the affective variables influencing second language acquisition can also help improve our understanding of some of the main problems that are reported in this and other studies on this community.

Chapter 6 went on to show how Latin Americans' social conditions have led them to engage in campaigns to seek recognition as an ethnic minority. This chapter will now examine the relationship between language, recognition and the fostering of an ethnic identity. It argues that promoting a common identity and organising around ethnicity is a form of political strategy that allows this highly heterogeneous new migrant group to act as a collective actor in its quest for integration and inclusion.

This chapter further links these efforts for ethnic organisation with relevant contextual factors, such as the development and maintenance of community practices and government policy. First, however, in order to understand how the heterogeneous background of Latin Americans may represent a challenge to this process, this chapter will present a brief review of some of the main theoretical concepts through which Latin American identity has been considered.

The unity and plurality of Latin American identity

Reflections around understandings of Latin American identity have resulted in the development and revision of various concepts. Biological and cultural '*mestizaje*', 'heterogeneity' and 'hybridity' are some of the most contested terms that continue to feed the reflection around what Latin American identity means. This section will briefly review some of these terms in order to provide a background for the analysis of Latin American practices in London and for the identity debates which underpin the recognition campaigns.

From biological to cultural 'mestizaje'

> "We are not Indians, nor Europeans, but a mixed species of the legitimate owners of the country and the Spaniard usurpers […] we find ourselves in the most extraordinary and complicated case" (Bolivar, 1915: 66. My translation).

> "It is impossible to state with accuracy to which human family we belong. Most of the natives were exterminated, the European has mixed with the African, and the African has mixed with the Native and the European." (Bolivar, 1919: 133. Author's translation).

These words from Bolivar's political letters of 1815 and 1819 are considered the initiators of the long history of the concept of '*mestizaje*', which originally referred to the particularity of the phenomenon of miscegenation in Latin America which involved

three races: natives, whites, and blacks. The concept of *mestizaje* has been perceived and used since the last decade of the nineteenth century as a unifying characteristic of most of the territory south of the US (Miller, 2004). The term was initially used to describe what was perceived as a homogenising miscegenation process.

In *Our America*, Jose Martí (1891) calls the peoples of Latin America to resist the "imperialistic" threat of the United States of America, as well as the strong cultural and political influence of European countries, by appealing to the strengths of a man that was born in Latin America, a real man who could overcome racial differences by highlighting "the universal identity of men", where "there is no racial hate because there are no races" (Martí, 1891: 17. Author's translation). Similarly, in *The Cosmic Race* (1925), Vasconcelos refers to the birth of the "Latin American race", a chosen group with the "divine mission to integrate and consolidate whites, blacks and Indians" (Miller, 2004: 30).

Based on the writings of Bolivar, Martí and Vasconcelos, *mestizaje* was constructed as an advantage which provided the region with the potential to absorb and overcome all differences. This idea was central to the definition of a regional identity, which was particularly important during the late 19th Century, and the first decade of the 20th Century when most of the Latin American nations were establishing the grounds for independence. As a distinctive and unifying element that built inner cohesion while setting an irreversible distance from Spain, the idea of *mestizaje* served a political purpose (Linares, 2006).

Although there are countries which have large groups of multiracial heritage, following an "uneven transition from colony to independence" Latin America has never been homogenised by a biological *mestizaje* (Miller, 2004: 2). There are significant differences in terms of demographic composition within the region and often within countries. Whereas in some areas of Latin America the native population was almost completely exterminated, it continues to comprise the majority of the population in other regions: "in contrast with indigenous groups in Mexico and Guatemala, those in Puerto Rico and Cuba had been nearly destroyed by the mid-sixteenth century" (Menchaca, 2007: 314). In addition, the distribution of black people is also uneven. In order to replace the labour force, African slaves were introduced in mass numbers mostly in the areas where the native population was slaughtered. This explains the relatively large percentage of people of African origin in countries like Cuba, and their limited numbers in other countries (Menchaca, 2007). In summary, the miscegenation process of Latin America was neither homogenisingeous nor did it involve the same

races throughout the whole territory. In spite of this complex and heterogeneous demographic map, the idea of *mestizaje* has significantly helped to construct what Berg (2006) calls a "fiction of unity" in Latin America.

According to Miller (2004), the strength of this idea lies in the fact that *mestizaje*, a term that originally belonged to the biological field, became a symbolic one. From this perspective, every single individual in Latin America shares with the others a cultural form of *mestizaje*, a background of European colonialism and cultural miscegenation that makes them share the experience of heterogeneity (Miller, 2004).

Detractors of this idea criticise the concept of 'cultural *mestizaje*' because of its inaccuracy; it is considered a misleading concept because it is based on the fiction of homogeneity that was presented throughout history in the guises of assimilation, integration and the confluence of the different groups (Briseño Linares, 2006). More importantly, it implies that the social tensions between the different groups can be resolved and, indeed, have already been overcome in the homogeneity and unproblematic 'melting pot' that *mestizaje* represents. In this sense, the claim of cultural *mestizaje* reproduces the matrix of European colonial domination, where Western culture is preferred. It is a way of 'whitening' people in a context where it is better to have a mixed race than to be native or black, which implies a questionable cultural equality: "the concept of *mestizaje* falsifies the state of our culture and literature. In fact, all it does is provide images of harmony for what is obviously torn and hostile[14]" (Cornejo Polar, 2002: 867. Author's translation).

Transculturation, Hybridity, Heterogeneity, and Cultural Diglossia

The term 'transculturation', coined by Fernando Ortiz in 1940, expresses a different perspective towards the cultural processes that followed colonialism. It acknowledges the ideas of 'acculturation', as the loss of elements of the local culture by the imposition of the new and repressive European order, but also implies that such impositions were not passively accepted. The term highlights that the incorporation of European schemes and values were only partial, and that these elements were not passively adopted without being altered (Gomez, 2009). Transculturation addresses the loss of a culture and the creation of a new cultural formation, where elements of both ends can be found as well as the emergence of original ones (Briseño Linares,

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14 In the original, from 1997: "...el concepto de mestizaje, pese a su tradición y prestigio, es el que falsifica de una manera más drástica la condición de nuestra cultura y literatura. En efecto lo que hace es ofrecer imágenes armónicas de lo que obviamente es desgajado y beligerante" (Cornejo Polar, 2002: 867).

2006).

The main critique of this perspective is that, although acknowledging conflict, as happens with mestizaje, it assumes a certain closure wherein the particularities of each culture vanish upon the encounter with the other and merge completely. In contrast, García Canclini's concept of 'hybridity' belongs to a paradigm of thought that understands Latin American identity as culturally plural (Briseño Linares, 2006). According to Canclini, Latin American countries are the result of the "sedimentation, juxtaposition and interweaving of indigenous traditions [...] Catholic colonial hispanism, and modern political, educational and communicational actions" (Canclini, 2010: 86). In this sense, the concept of hybridity acknowledges mixture and discontinuity, as well as the actuality of cultural battles (Briseño Linares, 2006).

In similar contrast with the long established tradition of *mestizaje*, in 1997 Cornejo Polar argued that Latin American cultural productions should be regarded as 'heterogeneous'. This perspective aims to avoid falling into synthesis that can only ignore the existing differences: discursive variety, value of culture, formal recognition, space of participation, etc. Highlighting these differences and the continuity of cultural struggles should not make us understand Latin America as an absolute pluralism, since the region is integrated by its immersion in global history (Briseño Linares, 2006).

Another concept that provides a new perspective on this matter is Lienhard's 'diglossic culture' or 'alternative culture' (Gomez, 2009). By transferring the concept of diglossia from the linguistic field and applying it to socio-cultural processes, Lienhard aims to achieve an understanding of Latin America that considers the continuous transformations of these communities, while addressing its inherent conflicts and situations of inequality. The term 'diglossia' refers to the coexistence of two or more parallel cultural systems (of language, religion, ways of communication) that individuals use selectively and depending on the context of a given situation. These cultural systems are granted different levels of prestige, legitimacy and authority. This concept keeps the relations of power and inequality which characterise Latin American societies at the forefront (Briseño Linares, 2006).

The list of concepts outlined in this chapter does not attempt to cover all the concepts and theoretical approaches that form part of the construction of 'Latin America' as a culture and identity:

> "Latin America not only refers to a vast and varied geographical region, but also to a historical, ideological and geographical construct that has been used to describe a heterogeneous

> group of people, with different languages, traditions and political systems" (Román-Velázquez, 1999: 2).

Contemporary factors, such as the development of cosmopolitan cities and the insertion of Latin American countries in globalisation processes through, for example, the circulation of cultural productions and increasing international migration, add new layers of analysis and expand the conceptualisation of Latin American identity beyond its territory (Canclini, 2002).

Thus, speaking about 'Latin American' migrants implies a reference to a highly diverse group of people, a diversity which is reflected in different forms of identification, ideas of belonging and differences. As analysed in Chapter 4, language is often a social production that serves to express those ideas. Nonetheless, this group of migrants in London have progressively developed a number of community practices that are strongly marked by a Latin American identity.

Latin American community practices

In spite of being a highly diverse and relatively new migrant group, Latin Americans have managed to create a wide range of organisations, cultural initiatives and campaigns in London. As reviewed in Chapter 6, most of the main community organisations were established by the initial flows of refugees and Colombian migrants (Cock, 2009; Bermudez Torres, 2010). These offer services and information on issues such as legal advice, welfare and housing, either by appointment, drop-in or both. Most organisations also run educational and cultural projects, as well as workshops and talks in areas such as employment, rights and health. Some of these community organisations, such as CARILA, IRMO and the Latin American House, serve the community as a whole, but there are also organisations that target specific sub-groups. Among these, the Latin American Women's Aid (LAWA) and the Latin American Women's Rights Services (LAWRS) provide information, advice and a range of informational, educational and cultural projects for women; the Latin American Disabled People's Project (LADPP) runs services targeted at assisting Latin Americans with mental or physical disabilities; IRMO's youth group, the Latin American Youth Forum (LAYF), offers artistic workshops and educational projects for young people; and the Hispano-American Health Centre (CASAH) provides information and access to health services.

Though small, most of these community organisations are long-established registered charities that rent their own premises. With few paid staff, they rely heavily

on volunteers to run their services. As reviewed in Chapter 6, many of these organisations previously operated as solidarity campaigns against repressive governments in Latin American countries and then progressively started providing services to the emerging community in London until they formally became community organisations, adopting a Latin American identity. There are also two initiatives that are linked to the Ecuadorian Government specifically, namely the civic movement MERU and SENAMI. Both organisations offer services and activities for Ecuadorians. SENAMI is a centre that supports the integration of Ecuadorian migrants; however, it also helps the general Latin American community through collaborative work and by allowing other groups to use their premises for meetings and events.

