

**Migration, invisibility and belonging: a case  
study of Latin American families in the UK**

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## Abstract

Despite the salient role that *ways of seeing and categorizing difference* have acquired for the ordinary integration framework of contemporary Britain, research on how sparse immigrant populations and un/marked migrants and ethnic minorities negotiate these issues remains underdeveloped. This thesis contributes to illuminating the intersections between socio-cultural and embodied *in/visibility* and migrants' and their young descendants' experiences of incorporation by focusing on the case of Latin Americans in the north of England. The research comprised interviews with stakeholders and other informants and a multiple case study with ten Latin American and Latino-British families in the Yorkshire and Greater Manchester regions. The fieldwork with the families included all the household members over 8 years of age (totalling 30 participants) and combined a range of person-centred qualitative methods (text and visually based), involving multiple individual and group research encounters. The thesis argues that the socio-cultural invisibility of this population in the north of the country is co-produced and sustained by a lack of official attention and soft Latin American/Latino panethnic identifications. Also significant here is the fraught relationship between these migrants and the system of ethno-cultural recognition which operates in their host society. Invisibility and visibility emerge as signifiers of sameness and difference through the everyday embodied experiences of the adult and young participants. These are negotiated with 'passing' and 'coming out' strategies aimed at acquiring *mainstream* membership, avoiding enforced racialization (othering) or re-defining notions of commonality based on principles of cultural diversity. Nonetheless, conditions of socio-cultural invisibility constrain the extent to which both adults and young people can reproduce forms of *Latin Americanism* locally, displacing tasks of intergenerational cultural transmission to the transnational sphere of the extended family. Thus, young participants display narratives of *potential delayed belonging* to their inherited homelands in order to legitimate their claims to their locally uncommon cultural background.

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## 1. Introduction

Despite the increased presence of Latin American spaces and festivals in the global city of London (e.g. Carnaval del Pueblo Association [1999]; Visit London [2010]), the British public continues to be largely unaware of the presence of a Latin American population among its culturally and ethnically diverse society. An unfortunate example of the generalized *invisibility* of this heterogeneous collective in the UK arose in the British media in February 2011. The presenters of one of the most watched BBC television programmes 'Top Gear' provoked considerable controversy by making racist and stereotypical remarks about Mexicans after having road tested a car designed in their country, comments for which the BBC issued a low-key apology (BBC 4 February 2011). The British comedian and actor Steve Coogan (5 February 2011) wrote an insightful comment in *The Guardian* regarding this episode, in which he suggested that one of the reasons that had led these presenters to consider Mexicans a group 'safe' to stereotype (and insult) was their relative lack of presence in the public consciousness. As it is, the deluge of complaints which the comments provoked showed that Mexicans (and Latin Americans in general) may not be as *invisible* as it would have seemed.

The present *invisibility* of Latin Americans in the UK is at the heart of this thesis. In order to explore how issues of socio-cultural and embodied *in/visibility* relate to experiences of incorporation of migrant adults and their children, I examine in-depth the case of a group of families/households in the north of England, specifically Yorkshire and the Greater Manchester areas. In this introductory chapter, I start by contextualizing the migration of Latin Americans to Europe and the UK and continue by considering the conceptual debates which have characterized the macro-identity Latin America. Finally, I present the research aims and questions of the study and outline the structure of the thesis.

### 1.1. Latin American migration to Europe and the UK

Several authors have highlighted how internal and international migration flows are entangled with the history of Latin America (e.g. Castles and Miller 1998; CEPAL 2006; Guarnizo 2000; Pellegrino 2003). In broad terms, after having received European colonizers and forced migration from Africa in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries; increasing numbers of European settlers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, and

having experienced rural to urban migration flows across borders during the 1930s-1960s (and up to the present); Latin America has become mainly a region of emigration in the second half of the last century (Pellegrino 2003, 11-12).

This dynamic is in line with the changing face of international migration at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century described by Arango (2004, 22), “flows have become more global and heterogeneous in composition; Asia, Africa and Latin America have replaced Europe as the major region of origin; both the relative volume and nature of labour demand in receiving societies have changed; restrictive admission policies have proliferated; new forms of migration based upon entitlements have become paramount; undocumented flows and clandestine traffics have acquired an increasing saliency; social integration in the receiving society has become less linear; and transnational spaces and communities have emerged”. Migration flows from Latin America to Europe (and the UK), apart from their increasing nature, exhibit an heterogeneity of characteristics that are in accordance with the transformations summarized by Arango (2004): they show patterns of diversity in the forms of arrival, settling and organization (Pellegrino 2004).

A report prepared by the Economic Commission for Latin America (Comisión Económica para América Latina, CEPAL 2006) analyzed the characteristics of the present migration flows from Latin America and the Caribbean to Western countries. It established that the number of migrants from this region had increased considerably between 2000 and 2005, moving from an estimated 21 million to 26 million in this period; a number which represented 13% of all the world migrants (CEPAL 2006, 72). The same report highlighted that the destination countries for these migration flows had diversified gradually, pointing out that since the beginning of the 1990s up to 2006, 3.7 million migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean have moved to countries other than the US (CEPAL 2006, 74). One of these new destinations is Europe, especially Spain, Italy, France and Portugal (CEPAL 2006, 74).

However, scholars have started to document the extent to which the UK has become a popular country of settlement for Latin American migrants in the last two decades (e.g. Buchuck 2006; Carlisle 2006; Guarnizo 2006; McIlwaine 2007; see also chapter 4). Due to the relatively recent history (and diversity) of these flows, Latin Americans have been described as one of the ‘new migrant groups’ in the UK, that is groups from outside of the Commonwealth and European Union which have settled in the country since the 1990s (Kyambi 2005). Researchers have also started to highlight the *invisibility* (and potential

vulnerability) of this population on the basis of the lack of attention that, so far, they have received from the British state and its policy apparatuses (due to their smaller size in comparison to other immigrant populations) and their significant rate of irregular status (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007, 2009).

In this thesis, I argue that the *invisibility* of this population has two interrelated manifestations. Firstly, as I stated above, it can be described in terms of their *official non-recognition* (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007). This situation also relies on the generalized public unawareness of the presence of Latin Americans in the country and their lack of representation in the social landscape of the host society (i.e. scarcity of Latin American cultural spaces or private commercial initiatives in the case of the north of England). In the following pages, I refer to this ‘unnoticed presence and non-recognition’ of Latin Americans as *socio-cultural invisibility*.

Secondly, meanings attached to *invisibility* are caught between notions of unmarked embodiments, which have also been described as *nonvisible*<sup>1</sup> (e.g. Samuels 2003, 251 note 2), and metaphorical expressions for social oppression and marginality (i.e. discrimination of the black population, Fortier 2000, 23). This semantic diversity has been further expanded by the development of *politics of visibility* in movements of liberation (e.g. gay movements, disability, black activism), in which *visible physical traits* have been used as political tools to claim recognition and emancipation (Samuels 2003, 251 note 2). Latin Americans are the descendents of Indigenous, African and European peoples (and other immigrant populations) who have inhabited and settled in the region from pre-colonial to present times (cf. Wade 1997). Consequently, as Gracia (2000, 12) has summarized it, “there is no single discernible race in Latin America but, rather, a veritable melange of races and racial mixtures”. Thus, the range of marked/unmarked embodiments which characterizes this population places them in different positions in relation to the constructed *scopic regime* of physical *in/visibility*.

These two dimensions of *in/visibility* (and related expressions) for the case of Latin Americans in the north of England are the focus of interest of the present study. However, before I can proceed to introduce the research project on which the present volume is

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<sup>1</sup> This notion is also highly controversial as it implies that ‘whiteness’ is not a racialized identity. As Byrne (2006, 25) has pointed out: “The idea of whiteness as racially unmarked is of course only held by those positioned as white. (...) Whiteness, in terms of the power exercised by whites, has long been visible and an object of analysis for those who are positioned as black”.

based, I consider it necessary to pay attention to the concept of Latin America and how I have employed it.

## 1.2. Latin America: concept, meanings and debates

The etymological origin, meaning and uses of the concept of Latin America are highly controversial. There are two strands of thought regarding when the term was first used. One of them, considers that geographers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century started to deploy it to designate the territories colonized by Spain and Portugal (Meade 2010, 1). The other maintains that it was firstly used by French colonizers in the 1850s as an attempt to consolidate their power in the region by creating a political entity based on the *Romance* (Latin) languages and cultures that the Spanish, Portuguese and French had brought to the continent (Eakin 2007, 3; Skidmore and Smith 2005, 3).

In fact, both perspectives are Eurocentric and colonialist and reify the 'Latin' patrimony of the imperialist nations (Spain, Portugal and France) which invaded the region from 1492 onwards, and disregards the important African, Indigenous and subsequent immigrant cultures that are part of the heritage of the continent (Eakin 2007; Meade 2010; Skidmore and Smith 2005). In its most popular definition, this constructed political entity "includes 20 countries that gained their independence from Spain, Portugal (Brazil), and France (Haiti) in the nineteenth century (and at the turn of the century in the cases of Cuba and Panama)" (Eakin 2007, 3). However, as many historians point out, this definition does not solve the conundrum of inclusion or exclusion of other areas of the continent that historically had also been part of the Spanish territories but subsequently were appropriated by other colonial powers or later on became part of the United States (e.g. Eakin 2007; Meade 2010; Skidmore and Smith 2005).

Consequently, the history of the term and what it represents has led historians and other scholars to question whether Latin America exists or is purely an *invention* of the European colonial imagination (see for example Mignolo 2005). However, as Romero suggests "it is undeniable that, at least as viewed from Europe, [Latin America] exists as a unified idea" (2001, 15 my translation). These debates have become even more complex due to the evolution of the term in the post-independence era. For instance, Larrain (2000, 1) argues that a sense of collectivity has continued to grow across the region through the increased appreciation of social, economic and cultural commonalities amongst its inhabitants - i.e. through the writings of Latin American intellectuals who have affirmed the existence of

this identity or currents of shared popular culture (Larrain 2000, 1-3). The extent of this 'self-identification' from a grass-roots perspective has also been challenged by the development of other collective terms such as 'Indo America' or 'Afro America', rooted in political movements aimed at recognizing Indigenous and African peoples (e.g. Eakin 2007; Meade 2010; Mignolo 2005). These debates are extremely complex and are also entangled with those surrounding 'panethnic' identifications such as *Latino* or *Hispanic*, which have found expression amongst Latin American migrant populations and their descendants (e.g. Gracia 2000, see also chapter 4). Notwithstanding this, for the object of the present thesis, it is important to note that many scholars and other intellectuals concur that a sense of Latin American identity (multiply defined and contested) has continued to exist vis-à-vis national identities and other collective affiliations across this vast and heterogeneous region (e.g. Eakin 2007; Larrain 2000; Meade 2010).

In this study, I have followed the politico-geographical definition of Latin America outlined above by Eakin (2007, 3) and included the following countries and dependency in its scope: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela. It is a pragmatic definition for the aims of the project which does not mean to imply that other territories are not part of this collective. Furthermore, it is not my intention to define migrants from this geographical area with a Eurocentric point of view or to imply that Latin America exists as a culturally coherent unit. Nonetheless, I believe that Latin Americans settling in Europe have to face social and governmental *gazes* that are often dominated by this construct (cf. Eakin 2007; Romero 2001). To counteract this colonial point of view, I actively recruited participants who self-identified with the idea of Latin America in some way (however contested and perceived). Furthermore, it has been my aim to foreground their own understandings of the term and relationships with it, in order to highlight how this fluid political and cultural label is resisted, negotiated and reconstructed.

### **1.3. Researching Latin American families in the north of England**

Despite the relatively recent history of this immigrant population in the UK and their generalized *invisibility*, researchers have started to provide important accounts of the trajectories and experiences of settlement of Latin Americans in the country. Some significant studies have been undertaken, mainly (but not exclusively) focusing on specific

national groups in London where the majority of the population resides (e.g. Bermúdez 2010; Carlisle 2006; Evans et al. 2007; Guarnizo 2008; James 2005; McIlwaine 2005, 2007; McIlwaine et al. 2011; Sveinsoon 2007). However, information is scarcer once outside of the capital and there has been a general lack of research about the experiences of children and young people from this group (for an exception see McIlwaine et al. 2011 for a recent survey conducted in London amongst young people of Latin American descent).

The present thesis and the research project on which is based originated from an ESRC CASE Studentship between the School of Geography (University of Leeds) and the British Refugee Council (commonly known as the Refugee Council). This collaborative initiative was designed with the broad aim of exploring the experiences of Latin American migrants and their children, also paying attention to the largely overlooked asylum seekers and refugees from this group. Due to the small number of individuals and families from this region who, at the present time, settle in the UK through the asylum route (see chapter 4), I was interested in considering their experiences of integration alongside those of other types of Latin American migrants. The sample of participant families/households reflects this broader approach (see chapter 3) and in this thesis I have maintained an integrative outlook on their incorporation experiences. As Black (1991, 293) has pointed out, “[r]efugee communities have often been faced with a particularly difficult task of economic and cultural adaptation, since many arrive with few economic resources, as well as with their social and cultural networks completely demolished. Nonetheless, they are likely to face the same problems of racism and discrimination as other migrant groups (...)”. Therefore, I considered that a perspective which could appraise refugee and other types of migrant families’ common and diverse experiences was potentially very fruitful. The thesis examines some of the main policy implications that the findings of the research have in relation to Latin American asylum seeking or refugee families (see conclusions in chapter 8) but I am also writing a separate report for the Refugee Council in which I explore their case in-depth.

I must also highlight that I was particularly interested in developing a project which could take into account the experiences of young people of Latin American descent alongside those of migrant adults (cf. Hopkins and Pain 2007; Vanderbeck 2007). This included children who had been born in Latin America and who had immigrated at an early age - first or 1.5 generation - and those who had been born in the host society to at least one migrant Latin American parent, second generation. Although these generation categories

are constructed and the boundaries between them are blurred (cf. Levitt and Waters 2002), in this thesis I have adopted the term second generation to refer to all the children of migrants (both those who were born in the host country and those who came at an early age). The sample of participants also included a minority of children who had migrated with their families more recently; in the analysis chapters I indicate the instances in which there is a need for a distinction between different participants. Next, I consider the aims and research questions which guided the research process and the writing of this thesis.