There are also a few London-based associations campaigning in solidarity with Latin American countries, such as Hands off Venezuela and the Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba and Nicaragua solidarity campaigns. These groups provide support to organisations overseas and work to create awareness in the UK about political problems affecting those countries. In addition, other ad hoc campaigns respond to specific events that take place in Latin America. Recent examples of this are groups campaigning against mining exploitation, or in support of students and indigenous movements in Latin America. On the other hand, there are also organisations which undertake activities with the aim of funding development projects within Latin American countries, such as Discovering Latin America, Children of the Andes, Children of Latin America, and Friends of Colombia Solidarity Aid.

Groups campaigning for the London community of Latin Americans mainly focus on access to rights and recognition, such as the Latin American Workers' Association (LAWAS) and the recognition campaigns of the AIU and LARC, whose objectives were discussed in depth in Chapter 6. LAWAS formally organised as a campaign in 2002, although it had been operating since the 1980s. It attempts to tackle the needs of Latin American workers in the UK, who mainly are concentrated in unregulated sectors of the labour market. LAWAS played an important part in the London Living Wage campaign and in the creation of the Justice for Cleaners campaign (Però, 2008a; 2008b; 2008c). It has also contributed to the development of a side campaign called ALARMA, the solidarity network that distributes information about UKBA raids through a text message phone tree network.

Although the organisations listed above focus their work on different issues, there are certain overlaps in terms of their activities and general goals. For example, LAWRS, one of the community organisations that work for women, has included

recognition as part of their business plan and has started campaigning for the inclusion of Latin Americans in ethnic monitoring. Many of these groups also offer some kind of language support through classes or language exchange sessions, and most run cultural projects: LAWAS and LAH, for example, run a weekly film club. In addition, there are people who participate in different groups, either combining activism with community work, or campaigning on both continents through transnational practices (Cock, 2009; Bermudez Torres, 2010; Però, 2008c).

In recent years marked by economic crisis and funding cuts, the Latin American community has witnessed the closure of a few projects, such as *Años Dorados* (Golden Years), a community organisation that provided services to the elderly. New initiatives, however, continue to emerge. At the time of writing, nine organisations have recently joined forces to form the Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK). This initiative emerged in response to the recommendations of the *No Longer Invisible* report (McIlwaine et al., 2011), commissioned by Trust for London and LAWRS. Previous attempts to work jointly through Latin American umbrella organisations, such as Latin Front, *Coordinadora Latinoamericana* and the Coalition of Latin Americans Against the Cuts (COLACOR) were not sustainable over time. Many community workers and activists argue that this happened because of conflicting interests and ideological differences. Others speak about 'jealousy' and 'personal agendas' (Però, 2008c).

On the other hand, Latin Americans in London have also brought an expansive cultural offering, including music, arts, film, and gastronomy. Along with the growth of the community, a few annual festivals have also emerged over the past 10 years. These include the CASA theatre festival, the London Latin American Film Festival (LLAFF), the *Carnaval del Pueblo*, Colombiage carnival, PINTA, which is an art show; and the Discovering Latin America Film, Music, Literature and Arts festivals.

Another important aspect of the development of the Latin American community in London is their presence in the media. There are a number of newspapers that provide information about both local and Latin American news. Of these, the two main newspapers are *Express News* and *Extra*, which are distributed in spaces such as shops, restaurants and community organisations that are frequented by Latin Americans. There are also numerous online publications that aim to promote Latin American culture, including online magazines and blogs, such as *Latinos in London*, *Vida London*, *¡COMO No!*, *Sounds and Colours*, *Ventana Latina*, *Latino Life UK*, and

La Tundra London[15]. Other publications, such as *Latin American Bureau* (LAB), *The Prisma* and *Alborada*, focus on news and political analysis.

Latin Americans are also present on London radios with programmes such as *Todas las Voces* and *Latin Radio Rock.* The two main stations are *Emisora Imperio Latino* and *Aculco Radio*. There is also an online Latin American TV channel, *Imagen LatinaTV*, and a number of blogs and websites that offer information and opinions. The community has also made extensive use of social network tools, such as Twitter and Facebook, to create various groups by nationality, such as Mexicanos in London which has over 4,000 followers, where people promote cultural and social activities, advertise rooms, job vacancies, and ask for information and help.

There are also various commercial areas that were mainly developed by Colombian migrants, but which have also come to service the general Latin American community (Cock, 2009). The two main areas of Latin American commercial developments are the Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre and Pueblito Paisa, a market in Seven Sisters. There are also smaller concentrations of shops in areas such as Brixton and Islington, as well as restaurants and dance venues spread around the city (Román-Velázquez, 1999).

Interestingly, there is extensive evidence pointing to the fact that areas of ethnic concentration bring important opportunities for social mobility by allowing co-ethnic members to bypass the limitations imposed by the labour market (Zhou, 2004). For Latin Americans, the relevance of these commercial areas therefore also lies in the fact that they represent much more than a space for consumption. They are also an important area for socialisation and a space for the construction of multiple, albeit contested, Latin American identities (Cock, 2009; Román-Velázquez, 1999).

Participation and sense of belonging

Despite the fact that Latin Americans have developed a network of long-established community organisations, a variety of cultural initiatives and a presence through ethnic entrepreneurship, these spaces of interaction are not equally used by all sectors.

In his review of the roles and importance of commercial spaces for Latin Americans in London, Cock (2009) reveals a "geography of fear" which stems from a sense of insecurity associated with the specific areas where these businesses are

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15 Latinos in London, http://latinosinlondon.wordpress.com; Vida London, http://vidalondon.net/; ¡COMO no!, http://www.comono.co.uk/; Sounds and Colours, http://www.soundsandcolours.com/; Ventana Latina, http://www.ventanalatina.co.uk/; Latino Life UK, http://www.latinolife.co.uk/; La Tundra London, http://www.latundra.com/.

located and common stereotypes about Colombians doing "dodgy business" in these spaces (Cock, 2009: 210).

Irregular migrants may also avoid these Latin American spaces as they may become target of UKBA immigration raids. Socialising with other Latin Americans may also represent a risk for irregular migrants. Respondent Luisa, for example, explains how she has always avoided visiting Latin American commercial spaces, a habit she acquired while having an irregular status:

> "Since I arrived here, I always avoid mixing with other Latin American people, because I was illegal and we know that there is a lot of mistrust among Latin Americans and you are scared to tell people and be betrayed. I had a big responsibility in Colombia and couldn't run the risk" (Luisa's interview).

Similarly, Joaquín speaks about the danger of being surrounded by other irregular migrants:

> "I always had to move around, because unfortunately we, [Latin Americans] have the bad habit of living among ourselves, very integrated and that is very bad because if they are looking for a person, there would be another [irregular migrant] right next to him. This happened to me many times; I was living somewhere and then I had to leave because Immigration would come looking for someone. Sometimes, being in the flat, we had to stay inside and not open the door, and they wanted to throw the door down, but we couldn't open it. It was Immigration that was looking for someone" (Joaquín's interview).

The levels of mistrust among Latin Americans have also been considered in previous research (McIlwaine, 2011; 2012). As expressed by Luisa, in many cases irregular migrants are abused by other Latin Americans. For instance, during our interview, Joaquín told me that in order to work, he would always use a fake identity. In this way, he always paid taxes under the name of a person with legal documents and was paid his salary on their account. In his case, this brought some additional problems:

> "You had to keep going to see that person for them to give you your money. I struggled with that a lot, and a lot of times I got stolen [...] sometimes those people were also under investigation or they had done fraud or stolen something, owed money to the banks and left. Then you started getting paid in that account and they [creditors] would go 'oh so he is back here, we will go and get him', and so you had to run from them as well" (Joaquín's interview).

Thus, public spaces with an openly Latin American identity may represent

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spaces for socialisation and information for some, a place that makes many people feel that they are 'back in Latin America for a little while', but they also represent a serious danger for others. Although not everyone relates to these spaces in a similar way, the use of these commercial areas appears to be widespread and to generally attract people of all backgrounds (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

On the other hand, most of the Latin Americans who approach community organisations do so not because they are seeking a space for socialising but because they are in need. This frequently reflects their general situation and it can be assumed that a large proportion experience some level of exclusion and poverty, leading the profile and needs of the excluded sector of the Latin American community to be the focus of a number of studies (Carlisle, 2006; McIlwaine, 2007; McIlwaine and Velazquez, 2007).

Nonetheless, the situation of this group contrasts with that of the sectors that participate in other socio-economic spheres and should remind us not to oversimplify the profile of this group and to acknowledge its internal class divisions, which often lead to separate experiences (Fenton, 2003). In this sense, spaces of community practices are used differently and by different groups. A community worker refers to these as "isolation patterns" linked to class:

> "Most of the people I help, for example, are from a very humble economic background. Right now, as migrants, we are all in the lowest social sphere. However, there is another group, which is the one I first came to – students. Because they come supported by their parents, or financed in general, they have economic resources and they make up a whole different community and they almost ignore the existence of the other social group. Being part of the same community, sharing many cultural aspects, we all share the same cultural elements [...] and there is another level a lot higher; I've met some of them. They are super qualified people. They have completely different lives and for them we are completely non-existent. Even the students are completely non-existent for them [...] Social class divides us a lot, but there are small communities within each of these social levels" (Diego's interview).

However, splitting this migrant group in terms of a clear-cut division of social classes may lead to existing patterns of mobility being overlooked. As noted in Chapter 6, experiences of downward mobility are very common among Latin Americans in London. In this case, the response above also reflects this pattern by clarifying that "right now, as migrants, we are all in the lowest social sphere" and that he first came as part of a different group: students. When discussing migrants' mobility, attention is

often put on economic aspects. However, in many cases migrants experience a decline in social status, which is frequently attached to the status of their work (Gans, 2009). In this sense, although Latin Americans may experience some kind of economic progress, even when this only means a very fragile stability, they often experience downward social mobility (McIlwaine et al., 2011). As such, it is common to find highly educated Latin Americans of middle-class socio-economic background working in the poorest sectors of the labour market. Thus, it is not possible to explain Latin Americans' participation in community practices through differences linked to class.

In order to acknowledge this mobility, it is important not to produce fixed differentiations of class but to focus on people's motivations for engaging in or avoiding the different types of community practices. In this sense, "not everyone participates [in] all Latin expressions in London, or is exposed to them to the same degree or even experiences them in the same way." (Román-Velázquez, 1999: 153). While some people tend to see areas of Latin American concentration and cultural practices positively, others are not exposed to them, or even avoid them as they consider them detrimental to their integration and social advancement. As a person once told me during fieldwork, "not everyone wants to live in the ghetto".

Latin Americans as an ethnic group

Latin Americans are a highly heterogeneous group which includes people that not only came from different countries but also from various sub-groups and regions within those countries. This diversity is normally expressed in terms of national identity, socio-economic background or rural versus urban origin. However, there are also important cultural differences among Latin Americans. Although most people speak either Spanish or Portuguese, Latin American countries are highly multilingual and, as stressed in Chapter 4, this implies not only the coexistence of different cultures but also of various world-views. This heterogeneity exposes the ongoing disrupted, conflicting and fragmented hybridity of cultures (Canclini, 2010. Author's translation).

Latin American migrants in London bring this heterogeneity with them, which leads to the question of whether there is a Latin American community in London or not:

> "Despite comprising a wide range of nationalities, ethnicities and cultures, Latin Americans are generally referred to as a community. However, it is important to emphasize that this is a "community" in a sense of denoting people from the same continent, sharing a language (with the exception of Brazilians) and a very loose cultural affinity. It is not one based on homogeneity and social cohesion" (McIlwaine, 2011).

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In addition, it has been noted that the adoption of a Latin American identity among community organisations that originally served single national groups responded to a need to fit government requirements in order to access resources. Cock (2009) explains that when the Greater London Council was facing closure, existing organisations were offered funds for a building if they were able to merge as Latin Americans. In this sense, community organisations would have become 'Latin American' because of an external influence:

> "The British institutional framework and the structure of opportunity it affords for organising have also played a major role in these developments. Funding for advice for ethnic minorities has provided an incentive for creating Latin American organisations and has thus been an important part of creating the boundaries of the Latin American community in London" (Cock, 2009: 173).

Moreover, the debates raised by the recognition campaigns analysed in Chapter 6 also call into question the idea of a clearly defined community. The debates on the clarity with which the boundaries of the community can be defined not only take place between opposing campaigns, but also within the groups themselves. The acknowledgement that the efforts of Latin American community organisations were also directed towards the fostering of a shared identity is evidence of its socially constructed character, which generated discomfort for some members, demonstrating the fact that a single collective action "contains different kinds of behaviour" (Melucci, 1985: 794). On the other hand, the idea that a specific category could become a blanket term suppressing the inner diversity of the group has often led to debates among activists. If there is no consensus between – and in some cases within – the campaigns regarding the basis for group identification, or even the boundaries of this group and consequently the category to be used, is it possible to speak about a 'Latin American' ethnic community in London?

As set out in Chapter 6, both the AIU and LARC campaigns combine in their public discourse arguments based on the strategy for promoting their preferred category for the identification of the community. Both campaigns appeal to shared cultural elements such as language and habits, while at the same time stress the practical benefits of gaining visibility through the inclusion of their proposed ethnic categories.

There is much discussion in the literature regarding the danger that developing strong solidarity within different activist organisations can represent for the wider

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movement. This situation may lead the different groups to lose sight of goals of the wider movements, work against each other's aims and "become overly critical of them as a result of their immersion in, and defence of, their own organization" (Saunders, 2008: 250): a process that shows some of the internal struggles that are intrinsic to collective action in social movements (Melucci, 1985; 1996).

At a first glance, this could seem to be the case of the two conflicting (competing) campaigns of the AIU and LARC analysed in this study. However, as will be discussed in this chapter, identity in this process is not only a cohesive element fostered by these campaigns to be able to claim to act collectively (Bernstein, 2005; Melucci, 1996), but it is also the result of various influencing factors and a goal in itself.

Nonetheless, the fact that this debate is taking place and that the boundaries of the community to be recognised are put under question once again links the adoption of a collective identity with convenience and opportunity. The efforts of these conflicting campaigns represent an attempt to forge an ethnic category, but would this category be based on the 'real' existence of an ethnic group or is it based solely on a matter of opportunism? Are these campaigns inventing an ethnic identity simply because of the benefits attached to it?

Literature on collective action has shown how developing a shared identity is indispensable for allowing collective actors to distinguish between group members and non-members; in other words, to establish the boundaries that will allow them to recognise themselves and be recognised by others as a unity in order to claim the outcomes of their action (Bernstein, 2005; Melucci, 1996).

In the case of excluded groups organised on the basis of "status identities", collective identity takes on an even more central role as "identity itself forms a part of the basis for grievances" (Bernstein, 2005: 58). Collective identities of social movements such as the peace or environmentalist movements differ from "status identities" in that they "can be more easily adopted or discarded" (Bernstein, 2005: 58).

Although these types of identities are at least partially imposed by outsiders, the difficulties of overcoming social categories may often lead marginalised groups to strategically adopt a social category in order to change unfavourable perceptions (Bernstein, 2005). In this sense, adopting stigmatised social categories may respond to the need to gain access to and participate in all social and economic aspects of society (Melucci, 1996). Claiming a shared identity in these cases becomes a strategy to try to gain minority status and the related rights and support.

The question of whether ethnic groups emerge in multi-ethnic societies as a

result of self-identification or for instrumental reasons also has a long history in ethnicity studies (Fenton, 2003). This issue is ultimately linked with the opposing views of primordial versus other conceptualisations of ethnicity. The basic principle of primordialism is that ethnicity is naturally fixed at birth. From this perspective, ethnic groups can be defined through objective criteria, as ethnic members are considered to be permanently linked via a common heritage. This type of pre-social conceptualisation of ethnic bonds has long been rejected in academic discourse; however, it is still frequently referred to in public and political discourse (Fenton, 2003).

Following objective criteria, ethnic groups have also been defined by their distinguishing characteristics. These definitions often emphasise cultural and geographical elements (Sanders, 2002). According to this approach, the sharing of certain characteristics, such as origin or language variety, is the determining aspect that separates members from non-members.

Since Barth (1969), and with the acknowledgement that both cultural features and identification are subject to change, the study of ethnic groups has shifted to the examination of the social processes through which ethnic boundaries are maintained. Barth also introduced the premise that "ethnic groups are categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves" (Barth, 1969: 10). This is not to say that the maintenance of ethnic boundaries depends solely on the practices of ethnic members. On the contrary, in the cases of excluded groups, boundaries are also reinforced by others. What the quote emphasises is the flexible and subjective character of the ethnic "sense of groupness" (Edwards, 1985a: 22).

This last point is key to the understanding of how ethnic identities become a source of social mobilisation, one of the main questions being raised in the field of ethnicity studies (Fenton, 2003). In order to understand how a group such as Latin Americans in London, organises around ethnicity, it is necessary to take into account "the historical and social circumstances in which a particular ethnic configuration has developed" (Eriksen, 1991: 129). In this sense, the processes that are taking place among Latin Americans in London and the question of whether the recognition campaigns are basing their claim on real versus instrumental ethnic identities require a consideration not only of the actors' identification processes, but also of the strong influence of specific contextual factors.

As mentioned above, the literature reports that some community organisations may have decided to adopt a Latin American identity because they were encouraged by an opportunity to access resources (Cock, 2009). There are other ways in which the

structure and practices of the government and of local society are encouraging Latin Americans to organise around ethnicity.

The strategy of becoming 'Latin Americans'

As analysed in Chapter 6, there is no consensus about the category or the boundaries of the ethnic group in question between the recognition campaigns. The co-existence of different "currents of opinion" is not uncommon for social movements. These are not limited to a binary conflict between 'movements and 'counter-movements', "within any given field of contention, both over time and at any particular point in time, one can find different discourses and demands, each of which might be represented by a number of distinct social movement organisations (SMOs)" (Crossley, 2006: 28).

Nonetheless, the groups do agree on the fundamental motivation for their activism: a lack of official statistics that could make the struggles of the community visible. These struggles include a lack of access to services and education, as well as exploitation and discrimination in the labour market (McIlwaine et al., 2011). In addition, and although both groups claim to campaign for cultural, economic and social recognition, they have both addressed the inclusion of a category for the Latin American community in ethnic monitoring forms as their main priority.

Through inclusion in ethnic monitoring, minorities become officially recognised as part of the sector of the local population that is vulnerable to discrimination and marginalisation. In this sense, these campaigns are very clearly oriented towards a practical goal which is motivated by the benefits associated with gaining ethnic minority status both locally in London and nationally, across the UK; hence the reason that the campaigns are directed at Parliament and the London authorities.

The data gathered through the implementation of ethnic monitoring by government surveys, service providers, educational institutions and employers, allows the particular issues affecting the different groups and the most vulnerable sectors within them (e.g. women, the disabled, etc.) to be identified. This data can then be used for the development of social policies and strategies that aim to tackle the exclusion of the affected groups, and for the allocation of funds.

Inclusion in ethnic monitoring aims to facilitate people's access to rights and allows for the identification of discrimination against specific groups. The history of the introduction and expansion of the ethnicity question in UK Census forms, as seen in Chapter 6, demonstrates that other minority groups have reached the same conclusion

and followed a similar strategy for the betterment of their groups.

In the case of Latin Americans, the lack of statistics is associated with the rapid growth of the community and the wide range of legal statuses found within the community, including a large sector with either British or European citizenship, and a significant undocumented group (44 per cent and 19 per cent respectively, according to McIlwaine et al., 2011). This makes it extremely difficult to track statistics from surveys that do not ask about people's country of birth or family origin.

There is extensive evidence documenting that Latin Americans in London are facing disadvantages in the labour market, which often implies experiencing downward mobility, a lack of access to labour rights, and increased vulnerability to exploitation and discrimination (McIlwaine et al., 2011). Many experience difficulties securing legal status, with people going through long periods of applications processing and undetermined or irregular status. With the recent introduction of increasingly restrictive regulations for migrants, many struggle with limited or no permission to work, which often leads people into the vulnerable situation of undocumented work (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010).

It has also been widely reported that Latin Americans face great difficulties accessing information, services and health care (McIlwaine et al., 2011). In a context of unequal gender relations, women are particularly vulnerable to these problems (Carlisle, 2006; McIlwaine and Carlisle, 2011). In addition, as analysed in Chapter 5, experiencing language difficulties hinders people's access to information, employment and educational opportunities. Due to its direct and indirect influences, the language barrier fosters exclusion and poverty among the Latin American migrant population, which in turn translates into poor housing and health conditions.