### **1.3.1. Aims and research questions**

The main research omission that the project aimed at starting to address was the generalized lack of studies focusing on Latin Americans outside of London and specifically in the north of the country where the population is smaller and more dispersed. Within this general approach, I established five further aims (and related research questions) that covered additional study interests and provided the framework from which to design the data collection process.

**Overall aim:** To deepen our understanding of the Latin American population in the UK by focusing on migrants and their descendants living in the north of the country.

**Aim 2:** To investigate the incorporation experiences of Latin American migrants and their children against the background of socio-cultural invisibility which characterizes this population in the north of the country (low numbers, physical dispersion and sparsity of cultural or community groups).

1. What are the macro and contextual factors contributing to the socio-cultural invisibility of this population in the north of the country?
2. How do Latin American adults and young people interpret and negotiate this socio-cultural invisibility?

**Aim 3:** To explore the ways in which the diversity of marked/unmarked embodiments, which characterize the Latin American population, impact on their experiences of incorporation.

1. How do participants (adults and young people) understand notions of sameness and difference in relation to their everyday incorporation experiences?

2. How do participants (adults and young people) negotiate sameness and difference within their settlement contexts?
3. How are issues of visibility and invisibility experienced by adults and young people?

**Aim 4:** To explore the role of transnational practices in the simultaneous experiences of incorporation of Latin Americans in the north of England.

1. How do conditions of socio-cultural and embodied *in/visibility* impact on the transnational practices of the participants (adults and young people)?
2. How are practices of ‘frontiering’ and ‘relativizing’<sup>2</sup> undertaken against a background of socio-cultural invisibility?
3. What kinds of transnational practices do the participants (adults and young people) engage in? What are the roles and meanings attached to these transnational practices?

**Aim 5:** To develop an understanding of the senses of belonging of Latin Americans in the north of England in relation to the invisibility which characterizes their experiences.

1. How do participants (adults and young people) construct their senses of belonging?
2. What simultaneous frames of reference figure in their accounts (local and translocal)?
3. How do the relational dynamics of the family (nuclear and extended, local and translocal) inform the young people’s accounts of their senses of belonging?

**Aim 6:** To contribute to deepening our understanding of the settlement and incorporation experiences of a highly invisible minority asylum seeking and refugee population (adults and young people) in response to the policy interests of the research partner, the Refugee Council.

Subsequently, these aims and research questions provided the thematic basis for organizing the findings and the structure of this thesis to which I turn next.

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<sup>2</sup> Bryceson and Vuorela (2002, 11) suggest the expression ‘frontiering’ in order to describe the ways and means through which members of transnational families establish relational networks with fellow migrants and wider (local and translocal) social contacts. In addition, they propose ‘relativizing’ to signify the variety of ways in which migrants establish, maintain or curtail transnational relationships with family members (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14).

### 1.3.2. Structure of the thesis

The theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the empirical study and the thesis are explored in **chapter 2**. Therefore, I take into account a range of literatures, starting with an overview of the post-1945 migrant incorporation models of Western countries and paying special attention to the case of Britain. I continue by discussing the transnational paradigm (including transnational families) and the challenge it has posed for these models of *national* incorporation. I also consider the enriched insights which can be gained by adopting an embodied transnational approach and an everyday migrant-centred perspective in researching processes of incorporation. Finally, I review the literature on immigrant and minority ethnic children's experiences of integration and related themes of identity and belonging, highlighting the need to develop further intergenerational family perspectives. I conclude by presenting the migrant-centred, embodied and intergenerational conceptual approach taken by the empirical study and the thesis in its aim to contribute to understandings of issues of *in/visibility* in migrant incorporation scholarship.

In **chapter 3**, I proceed to outline the project design and methodology of the study. Firstly I describe the preliminary research phase (including interviews with informants and stakeholders), the multiple case study approach and the sampling strategy I adopted. I continue by providing an overview and critical appraisal of the multiple methods (text and visually based) and different activities I employed for the fieldwork with adults, young people and the household as a group. I also consider the linguistic and translation aspects of the research (working both in Spanish and English) and how the analysis of the case study data was conducted. Finally, I provide an overview of the ethical framework of the project and reflect on my own positionality as a feminist researcher. I conclude by highlighting the original aspects of the methodology and discussing how they contribute to research practice.

**Chapter 4** starts the analytical section of the thesis with a discussion of the factors which co-produce and sustain the *socio-cultural invisibility* of this population in the UK and more specifically the north of the country (research aim 2). Thus, I pay attention to the *official gazes* involved (i.e. British government statistical classifications, sending states' related invisibility) but also to the complex accounts that the participants revealed in relation to the contested notions of the Latin American collective identification (and related terms) and its local manifestations. I argue that the accounts that the participants displayed

regarding Latin American or Latino macro-identities revealed a fractured relationship with the 'ethnic' (multicultural) recognition system which operates in their society of settlement; a problematic relationship which came to the fore in their everyday, embodied experiences of visibility and invisibility.

These embodied experiences are the focus of **chapter 5**, in which I address how the participants navigated the ethno-cultural visual regime of difference which characterizes their integration context (research aim 3). I consider the ways in which adults and young people constructed and reproduced sameness through highlighting commonalities with the perceived British *mainstream* and 'silencing' potential differences. I continue by analyzing how the marked/unmarked embodiments of the participants exposed them to a range of 'othering' and 'enforced racialization'<sup>3</sup> experiences which they negotiated by adopting in/visibility strategies (i.e. 'passing' or 'coming out'). Overall, the participants' accounts expose the resilience of visual systems of 'racial' and ethnic differentiation and discrimination within the British framework of incorporation.

In **Chapter 6**, I focus on how the lack of opportunities that Latin Americans and their children have to interact with fellow migrants or reproduce forms of *Latin Americanism* locally impacts on their efforts to perform cultural transmission and maintenance (i.e. Spanish language, popular traditions, etc.). Therefore, I discuss the ways in which the participant households displaced their activities of cultural transmission to the 'relativized' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14) sphere of extended and transnational family relationships (research aim 4). I argue that senses of familyhood and transnational practices become the main resources which can guarantee opportunities for the second generation to develop attachments and a deeper knowledge of their cultural heritage.

In fact, emotional and symbolic bonds to the transnational extended family and inherited homeland already figured on the ways in which young participants articulated their senses of self. Thus, in **chapter 7**, I consider the narratives of identity and belonging of both adult and young participants and reflect on the temporal and spatial impacts of socio-cultural invisibility on their senses of attachment to place/s and collective identifications (research aim 5). Overall, I argue that by paying attention to the myriad of ordinary ways in which migrants and their descendants *bond* to their society of settlement, it is possible to gain an insight into the emotions which constitute sentiments of belonging. These emotions are

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<sup>3</sup> In the rest of the thesis, I use the term racialization to refer to the process of "enforcing a non-white racial status" (Vasquez 2010, 46).

fluid and complex and attach migrants and their descendants to *both* origin and receiving societies in ways which are not necessarily contradictory.

**Chapter 8** closes the thesis by bringing together the findings, contributions and wider implications of the study. I start by summarizing the main conclusions of the analysis chapters and continue by discussing their theoretical and empirical contributions to scholarship on migrant incorporation and the scopic/aural limits of sameness, emotional geographies of belonging and transnational familyhood. I then consider the methodological contributions of the study in terms of research with children and young people *within* families and developing translanguistic projects. Finally, I discuss the wider policy implications of the thesis in relation to migrant incorporation and issues of interest for the Refugee Council (research aim 6).

Overall, the thesis contributes to illuminating the intersections between socio-cultural and embodied *in/visibility* and migrants' and their descendants' experiences of incorporation.

## **2. Migrant and ethnic minorities incorporation and belongings: perspectives from adults' and young people's literature**

### **2.1. Introduction**

In studies of international migration, a great deal of effort has focused on researching the experiences and futures of migrants and their children in their settlement societies. As international migration flows become a more dominant feature of our contemporary world and social and cultural diversity continues to increase in many immigrant receiving societies, the importance of developing better understandings of these mobilities, settlements and interactions has become ever greater.

In this chapter, I explore the different literatures that contextualize this thesis, paying attention to the subject areas that underpin the conceptual framework which I have adopted. I start by exploring the diverse incorporation models (and related ideas of citizenship and national belonging) utilized by Western societies in the post-1945 era when trying to accommodate 'racially' and ethnically diverse immigrant populations (e.g. assimilation and multiculturalism). Within this discussion, I place special emphasis on the case of Britain in order to provide an account of the development of the socio-political conditions which characterize the contemporary context of immigrant reception in this country. I continue by considering the challenges that the development of the transnational paradigm in migration studies has had for these models of *national* incorporation. The aim of this discussion is to appraise how this perspective has come to enrich conceptualizations of the experiences of contemporary immigrants and ethnic minorities (and their families), by transcending the nation-state container model and encompassing instead multiply-scaled, relational and simultaneous connections and affiliations. Finally, I consider the contributions of scholarly research on migrant incorporation and its evolution from measuring the economic and social indicators of immigrant and minority populations to migrant-centred perspectives which can take better account of their senses of belonging.

In this part of the chapter, I highlight that the British immigrant incorporation policies have come to be characterized by a regime of race relations which foregrounds issues of visibility/invisibility that have important impacts on how immigrants and minority ethnic individuals can negotiate sameness and belonging in their society of settlement. Despite the salient role that ways of seeing and categorizing difference have acquired for the ordinary integration framework of contemporary Britain, I note that research on how unmarked (or within the un/marked spectrum) migrants and minorities negotiate these issues remains underdeveloped.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the scholarship on immigrant and minority children's experiences of incorporation and related aspects of ethnicity and senses of identity and belonging, including second generation transnational attachments. To a great extent, this scholarship has developed independently from studies on adult experiences of integration, belongings and issues of visibility/invisibility. In this section, I highlight the need to pay attention to intergenerational family relations when considering questions of belonging among migrant or minority ethnic children and also the need to focus on the experiences of those from 'sparse' populations, who do not have so many opportunities to come into contact with children from a similar cultural background. I conclude by bringing together the approaches and gaps identified from these diverse literatures in order to outline the conceptual framework which my research has adopted.

## **2.2. Approaches to migrant incorporation**

After the Second World War, most Western European countries required immigration to supply the shortage of labour that had been caused by the conflict (Castles and Miller 1998, 8-9; Rex 1996). Grillo (1998, 171) describes how, in the case of Britain, workers came from Southern European countries such as Italy, as well as from the retained exiled populations of the war, e.g. Poles and Ukrainians. However, colonial and ex-colonial territories became the main source of labour and people from the West Indies and South Asia started to arrive in the country; the next few decades saw an increase of non-white immigration and the creation of a set of ethnic minorities in British society (Grillo 1998, 171).

Similar immigration trends could be found in other European countries (e.g. France, Germany, The Netherlands), although each drew immigrant labour from different areas according to their histories and developed different incorporation regimes (Rex 1996). The case of the US evolved separately to that of its European counterparts, but at the same time that Europe's countries were attracting a diversity of immigrants, the main issue on the other side of the Atlantic was "how its Black people could achieve equality with Whites, and enter a society whose institutions had been designed to deal primarily with the situation of European migrants" (Rex 1996, 124).

The arrival of these immigrants and how Western countries addressed their incorporation can be contextualized in relation to the citizenship and nationhood regimes that characterized these nation-states and their implicit politics of national belonging. Traditional models of citizenship relate belonging to a territorially and historically bounded polity, which confers citizens with rights and obligations (Bellamy 2008; Castles and Davidson 2000; Isin and Turner 2002; Shafir 1998). The origin of these models can be traced back to the 1789 French Revolution, when the nation-state was consolidated as the dominant form of political organization and the relationship between the individual and the state was redefined by establishing nationality at the basis of membership to the political community (Soysal 1994, 17). From this basis, "[c]itizenship is thus 'internally inclusive' and 'externally exclusive' (...): a set of rights and obligations bestowed equally on all members of the community, but also as a mechanism of closure, separating members from non-members" (Joppke 1999b, 6).

The modern democratic understanding of citizenship is often traced back to the work of sociologist T.H. Marshall (Bellamy 2008; Isin and Turner 2002; Shafir 1998; Turner 1993). By analyzing the history of West European democracies from the 18th to the 20th century, this scholar provided a view of "citizenship as the product of the interrelated processes of state-building, the emergence of commercial and industrial society, and the construction of a national consciousness" (Bellamy 2008, 46). Focusing on the British case of class struggles to achieve equal inclusion in the national community, Marshall (1950) proposed an understanding of citizenship composed by civil, political and social dimensions which had evolved in consecutive stages: the 17th century brought civil or legal rights (e.g. equality before the law), the 18th and 19th century added political rights (e.g. parliamentary democracy and expansion of the

rights to political participation) and the 20th century consolidated social rights (e.g. welfare state) (Turner 1993, 6-7). Joppke (1999b, 6) argues that the Marshallian tradition addressed the “internally inclusive aspect” of citizenship by considering the process by which disadvantaged groups (e.g. workers, women) may progressively achieve equal inclusion; however, immigration brought to the fore its “externally exclusive dimension, [that is] the drawing of boundaries between members and non-members”. Thus, the sovereignty of the State is also exerted through immigration policies which control “access to and stay within” its territory (Joppke 1999b, 5).

Moreover, the formal exclusionary nature of citizenship has been further complicated by its entanglement with notions of national identity and belonging. As I mentioned above, the notion of citizenship evolved in parallel with processes of “state building” and the construction of a “national consciousness” (Bellamy 2008, 46); these processes fomented a symbolic correspondence between political communities, territories and ethno-cultural groups (Gellner 2006). Anderson’s (1991, 2006) influential work, has shown how nationalistic strategies construct powerful imaginaries which function on the basis of a nation bound together by common history, language, culture, ethnicity and territory. Such imaginaries are sustained by a fiction of “deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 1991, 7) among its members which masks the diversity and inequalities which lay at their midst. Nation-states use such national imaginaries in order to sustain social cohesion; they do so by externally projecting a distinctive national identity and internally promoting a sense of unity and community among its citizens (Anderson 2006). In this sense, citizenship can be understood not only as a legal entitlement but as an identity which “depends on and reinforces shared values and understandings, that is, a common culture” (Joppke 1999b, 6-7).

Traditionally, therefore, the construction of national identity (and by extension citizenship) as mono-cultural and mono-ethnic, established the supposed equivalence between political and cultural boundaries (Gellner 2006). Furthermore, the dominant perceptions of ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1991, 2006) amongst majority populations have important consequences for how national belonging is understood and who is included in/excluded from it. Incomers, amongst other minorities, may be formally recognized as members of the political community (e.g. through citizenship)

but this does not secure their full acceptance within the cultural community (Crowley 1999).

The racially, ethnically and religiously diverse immigration flows which characterized the post-1945 era posed significant challenges for Western states which had so far functioned according to these principles of national mono-cultures and perceived homogeneities. The immigrant incorporation models which I explore below constitute the diverse responses these states have devised when trying to maintain the cohesion of their nations while accommodating the increased cultural plurality of their members (or failing to do so).

### **2.2.1. Traditional models**

Castles (2000, 135; 2002, 1154) has argued that, despite the fact that each country which has received immigration has developed its own framework of incorporation, overall it is possible to distinguish three main approaches: differential exclusion, assimilation and multiculturalism. Of this triad, differential exclusion could be described as an approach which, in fact, tries to avoid incorporation. It describes the type of “guestworkers” regimes that were created in the late 19th century by countries such as Germany or France and became important systems of temporary recruitment in post-1945 Europe; more recent examples can be found in the Gulf oil industries (Castles 2002, 1155). This system considers immigrant workers as visitors who come into a country with strict limitations, as such they are not entitled to settle and become citizens (Castles 2002, 1155). However, these limitations have not prevented the creation of ethnic minorities in the countries that have implemented them. Castles (2000, 136) points out that some population groups have become politically and socially discriminated against on the basis of these differential policies; while Soysal (1994, 164) has argued that immigrants living under this type of regime have managed to negotiate forms of “postnational citizenship” which are “informed by a dialectical tension between national citizenship and universal human rights”.

Soysal’s (1994) arguments can be understood in the context of subsequent academic studies of migration and settlement, which have challenged traditional understandings of migration as ‘one-way journey’ from one nation-state to another. Instead, in light of the transformations introduced by technological advancements and processes of

globalization, the transnational<sup>4</sup> paradigm has highlighted the simultaneous lives and multiply scaled affiliations that contemporary migrants may maintain across borders and has transformed the way in which their incorporation experiences can be conceptualized. I will focus on the full extent of this challenge later on in the chapter, but first I explore the remaining main approaches to migrant incorporation (assimilation, multiculturalism, neo-assimilation) and how Western immigrant receiving countries have engaged with these ideas, paying special attention to the case of Britain.

### **2.2.1.1. Imposing homogeneity: assimilation and integration**

Early approaches to migrant incorporation, mainly based on a US perspective, considered that newcomers would embark on a one-way journey, settling permanently in the receiving country, adopting 'its culture', transferring their national loyalties and, eventually, exchanging one citizenship for another (Castles 2002, 1154-55). These approaches worked on the premise that migrants and their descendants would, progressively and in a linear manner, become economically, politically and culturally 'assimilated' (adapted and acculturated) into their host society (e.g. Gordon 1964; Park and Burgess 1969; Warner and Srole 1945). Assimilation ideals, therefore, rested on the iconic image of the 'melting pot' by which all difference would be dissolved into a supposed homogeneous host society (e.g. Glazer and Moynihan 1963); on this basis, belonging to the national community had to be achieved by immigrants and their descendants progressively abandoning any linguistic, religious or ethno-cultural differences.

Gordon's (1964) influential work, *Assimilation in American Life*, developed the conceptual framework of assimilation and distinguished between "acculturation" and "structural assimilation" (Alba and Nee 1997, 829). According to this author, acculturation, or the adoption of the core society's cultural patterns, happens first, and may eventually be followed by its structural equivalent, that is the incorporation of

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<sup>4</sup> Glick Schiller (1999 quoted in Mahler and Pessar 2001, 443) has provided a useful definition to distinguish between 'global' and 'transnational'. She suggests that: "'Global' is best reserved for processes that are not located in a single state but happen throughout the entire globe. (...) On the other hand, (...) transnational [can be used] to discuss political, economic, social and cultural processes that extend beyond the borders of a particular state, include actors that are not states, but are shaped by the policies and institutional practices of states" (Glick Schiller 1999, 96 quoted in Mahler and Pessar 2001, 443).

migrants and minority ethnic individuals into the mainstream sphere of socio-economic relationships (Alba and Nee 1997, 829). One of the main criticisms that has been addressed at this model of assimilation has been that immigrants are expected to 'acculturate' into an assumed homogeneous host culture (e.g. an essentialized notion of the Anglo-American middle class in Gordon's (1964) theory), which in turn, remains untouched by the influences of the newcomers (Alba and Nee 1997, 833).

However, there has been a wide debate regarding the extent to which this adaptation process has a linear nature, and subsequent theories of 'segmented assimilation' have argued that it is in fact an uneven path by which second generations improve their economic and social conditions and acculturate only in certain ways – highly contingent on the racial, social and economic stratification to which they are incorporating (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997). Within this perspective, processes of acculturation are not seen as parallel to economic and social integration but divergent (Gans 1997). These divergent dynamics can give place to a diversity of situations: second generation individuals can use their cultural distinctiveness as a resource for educational and professional improvement, fail to do so and suffer 'downwards assimilation' into the poorest strata of their host society or progress towards growing acculturation and parallel integration into the middle classes (Portes and Zhou 1993; Zhou 1997). As Colombo et al. (2009, 39) have pointed out, this perspective works from the premise that there is a delimited and "shared dominant model" to which second generations should aspire to assimilate and "[t]he only factor considered to be important for inclusion is economic success, which is assessed according to the parameters and models belonging to the majority group".

Overall, the US classical assimilation paradigm has been perceived as a process enforced by the regulatory forces of the State focused on homogenizing its population and absorbing minority cultures (e.g. Brubaker 2001; Rumbaut 1997). However, some scholars have argued that these criticisms are not accurate as they do not reflect "the views of key assimilation theorists nor the long-running disputes in assimilation scholarship about the nature and extent of ethnic change" (Nagel 2009, 402; see also Alba and Nee 1997; Schneider and Crul 2010). As I will explore later, more recent re-workings of this perspective maintain that assimilation can be redeemed from its shortcomings and be used analytically to understand the structural factors which

prevent or facilitate immigrants' and their descendants' incorporation to their host society (e.g. Alba and Nee 2003; Brubaker 2001; Nagel 2009).

Castles (2002, 1155) highlights that, after 1945, assimilationist approaches were used to different degrees in the UK and other European countries, especially in the case of how former colonial powers incorporated immigrants from countries which had been subjected to their rule. Post-colonial thinkers have emphasized that despite the process of decolonization and the dissolution of the empire, the colonial social hierarchy was retained in the ways in which the 'mother country' treated its Commonwealth newcomers e.g. the superiority of the white British (Gilroy 2004; Hall 2000b; Hesse 2000). Consequently, in the 1950s, Britain started to experience the symptoms of the discriminatory treatment suffered by 'non-white' immigrants and which manifested in the 'race riots' that broke out in London and Nottingham in 1958 (Grillo 1998, 173). This social unrest foregrounded the tensions between the need for more labour immigration and popular attitudes towards race and Britishness; tensions which were also intertwined with other socio-historical transformations e.g. end of the empire and economic decline, transition from industrial to post-industrial models (Morrell 2008, 9).

Within this climate, several British governments passed laws to control immigration admission to the UK and redefine British nationality from the 1960s onwards (Grillo 1998). For instance, the *Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962* and *1968* aimed to restrict the entry of colonial and ex-colonial subjects, and further legislation in 1971 and 1982 redefined British nationality, adding *jus sanguinis* to the principle of *jus soli* by which British citizens had to be born to British parents and not solely on British territory (Grillo 1998, 173-6). At the same time, though, legislation was also passed in order to counteract racial discrimination e.g. *Race Relations Act 1968* (Grillo 1998, 176). Joppke (1999b, 224) suggests that "the British regime for integrating immigrants presented itself from the start as a race relations regime, a regime for managing the relations between groups kept apart by the immutable mark of skin colour". It therefore showed an extreme example of citizenship as "externally exclusive" by restricting new entries, and as "internally inclusive" by adopting a Marshallian approach aimed at bestowing full citizenship equality to Commonwealth immigrants (Joppke 1999b, 224). As these immigrants already had formal citizenship, the necessary

next step was to provide them with social rights, i.e. access to welfare and material equality (Brubaker 1992; Joppke 1999b, 221).

It was the Home Secretary Roy Jenkins who, in 1966, declared the need to change the approach to immigrants' incorporation by providing migrants and minority ethnic individuals with equal opportunities as well as recognizing their cultural diversity (Alibhai-Brown 2000, 17):

“Integration is perhaps a rather loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrants, of their own national characteristics and culture. I do not think we need in this country a ‘melting pot’, which will turn everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone’s misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman... I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation but as an equal opportunity, coupled with cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance” (Jenkins 1967, 267 cited in Grillo 1998, 177).

Jenkins’ statement brings to the fore the term *integration* which must also be taken into account when considering approaches to immigrant incorporation. In fact, the UK and many other Western immigrant receiving countries have favoured this term to describe the way in which migrants and minority ethnic individuals become members of their societies (Favell 2003; Nagel and Staeheli 2008a; Phillips 2007). Nonetheless, integration has suffered from terminological ambiguity (Favell 1998, 2003). Often and when used to describe the process of migrant incorporation, it has been understood as referring to a *one-way path* similar to assimilation (e.g. Castles et al. 2002; Vasta 2007) – i.e. the notion that Jenkins was trying to reject in 1966. Subsequently, in light of more pluralistic policies and in contrast to assimilation, integration has been used to emphasize either a certain degree of recognition of cultural and social diversity or a *two-way* perspective on migrant incorporation processes, which implies that both host society and immigrants are involved in practices of “mutual adjustment and participation” (Atfield et al. 2007, 12). Phillips (2007, 1150 drawing on Favell 1998) highlights that both terms, assimilation and integration, have undergone a process of politicization and even racialization and now foreground “different policy approaches to incorporating social and cultural difference”. Therefore, conceptualizations of integration continue to be highly contested as they are pervaded by shifting political agendas (Castles et al. 2002).

Castles (2002, 1156) has noted that, from the 1970s onwards, many Western countries had to face the “illusion” of long-term cultural assimilation and engage with the enduring diversity of their immigrant populations. The next section explores the introduction of pluralist policies which ensued.

### **2.2.1.2. *The rise of multiculturalism***

Basically, as Castles (2002, 1156) has summarized, “[m]ulticulturalism implies abandoning the myth of the homogeneous and monocultural nation-states. It means recognizing rights to cultural maintenance and community formation, and linking these to social equality and protection from discrimination”. In ideological terms, understandings of multiculturalism have focused around the political approaches adopted by liberal states (e.g. Canada and Australia) from the 1970s onwards to deal with the dilemmas of the increasing cultural and ethnic diversity in their societies. In an attempt to analyze different uses of the term, Grillo (1998 drawing on other scholars) suggests a spectrum between *strong* and *weak* forms of pluralism, with the former including those approaches that accommodate certain forms of difference, mainly in private domains, but still demand assimilation in terms of governmental regulations, education and employment; and the latter, which is characterized by a high level of public recognition of cultural difference - i.e. forms of ‘multicultural or differential citizenship’ (see Joppke 2001; Kymlicka 1998 for debates on this topic). In this sense, multiculturalism can be understood as developing understandings of national belonging based on diversity instead of sameness.

In Britain, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed the development of educational and municipal multicultural initiatives aimed at addressing, to some extent, the discrimination suffered by minority ethnic individuals (Alibhai-Brown 2000, 17-18; Grillo 1998, 178-181). At the same time, and inspired by the US Black civil rights and liberation movements, non-white British residents organized politically to demand recognition of their rights (Ali 1991, 195). However, these diverse multicultural initiatives did not become a fully developed national policy and failed to tackle racial discrimination and inequalities convincingly, keeping instead a narrow focus on minorities apart from “the concerns of the state at the time and the way society was being transformed” (Alibhai-Brown 2000, 18).

Since the end of the 1990s, multiculturalism has been increasingly questioned from political, policy and academic angles. A first group of criticisms has been directed at the perceived inherent essentialism of the concept. It is argued that multiculturalism is built upon bounded and organically unified ideas of cultural or ethnic groups, which have consequences for how individuals are categorized by the state (Grillo 1998; Morrell 2008; Vertovec 1996). For example, this charge has been made in relation to the way that ethnic categories, such as Asians in the UK, are used by governmental monitoring practices (Cohen 1997; Grillo 1998), “homogenis[ing] a group of individuals that may have some (loose) connection or cultural affinity” (Morrell 2008, 11).

Consequently, a second related set of critiques questions how multiculturalism has been used by governments and the impacts this has had. For instance, multiculturalism has been perceived as a way in which “the state seeks to control minorities through selected elders, reifying and rendering static the notion of minority cultures” (Rex 1996, 58 quoted in Grillo 1998, 198). Therefore, it has been considered that it ignores the diversity of members of minority groups (e.g. women, young people) and the power relations within them (Anthias 2002a). Additionally, it has been argued that this form of institutionalized politics is often characterized by a celebratory and tokenistic undertone which reduces multiculturalism to stereotyped, visual and ‘exotic’ ethnic cues (Grillo 1998, 200).

A final area of controversy lies in the relativist approach which underpins multiculturalism. Its relativist stance has been built in opposition to universalism, which is charged with “ignor[ing] the power relations inherent in creating a dominant discourse and what is often the ethnocentrism of the dominant group” (Morrell 2008, 11). However, by defending the idea of a society formed by set of different cultural groups, multiculturalism reverts to universalist positions as it does not elaborate on the power relations which characterize the interactions between these groups or within them (Morrell 2008, 11). This critique is also related to what Grillo (1998, 194) has called multiculturalism’s “attack on the ‘common core’” of the national society. He is referring to the existing perception that multiculturalism is a doctrine for non-white minorities, which excludes the ‘white group’ from its dialogue and also the claims of non-ethnic minorities (Alibhai-Brown 2000). Overall, as Joppke and Lukes (1999, 8) have pointed out, by protecting a ‘mosaic’ of cultural groups, multiculturalism has been

accused of fragmenting and disuniting the national collective and perpetuating segregation.