For migrants who come from non-English-speaking countries, language becomes a key factor in their integration processes. Latin Americans who experience the language barrier are forced to take manual jobs, normally in the cleaning and catering sectors of the labour market. These sectors offer very poor working conditions, which frequently entail low pay, casual work or contracts of very few weekly hours. In addition, according to the Trade Union Congress representative interviewed for this research, the structure and lack of regulation of these sectors make it extremely difficult for workers and unions to enforce workers' rights, as it is extremely difficult to identify and attribute responsibilities to employers and contracting agencies.

The conditions of these areas of work which often force people to work split shifts very early in the mornings and very late in the evenings, make it extremely

difficult for migrants to access English language provision. Migrants working in these sectors are stuck in a cycle of lack of English language knowledge and extremely poor working conditions. Since ESOL provision does not account for Latin Americans' lack of access to this service, these issues remain largely ignored.

In order to break out of this vicious circle of 'hidden jobs' (Carlisle, 2006), Latin Americans have identified the need to claim recognition as a collective actor in order to overcome the statistical and political invisibility hindering the development and integration of the community. Organising collectively on the basis of a Latin American identity becomes a strategy to combat structural problems. As reviewed in Chapter 6, this strategy is often adopted by excluded groups, for whom "it often makes political, economic, or social sense to organize and act politically on the basis of ethnic identities" (Foner, 2003: 261).

In the context of London and the UK, where resources are allocated according to ethnic classifications, becoming an ethnic group is more a matter of survival than a matter of identity for Latin Americans: "The importance of ethnicity in any society is partly influenced by the activities of the state, and the protection which the state does or does not provide" (Fenton, 2003: 117).

Consequently, the campaigning activities analysed in Chapter 6 emerge at least partially as a "tactical" response to externally imposed conditions (Polleta and Jasper, 2001). The emergence of efforts to gain recognition as an ethnic minority among Latin Americans thus represents an attempt to counterbalance the exclusionary practices of the system and society in order to gain access to rights and participation. It is a response, a form of resistance that can only be achieved by becoming a collective actor.

At the same time, it is also a form of accommodating to the way in which society is categorised in the UK, as the governmental use of ethnic classifications is not common in Latin American countries. This is evidenced in the confusion many people face when asked about their ethnic group. McIlwaine and her colleagues (2011) have found that the majority identify as "*Mestizo*/Mixed" (41.3 per cent), "White" (28.7 per cent) or "Latino/Latin American" (17 per cent). Other classifications included "Indigenous" (2.5 per cent), "African descent" (2 per cent), "British Latino" (0.9 per cent) and "Ibero-American" (0.4 per cent). The diverse responses gathered by their study may be explained by the fact that the survey provided respondents with a list of pre-coded categories. By contrast, the survey conducted for this research included an open question on ethnic group. Out of the 60 people surveyed, almost half chose not

to respond the question and said they did not know how to answer it. In spite of the diversity of its responses, the study carried out by McIlwaine and her colleagues (2011) revealed an "overwhelming support for Latin Americans to have their own ethnic classification (77%)" (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 37).

This strong agreement supports the argument that "the level of consciousness and political organisation of an ethnic group or category will depend less on internal social and cultural features and more on external political and economic circumstances" (Fenton, 2003: 70).

The way in which the local government monitors equality in London and the UK, along with the structural discrimination experienced by a large sector of this community, represent strong contextual influencing factors for the social construction of a Latin American ethnic group in London. The case of this community reaffirms once more that "ethnicity is not just about 'difference' but about structural inequality and hierarchy of difference" (Fenton, 2003: 111), which is frequently maintained through generations (Glazer, 2000).

The fact that there are sound political reasons for Latin Americans to seek recognition as an ethnic minority may raise questions about the real existence of shared identity, and give rise to the argument that "claiming essentialist differences is a strategic maneuver made by activists rather than an ontological position" (Bernstein, 2005: 51). However, these initiatives are not only the result of external factors, nor is this form of collective organisation based solely on strategy and profit. Latin Americans in London do share important cultural elements and participate in spaces of interaction that are certainly marked by a Latin American identity. As stressed in a previous section, Latin Americans in London have developed a wide range of community practices, from shopping to activism.

In addition, there are also other important factors, such as residential concentration, social class or occupation, which may also generate identification (Glazer and Moynihan,1963). These shared Latin American experiences represent a source of identification, even when contested, fluent and fragmented.

On the other hand, even when socially constructed ethnicity is usually perceived as natural by ethnic members, "the fashion for imaginings, constructions and inventions may have gone too far. Even where these ethnic labels are rather loose categories of diffuse identifications, there are nonetheless real blocs of the population who correspond roughly to these labels" (Fenton, 2003: 3).

'Latin American' as a felt identity

Perhaps the fact that ethnic identities are felt as essential is best exemplified in the case of the history of the emergence of LARC. During a public conference held in January 2010 which was attended by community workers and authorities from the GLA, the AIU promoted the inclusion of an 'Ibero-American' category in ethnic monitoring. This category would group together Latin Americans and the rest of the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking people of the world, including people of European, African and Asian origin.

A number of attendees at this meeting were strongly against this classification and felt the urge to provide a voice for their dissent: "We left with the clear idea that we needed to encourage a new wave, one that would be more in line with what we call the Latin American identity" (Chipana's interview). As a consequence, the group organised their own conference which was held at SOAS in April 2010. During this debate, LARC was spontaneously created, initially in defence of the distinctiveness of Latin Americans. As time went by and with a better acknowledgement of the implications of this proposal, LARC set the inclusion of the Latin American category in ethnic monitoring as its principal goal.

In line with this objective, its discourse has progressively focused on ethnic monitoring and the importance of visibility, but it is still strongly marked by an affirmation of Latin American identity. Upholding a Latin American ethnic identity is therefore not only explained by structural conditions. In diverse societies:

> "The reaffirmation of a cultural heritage consisting of the language, customs, and traditions of an ethnic group has given minorities a weapon with which to oppose the cultural and linguistic monopoly of dominant groups and resist forced integration into the systems of symbolic codes imposed by the centre" (Melucci, 1996: 147).

In this sense, LARC is not attempting to create a new identity but fostering certain elements that are already shared by many Latin Americans. Melucci argues that in these contexts, "ethnic solidarity responds to identity needs which operate not just at the material level but at the symbolic level as well" (Melucci, 1996: 148). Whereas LARC's discourse is greatly focused on the community's disadvantaged situation, the symbolic value of recognition as a distinct ethnic group is evidenced by the campaign's emphasis on shared cultural values and roots. In addition, in a context where migrants are increasingly being demonised in public discourse, gaining recognition as a minority represents a way to counterbalance stigma, a pathway to the

reconstruction of their sense of pride (Jasper, 2011).

The recognition campaigns studied in this thesis face the challenge of gaining support for what they consider a suitable category. In order to confirm acceptance of the proposed categories, these efforts are critically dependent on public responses to ethnic monitoring, which leads us back to the problem of heterogeneity and the fact that "there are always differences between members, [because] not all share all characteristics" (Barth, 1969: 29). In this sense, finding a category that suits this highly heterogeneous community and the efficacy of these efforts will depend on the community's response.

Conclusions

This chapter sought to study the relationship between language, recognition and the fostering of an ethnic identity. This meant taking into account processes that are internal to the group, as well as contextual factors:

> "Explanations based on 'structural determinants' on the one hand and 'values and beliefs' on the other can never answer the questions of how social actors come to form a collectivity and recognize themselves as being part of it; how they maintain themselves over time; how acting together makes sense for the participants in a social movement; or how the meaning of collective action derives from structural preconditions or from the sum of the individual motives" (Melucci, 1996: 69).

The emergence of initiatives for collective action among Latin Americans in London is linked to a belief in a common identity, which is reinforced by the development and maintenance of a wide range of community practices. These include formal and informal networks of solidarity, as well as commercial, leisure and cultural activities.

In addition, we must bear in mind that "the context of interaction is constituted prior to the interaction itself and must therefore be part of the explanation of interpersonal processes" (Eriksen, 1991: 129). This implies an acknowledgement of time, place and power relations. In this sense, there are contextual factors that have encouraged ethnic organisation and action among Latin Americans.

Among these, the use of ethnicity in government policy for the organisation of society and the distribution of resources emerge as particularly important: "Once the state takes a hand in using ethnic categories to allocate resources it both creates and confirms ethnic categories and makes ethnicity a politically instrumental principle"

(Fenton, 2003: 99).

The agency of the state in the encouragement of ethnic organisation and action is crucial for this process. However, not every group will need to become one of these "state sponsored" ethnicities (Fenton, 2003). In this sense, campaigning for recognition represents a strategy to fight the situation of exclusion and invisibility facing Latin Americans living in London, which leads to exploitation in the labour market, and a lack of access to services and rights. The importance of language in this process is key, as it can both connect and isolate people, potentially leaving them stuck in a cycle of invisibility.

Trapped in the cycle created by the lack of English language knowledge and poor working conditions, organising around ethnicity is the way Latin American migrants have found to try to break out of the cycle. For minorities who are facing exclusion, integration into multi-ethnic London requires collective organisation. Following the path of other groups, although largely unaware that they are doing so, Latin Americans have found in ethnic recognition the potential to break out of the cycle of poverty and lack of opportunities. In this sense, campaigning for recognition represents a strategy for collective participation and a form of adapting to the way in which society is categorised in the UK.

The people and organisations involved in these campaigns are openly seeking statistical visibility and inclusion in governmental policies for Latin Americans. However, this does not make the Latin American ethnic identity fake or rehearsed. On one hand, and as is often the case, although ethnicity is constructed through social interaction, it is often felt as an intrinsic element of individuals (Fenton, 2003). In this sense, the discourse of the recognition campaigns analysed in Chapter 6 demonstrates a strong belief and identification with a 'shared' Latin American culture and heritage.

On the other hand, this case also reminds us that ethnic mobilisation becomes relevant in specific contexts of interaction: "Ethnic and national identities are not naturally occurring social facts grounded in the existence of substantive ethnoses. Rather they are the identities built, shaped and reshaped out of a variety of historical materials" (Fenton, 2003: 67). For Latin Americans in London, ethnic identity is a matter of survival.