In the case of Britain, it is important to consider further the consequences of the shift from a focus on race and ethnicity to culture. As Hesse (2000, 8) has pointed out, multiculturalism was the liberal solution to accommodate “racially marked white/non-white cultural differences” in a way that could guarantee freedom and tolerance for both the white majority and the non-white minorities; however, this approach sidelined racism and its discriminatory power practices concentrating instead on the cultural discourse. Within this framework, minorities were offered cultural tolerance and protection as long as they lived according to the existing laws and civic principles (Morrell 2008, 12 drawing on Favell 1998); and yet, the core of perceived ‘British values’ remained untouched.

Several authors have considered the outcomes of the introduction of multicultural policies in Britain and suggested that there have been positive effects in the political sphere of the country which should not be dismissed (Hesse 2000; Joppke and Lukes 1999; Parekh 2000). For example, in relation to how “the representational landscape” of the nation has been transformed, integrating ethnicity into its visual frame (Hesse 2000, 9-10). However, some thinkers have also emphasized that to a great extent these transformations have been a ‘cosmetic solution’ covering over inequality, conflict and power relations and leaving the post-colonial condition unsolved - i.e. the structures of power of the empire still underline the contemporary institutional arrangements of the nation (Gilroy 2004; Hall 2000b).

At the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, Britain saw attempts to address the main criticisms that had been made against multiculturalism. The publication of *The Parekh Report* (Parekh 2000) was the culmination of the work of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, which had been organized by the Runnymede Trust<sup>5</sup> with the aim of providing policy recommendations on how to counteract racial discrimination and transform Britain into “a confident and vibrant multicultural society” (Parekh 2000, x) . One of the main contributions of this report was to try to disentangle multiculturalism from its essentialist connotations. The report

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<sup>5</sup> The Runnymede Trust is an independent think-tank which works for racial equality.

re-defines Britain as a 'community of citizens' and a 'community of communities', realities which overlap and are in continual interaction, and within which individuals may relate to multiple identities that are not stable or constant (Vertovec 2001, 6). This community of citizens is in turn characterized by "a common sense of belonging and a shared identity among its members" (Parekh 2000, ix). This corrective approach is in line with other attempts to critically appraise multiculturalism (e.g. Baumann 1999) which have emphasized the need to utilize non-reified concepts of culture (Vertovec 2007).

Overall, 'new multiculturalism' was a re-conceptualization that tried to adopt a 'bottom-up' approach by which 'culture' was considered to be generated from society at large and not rigidly imposed by the state from above (Parekh 2000; Vertovec 2001). Despite these efforts to 'recover' multiculturalism from its shortcomings, this approach has been disappearing from the British government's agenda during the present decade. Terrorist attacks such as the ones on September 11th 2001 in New York and July 7th 2007 in London, have complicated further the contemporary political climate, fuelling fears of disaffection and segregation (mainly focusing on young British Muslims). Within this climate the British state has shifted its efforts towards a more policy regulated framework rooted in principles of 'community cohesion' (e.g. Ager and Strang 2008; Nagel and Staeheli 2008a). For example, in a report published in 2007 by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, it was deemed that multicultural policies emphasized the maintenance of differences instead of fomenting relationships on the basis of similarities (Vasta 2007, 12). These policy developments place "the primary responsibility for integration (...) with immigrants and minorities" (Nagel and Staeheli 2008a, 416), therefore returning to assimilationist positions.

The new policy focus on 'social or community' cohesion in many immigrant-receiving societies, its corresponding progressive abandonment of multiculturalism and its consequent return to assimilation ideologies has led some scholars to highlight the importance of interrogating further the concept of assimilation (e.g. Joppke 2004; Kofman 2005; Nagel 2009). The next section explores these proposals.

### **2.2.1.3. *Neo-assimilationist perspectives***

From the late 1990s onwards, there have been calls to 're-consider' assimilation as a conceptual tool for the study of populations of immigrant descent (e.g. Alba and Nee 2003; Brubaker 2001). These calls, which started in American academia, appeared in response to public debates "about the [perceived] unassimilability of contemporary migrants" (Nagel 2009, 401) in relation to the alleged failure of multicultural policies and the challenges posed by the rise of the transnational paradigm. By foregrounding the persistent connections that immigrants may maintain with their societies of origin, transnational practices have been considered to disrupt traditional processes of integration (e.g. Portes 1999; Vertovec 2004). I will focus on the debates about transnationalism in the next section, but first I examine the proposals to re-conceptualize assimilation as a model to understand processes of migrant incorporation.

Early calls to reconsider assimilation focused either on highlighting the perceived misconceptions at the basis of the critical charges against its formulations or on trying to correct some of the main criticisms addressed to this approach (e.g. Alba and Nee 1997; Kivisto 2004). On the first account, and as I mentioned in the assimilation section, it has been argued that most problems which have affected assimilation theories can be related to a certain degree of confusion about the original proposals developed by Robert Park and the sociologists of the University of Chicago, in the early 1920s, and the systematic approach later elaborated by Milton Gordon (1964) (Morawska 1994; Nagel 2009). The basic argument of this defence relies on clarifying that these influential definitions of assimilation did not imply that immigrants and minorities would have to erase all signs of their ethnic or cultural heritage in order to become full members of the American collective (Alba and Nee 2003, 828), nor were they expected to "simply melt into the mainstream over the course of a few generations to create a homogeneous society" (Nagel 2009, 402).

Classic assimilation theory was developed on the basis of the characteristics and circumstances which defined the case of early European and East Asian migrants to the US (Alba and Nee 2003). Subsequently, it has been considered that attempts to apply assimilation principles to the incorporation experiences of later immigration flows failed to address adequately their distinctive racial and cultural diversity and the

changing socio-economic context of American society (Alba and Nee 2003) – and also the contextual and historical specificities in the cases of other countries. Responses to this criticism have included the development of alternative approaches which could take into account “the variability of immigrant experiences due in part to varying levels of social and cultural capital among migrants and in part to the heterogeneity of receiving societies” (Nagel 2009, 402). One of the most influential proposals, as I described in the assimilation section, has been the ‘segmented assimilation’ approach which has tried to acknowledge the diversity of immigrant populations and also the characteristics of the context of reception (e.g. Gans 1997; Portes and Zhou 1993; Stepick and Stepick 2010 for a recent overview; Zhou 1997).

However, other scholars have advocated complete re-workings of the concept (i.e. new assimilation theory). For example, Alba and Nee (1997, 827) proposed a redefinition which could correct “the ethnocentric tendency of classical American assimilation” by rejecting its “normative or ideological applications” (i.e. state-imposed policies). Instead they interpreted it “as a social process that occurs spontaneously and often unintendedly in the course of interaction between majority and minority groups”; in this way, it would be possible to take into account the “social dynamics of ethnicity in American society” (Alba and Nee 1997, 827). Similarly, Morawska (1994, 76) suggested a reformulation to address the “simplistic and ahistorical” nature of traditional understandings of assimilation, by providing instead robust explorations of migrants’ and ethnic minorities’ experiences as embedded in specific historical moments and places and as related to multidimensional contextual circumstances (for other proposals see Barkan et al. 1995; Kazal 1995).

Brubaker (2001, 534 italics in the original) has argued that this “return to assimilation” supposes the abandonment of the transitive and organic meaning of assimilation, i.e. “to *make* similar” or absorb completely, for a focus instead on its abstract and intransitive meaning, which emphasizes the process of “becoming similar in *certain aspects*”. Analytically, this approach can shift the focus of assimilation research from studying persisting differences to considering the communalities which develop amongst different population groups (Brubaker 2001, 542-3). This shift also implies thinking not in individual but in population terms (the level of assimilation being considered is that of a “*multi-generational population*” not the specific person); these

collective units of analysis are seen as heterogeneous and not homogeneous (the populations being compared have different distributions of socio-economic properties) and the analytical approach is "*disaggregated*" (Brubaker 2001, 543-4 italics in the original). Thus, assimilation is seen not as a single process but as diverse processes which can take into account multiple reference populations and occur in different socio-economic areas and periods of time (Brubaker 2001, 544).

More recently, however, Nagel (2009) has provided a more progressive proposal, which transcends the view of assimilation as the macro analysis of patterns of sameness and/or difference amongst population groups. Instead, she argues that assimilation scholarship should pay attention to the ideological and political discourses that, in any given society, define "the mainstream" and who is excluded from it (Nagel 2009, 401). By focusing on these discourses and how migrants and minorities experience and negotiate them, assimilation can be conceptualized "not only as a pattern of sameness but as a relational process of *making sameness*" (Nagel 2009, 401 italics in the original). Within such an approach, she elaborates, understanding assimilation involves considering how dominant groups establish which characteristics are relevant in terms of social membership, but also bringing to the fore the perspective of those "objectified by assimilation discourses (i.e. immigrants and minorities) [and how they] respond to and confront discourses of sameness" (Nagel 2009, 404).

Nagel alone and in collaboration (Nagel 2002; Nagel and Staeheli 2005, 2008b) has conducted research using this new epistemological approach to assimilation and focusing on the cases of British-Arabs and Arab-Americans. For instance, by studying the case of Arab immigrants in London, Nagel (2002) shows that, for her participants, assimilation processes are a form of everyday politics through which they negotiate racialized categories and strategically define forms of sameness and difference within their multiple social spheres and locations. These everyday politics and strategies take diverse approaches amongst her participants, reflecting differences in class and generational background and diverse understandings of collective identities and affiliations. Overall, however, these strategies foreground the micro expressions of assimilative practices and discourses of migrant individuals and groups when trying to negotiate membership in their society of settlement.

By researching assimilation from the immigrants' and minorities' perspectives, it is possible to appraise "how immigrants are involved in the construction of assimilation – how they understand assimilation, how they perform it by presenting themselves in certain ways, and how, perhaps they contest the terms of assimilation set by dominant groups" (Nagel 2009, 404). Importantly, this approach captures individuals' experiences of assimilation and how they negotiate sameness and difference through emotional and practical responses in the real spaces of day-to-day life (Nagel 2009, 404).

Understanding these person-centred, micro dynamics of sameness and difference is becoming increasingly important in the contemporary political climate, within which many immigrant receiving societies are shifting their policy frameworks towards ideas of social or community cohesion (Kofman 2005; Nagel 2009). Exploring how sameness and differences are negotiated in everyday spaces and the politics which underline dominant discourses of membership are essential in order to comprehend dynamics of social cohesion.

Overall, the approaches to immigrant incorporation I have reviewed are dominated by a model of "primary belonging to one society and a loyalty to just one-nation state" (Castles 2002, 1157). Nonetheless, the rise of the transnational paradigm has directly challenged the hegemony of the nation-state container and provided an understanding of incorporation which transcends its boundaries (e.g. Castles 2000; Faist 2000a; Grillo 2001; Vertovec 2001). In order to understand the experiences of contemporary immigrants, it is necessary not only to consider their participation and affiliations in the society of settlement but also the transnational bonds that may play a role in their experiences (e.g. Kivisto 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Morawska 2003).

### **2.2.2. The transnational challenge**

The transnational approach aims to capture the processes by which migrants create and sustain simultaneous, multifarious and multi-sited ties and practices across borders, establishing social fields which transcend geographical boundaries (Basch et al. 1994; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). These social fields are construed not only through material practices and connections (e.g. remittances, political participation) but also through cultural and social imaginaries in "which ideas, practices, and

resources are unequally exchanged, organized, and transformed” (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, 1009).

Initially, the potential of this concept to research migration with a fresh outlook and use it to challenge theories of immigrant assimilation, caused a novelty effect among scholars, who produced rich descriptions of the phenomenon but did not offer a clear idea of its quantitative dimension (Portes 2001). The fact that the appeal of this ‘new’ concept went beyond purely migration terms increased its conceptual controversy. Vertovec (1999), for example, summarized at least six different approaches within which theory and research in this area had been grounded, including understandings of transnationalism as “a kind of social formation spanning borders” (1999, 449); as “a kind of ‘diaspora consciousness’ marked by dual or multiple identifications” (1999, 450); as “a set of processes of cultural interpenetration and blending” (1999, 451); as an “avenue of capital” (1999, 452) encompassing financial processes of both institutional transnational corporations and grass roots flow of remittances; as a “site of political engagement” (1999, 453); and finally, as a “(re)construction of ‘place’ or locality” (1999, 455) by which “social fields” have been created “that connect and position some actors in more than one country” (1999, 456).

This classification shows the broad and interdisciplinary areas that studies about transnationalism have examined, extending its scope well beyond the migration arena. Furthermore, Vertovec’s (1999) analysis also introduces the idea of diaspora, an area of research which has developed alongside transnationalism and has been equally concerned with developing understandings of migration experiences and collective identifications which transcend nation-state borders and territory-related notions of identity (Anthias 1998). The fact that these two terms have been often connected, or even used interchangeably, has further complicated their conceptual frameworks and uses (Brettell 2006).

The traditional meaning of diaspora referred to “groups who were forcibly expelled from their homelands and who remained socially marginal in the societies that received them as they waited to return” (Levitt 2001, 202); in this strict sense of the word, scholars normally make reference to Jewish, Greek or Armenian diasporas (Brubaker 2005; Levitt 2001). More contemporary uses, nonetheless, have pushed the boundaries of this definition to denote other displaced populations’ senses of common migration

history and collective connections (Anthias 1998; Brubaker 2005) and have drawn attention to the existence of diverse types of diasporas, e.g. queer diasporas (Cohen 1997; White 2003).

Despite numerous attempts to re-define and distinguish their approaches, transnationalism and diaspora continue to cover deeply entangled subject areas (see for example Anthias 1998; Cohen 1997; Levitt 2001; Portes et al. 1999; White 2003). However, what is significant is their common ground in disrupting traditional conceptions of migration, place and identities and providing a potential “‘third-space’ of hybridity” or liminal space from which to resist “‘either/or” hegemonic modes of immigrant incorporation (Bhabha 1990; Mitchell 1997, 533; Soja 1996). Both perspectives propose the de-coupling of identity and territory (e.g. Basch et al. 1994; Castles 2000; Cohen 1997; Faist 2000a) to allow a conception of social spaces as spanning across borders and sustaining migrants’ (and non-migrants’) multiple and simultaneous forms of interaction and identifications across or between geographical boundaries (Anthias 1998; Faist 2000b; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

In this sense, it has been argued that transnational orientations pose significant challenges to the governing role of the nation-state, as migrants engage in simultaneous political loyalties and practices, which are often seen with suspicion by receiving states (Vertovec 2001, 17). A clear example of this type of challenges can be found in the debates about how transnationalism may be transforming national citizenship regimes and governance within the nation-state, with proposals to consider, for example, forms of “postnational citizenship” (Soysal 1994) or “transnational citizenship” (Bauböck 1994). Such debates highlight that singular and exclusive traditional forms of citizenship may no longer be sustainable in the contemporary era, in which “people move frequently between different countries, and maintain important affiliations in each of them” (Castles 2002, 1161). Instead, they foreground the need to adopt flexible approaches to forms of social membership and national belonging e.g. dual citizenship (cf. Desforges et al. 2005; Ho 2008; Joppke 1999a).

However, transnational and diasporic approaches have also received significant criticisms. One to which I have already referred has been the conceptual imprecision and muddledness of both terms (Ní Laoire 2003). Some scholars have pointed out that the overuse of diaspora has stripped this term of its ability to evoke a distinctive

phenomenon and has progressively become abstracted and disconnected from historical, political and economic contexts and everyday practices (Brubaker 2005; Mitchell 1997). Similarly, Bailey (2001, 422) has pointed out that transnational research has also suffered from a lack of proper attention to space-time relations, for example by not offering elaborated explanations of how time and space are experienced under transnational conditions.

Although transnationalism and diaspora aim at disrupting traditional binaries between territory and identity and transcending the nation-state container model, additional critiques have highlighted that a considerable amount of research in this area continues to “reinforce bound understandings of place and society” (Collins 2009, 437). Most of these shortcomings have been summarized by Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002, 324) in their discussions of “methodological nationalism”, which highlight that both diaspora and transnational research has often been dominated by conceptual and analytical tools which reproduce the “bounded national container society” albeit across borders. Furthermore, approaching diasporas and transnational networks as “communities tends to reify and essentialize these communities in a similar way that previous approaches reified national communities” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 324). In addition, scholars have pointed out that, despite the transformations introduced by transnational flows, the power of nation states’ borders cannot be dismissed as continued restrictions in people’s movement and trade demonstrate (e.g. Crang et al. 2003; Fabricant 1998; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004). Furthermore, it has been emphasized that forms of “long distance nationalism” (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001, 542) and institutionalized transnationalism may be, in fact, consolidating patriarchal forms of national belonging and nation-states’ constructs (Pratt and Yeoh 2003, 162). These criticisms, therefore, question the celebratory tone of some transnational and diasporic accounts which hailed the emancipatory and liberatory powers of transnational and diasporic hybrid subjects in challenging “oppressive nationalism, repressive state structures, and capitalism” (Ong 1999, 15 quoted in Yeoh 2005, 61). Instead, feminist scholars have brought to the fore that ease of movement across borders cannot be taken for granted (as this often leads to masculinist understandings which ignore the heterogeneity of immigrants) and that structures of power must be taken into account in any analysis of transnational practices, i.e. migration experiences

are highly mediated by individuals' specific personal characteristics and circumstances such as gender, class, etc. (Pratt and Yeoh 2003; Yeoh 2005).

All these debates have highlighted the need to *ground* transnational research; that is, to take into account that "transnational practices, while connecting collectivities located in more than one national territory, are embodied in specific social relations established between specific people, situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times" (Guarnizo and Smith 1998, 11 quoted in Mahler and Pessar 2001, 444). Subsequent contributions to transnational scholarship have provided corrective approaches to this disjuncture by proposing the development of migrant centred perspectives which pay more explicit attention to the links between agency and structure (Dunn 2010; Faist 2008). Therefore, calls for grounded transnational research have increasingly led to a focus on the grass roots circumstances of transnational experiences, with an interest in studying the "everyday, daily life, banal, ordinary, and middling transnationalism" (Dunn 2010, 3). These proposals are in line with more general calls in migration studies to conceptualize migration as situated within everyday life (Halfacree and Boyle 1993).

As Semi et al. (2009, 69) have noted "the everyday arena is open to and connected to dimensions which go above and beyond the here and now of the immediate context, transforming banal, ordinary relations and practices in a new way"; this perspective recognizes individuals' agency (Touraine 1988) and allows an exploration of simultaneous frames of reference and ordinary negotiations and resistances (Certeau 1988) within local and translocal domains. Furthermore, it recognizes the relevance of the "taken-for-granted world" and how subjects experience and negotiate its complexity (Ley 1977). In this sense, Ley (2004) has argued that there is a need to focus on the everyday dimension of transnational practices and attachments in order to capture the interconnection between the local and the global and the continued importance of specific places in mediating individuals' experiences (see also Conradson and Latham 2005). For example, Ley (2004) draws on the cases of transnational businessmen and cosmopolitans to unsettle the accounts that present these global actors as a deterritorialized class by exploring instead their localized everyday existences.

Additionally, approaching transnational practices from an everyday perspective also brings to the fore “the gendered space of transnationalism” (Collins 2009, 443; see also Huang and Yeoh 2005; Williams 2005). Boehm (2008) provides an example of the importance of using gender analyses in developing understandings of migration and transnationalism by exploring the lives of transmigrants who live within the transnational fields that connect San Luis de Potosí in Mexico and New Mexico in the US. By paying attention to the everyday experiences of these migrants, Boehm (2008) exposes how they constantly negotiate gender roles within their transnational social fields and, by doing so, concurrently maintain and disrupt patriarchal norms.

As Collins (2009, 444) has suggested, research which focuses on the everyday dimensions of transnationalism has also been extended by an embodied approach. Such an approach provides a venue of enquiry that “simultaneously engage[s] the settings and contexts in which immigrants and their descendents live as well as the reactions of those people to the settings” (Dunn 2010, 2 see also Bailey 2001; O’Connor 2010). Dunn (2010, 4) traces the interest of geography in the body back to feminist scholars and other fields of the discipline (e.g. disability studies), recalling Robyn Longhurst’s (1994 cited in Dunn 2010, 4) iconic description of bodies as the ‘geography closest in’. Since the 1990s, geography has witnessed a resurgence of interest in embodied and corporeal perspectives (Longhurst 2001; Rose 1995; Teather 1999). As Longhurst (2001, 19-22) has explored, an increasingly rich interdisciplinary scholarship focuses on how “our bodies make a difference to our experience of places” (Laws 1997, 49 cited in Longhurst 2001) covering a diversity of subject areas (e.g. Ahmed 2002; Bell and Valentine 1995; Hall 2000a; Hopkins 2008; Hörschelmann and Colls 2009; McDowell 1993).

As Dunn (2010, 5) has pointed out, an embodied approach to studying migration has provided important findings, as for example, that individuals do not have equal access to ease of movement but instead their opportunities are highly dependent on factors such as ethnicity, race, class, financial resources and state regulations. Embodied analyses, in this sense, can be a fruitful in adjusting “accounts of individuals traversing a somehow frictionless world, endorsing instead research that details the emplaced corporealities of such movement” (Conradson and Latham 2005, 228). Such an

approach can also provide a vantage point to study how migrants and their descendants experience their settlements and simultaneous belongings.

An important contribution of the embodied perspective is that it provides access to deeper understandings of the emotional and affective dimensions of migration, transnationalism and settlements (Collins 2009; Dunn 2010). As Collins (2009, 444, 445) has noted “[e]ngagement in transnationalism is frequently emotional” and “transnational affect can be viewed as the forces that emotively compel participation in transnational connections”. In this sense, research on transnational families has provided rich insights into the emotional impacts of changes in family configuration and roles when parenting from afar or trying to fulfil intergenerational obligations of care (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Orellana et al. 2001; Parreñas 2005; Pribilsky 2001; Schmalzbauer 2004). Despite the fact that most research in this area has focused on the impacts of a transnational organization on the nuclear family, its structure and intra-familial dynamics; an increasing number of studies also consider the extended transnational family and ‘national’ nuclear families who engage in transnational practices (e.g. Walton-Roberts and Pratt 2005). These studies highlight the persistence of intergenerational bonds through moral and emotional support, constructions of co-presence and other forms of care (e.g. Baldassar 2007, 2008; Svašek 2008). The next section explores briefly the main contributions of this scholarship.

#### ***2.2.2.1. Transnational families and emotional transnationalism***

Bryceson & Vuorela describe transnational families as those “that live some or most of the time separated from each other, yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely ‘familyhood’, even across national borders” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 3). These authors have explored in depth the configuration of families organized in this manner and emphasized their relational nature. They propose using the concept of ‘relativizing’, “to refer to the variety of ways individuals establish, maintain or curtail relational ties with specific family members” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14). In this sense, the physical absence or proximity of some members and not of others dictates the reconstruction and transformation of family relationships and dynamics; furthermore, individuals must

continually revise their own roles and family identity through their life cycle (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 15).

A rich and prolific scholarship has focused on how the transnational organization of the family redefines family and gender roles. Transnational motherhood has received a great deal of attention with studies highlighting how the role of 'breadwinner' has been added to the traditional caring and nurturing role for many women who leave their children behind and migrate in search of livelihoods. This situation has significant impacts on both mothers' and children's emotional wellbeing, intergenerational bonding and relationships (e.g. Bernhard et al. 2009; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2005; Schmalzbauer 2004; Solé and Parella 2005). Similarly, in the case of transnational fatherhood (e.g. Pribilsky 2001, 2004), scholars have explored how men re-negotiate their father and/or husband roles in response to their migration circumstances (e.g. low-skilled jobs) which may erode traditional sources of identity and masculinity.

In addition, several authors have started to develop intergenerational perspectives which deepen our understanding of the extended nature of family and kin obligations and provision of care (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Nesteruk and Marks 2009; Schmalzbauer 2004). For instance, Nesteruk and Marks (2009) explore how middle-class Eastern European immigrants in the US struggle to maintain and reproduce traditional intergenerational relationships between their offspring and grandparents left in the countries of origin. By bringing their own parents to spend time with their children and 'keeping in touch', immigrant parents try to provide the younger generation with the possibility to develop relationships with their extended family and inherited culture and, at the same time, maintain traditional models of intergenerational childrearing and family obligations.

These studies have provided deeper understandings of the ways in which the cultural and gender dynamics of the family (nuclear and extended) are transformed by a transnational spatiality and organization. An additional area of research complements these perspectives by focusing on "the emotional complexities of transnational family life" (Skrbiš 2008, 236). By taking into account this transnational emotional dimension, scholars are acknowledging "the existence of emotional ties that inevitably link individuals to families" (positive or negative) and contemplating the emotional

connotations of the process of migration e.g. separation from family, friends and social referents (Skrbiš 2008, 236).

This approach must be understood in relation to the 'emotional turn' which has taken place in the discipline of geography in general during the last decade and has aimed at recognizing the importance of emotions in understanding the relationships between people, places and spaces (Anderson and Smith 2001; Davidson et al. 2005; Davidson and Milligan 2004). This scholarship highlights that "emotional geographies and geography of emotions<sup>6</sup> are (...) significant across a broad spectrum of sites and scales", from the body, through communal spaces (e.g. schools, work places, localities), the urban and rural, to national and transnational spaces (Davidson and Milligan 2004, 527). Svašek (2010, 868 italics in the original) has suggested that "it is useful to regard emotions as dynamic processes through which individuals experience and interpret the changing world, position themselves *vis-à-vis* others, and shape their subjectivities (...) The self, in this perspective, is (...) regarded (...) as a multiple, relational being-in-the-world that is captured by his or her surroundings, engaging with past, present and future situations." Therefore, emotional interactions and responses are seen as important avenues of enquiry into processes of human mobility, displacement and emplacement (e.g. Waite and Cook 2010 in press).

A growing literature focuses on the emotional dimensions of transnational relationships (Skrbiš 2008). For example, the ways in which physically distant family members negotiate possibilities of *co-presence* through communications and visits has attracted a great deal of attention (e.g. Baldassar 2008; Wilding 2006), as well as how family members continue to provide moral and emotional support and care for their relatives across borders by 'staying in touch' and negotiating feelings of absence and longing (e.g. Baldassar 2007; Baldassar et al. 2007). To a lesser or greater extent, these studies are concerned with transnational caregiving and "emotional labour" (Hochschild, 1983 cited in Skrbiš 2008, 237) and foreground the emotional processes by which family and kin connections are reproduced and sustained across time and space.

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<sup>6</sup> Parr (2005, 473) defines "emotional geographies" as "spatial knowledge written with and/or on emotions" and "geography of emotions" as "a mapping of different emotional states".

Yeoh et al. (2005, 308) note that “the transnational family as a formation derives its lived reality not only from material bonds of collective welfare among physically dispersed members but also a shared imaginary of ‘belonging’ which transcends particular periods and places to encompass past trajectories and future continuities”. In this passage, they introduce an essential aspect of the lives of transnational families. The welfare of ‘the family’ relies not only on material assets but also on the symbolic and ideal meanings of being part of that family. For example, Canales (2005) explores how remittances play a dual role in securing the welfare of kin (see also McKay 2007). He found that apart from allowing the economic and material maintenance of households, remittances also provide a cross-borders avenue for the reproduction of the essential values which form part of the family system; that is, the values of reciprocity, responsibility and solidarity. It is important to note, that this material form of symbolic support is not uni-directional (e.g. remittances back to the country of origin), but reciprocal when possible, as was the case with McIlwaine’s (2007) Latin American participants in London, who declared receiving financial help from their relatives back in their country of origin when in need.

Bryceson & Vuorela (2002, 11-12) call the relational work that families construct and maintain with extended kin and broader communities, ‘frontiering or frontier networking’. The networks that transnational families establish are essential for their wellbeing and constitute their main source of support. Importantly, considering the relational dimensions of transnational families brings to the fore the simultaneous nature of “living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in destination country and transnationally” (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, 1003). Ariza (2002) has suggested two instances in which such simultaneity of relations has significant impacts on the senses of identity and belonging of transnational family members. The first one is the tension between processes of assimilation and belonging (e.g. ‘hybridization’ processes that may characterize transnational belongings) and the second is the increasing heterogeneity of identities (e.g. adopting fluid identities as a defensive response to the difficulties of social integration and pressures of segregation). An additional aspect of these identity struggles comes from the potential intergenerational tensions when first generation migrants try to transfer home cultural values to their children.