In this sense, the attempts to organise collectively around a Latin American ethnic identity are not only based in the socially constructed belief of a shared heritage. They emerge as a result of a convergence of factors, which include the poor

socio-economic conditions of a large sector of this fragmented and heterogeneous community, the development and maintenance of community practices, and government actions.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

The general goal of this thesis was to study the role language plays in the lives of Latin American migrants in London, in order to reach a better understanding of the articulation between language, integration and social identity. By adopting a more comprehensive approach, the analysis considered not only the communicative functions of language and its links with the socio-economic situation of migrants, but also the symbolic and affective value language has for speakers.

Chapter 4 focused on Latin Americans' language of origin, Spanish. It explored the different functions fulfilled by the group's mother tongue and the ways in which language varieties are used by the actors to express identification with, or distance from other Latin Americans. In doing so, this chapter reinstated the links between language and identity, and showed how much language is linked to ideas about a common origin and heritage, belonging, identification and differentiation.

On the other hand, Chapter 5 looked at a highly relevant issue for migrants who came from non-English-speaking countries: the language barrier. Since a large sector of the Latin American community is unable to speak fluent English (McIlwaine et al., 2011), this chapter aimed to provide a broader account of the impact of the language barrier in migrants' daily lives. It explored the experiences of the language barrier and its influences on social networks, employment, access to information and services. It also examined the level and types of motivation, as well as the main obstacles facing

Latin Americans when trying to access English language classes.

The following two chapters analysed the connection between language and ethnic identity in the context of the broader situation of this community, which is greatly marked by social exclusion and disadvantage in the labour market. Chapter 6 looked at the engagement of Latin Americans in campaigning for the inclusion of a 'Latin American' category in ethnic monitoring and the official recognition of the community as an ethnic minority in London and the UK. Inclusion in ethnic monitoring is a strategy other minority groups in Britain have also adopted in the past in order to overcome issues of socio-economic marginalisation. This research shows that, in the case of Latin Americans, these problems are closely linked to the negative cycle created and perpetuated by a lack of English language knowledge, poor working conditions, and the subsequent lack of access to English language education. Chapter 7 provided an analysis of the emergence of a Latin American collective identity based on ethnicity in London. It examined the bases for this development, the conditions under which this identity is emerging, and the actors involved in the process. This chapter argued that this Latin American ethnic identity, although socially constructed, is often experienced as essential. Consequently, the emergence of claims for recognition of 'Latin American' as an ethnic group responds not only to the need to improve the material conditions of the community, but also results from emotional factors and identification processes in which language plays a significant role.

In this sense, the development of 'Latin American' as a new ethnic group is explained by a convergence of factors, which include processes that are both internal and external to the group. These include the reaffirmation of a shared historical heritage in the context of migration and the development and maintenance of community practices, but also shared experiences of poor socio-economic conditions, and government actions.

This concluding chapter will look back at the research question of this thesis as presented in the introduction and examine whether its objectives were met. It will re-evaluate the methodology employed to answer the research questions, and reflect on the main issues confronted by this approach. It will continue by presenting and discussing the main results and the theoretical contributions of this study, and finish by acknowledging the limitations, policy implications and avenues for future research.

Problem statement and methodology

In the context of increasing global mobility (Zetter et al., 2006), over the past few decades, London has started receiving migrants from more numerous and diverse origins than ever before (Vertovec, 2007). With large numbers coming in over the past 10 years, Latin Americans are one of these new migrant groups (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

The growth of this community has been accompanied by an increase in studies on the situation and practices of Latin Americans. The *No Longer Invisible* report has recently shown that the Latin American community of London is young, highly educated and in employment. However, the socio-economic situation of a large sector of this migrant group is still very poor, with most people receiving low income, many families living in overcrowded conditions, and with limited access to mainstream health services, information and welfare (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

These problems are closely linked to Latin Americans' disadvantaged situation in London's labour market and the instability associated with different legal statuses. With a large sector employed in unregulated areas of the labour market, such as cleaning and catering, people are often forced to take jobs that offer poor working conditions and are often victims of exploitation (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

In addition, and as happens with other minority groups (Sveinsson, 2010), there are currently no official statistics on this community that could help authorities and service providers identify and tackle the main problems affecting them. Consequently, the challenges Latin Americans face in terms of their lack of access to information, services and welfare remain hidden.

The importance of language in the integration processes of migrants has long been acknowledged. Researchers have shown that the ability to speak the language of the host community greatly influences people's access to jobs, higher earnings (Chiswick and Miller, 1995, 2002) and information through gaining access to more diverse social networks (Esser, 2006).

In the UK, the linguistic integration of migrants has also become an important issue in public discourse on immigration. Migrants are often accused of not wanting to learn the language or integrate in political speeches (for example, see Cameron, 2011), as well as in everyday discourse (Garner, 2010); this has been accompanied by a "shift towards aligning ESOL with social cohesion" (Williamson, 2009: 2) in public policies (COIC, 2007; DIUS, 2008).

As Latin Americans come from non-English-speaking countries, language has been recognised as an important factor hindering their social, cultural, and economic integration both by researchers and migrants (Carlisle, 2006; James, 2005; McIlwaine et al., 2011; McIlwaine and Carlisle, 2011; Sveinsson, 2007). However, the linguistic situation and practices of Latin Americans remain largely under-researched.

This thesis set out to contribute to covering this gap. Based on over two and a half years of fieldwork, this research looks into the links between language, identity and integration among the Latin American community of London. It explores the experiences and ideas of Latin Americans in order to learn about the importance of language and the ways in which it impacts these migrants' lives, paying special attention to people's motivations for learning English and the obstacles impeding this learning. With the aim of understanding why this group of highly qualified migrants in London is trapped in a negative cycle of disadvantage and a lack of English language knowledge, this thesis frames these fieldwork findings within the current state of London's labour market, UK immigration law and ESOL funding policy.

This research started in 2009 and, as stressed above, information about the Latin American community of London was very limited. There are still no reliable official statistics on this group[17] and most of the literature that was available at the start of this research was based on single national groups or particular segments of the community, such as women or people involved in activism. This made it extremely difficult to get a sense of the characteristics of the group and their situation in London.

In order to tackle this issue, I decided to conduct participant-observation work. Initially, this was done at a community organisation, and after learning about the structural problems of the disadvantaged sector of the Latin American community, I approached a recognition campaign to conduct fieldwork as a participant. This allowed me to access large databases, have daily contact with Latin American migrants and gain first-hand knowledge of the living conditions and the particular challenges faced by this group. Through this work, I was able to identify certain patterns and characteristics, such as the existence of widespread downward mobility, the participation of Latin Americans in particular segments of the labour market, and experiences of a long-term language barrier. In addition to this, my active engagement in the Latin American Recognition Campaign as an activist allowed me to conceptualise,

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17 McIlwaine et al. (2011) provide an estimate about the size of this community which is based on official statistics.

discuss and analyse the issues studied with other actors from the group. These actors were key participants in the process of knowledge-production (Chesters, 2012).

The interviews conducted throughout this period allowed me to discuss specific issues with Latin American migrants, community workers from three different organisations and activists. These interviews contributed greatly to revealing the diversity of the histories, views and expectations behind a curtain of similar living conditions. These interviews also allowed me to explore the importance of interviewees' language of origin, the impacts of the language barrier, the different types of motivation for learning English, and the main challenges that obstruct people's learning.

A number of factors that were not anticipated in the initial project emerged during the experiences of participant-observation work and in-depth interviews. Among these, three issues struck me in particular: how strongly people felt about their first language and its different varieties; how widespread the combination of high regard for and lack of knowledge of the English language seemed to be; and how common it was to find people speaking very little English after having lived in the UK for over a decade. These findings encouraged me to conduct surveys to learn more about the level and types of motivation to learn English, both among those attending and not attending English language courses. It also allowed me to explore people's levels of anxiety and their main obstacles with respect to their learning.

In summary, and as stressed in Chapter 3, fieldwork for this research was a process that involved a long period of exploration and reformulation which allowed those elements that emerged as important during fieldwork to be incorporated into the analysis. This required learning from different disciplines, considering different frameworks, and thinking across them in order to understand the debates linked to these issues and to address the research questions.

This process greatly influenced the development of the theoretical framework for this research and the selection of the theories and disciplines upon which it draws. In this sense, the interdisciplinary approach adopted in this thesis is driven by the complexity of a problem that is highly relevant both for host societies and migrants. It corresponds to a model of interdisciplinary work that "addresses issues of social, technical and/or policy relevance where the primary aim is problem-oriented and discipline-related outputs are less central to the project design. The relevant mix of disciplines is project specific" (Tait et al., 2004: 12).

In this sense, because it deals with a multidimensional social process, the study of language in the context of migration requires the perspectives and conceptualisations developed within different fields of study to be taken into account. In order to study the multiple factors that are at play in the articulation between language, identity and integration for Latin American migrants in London, this research combined theories derived from the broad fields of Sociology and Linguistics, and from the sub-fields of Migration Studies, Sociology of Language, Motivation in Second Language Acquisition, Collective Identity and Ethnicity studies. These theories were integrated throughout the analysis, which contextualised the issues studied within the particular situation of Latin Americans in London in relation to the framework of the city's wider migratory landscape and labour market situation. This approach allowed me to take into account the practical, symbolic and affective importance of language in the processes of identification and integration of Latin American migrants in London.

Discussion of main findings

Over the past 10 years, large numbers of Latin Americans have migrated into London, becoming one of the city's fastest growing migrant groups, similar in size to the Chinese ethnic minority and Polish migrant group (McIlwaine et al., 2011). Nonetheless, and in spite of their growing presence and poor living conditions, Latin Americans are still overlooked in public policy and ethnic monitoring.

This thesis contributes to the profiling of one of London's invisible yet fastest growing migrant communities. By focusing on language, it deals with one of the most relevant issues in debates surrounding immigration and social cohesion. The ideas and perspectives retrieved through fieldwork provide important insights into the role and impact of language in the shaping of this migrant community's experiences in London.

In its aim of providing a more comprehensive approach to the study of language and migration, this thesis addresses three main topics: the role and functions of the origin language and its links with different forms of identification; the experiences surrounding the language of the host society in relation to the integration processes of migrants; and finally, the connection between these issues and the emergence of efforts to organise collectively in order to achieve official recognition as one of London's ethnic minorities.

This section will summarise and discuss some of the main findings regarding Latin Americans' language knowledge, practices and experiences; the role language plays in generating marginalisation; the links between disadvantage and ethnic minority

recognition; and the importance for migrants to maintain their first language in this context.

English language learning and integration

As Latin Americans come from non-English speaking countries, language plays a key role in their structural and social integration processes. Regardless of their educational background, those who are unable to speak English fluently have no choice but to take jobs that require little communicative interaction. Participating in Spanish-speaking social circles leads people to rely mainly on other Latin Americans to access information and work opportunities. Consequently, people are concentrated in the cleaning and catering sectors, which offer jobs that are easy to access and which are normally found by word-of-mouth, through other Latin Americans already working in the sector.