Overall, this research has highlighted the important role that transnational networks and their emotional circuits play in recreating or reproducing attachments that may figure saliently in the senses of belonging and identification of the second generation. However, migrant populations who live in conditions of socio-cultural invisibility (e.g. without community groups or close fellow migrants) may see their possibilities to 'frontier' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 11) curtailed by their contextual circumstances; forcing them to displace the focus of their cultural maintenance and transmission efforts to the familial sphere. Furthermore, and as O'Connor (2010, 76) has pointed out, so far transnational debates have been mainly based on "the experiences of 'visible' migrants" and we should also be paying attention to the experiences of invisible minorities; for example, she uses the case of present Irish immigrants in Australia to explore the embodied underpinnings of their transnational experiences. Therefore, I consider that it is important to develop an understanding of how emotional and symbolic attachments within the family and its extended relationships mediate senses of belonging among the children of migrants from sparse and unmarked (or from across of the marked/unmarked spectrum) populations. In this thesis, I contribute to this understanding by exploring in depth the case of a group of families (adults and young people) from a highly sparse immigrant population characterized by a diversity of marked/unmarked embodiments. I will return to the research focusing on second generation transnationalism when exploring migrant and ethnic minority children's experiences of integration in the last part of the chapter, but first I consider further the scholarly research on migrant incorporation and how the thesis aims to enrich it.

### **2.2.3. Research on migrant incorporation: from statistical indicators to migrant and ethnic minorities' senses of belonging**

Despite significant differences in discourses and institutional systems in the US and Europe, both assimilationist and integrationist empirical research has made use of statistical indicators, such as language acquisition, intermarriage numbers, labour market participation, educational attainments or residential patterns, to measure the level of incorporation and acculturation of migrants and minority ethnic populations to their host society (Phillips 2007; Schneider and Crul 2010). A central concern of this measurement has been to establish "the degree to which minority groups are spatially

similar (integrated) or dissimilar (segregated or clustered in enclaves or ghettos)" (Nagel and Staeheli 2008b, 84). In this research, spatial distance has been related to social distance and lack of interaction between population groups (Phillips 2007).

There has been a considerable amount of debate on the methodological constraints of these quantitative approaches as they are often designed on the basis of *available* statistical data, e.g. census based figures (cf. Findlay and Graham 1991; Graham 1999). Scholars have pointed out that the processes of collection, interpretation and representation of these *available datasets* are embedded in politicized debates around immigration, conceptualizations of minority ethnic groups and understandings of segregation (e.g. Ahmad 1999; Phillips 2007; Simpson 2007). Furthermore, this type of research has also suffered from a general "lack of agreed-upon theoretical and methodological concepts and indicators" (Schneider and Crul 2010, 1143).

Although this approach has provided important insights into the socio-economic differences between minority and majority groups in given societies and the different patterns of social, economic and geographical mobility of these groups in specific localities (Nagel 2009, 402), it cannot illuminate how minority groups or immigrants themselves interpret segregation or integration (Ehrkamp 2006; Nagel and Staeheli 2008a; Phillips et al. 2007). Nagel and Staeheli (2008a, 418) note that some studies have started to centre their efforts on elucidating how immigrants themselves understand residential choices (e.g. Phillips et al. 2007) or negotiate local belongings (e.g. Ehrkamp 2006). Such accounts problematize uni-dimensional understandings of integration by bringing to the fore migrant-centred perspectives and showing the complexity of factors which play a role in immigrants' and ethnic minorities' choices of residence, relationships to their localities and understandings of integration.

In light of this, it has been suggested that paying attention to migrants' and ethnic minorities' senses of affiliation and belonging is essential if we are to comprehend processes of integration in all their complexity (Ehrkamp 2006; Nagel and Staeheli 2008a; Phillips et al. 2007; Valentine et al. 2009). A focus on belonging has been considered crucial on at least two fronts. On the one hand, it provides deeper understandings of immigrants' and ethnic minorities' perspectives of their affiliations and notions of membership in their settlement societies; perspectives which are

necessary if we are to comprehend the dynamics of social cohesion (inclusion and exclusion experiences) and how common senses of belonging may develop (Antonsich 2010, 652; Mee and Wright 2009). On the other, it has also been considered that a focus on belonging can illuminate how processes of incorporation and transnationalism occur in simultaneous and not contradictory ways and how it can consist of multi-scaled and territorialized/non-territorialized attachments and affiliations (Joppke and Morawska 2003; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Morawska 2004; Nagel and Staeheli 2008a).

There is an increasingly rich geographical scholarship focusing on aspects of belonging, illustrating the diversity of ways and scales to which it is possible to belong and the multiplicity of informal and formal expressions which belonging can take (Mee and Wright 2009, 772). Probyn's (1996) definition of belonging, which combines the aspects of *being* in place and *longing* to be in place, has proved highly influential for authors trying to establish the meaning of this concept and how it can be used to illuminate people's relationships and connections with their multiply-scaled surroundings and the human and non-human objects that inhabit them (Antonsich 2010; Fenster 2005; Mee and Wright 2009; Yuval-Davis 2006).

Overall, empirical perspectives have helped to illuminate two intertwined analytical dimensions of belonging, which Antonsich (2010, 645; building on Fenster 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006) has recently defined as "belonging as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and belonging as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging)". In a simple way, the first dimension relates to the personal emotions of feeling in place and the second to the social aspect of being recognized as being in place or not (formally and informally); dimensions which are often co-dependent. Research which has used a belonging lens to look into the experiences of migrants and ethnic minorities has focused, for example, on transmigrants' homemaking strategies and how they actively develop complex notions of home and belonging which include different geographical locations and scales (e.g. Blunt and Dowling 2006; Butcher 2010; Tolia-Kelly 2006). Others have shifted their attention to the politics of belonging, by exploring the relationship between citizenship and belonging in the case of marginalized groups or the contested terrains of national belonging and its tensions

between majority and minority perspectives (e.g. Anderson and Taylor 2005; Anthias 2002b; Bond 2006; Ehrkamp 2005; Hamaz and Vasta 2009).

These studies have brought to the fore the crucial relationship between individual feelings of belonging and the politics of belonging. As I have explored in the previous sections, negotiating belonging in receiving societies has often required individual migrants to adjust to the cultural conventions and values of the majority group. However, “even assuming that one person is willing to assimilate, there might always remain other dimensions (e.g. place of birth or skin color) which would prevent full sameness and, therefore, expose that person to discourses and practices of socio-spatial exclusion” (Antonsich 2010, 650). What can be inferred from this paragraph is the importance of the *visual regime of difference and sameness* in mediating people’s opportunities to negotiate inclusion and belonging.

As Nagel and Staeheli (2008b, 83) have argued, in Britain the multicultural system (and consequent politics of integration) has created a “‘visual lexicon’ of cultural difference”; which is based on the idea that there are clearly distinguishable racial and cultural differences in British society. Within *this way of looking*, some visual markers have come to be perceived as irrelevant while others are considered “to signify an unwillingness to become part of British society” (Nagel and Staeheli 2008b, 83-4). These “politics of visibility and invisibility” have important consequences for how processes of integration are conceptualized and what differences are considered meaningful when exploring patterns of similarity or dissimilarity between populations (Nagel and Staeheli 2008b, 85). Furthermore, this regime of visibility/invisibility has clear consequences for the day-to-day experiences of immigrants and minorities and the extent to which they can negotiate sameness and gain membership to the national imaginary.

Despite the salience that questions of visibility/invisibility have for immigrants’ and minority ethnic individuals’ experiences of incorporation and potential sentiments of belonging, these areas remain somewhat underdeveloped in research on integration. There is, of course, an extremely important and vast literature focusing on aspects of race and ethnicity, which informs the experiences of visible migrants and ethnic minorities and the exclusionary practices to which they may be subjected by structures of power and societies at large (cf. Ahmed 2002; Gilroy 2002 [1987]; Hall 1996; Ratcliffe

2004; St Louis 2005; Sundstrom 2003; Wade 1997). This literature also includes an increasingly rich focus on whiteness from historical, psychoanalytical, sociological and cultural perspectives and its multiple lived experiences (cf. Bonnett 2000; Byrne 2006; Frankenberg 1993; Seshadri-Crooks 2000; Vanderbeck 2006).

However, the complexity of the visibility/invisibility spectrum and how this impacts on immigrants' and minority ethnic individuals' possibilities to negotiate sameness and membership on an everyday basis has not yet received the necessary attention (see Colic-Peisker 2005; Nagel and Staeheli 2008b; Van Riemsdijk 2010 for recent examples). This thesis aims to contribute to this area of study by adopting an embodied day-to-day approach to studying the case of a sparse immigrant group characterized by a relatively recent history of settlement in their receiving society, a lack of group (cultural/ethnic) organization and recognition and a diversity of marked and unmarked embodiments. Furthermore, it also takes into account that existing research has been mainly based on adult perspectives; when in fact, different generations of the same family may have distinct approaches to issues of in/visibility. The next part of the chapter turns to the literature on migrant and minority children's experiences of integration and related issues of identity and belonging. After exploring the current scholarship in this area, I outline how, by taking an intergenerational approach (within the context of the family), this thesis illuminates novel questions of in/visibility and belonging in relation to both migrant or minority adults and young people.

### **2.3. Migrant and minority children's experiences of incorporation**

During the 1970s-1980s, there was increasing concern among scholars about the aptitude of existing theoretical approaches to the study of children and childhood (James and Prout 1997). Discourses about the nature and expressions of childhood were dominated by psychological accounts of a developmental nature which had been introduced at the beginning of the 20th century and which conceived childhood as "a presocial period of difference, a biologically determined stage on the path to full human status i.e., adulthood" (James and Prout 1997, 10). During the 1950s, sociologists had adopted this type of essentialist discourse by conceiving the process of socialization as "the key which turns the asocial child into a social adult" (James and

Prout 1997, 13). These essentialist views are at the root of idealized conceptions of the 'child' which still have a powerful influence on the ways in which Western societies think about children and childhood (Holloway and Valentine 2000). However, these conceptualizations have become even more pervasive as they have been adopted as universally valid (Wyness 2006).

During the 1980s, social scientists started to criticize the predominant psychological notion of child development by highlighting how its theorization ignored "the social and historical context of childhood and the highly variable circumstances in which children grow up" (Prout 2005, 1). This criticism was also extended to its counterpart in sociology, in which the concept of socialization came under scrutiny for being conceived "as a one-way effect of (adult) society on individual children" (Prout 2005, 1). Furthermore, Holloway and Valentine (2000, 2) point out that the rise of perspectives which emphasized how identities are fractured and socially constructed during the 1980-1990s, also nurtured anti-essentialist approaches to concepts of children and childhood.

These challenges allowed the emergence of "a new paradigm for the study of childhood" (James and Prout 1997, 2) that "considered childhood as a social construction and children not as passive objects of socialization but as social actors in their own right" (Prout 2005, 1). Furthermore, this type of conceptualization enables the use of childhood as a category of analysis which must be considered together with other social variables, e.g. class, race, gender, etc. (James and Prout 1997, 8). As I will explore below, this change of paradigm has also been key in underpinning "research on children's active construction of ethnic and cultural identities" (Scourfield et al. 2005, 211).

Importantly, Holloway and Valentine (2000, 9) foreground the essential contribution that geography can bring to the studies elaborated through this new paradigm by promoting understandings of how "childhood is constructed in different ways in different times and places". These two authors undertake the task of reviewing the contributions that geographical studies have made to the study of children and childhood. They recollect how scholars in geography showed an interest in childhood studies as early as the 1970s, by undertaking research on "children's spatial cognition and mapping abilities as well as their access to, use of and attachment to space"

(Holloway and Valentine 2000, 7). However, it was not until the 1990s that there was a revitalized concern in recognizing children's voices and experiences within the discipline (Holloway and Valentine 2000).

Importantly, recent accounts of the research undertaken in the last two decades under the umbrella term of children's geographies reveal that scholars are well on the way to creating a discipline that brings children to the fore as social agents in their own right, appreciates their heterogeneity and their spaces, as well as providing insights into the broader structural dimensions of childhood (Holloway and Valentine 2000; Matthews 2003). Within this general trend, youth or young people's geographies have followed their own development path, which has been underpinned by work on youth transitions and sociological theories of individualization (Valentine 2003, 40; 2008b, 2099). The 'coming of age' of children's (and youth) geographies (Evans 2008; Matthews 2003) has become even more explicit through calls to strengthen its theoretical foundations (e.g. Horton and Kraftl 2005; Vanderbeck 2008) and to transcend its own subject boundaries by challenging the adultist tone of the discipline of geography as a whole (Valentine 2008b).

Until recently, migration research was an area in which adultist approaches had neglected children's experiences of migration and mobility (Dobson 2009; McKendrick 2001; Ní Laoire et al. 2010). Dobson (2009) traces the development of this area of research by exploring how children have been conceptualized in studies of migration. She argues that, traditionally, children have been considered passive elements in the migration process, dependent on their parents or guardians, and as a source of adult anxiety. In population geography, in general, children have typically been conceptualized as an "object' (a means to an end) rather than a 'subject' (worthy of interest in their own right/for their own sake)" (McKendrick 2001, 462). However, more recent accounts, have come to recognize young people as "active agents in migration" (Dobson 2009, 357) and, therefore, have foregrounded the roles they play in family decisions or on their own mobilities (e.g. Barker et al. 2009; Orellana et al. 2001; Punch 2007; Van Blerk and Ansell 2006a, b).

For example, an important contribution to this literature comes from Orellana et al. (2001), who undertake the task of bringing the experiences of children to the forefront of the transnational experience. By looking at the case of Central American and

Mexican families and Korean and Yemeni children residing in the US, they aim at addressing the gap in transnational families' literature which, with few exceptions, has generally ignored children's roles in processes of transmigration. Their findings indicate that children can play important roles in families' decisions and in how families face experiences of uprooting, re-rooting and family organization. Children can even take the lead in processes of migration and challenge normative perceptions of what children are capable of doing at different ages, as in the case of the Korean 'parachute kids' who move on their own at an early age to undertake education in the US.

A similar 'adultist condition' affected early research looking into the integration experiences of immigrants and their descendants. As I have explored in the first section of this chapter, incorporation models such as assimilation or segmented assimilation, rely on the children of immigrants as "agents of integration", as they are based on the notion that subsequent generations will progressively become more adapted into their receiving society (Olwig 2003, 218-9). Thus, children have again been an implicit *object* of research, "ever-present" in efforts to "profile a population" with socio-economic indicators but "never really there" (McKendrick 2001, 466). However, as Ní Laoire et al. (2010, 156) have noted, more recently, the recognition that children are social agents and actively engaged in creating their own socio-cultural worlds has contributed to the development of a "body of research which explores, from different perspectives, how children and young people form and negotiate their identities and belongings". This body of work, which includes studies focusing on migrant and ethnic minority children and young people, is explored in the next section.

### **2.3.1. Young people, ethnicity and senses of identity and belonging**

As Butcher and Harris (2010, 449) have recently noted, debates about the future of increasingly ethno-culturally diverse societies often centres on young people and their attitudes towards this diversity and in relation to their own senses of identity and belonging. Studies focusing on children and ethnicity have provided rich perspectives on how young people are involved "in processes of othering and racialization" (Ní Laoire et al. 2010, 156). Scholars working in this area have found that notions of difference and related othering practices are part of the everyday interactions of

children and how they negotiate their peer relations and construct their own diverse social identities (e.g. Castro 2004; Devine and Kelly 2006; Valentine and Sporton 2009).

In addition, the dynamic negotiation of difference and sameness and its entanglement with wider societal power, have also been considered critical when trying to understand how young people negotiate processes of inclusion and exclusion in their everyday lives (e.g. Devine et al. 2008; James 1993; Scourfield et al. 2005; Vanderbeck and Dunkley 2004). Within this research, the social worlds of migrant and second generation children and their experiences of integration have captured the attention of researchers, who have started to document the development of identities among these young people as strategies to negotiate membership or to cope with the conditions they face in the host society (e.g. Ackroyd and Pilkington 1999; Griffiths 2002).

For example, Griffiths (1997, 19) found that younger Somalis displayed “a range of strategies in order to combat the racism and sense of endangered masculinity which they experience in Britain”; these strategies include an identification with black African-Caribbean cultural forms which they use to re-negotiate their sense of belonging. Similar attachments are reported by Rutter (2006, 47) “among other young male refugees, again young men adopting white working-class ‘laddish’ cultural forms, as strategy to gain acceptance”. In addition, Rutter’s (2006) work with young Southern Sudanese shows evidence of the development of hybrid identities among the male members of this collective, who adopt both British and Sudanese cultural forms at ease. However, this is not the case for Southern Sudanese young women, whose behaviour is much more constrained by the traditional gender norms of this collective.

Sporton and Valentine’s (2007) study of young Somali refugees brings to the fore the relevance that a Muslim identity has acquired as a stable point of reference for children who have limited memories of their homeland and have grown up, in some instances, in more than one European country. Similar types of religious attachments have been found in studies about second generations, as Levitt and Jaworsky note (2007, 141) “[c]hildren of immigrants are increasingly turning to “inherited religion” as their primary source of identity (...). In general, these individuals hear their faith (...) as a path toward greater social integration”.

Other studies have approached minority and immigrant children's experiences through their perceptions of belonging, foregrounding the multiplicity of social locations that may figure prominently in their accounts (e.g. Den Besten 2010; Schmitt 2010). For example, Olwig's (2003) study focusing on the case of children from Caribbean backgrounds living in the US, Canada and Britain, shows that her young participants did not refer primarily to their ethnicity or ancestral homeland when considering their places of belonging but directed their attention instead to their everyday spaces and related spheres of social interaction. These studies point towards the need to take into account the multiple frames of reference available to young migrants and second generations when negotiating their own sense/s of identity and belonging, including (but not privileging) their potential transnational affiliations.

### **2.3.2. Transnational practices of the second generation**

There has been a long (and continuing) debate regarding the extent to which transnational activities and connections will be sustained by the descendants of contemporary transmigrants, that is the second and subsequent generations (e.g. Jones-Correa 2002; Kasinitz et al. 2006; Levitt 2002; Levitt 2009; Rumbaut 2002). Some authors in the US have focused their research on the material transnational activities (e.g. visiting, remitting, participation in kin networks) of the second generation and concluded that they are only pursued by a minority and that this involvement tends to decline over time (e.g. Kasinitz et al. 2008; Lee 2007; Rumbaut 2002). For example, Rumbaut (2002) conducted a decade-long longitudinal study of the material and subjective transnational attachments among the 1.5 and second generation young adults from Mexico, Philippines, Vietnam, China, and other Latin American countries living in the US. He concluded that the level of transnational activity of these groups was rather low, involving less than 10% of individuals from all the groups studied (despite significant differences across groups).

Lewitt & Jaworsky (2007) emphasize that there is an increasing consensus among scholars that transnational ties fade through subsequent generations. However, there is also an increasing awareness that approaching the study of generations as a linear process does not capture properly the experience of living embedded in transnational social fields, where the comings and goings of migrants blur the distinctions among

cohorts and the ethnification of migrant 'communities' provides new terms of cultural reference (Eckstein 2002; Fourn and Glick Schiller 2002; Gowricharn 2009; Levitt and Waters 2002). In this sense, Levitt (2009, 1226) argues that we should not ignore how growing up in households, families and communities embedded in transnational social fields may affect the lives of the children of immigrants.

Despite the fact that there has been more interest in the adult second generations when studying transnational practices amongst the descendants of migrants (e.g. Haller and Landolt 2005; Lee 2007; Louie 2006; Rusinovic 2008; Viruell-Fuentes 2006; Zevallos 2008), an increasing number of studies have also focused on young people of immigrant background. A way of making sense of the role of transnational attachments for the young second generation has been to focus on how the transnational social spaces of the parents affect the lives of their children (Levitt and Waters 2002, 22). For example, Le Espiritu and Tran (2002) propose thinking of transnationalism not only in the literal sense but also at the symbolic level through their research with second-generation Vietnamese American university students in San Diego (US). The authors suggest that memories, idealized images of the homeland and imagined returns can act as powerful symbols through which the second generation develop their own transnational attachments. In addition, Wolf (2002) conducted research with second generation Filipino youth in California who live embedded in different cultural frames of reference provided both by their present home but also by the homeland values of their parents and grandparents, frames of reference that can easily be conflictive. Wolf proposes the concept of "emotional transnationalism" to describe the transnational emotional obligations which characterize her young participants' lives. She advocates "a cultural transnationalism that plays itself out in the realm of emotions" (Wolf 2002, 279), which despite being located in one geographical setting has transnational emotional dimensions<sup>7</sup>.

An alternative perspective relating to the transnational orientations of the second generation youth has come from research focusing on the increasingly ethnified

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<sup>7</sup> As Collins (2009, 445) suggests, it could be argued that all forms of transnationalism are directly or indirectly emotional as the motivations to engage in or maintain transnational activities are permeated by emotions which dictate senses of obligation or attachment towards family, kin and imagined or real ancestral homes.

migrant communities that can be found in cities of Western immigrant receiving countries. Some studies have highlighted that the children of migrants may be developing *transnational identifications which do not rely on their parents' homelands but instead on the ethno-cultural specific environments in which they are growing up and on global cultural flows* (Gowricharn 2009; Vickerman 2002). This perspective provides a more complex picture of the potential transnationalism of second and subsequent generations, highlighting the importance of local ethno-cultural infrastructures in fomenting transnational orientations and behaviours (Gowricharn 2009).

As this last paragraph implies, most of these studies have been conducted among migrant populations or ethnic minority groups which are embedded in intense transnational social fields created by the close presence of co-ethnic members and fellow migrants' networks in the host land. In many instances the transnational identifications of the second generations have been found in children who live among other young people from the same geographical origin or religious background. This is the case, for example, in Griffiths' (2002) study about the renewal of Kurdish identity among young people of Kurdish descent living in London or the two studies conducted in the US by Wolf (2002) and Le Espiritu and Tran (2002) highlighting the symbolic and emotional attachments of second generation Filipinos and Vietnamese Americans. Much less is known, however, about the circumstances and the circuits of identification and belonging of second generations from sparse migrant populations (without much contact with young people of similar descent), unmarked minorities or those who have fewer opportunities to reproduce emotional and symbolic attachments to their cultural heritage outside of the household.

Furthermore, in the effort to recognize children as independent social agents, most of the research that I reviewed in the former section has focused on developing understandings of minority young people's senses of identity and belonging outside of the realm of the family or other intergenerational contexts. As important as these contributions are, they do not allow for an exploration of the role that relationships within the family may play in the senses of belonging of the young generation. The research presented in this thesis aims to contribute to this area of research by adopting

such an intergenerational approach, therefore responding to calls to consider further engagement between generations (Hopkins and Pain 2007; Vanderbeck 2007).

## 2.4. Conclusion

I started the chapter by outlining the diverse incorporation models that have been adopted by Western countries in order to accommodate the ethnic and racial diversity of their immigrants and ethnic minorities in the post-1945 era. I explored how these models evolved from assimilation canons aimed at progressively 'dissolving' immigrants' linguistic, religious or ethno-cultural differences into the perceived mainstream of the society of settlement (e.g. Gordon 1964) to multicultural principles based on the ideas of recognizing immigrants' ethnic and racial diversity and counteracting discrimination (Castles 2002). I continued by paying attention to the rise of the transnational paradigm within scholarship on migration (Bailey 2001; Vertovec 1999). This paradigm has foregrounded the multiple and simultaneous activities and attachments that contemporary migrants may sustain across borders, disrupting traditional conceptions of the coupling between identity and territory and providing liminal or hybrid spaces from which to resist hegemonic modes of immigrant assimilation (Bhabha 1990; Soja 1996). Finally, I observed that the challenges posed by the transnational model and the criticisms addressed at multicultural models, alongside the changes in the political context in Western countries in response to fears of disaffection among minority populations, have all together led to a return to assimilation ideals in policy quarters and to calls among scholars for a reconsideration of the assimilation model in studying populations of immigrant descent.

My main aim in this discussion has been to outline how these different models have been used in Britain in order to establish the conditions which characterize the contemporary framework of immigrant reception in this country. Following Nagel and Staeheli (2008b), I argued that, in this case, multicultural and integration policies underpinned by a system of race relations, have fomented an integration context dominated by a visual regime of difference and sameness (based on racial and ethno-cultural cues). This visual regime has important impacts for how immigrants and ethnic minorities can negotiate membership and belongings in their society of settlement. Despite the central role that *ways of seeing and conceptualizing difference* has acquired

for the ordinary experiences of integration of contemporary adult and young migrants and ethnic minorities in Britain (and in similar multi-ethnic societies), I noted that research in this area has not been sufficiently developed. Within this situation, I consider that Nagel's (2009, 401 italics in the original) proposal to approach assimilation dynamics as a "relational process of *making sameness*" is a fruitful point of access into how immigrant and minority ethnic group members understand discourses of assimilation/integration and negotiate sameness and belongings in their receiving society.

I have also highlighted that scholarship focusing on the integration, transnational attachments and belonging experiences of immigrants and ethnic minorities has been dominated by an adult perspective. However, the development of the social model for the study of childhood and children's experiences has provided increasingly rich insights into how young people (including ethnic minority children) construct and negotiate their identities and belongings, actively engaging in processes of inclusion and exclusion characterized by racialization and othering dynamics (Ni Laoire et al. 2010). With the object of recognizing children as social agents in their own right, this scholarship has concentrated on studying the senses of belonging of young people as independent actors and has paid less attention to their belongings in relation to their parents or within the relational framework of the family.

In addition, I pointed out that most of the studies conducted to date on the experiences of adults and young people of immigrant or minority backgrounds and their transnational attachments have focused on groups embedded in intense transnational social fields or ethnified local spaces. Much less is known about the senses of belonging of individuals from sparse migrant populations, *invisible* minorities or those who have fewer opportunities to reproduce emotional and symbolic attachments to their cultural heritage outside of the household.

In this thesis, I have taken a migrant-centred embodied approach to studying the experiences of adults and children from immigrant families which form part of a highly invisible and sparse population. I consider that this approach can illuminate how they negotiate the simultaneous structures (local and translocal) they encounter in their everyday lives, including the immediate family context and its intergenerational relationships. Focusing on how migrant adults and their children understand and

manage sameness and difference in quotidian situations brings to the fore the complexity of the marked/unmarked spectrum and how this may affect the two generations differently. Furthermore, the everyday, embodied approach also provides access to the emotional dimension of their experiences, including the type of simultaneous multiple-scaled attachments that may play a role in their senses of belonging. The next chapter presents the case study of Latin Americans and their children in the north of England and the methodology I adopted to undertake the research.

### 3. 'Needle in a haystack'- researching Latin American families in the north of England: project design and methodology

#### 3.1. Introduction

In order to explore the impacts that the visual regime of ethno-cultural sameness and difference of Britain have on the experiences of incorporation of a sparse immigrant population, this thesis focuses on the case of Latin Americans and their children living in the north of England (specifically Yorkshire and Greater Manchester). A low number of Latin Americans are settled in this area of the country and they remain largely inconspicuous amongst longer established and more numerous immigrant and ethnic minority populations (see chapter 4). In addition, their range of migration and socio-demographic backgrounds and their diverse marked/unmarked embodiments provide an appropriate set of characteristics to study the ways in which they understand and negotiate sameness and difference in their society of settlement. Focusing on families also allows consideration of how particular generations experience these conditions differently.

However, the lack of existing information about Latin Americans in this region, their sparsity and the paucity of cultural organizations makes them a *hard to reach group*. In fact, the proverbial English expression 'looking for a needle in a haystack' summarizes well the enterprise of conducting research with Latin American families with children of 8 years of age (or older) living in the north of England. Therefore, the rationale at the core of this thesis, the *invisibility* of this population in this area of the country, marked how the research project could be conducted and, consequently, the methodological approach I adopted. In this chapter, I start by outlining the design process and the multiple case study strategy selected. Next, I discuss the multiple qualitative mixed methods used with the adult participants, the young participants and the household as a group. Finally, I consider the ethical issues relevant to the project and reflect on my own positionality as a feminist social researcher.