Survey results show that most people employed in these sectors were working with other Latin American migrants. In addition, these jobs normally involve long hours of isolated work, and therefore offer limited opportunities for learning or practising the language. In addition, people are often contracted to work very few hours. This forces people to look for different employers and work split shifts, which are frequently out of office hours, very early in the morning and very late at night. In this context, it is no surprise that having a demanding work schedule emerged as the main obstacle for Latin Americans to access ESOL courses.

Through taking these jobs people often fall into a negative cycle as they struggle to survive with low pay and a lack of opportunities for learning English or any other locally relevant skills. In conclusion, integration through language greatly depends on factors that are frequently beyond migrants' control.

In addition, experiences of language difficulties also affect the daily lives of Latin American migrants when taking care of important and unimportant daily tasks, running errands, managing their finances, communicating with their English-speaking children, and when trying to access services and information. The language barrier in daily life generates dependency, feelings of isolation, vulnerability and fear.

As such, Latin Americans both in and out of English classes appear to be highly motivated to learn English. Among the main three motivations, people expressed a high regard for knowledge and a desire to speak properly. Integrative motivations were also very strong, which were apparent in respondents' desire to express their ideas in English, learn about the local system and meet more British-born people as well as

migrants of other origins. Finally, their motivation was also linked to various instrumental reasons, which included the ability to defend themselves, to improve their employment situation, and to use computers.

Although the level of English language knowledge of this sample group was low, speaking English was described by the majority of respondents as an enjoyable experience which is linked to high self-esteem. Their learning experiences, however, may be marked by feelings of embarrassment, fear and low self-esteem, which appear to be related to a lack of stability in terms of legal status, and the inability to reverse experiences of downward mobility.

Inequality and recognition

Latin Americans in London face disadvantaged and exploitation at work, which is largely due to the lack of regulation of the cleaning and catering sectors of London's labour market. This situation is worsened by a hierarchy of restrictive regulations imposed by the immigration system, which limits people's access to work, and consequently to labour rights (Anderson, 2008). Access is thus harder for people holding visas who breach their employment regulations, and for those with an irregular status (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010). Disadvantage in the labour market translates into poverty, precarious and often overcrowded living conditions, social exclusion, and a lack of access to services and the welfare system.

As concluded in the previous section, language plays a key role in the integration process of migrants. A lack of knowledge of the English language leads people to take manual jobs which provide low salaries and demand a disproportionate amount of time and effort. As ESOL funding policy fails to take into account the needs of these workers, people lack the necessary resources in terms of time and money to be able to attend English classes and, consequently, other host country-specific human capital. This situation leaves them stuck in a negative cycle whereby they lack the resources and opportunities needed to achieve upward mobility.

In addition, this cyclical process remains unnoticed due to a lack of statistical data on Latin Americans. In order to break out of this situation of disadvantage and lack of visibility, as happened with other minority groups in the past, a sector of this community started campaigning for the official recognition of Latin Americans as one of London's ethnic minorities.

The activities of two opposing campaigns have established a debate in the community regarding the definition and boundaries of Latin American identity. As a

highly heterogeneous group, Latin Americans express different levels of identification with community practices and group identity. Nonetheless, this research shows that the development of an ethnic category for this group is framed by issues related to both a historical and contextual basis for the development of identification and a strategic motivation for political mobilisation.

The analysis of these efforts in the context of London demonstrates that attempts to organise collectively on the basis of ethnicity are influenced by a number of convergent factors: the socially-constructed belief in a common heritage; the development and maintenance of community practices; and people's living conditions, which are greatly determined by governmental actions. In this sense, campaigning for recognition represents, on one hand, an attempt to counterbalance the excluding practices of the host system and society, while at the same time, it shows an adaptation to the way society is categorised in the UK.

By documenting and analysing the engagement of these migrants in activism for recognition, this study shows that the inclusion of a Latin American category in ethnic monitoring is not only a quest for equality and visibility, but also a strategy for political participation as a collective actor following the acquisition of minority status. The struggles of these campaigns highlight the importance of collective action for minority groups and the limitations of monitoring equality through ethnic categorisation.

The importance of the mother tongue

As is usually the case among migrants, the first language of Latin Americans in London, Spanish, is the language of the family environment. However, contrary to what normally occurs, and due to the working conditions outlined above, Spanish is also frequently the main language spoken at work. Moreover, for those who migrated alone and share flats with other migrants, Spanish is the language spoken at work while English, although limited, is often the language of home.

Social networks, which greatly influence the type of information and employment opportunities to which people have access (Baer, 2010; Granovetter, 2005; Montgomery, 1992), appear to be very limited for this group, as their networks appear to be mainly comprised of other Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants. This situation of isolation or disconnection from the host society often generates the impression that there are 'no British in London'.

Apart from being the language of most social interactions, within the family environment, Spanish is the language of affection and intimacy. It is also an

irreplaceable means of transferring cultural values and maintaining children's symbolic connections with the family origin, as well as bonds with the family abroad.

Sharing the same mother tongue makes Latin Americans feel closer and similar. Interviewees' experiences reveal a sense of connection and a sense of shared understanding as a result of having a shared language. In this context, and particularly when experiencing the language barrier, Spanish emerges as a safe zone, a non-threatening space of mutual understanding that provides refuge from fluent speakers of the dominant language. Nonetheless, a high regard for the maintenance of Spanish, as shown in Chapter 5, does not contradict a positive attitude towards English language learning.

Ideas about the different varieties of Spanish are also used to express ideas about the different sub-groups within the demographic in question. Language is thus used to express differences between different sub-groups of this speech community, while it also remains an important tool for the development of ideas of belonging and identification. In addition, nationality, legal status and the interviewees' and other people's perceptions of physical features appeared to be influential aspects for the identification processes of migrants with dual nationalities.

In summary, the importance of the mother tongue for this group lies in the social functions it fulfils. Spanish is the language of affection, an indispensable means of transferring cultural values and a social space of safety and relief, which is anchored in a feeling of mutual understanding. It also serves as an indicator of a speaker's origin and membership within distinctive sub-groups, and in this way it is used to maintain the internal distinctions of this highly heterogeneous group. In this sense, language plays an important part in the identification processes of Latin American migrants, while it simultaneously performs the social function of maintaining both the unity and plurality of Latin American identity.

Theoretical contribution

Language is a social practice. Apart from being the means of communication of most social interactions, language also fulfils a variety of other social functions. As a form of codification of social reality, "each language describes the world quite literally in its own terms, forming a unique mode of thought and expression" (Riley, 2007: 9). Speakers name what surrounds them and what is historically relevant for the group. In this sense, each language variety is a palimpsest that carries cultural content (Dorian, 1999: 32), while connecting speakers with a common origin (Padilla, 1999). Thanks to

the particularities of each variety, language frequently acts as an identity marker and one of the most salient elements of people's social identities (Edwards, 1985a; Dorian, 1999).

In spite of its entanglement with ethnic identity, there is relatively little discussion on the role of language in collective identity and ethnicity literature, which often treat it a mere cultural element, equated with music or traditional aesthetics as a means of showcasing a pre-existing identity. Language is thus often reduced to only one of its dimensions:

> "Collective identities are expressed in cultural materials – names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on" (Poletta and Jasper, 2001).

> "The cultural contents of ethnic dichotomies would seem analytically to be of two orders: (i) overt signals or signs - the diacritical features that people look for and exhibit to show identity, often such features as dress, language, house-form, or general style of life, and (ii) basic value orientations" (Barth, 1969: 14).

> "The fact that a cultural item, such as language or dress, may function as a boundary marker does not mean that people do not also take the cultural item seriously. People do attach importance to customary dresses and a familiar language" (Fenton, 2003: 111).

On the other hand, the study of language and migration tends to focus on its communicative function. Therefore, emphasis is often placed on the impact speaking the language of the host society has on migrants' economic situation, leaving aside language's social, emotive and symbolic value. It is frequently studied through large-scale studies that look at the impact of language on migrants' access to jobs and earnings (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002), and on intergenerational trends of linguistic assimilation (Alba et al., 2002). In addition, studies of language and society tend to study variables that directly affect language use, such as gender or class. However, language is rarely studied in light of factors stemming from the broader social context, such as the labour market situation, the immigration system or public policy.

There is also a tendency in studies of second language acquisition to de-socialise the acquisition of language by studying it in the artificial environments of the classroom or distance education. This thesis argues that in order to approach a better understanding of the acquisition of the destination language for migrants, studies need

to take into account the spaces in which people speak, and the meaning attributed to the different language varieties in the specific time and place. In order to avoid isolating language from its social context, this research paid special attention to the experiences of migrants and to various relevant contextual elements identified during fieldwork observation.

As the language of the host society, English is an important communicative tool and a requirement for accessing most jobs and educative opportunities in London. There is extensive literature demonstrating the power language has in shaping migrants' experiences in the labour market and their levels of income (Chiswick and Miller, 1995; 2002; Esser, 2006; Heath et al., 2000; Kanas and van Tubergen, 2009). This research also shows that when employers benefit from their employees' inability to speak English, language may also represent a tool for the perpetuation of inequality and the exercise of exploitative practices.

When considering the linguistic integration of migrants, much progress has been made in the study of motivation and anxiety (Gardner, 1985; Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993; Dörnyei, 1994, 2003; Spolsky, 2000; Noels et al., 2003; Lamb, 2004). Nonetheless, the contextualised analysis of the experiences of language difficulties and motivation to learn English among Latin American migrants in London showed that a lack of integration through language is not associated with low levels of motivation or the limited availability of courses. Many of the factors that determine the success of ESOL acquisition are strongly linked to structural factors of the socio-economic context, which are determined by employers, service providers and government bodies.

Moreover, since 2005, stricter language requirements have been progressively introduced as part of UK immigration law. Used as part of the regulatory system that determines the different types of legal statuses and entitlements for migrants, language also plays an increasingly important role in the distribution of power and access to rights.

In this sense, issues such as fluency, skills, monetary costs and the availability of English language classes should be considered along with the social and affective factors that influence migrants' linguistic practices. This research demonstrates that the linguistic situation of non-English-speaking migrants in London should be interpreted through the immigration history of the UK and the struggles of minorities, the migration system's hierarchical distribution of rights, and the dynamics of the labour market.

In this context, it is not surprising that migrants' use of their first language was often associated with a sense of safety and relief. Tied into the history of different speech communities (Haarman, 1999), language is linked to ideas of belonging (Edwards, 2009) and the transfer of cultural values (Padilla, 1999). In the context of migration, language is also the means through which transnational bonds can be maintained. In this sense, migrants' first language represents a space of shared understanding that fosters identification and the development of a sense of groupness and distinctiveness (Edwards, 2009).

In this respect, language may take on a key role in the emergence and maintenance of collective identities based on ethnicity. Studies looking into migrants' efforts to organise collectively around 'status identities' in order to achieve greater political participation should also acknowledge the ways in which language influences both migrants' levels of exclusion and identification processes.

By placing migrants' linguistic practices back in their social context, this thesis re-establishes the links between language and identity, and provides a broader account of the importance and impact of language in the lives of migrants. The need to include actors' perspectives in order to draw these conclusions emphasises the importance of empirical research on studies of language and society, and contributes to the development of a more comprehensive approach to the study of language and migration.

Following this perspective, this thesis argues that the study of the linguistic integration of migrants requires the development of an interdisciplinary perspective in order to take into account not only contextual factors that directly affect language use, such as place of residence or language policies, but also relevant factors from the wider socio-economic context.

In conclusion, migration theories provided this research with a theoretical framework for the study of the integration processes of migrants and the importance of host country language acquisition. However, these studies tend to reduce language to its communicative dimension, obscuring the influence that its symbolic and affective value has on the linguistic practices and experiences of migrants. Drawing from Linguistics studies and conceptualisations of language as a multidimensional social process allowed for the differentiation of the various functions of language, and for the examination of the role of language in the emergence of collective action and identification through ethnicity.

The links established in this thesis between theories produced within the broad fields of Linguistics and Sociology provide a more comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of language and migration. The interdisciplinary approach of this study also helps to avoid reducing the complexity of the interactions between the different dimensions of language and other social processes. Thus, this thesis puts forward theoretical debates that have been traditionally dissociated from each other, which in turn contributes to advancing the understanding of the links between language, integration and ethnic identity in diverse societies.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study is the fact that it mostly relies on qualitative data, which is principally due to a lack of official statistics on the Latin American community in the UK. The analysis of large-scale quantitative data would have presented a wider picture of the impacts of language in issues such as earnings, practices, and access to ESOL provision by Latin Americans in London.

Secondly, it is important to acknowledge that the sample reached during fieldwork should not necessarily be regarded as representative of the wider Latin American community. This is largely due to the limited resources and time available to a single researcher. The people who participated in the surveys and interviews, as well as the countless people met through participant-observation within the two different research settings, made up a sample that included a variety of nationalities, ages, legal statuses and educational backgrounds. However, they were mainly accessed in three locations: the bilingual customer service department of a phone company, a Latin American community organisation, and an organisation campaigning for recognition. In this sense, these gateways greatly determined the profile of the people met and although they seem to be in line with the profile of the majority of the community, there are other smaller sectors that have not been included in this research, such as children, and people in higher paid professions.

There were also constraints attached to the different roles assumed during fieldwork. Whereas my active engagement as an activist seeking recognition for Latin Americans through LARC allowed me to gain first-hand knowledge about relevant processes and debates, it is important to recognise that this type of engagement has also brought limitations to this research. For instance, while I was able to discuss many relevant issues with other LARC members on a daily basis, I only had access to the AIU's public discourse.

Finally, this thesis does not exhaust all aspects of the ties between language, identity and integration for the Latin American migrants who participated in this fieldwork. As a matter of fact, there were several related issues that came up during the interviews and observational work that should be accounted for in further research, such as the impact of becoming an immigrant on self-identification; the learning methods of self-taught bilingual speakers; experiences of discrimination related to language skills; representations of 'Latin American' in the media; language access and gender relations; transnational activities; and strategies to cope with linguistic difficulties.

Policy implications

This thesis deals with a number of issues that are highly relevant for governmental policy surrounding the integration of migrants and the development of social cohesion in a multicultural society.

The linguistic integration of non-English-speaking adult minority members in the UK is addressed by the government through ESOL provision. However, ESOL policy fails to recognise important aspects that are linked to people's access to English classes. Previous research has already questioned the construction of ESOL as a "basic skill" (Brooks et al., 2001), which contributes to the erroneous assumption that those who are not yet able to speak English are undereducated. ESOL policy also fails to account for the challenges of becoming bilingual or multilingual at an adult age within a migratory context, which often involves downward mobility, exploitation and a lack of opportunities. In addition, as stressed in this thesis, the cost and availability of courses, as well as equality and impact assessments, continue to overlook the situation of the Latin American community and others working in unregulated areas of the labour market.

Whereas the economic and social benefits of learning the language of the host country are clear for the different actors involved, this thesis shows that employing language as a regulatory element for gaining access to entitlements and rights may become a barrier to ESOL provision and hinder migrants' integration and social cohesion. On the other hand, the symbolic and instrumental value of migrants' first language, as well as the importance of opportunities for first language use for migrants' wellbeing, demonstrate the importance of maintaining a multicultural model that combines "the fight against exclusion and social inequalities with cultural recognition" (Wieviorka, 1998: 906).

In addition, this dissertation also addresses some of the dynamics of modern forms of exploitation in specific areas of London's labour market, and the consequences that the intrinsic limitations of current monitoring practices bring to an ever-changing society.

Future research

This study represents an initial step towards a better understanding of the processes involved in the linguistic integration of Latin American migrants in London. The methodology outlined in this thesis allowed for the identification of a number of issues that were not considered in depth due to time restrictions. In this sense, this study will hopefully encourage further research on aspects such as the impact of the language barrier on employment, social networks, mental health, and media consumption.

There are many avenues for future research on Latin Americans, language and integration. For instance, it would be interesting to conduct comparative studies to see how the experiences of this London community relate to those of other communities or to those of Latin Americans in other contexts.

While this thesis was being written, Southwark Council decided to officially recognise the Latin American community, becoming the first borough to include 'Latin American' as a category in ethnic monitoring. The data retrieved through ethnic monitoring will allow for quantitative analysis on the impact of language and ethnic concentration for Latin Americans in this borough. It will also allow the level of response to this category to be studied, and will facilitate the study of whether such a decision will bring significant changes to community practices and identification.

Future research on this community could also focus on children's experiences of the language barrier at schools and examine their perceptions and attitudes toward Spanish. In addition, this research could be continued by focusing on the particular needs and situations of specific sub-groups within this community, such as the irregular sector, women, people with disabilities, and young people entering the labour market.

Appendix 1: Interview sample

Table 1: List of Interviews

Name	Country of Birth	Legal Status	Education	Occupation	Age
Esteban	Argentina	EU Citizen	University	Barista	32
Julia	Perú	Student Visa	University	Employed part time	27
Ezequiel	Colombia	Student Visa	Postgraduate	MA student and employed part time	25
Alejo	Chile	British Citizen	University	Employed part time	28
Andres	Argentina	EU Citizen	Undergraduate	University student and employed part time	26
Cintia	Ecuador	Dependant Visa	University	Full time employed	33
Rodrigo	Panamá	Spouse Visa	University	Full time employment	30
Santiago	Argentina	EU Citizen	University incomplete	Employed part time	34
Manuela	England	British Citizen	University	Employed part time	23
Laura	Argentina	EU Citizen	University	Employed part time	36
Diana	Ecuador	Undocumented	Secondary school	Cleaner, employed casually	54
Joaquín	Colombia	British Citizen Former undoc	Further Education	Cleaner	53
Cecilia	Bolivia	EU Passport	University	Cleaner	37
Maria	Colombia	British Citizen Former Refugee	N/A	Community Workers	68
Matías	Colombia	EU Citizen		Employed part-time	32
Luisa	Colombia	British Citizen, former undocu		Unemployed	59
Julián	Cuba	EU Citizen	University incomplete	Full time student	22
Alfredo	Argentina	British Citizen			36
Alvaro	Colombia	British Citizen			24
Diego	Colombia	Student Visa	University	Student, Community Worker	NA
Alma	Colombia	British Citizen	N/A	Community Worker	NA
Mario	Chile	British Citizen	N/A	Community Worker	NA
Claudio	Peru	British Citizen	University	Spanish Teacher, Activist	NA

Table 2: Other Key Respondents

Name	Nationality	Organisation	Role
John	England	Trade Union Congress	Officer
Andrea	Luxemburg	Latin American Community Organisation	English teacher

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

1. Consent

2. Respondent's Personal Information and family history
- Nationality and family history
- Age
- Education

3. Migration to London
- How did you get to London? When and how? From where?
- Reason/s for emigrating
- Reason/s for choosing London
- What is your status here? / Do you have documents here?
- Anecdote: What were your most memorable experiences/impressions of when you first got to London? (how did you find a place to live/first person you spoke to/first meal/....) Is there anything you were not prepare for in those first weeks? Anything you weren't expecting?

4. Life in London
- Occupation. What do you do?
    - Work: What type of work do you do? How many hours do you work? Is it enough? How did you find your job?
    - Study: What are you studying? How long have you been studying? Why you chose to study here? (Study to stay or came to study?)
- Social life. Who do you spend most of your time with? Where are your partner/friends/colleagues from? Do you have British friends? Do you have friends from other migrant communities? Do you spend time with other people from Latin America? Why?
- Identification: Is there a group of people in London you identify with? Who do you feel you have more in common with and why?

5. Languages
- Do you speak English? Learning experience.
- What other languages do you speak?
- When do you speak English/Spanish? (home, work, friends, family abroad?).
- Are you in contact with different versions of Spanish? Any preferences? Any you dislike? Why? How does that language sound to you? Are there versions that you think are more correct than others? What do you think about the Spanish accent (Spanish from Spain)?
- Parents: do you want your children to maintain their Spanish? Why?

6. General Experiences
- Are you satisfied with your experience in London so far?
- Do you plan to stay in London? Do you feel settled?
- How do you think Latin Americans are treated in London? Do you think there is discrimination?

Appendix 3. Survey

Opinion survey: Language and Integration

Please complete the following questionnair making a circle, marking with an X and filling in the empty spaces. Completing this questionnair will take approximately 15 minutes.

A. About your language knowledge

Q1. **How many languages do you know apart from Spanish** – *Mark all that apply*

Aymará............................... ☐	English.................................. ☐
German............................... ☐	Portuguese............................ ☐
French................................. ☐	Quechua............................... ☐
Guaraní............................... ☐	Other/s, which one/s? : _____

Q2. **What language do you speak at home?** _____

Q3. **Knowledge self-evaluation**

Language	Basic	Intermmediate	Advanced	Native
Spoken English				
Written English				

B. About your language learning experience

Q4. **How long have you been studying English –** *Circle the time period and answer*

Months / Years: _____   Have you interrupted your studies frequently?: Yes / No

Q5. **Where do you study English?**

College................................. ☐	At home........................... ☐
Latin American org............... ☐	Other: _____

Q6. **In general terms, do you enjoy studying English?**

Yes.. ☐   No..................................... ☐

Q7. **In general terms, do you feel that you are making progress?**

Yes.. ☐   No..................................... ☐

Q8. **Why do you study English?**

_____

_____

_____

Q9. **When do you think you will be satisfied with your level of English?**

_____

_____

Q10. **Do you think you can reach an advanced level?**

Yes.......................................☐   No...................................☐

Q11. **How do the following sentences express your point of view?**

1. Strongly Agree. **2.** I Agree. **3.** Don't Agree nor disagree. **4.** I disagree. **5.** I strongly disagree. **6.** Doesn't Apply

I study English because...	1	2	3	4	5	6
...I need it keep studying						
...I like learning new things						
...I enjoy studying in general						
…I want to meet more British people						
...I want to speak English properly						
...It will help me use the computer						
...I like how it sounds						
...I enjoy practising English						
...I'm embarrassed not to speak it						
...I need it for the citizenship test						
...I want to expand my knowledge						
...To speak with migrants of other origins						
...To understand what my children say						
...to be able to defend myself						
…in case I travel						
...to improve my employment situation						
...to be able to express my ideas						
...to understand how London works						

Q12. **Do you ever feel like stop studying? Can you explain why?**

_____

_____

_____

C. About English language

Q13. **Which ones are more important to learn English, the experiences inside or outside of the classroom?**

Inside the classroom....... ☐   Outside the classroom.... ☐

Q14. **Do you easily find situations to speak English?**

Yes................................. ☐   No................................... ☐

Q15. How frequently do you carry out activities in order to learn English on your own? (e.g.: practising at home, listening to the radio, reading, or watcing movies in English)

Never	Once per month	Once a week	More than once a week	Every day
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q16. **Are there any issues difficulting your English language learning?**

_____

_____

_____

Q17. **How do the following sentences express your point of view?**

1. Strongly Agree. **2.** I Agree. **3.** Don't Agree nor disagree. **4.** I disagree. **5.** I strongly disagree. **6.** Doesn't Apply

Speaking English...	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
- makes me anxious	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- is the same as speaking Sp	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	—
- makes me tense	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- is something I enjoy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
- makes me feel good about myself	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q18. **Do you believe that English is necessary to live in London? Why?**

_____

_____

_____

D. Personal Details

Q19. **Age:** _____

Q20. **Gender**   Female / Male / _____

Q21. **Country of birth:** _____

Q22. **Ethnic group:** _____

Q23. **Occupation** – *Mark with an X all that apply*

Employed   cassual or temporal ☐   permanent ☐
full time ☐   part time ☐
one employer ☐   various employers ☐
Unemployed ☐   Student ☐
House work ☐   Self-employed ☐
Volunteer ☐   Other: _____

Q24. **Employment sector:** _____

Q25. **How long have you been in London for?** *- Circle the appropiate period of time*

Months / Years: _____

Q26. **Educational level achieved:**

Incomplete Primary School.. ☐   Further Education................. ☐
Primary School..................... ☐   Incomplete Universtiy............ ☐
Incomplete Secondary Sch ☐   University............................ ☐
Secondary School................ ☐   Incomplete Postgraduate...... ☐
Incomplete Further Educ...... ☐   Postgraduate........................ ☐

Last year of study: _____

Q27. **How long do you plan to stay in England for?** *- Circle the time period*

Months / Years: _____

For ever.............................. ☐

Don't know........................ ☐

Q28. **Legal Status in the United Kingdom**

British Passport................... ☐   Partner Visa......................... ☐
EU Passport........................ ☐   Without documents............... ☐
Tourist Visa......................... ☐   Don't know........................... ☐
Residency (5 years)............. ☐   Other: _____

Q29. **Borough of Residency:** _____

Q30. **What is the origin of those who participate of your social circle?**
Put an X in all that apply

	Doesn't Apply	Latin Am	UK	Spain	Other origin?
Husband/Wife	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Partner/fiancee	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Friends	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____
Occup colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	_____

Q31. **In your opinion, what makes someone Latin American?**

_____

_____

_____

Q32. **Are you registered at the GP (doctor)?**

Yes.. ☐   No... ☐

Thank you very much for completing this survey. If you wish to add anything, please do so here:

_____

_____

_____

(Alternative B section for people not attending English courses)
B. About your language learning experience

Q4. **If you studied English before, how long have you studied?**

Months / Years: _____   In which country/ies did you study?:_____

Q5. **Do you want to study English?**

Yes................................. ☐   No................................ ☐

Q6. **Why?**

_____

_____

Q7. **Are you satisfied with your English language level?**

Yes....................................☐   No.................................☐

Q8. **Do you think you can reach an advanced level?**

Yes....................................☐   No.................................☐

Q9. **Are there any issues making it difficult for you to attend English classes?**

_____

_____

_____

Q10. **How do the following sentences express your point of view?**

1. Strongly Agree. **2.** I Agree. **3.** Don't Agree nor disagree. **4.** I disagree. **5.** I strongly disagree. **6.** Doesn't Apply

I would study English because...	1	2	3	4	5	6
...I need it keep studying						
...I like learning new things						
...I enjoy studying in general						
…I want to meet more British people						
...I want to speak English properly						
...It will help me use the computer						
...I like how it sounds						
...I enjoy practising English						
...I'm embarrassed not to speak it						
...I need it for the citizenship test						
...I want to expand my knowledge						
...To speak with migrants of other origins						
...To understand what my children say						
...to be able to defend myself						
…in case I travel						
...to improve my employment situation						
...to be able to express my ideas						
...to understand how London works						

Appendix 4: UK census ethnic monitoring forms

Figure 1: The 1991 Census ethnic group question asked in England, Wales and Scotland

Figure 2: The 2001 Census ethnic group question asked in England and Wales

Figure 3: The 2011 Census ethnic group question asked in England

Source of figures 1 and 2: Bosveld, Connolly and Rendall, 2006.
Source of figure 3: ONS, 2011.

Appendix 5: Reasons to study English

1. Responses to the open question

Integrative: communication, participation in social life

"To integrate in the country"
"Because I want to be able to express myself in England "
"To be able to communicate"
"Because I want to improve my communication with everybody"
"To improve my communication"
"I want to be fluent "
"To speak fluently "
"Because languages keeps changing" (advanced speaker)
"To be able to communicate better with those who speak English"
"To be able to communicate myself properly"

Instrumental: employment

"It is important for my occupation"
"It is important for my occupation"
"For work "
"To improve my work "
"To improve the quality of my life, when you speak English you access better jobs"
"To get a better job"
"To access a job that is related to my studies "
"Because we need it in this country, otherwise it is very difficult to work"

Other instrumental

"It is very useful "
"Because I need to speak, read and write"

Other: living in the UK

"Because I am in London"
"Because I am in this country and I need it"
"Because I live here"
"Because I live in England"
"It is very important for me, I live in London "
"Because living in an English speaking country, I should learn to speak it better"

Other: English as a global language

"Because it is the universal language and it is important everywhere in the world"
"My life plan is to reunite my family in London or in the North of Europe, where it is very important to speak English"

Mixed

"I need it to defend myself, to go to the GP, shopping, everything. At my age I don't need it for work any more"
"I want to learn another language and it will help me with my employment situation"
"For my personal development, to reside in this country and get a good job"
"I would like to learn it to go to tourist places and to communicate with tourists and feel that I have value and that although I am 64 years old I keep studying and I keep moving forward"

"To continue studying and to be able to communicate to look for a job"
"To learn and to be able to develop in London. It is indispensable to work"
"Because it is very important for communication, when you travel"
"To open to work opportunities and understand people"
"To develop myself, to help others and to be useful"
"Employment and general knowledge, I want to learn the language"
"Because I like it and because it is necessary to work "
"Because it is very important in this country, besides we acquire good knowledge by learning the language"
"To be able to speak and make progress in my work, for communication"
"To look for a job and to learn and enjoy London "
"Employment and general knowledge, I want to learn the language"
"To prepare myself to find new opportunities and to be able to help other people "
"To be able to communicate with people who don't speak my language and to have a second language "
"To improve my knowledge and my speaking "
"I like it and it is a universal language "
"Because I like it, besides it is indispensable in this country"
"To understand, gain education and work experience in this country"
" Because I need to be able to work and to communicate with British society"
"Because I like the language, it's universal, I want to speak it perfectly"

2. Mixed reasons by topic

Reasons provided	Employment	Knowledge / Personal development	Integrative / Communication	Everyday life	Appealing / Leisure	Travel	Study	To help others	Global language	Access to Services	To defend myself
I need it to defend myself, to go to the GP, shopping, everything.				X						X	X
I want to learn another language and it will help me with my employment situation.	X	X									
For my personal development, to reside in this country and get a good job	X	X		X							
I would like to learn it to go to tourist places and to communicate with tourists and feel that I have value and that although I am 64 years old I keep studying and I keep moving forward		X				X					
To continue studying and to be able to communicate, to look for a job	X		X				X				
To learn and to be able to develop in London. It is indispensable to work.	X	X									
Because it is very important for communication, when you travel			X			X					
To open to work opportunities and understand people	X		X								
To develop myself, to help others and to be useful		X						X			
Employment and general knowledge, I want to learn the language	X	X									
Because I like it, besides it is indispensable in this country				X	X						
Because it is very important in this country, besides we acquire good knowledge by learning the language		X		X							
To be able to speak and make progress in my work, for communication	X		X								
To look for a job and to learn and enjoy London	X		X								

Employment and general knowledge, I want to learn the language	X	X									
To prepare myself to find new opportunities and to be able to help other people	X							X			
To be able to communicate with people who don't speak my language and to have a second language		X	X								
To improve my knowledge and my speaking		X	X								
I like it and it is a universal language					X				X		
Because I like it, besides it is indispensable in this country				X	X						
To understand, gain education and work experience in this country	X		X				X				
Because I need to be able to work and to communicate with British society	X		X								
Because I like the language, it's universal, I want to speak it perfectly		X			X				X		
Total	**12**	**11**	**9**	**5**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**

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