### 3.2. Project design process

Due to the scarce information available about Latin Americans residing outside of London, it was necessary to conduct a preliminary research phase which could help illuminate the circumstances that characterize this population in the north of the country and which could also inform the research design of the main qualitative phase of the project. This preliminary work comprised a benchmarking exercise of the statistical data available nationally (both from official sources and from researchers and support organizations) but also, and to the extent to which it was possible, an exploration of the socio-demographic characteristics of the Latin American population in the northern region (including Yorkshire and the Humber, the North West and the North East of England). The results of this data collection and analysis exercise provided a more nuanced picture of the situation of the population in these regions and illuminated some of the factors and dynamics which underlie their socio-cultural invisibility in this part of the country (see chapter 4 for an analysis of the results of this phase of the project).

Scholarship focusing on research with hard-to-reach populations highlights the need to collaborate with 'community' groups or 'insiders' in order to be able to negotiate access to potential participants (e.g. Benoit et al. 2005; Bloch et al. 2009; Taylor and Kearney 2005). In my research, despite the shortage of formal Latin American organizations or groups, the few non-for-profit and commercial initiatives that do exist proved crucial in facilitating access, i.e. a grass-roots magazine for the Spanish speaking community, conversation circles, specific cultural groups (e.g. Chilean Community in South Yorkshire, university student associations) and professional enterprises promoting Latin American culture, music and dance. I also approached around 50 generic support groups, public service providers and voluntary or community organizations. The contacts I established during the initial phase of the project provided me with an 'entry route' into the field, as I met a few key informants who helped me to develop a better understanding of the 'stories' and current characteristics of the population in the main cities of the region.

As part of this consultation process, I conducted five in-depth semi-structured interviews with stakeholders to discuss the Latin American population in their cities

and regions and any existing cultural or support initiatives. These included: an Evangelical pastor (Colombian) who used to support Latin American migrants integrate to northern congregations; two co-founders of Latin American business (Chilean and Costa Rican origins) in Liverpool – interviewed together; one Chilean refugee – representative of SCDA (Chile: Sports, Culture and Development Association) group founded in 1987 in Sheffield; two interpreters (Argentinean and Peruvian origins) who work regularly with asylum seekers and refugees.

I also undertook similar semi-structured interviews with five additional informants and two young families (with children younger than eight years of age) in order to develop a deeper understanding of the diversity of situations which characterize Latin American migrants in the north and explore themes of interest for the Refugee Council (see figure 3-1 for details of these participants, all names used are pseudonyms).

Additional informants	Profile
Mariela (30s, Colombian)	Migration due to marriage to British citizen. She lives in a small rural village with her young family, very isolated from other Latin Americans.
Pepe (20s, Colombian)	Asylum seeker who, with his family (wife and daughter), was dispersed to a northern town by National Asylum Support Service (NASS), recently been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).
Marcela (30s, Colombian)	Asylum seeker who was dispersed by NASS to a northern town after residing in London for a few years where she had relatives. Recently been granted ILR.
Carmen (20s, born in Colombia, holds Venezuelan passport)	Potential irregular status, living in the UK with husband, young children and brother in law.
Antonio (20s, born in Colombia, holds Venezuelan passport)	Potential irregular status, single, unemployed at the time of participation.
Young Argentinean family (parents are in their 30s)	Both partners are university graduates. Husband has professional job in healthcare sector and wife has taken time off because of recent maternity.
Young Anglo-Mexican family (mother 30s and father 40s)	Mexican father and British mother, both have skilled jobs in the entertainment sector.

**Figure 3-1 Summary of additional participants**

Additionally, I also engaged in many *ad hoc* and informal conversations with other Latin Americans by attending social events (i.e. language groups' gatherings, lunches and parties). These informal conversations (which I recorded in my fieldwork diary)

provided important grass-roots perspectives for the development of the main phase of the project and informed the overall findings of the research.

In light of their suggestions, I reconsidered the target population of the project on an evidence-based approach. Initially and according to the statistical data gathered, I had envisaged undertaking the research project exclusively with Colombian immigrants and their families due to this population being one of the largest and longer-established (in national terms) and also because of the greater diversity of their migration situations (resulting from the complex political and economic circumstances in this South American country, e.g. Bermúdez Torres 2003; McIlwaine 2005)<sup>8</sup>. However, key informants and other contacts highlighted that cross-nationality friendships and social networks were a very important aspect of how Latin Americans in the north organized their lives in a context without many fellow immigrants from specific countries. This consultation process dispelled my concerns about engaging with the macro-identity 'Latin American' and its colonial connotations (e.g. Mignolo 2005), leading me instead to realize the importance of exploring how immigrants from this region and their descendants engage with this identity category (originally created by the *colonial gaze*) and how they understand and negotiate it (see chapters 4 and 5). Furthermore, due to the need to maximize the possibilities for recruitment, I decided to focus my efforts on the Yorkshire and Greater Manchester regions, where I had been more successful in gathering contextual information and establishing contacts.

### **3.2.1. Multiple case study approach**

The aims of the research required that the project was designed in a way which allowed the inclusion of the experiences and perceptions of Latin American adults as well as those of their children, including the exploration of the relational context of the family. For the purpose of the project and this thesis, 'the family' is conceived as the immediate relational milieu through which children experience their lives. This is important when contextualising children's accounts and their intergenerational and family relationships, that is "[moving] the focus away from studying 'the child' in isolation by situating their narratives and experiences in a tangible, yet dynamic, social

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<sup>8</sup> As I will explain later I also conducted the pilot of the methodology with families of Colombian descent.

unit” (Chatty et al. 2005, 393). However, basing the research strategy on the family also responded to the ‘hard-to-reach character’ of the population. In these circumstances, I considered that the most viable route was to locate adults in the first instance. The statistical benchmarking exercise had shown that almost none of the School Censuses collected by northern Local Education Authorities made use of the extended ethnicity codes which could help find pupils of Latin American origin, therefore foreclosing the option of accessing potential participants through schools (Department for Children Schools and Families 2008).

Consequently, I opted for a “collective case study (or multiple case study)” design by which “the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the [research] issue” (Creswell 2007, 74; see also Silverman 2005). Within this approach, I considered each participant family as a distinctive unit formed by the different members (adults and young people); so I adopted “*an embedded case study design*”, by which I could take into account the “subunits” within the case – the different members/relatives – but also the whole of the unit –family/household – (Yin 2009, 50 italics in the original). This approach also required a clear definition of the boundaries of the case study, that is who was to be included in it (Creswell 2007; Silverman 2005; Yin 2009). I decided that each case would comprise all the adults and young people (over the age of 8 by convention and up to 18 if they were still dependants<sup>9</sup>) living in the household at the time of participation (at least 1 adult and 1 child).

As Yin (2009, 18) has pointed out, the case study design is appropriate when the researcher considers that the “contextual conditions” are essential to the understanding of the phenomenon under study. Therefore, using multiple case studies also provided the opportunity to develop rich understandings of the ways in which the participant families coped with their real-life circumstances, as well as allowing consideration of the family unit (and its potential transnational attachments) as the immediate relational context within which the participant children lived (cf. Levitt and Waters 2002).

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<sup>9</sup> Initially I had considered limiting the cases to those households with children between the ages of 8 and 15; however, the difficulties of recruiting families who fitted this criterion required me to extend the age bracket to 18.

Transnational scholarship has highlighted that the concept of household cannot be limited to those living *under the same roof* as families often dwell in multi-sited households while still maintaining a common social and economic life (e.g. Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Wright and Ellis 2006). However, due to the time and practical constraints of a PhD project, I decided to consider the local household (i.e. those family members living together in the same dwelling at the time of participation) as the case study. This decision also responded to the fact that during the consultation process, informants reported that there was a high incidence of dual nationality couples (Latino-British) amongst those living in the north, which often meant that the children in the household had been born in the UK (the final sample of the project participants illustrates this dynamic). I also considered that, although this approach would ultimately exclude the contrasting perspectives of any transnational (extended) family members; I would still be able to explore the transnational attachments which might figure in the lives of the participants. As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, 1012) have pointed out: “[a]lthough multi-sited research is ideal for studying (...) [the transnational networks of migrants and non-migrants], the impact of transnational relations can be observed by asking individuals about the transnational aspects of their lives, and those they are connected to, in a single setting”.

Opting for this family/household case study approach, however, had an impact on which sector of the population I was able to access and what could be revealed by the research. For instance, during the fieldwork I gathered numerous reports suggesting that the Latin American population in Liverpool and Manchester had increased significantly since 2008 (e.g. Liverpool.com 2007). According to these reports, many of these recently arrived migrants were young, had settled in the UK alone or with a partner, could be in irregular situations and were working in low-paid and low-skilled jobs in the cleaning and service sector. This part of the northern Latin American population may be affected by the same levels of vulnerability and exploitation which have been identified in London (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007); however, due to the focus of the present project on the experiences of families (and the second generation), its findings cannot illuminate the situation and problems faced by these recently arrived young migrants. Ultimately, and as I will consider below, the family

case study approach also had an impact on the composition of the sample I was able to recruit.

Notwithstanding, it is important to reflect further on the reasons why this group was hard-to-reach for me as a researcher and for the purposes of the project. An important issue was my positionality *outside* of the population, an aspect to which I will return in the last section of the chapter. However, there were other practical matters that played a role in the dynamics of access and recruitment, which I consider next.

### **3.2.2. Access, recruitment and sampling**

To fulfil the aims of the research, I followed the advice of scholars with experience in working with hard-to-reach populations who are characterized by a lack of sampling frame (i.e. "the size of the membership and group boundary is unknown", Benoit et al. 2005, 264) and I conducted purposive sampling in combination with snowballing techniques (e.g. Benoit et al. 2005; Bloch et al. 2009; Sadler et al. 2010). Basically, and to the extent to which it was possible, this meant selecting families/households with a diversity of backgrounds (i.e. different socio-demographic characteristics) and migration circumstances (i.e. short and long-term migrants and diverse migration routes) and subsequently, trying to build the sample through their social connections. In order to reduce the shortcomings of snowball sampling (e.g. accessing only participants with certain profiles) and maximize the possibilities of finding potential participants, I followed suggestions to use a variety of sources from which to start snowballing chains (e.g. Bloch et al. 2009; Sadler et al. 2010). Apart from the contacts which I had established during the preliminary phase of the research, I continued to publicize the project in all forms possible. I published a brief article/call for participation in a magazine for the Spanish speaking community in Yorkshire, distributed information leaflets to venues and key informants and I was interviewed on a digital radio programme called 'Latin Times' which aims at reaching audiences in the north.

I also decided to offer families a gift voucher (for shop/s of their choice) as a thank you gesture for their time and as a way of encouraging participation. Researchers have highlighted that there are important ethical considerations to take into account when offering informants financial incentives or even payment for their participation (e.g.

Bushin 2007; Head 2009; Lewis 2009). It has been suggested that this gesture may compromise some of the key ethical principles of research, such as voluntary participation (informed consent) or the reliability of the data collected (e.g. Goodman et al. 2004; Head 2009; McKeganey 2001). To counteract these concerns, it has been proposed that the researcher must try to offer an amount/gift which is only an incentive and not so valuable that coerces prospective informants to take part or leads them to feel obliged 'to say what they think the researcher wants them to say' (Head 2009). In contrast, feminist scholars have argued that making payments or giving gifts may help re-address the unequal power relation between the researcher and the participants (e.g. Goodman et al. 2004; Thompson 1996).

Taking all these points into consideration, I decided to offer each family gift vouchers to the value of £30 (in most of the cases this meant around £10 pounds for each participant: adults and young people). I did not present this token of appreciation as separate vouchers for each participant, as I wanted to make sure that each family received the same value gift; in all the participant cases I purchased vouchers for the benefit of the whole of the family (i.e. supermarket vouchers to buy groceries, except for two cases in which the parents asked me to provide vouchers for shops that their teenage children had chosen). Finally, I also decided that I would give the participants the voucher/s at the beginning of the research encounter, in order to emphasize that it was a gesture of appreciation for their time and not a reward for their accounts (cf. Cree et al. 2002; Hill 2005; Lewis 2009).

Despite these efforts, recruitment advanced at a very slow pace. It became clear that the only way in which people were willing to participate was if they met me in person (so I could explain the research to them face-to-face), or if a friend introduced me and reassured them about who I was and what the nature of the research was (cf. Bloch et al. 2009; Curtis et al. 2004). As Thomas et al. (2007, 435) have suggested, recruitment can be understood "as a process that involves some degree of 'emotional labour' (Hochschild 1983)", in the sense that researchers must manage their image and outward manner in order to achieve the task in hand. Their reflections resonate with my experiences during the recruitment process mainly on two fronts. Firstly, due to the work I had to do in projecting the right image "and retain[ing] the energy and enthusiasm" necessary while having to face many dead-ends and refusals (Thomas et

al. 2007, 436). For example, even when participants tried to convince acquaintances or friends who had children of the right age, on many occasions, their efforts also resulted in refusals. This experience illustrated a generalized lack of engagement with the idea of participating in social research (including a wish to remain 'invisible' – see chapter 5) but also the limitations of accessing the field without sufficient support or gatekeepers who could reassure the participants about my credentials and good-will. This became a limitation difficult to overcome when trying to access the 'hidden' part of the Latin American population, in which the incidence of irregular status seems to be relatively high (McIlwaine 2007). I did make a few contacts with irregular migrants but I did not have sufficient time to build the trust necessary in order to achieve fruitful results and find families, within this specific group, with the desired profile (cf. Bloch et al. 2009).

The second way in which "emotional labour" (Thomas et al. 2007, 436 drawing on Hochschild 1983) was relevant for the recruitment process was in having to navigate the hidden 'group politics' which were present in the field and of which I was often unaware. For example, on two occasions in two different cities, I eventually conducted research with two families who confirmed that they had known about the research all along. However, they had not been in touch before because they had associated me with the gatekeepers who first introduced me to the population in their cities. This exemplifies the need to diversify contacts in the field and manage the researcher's image carefully so she/he does not come to be identified with only one sector of the population (cf. Silverman 2005).

Overall, I recruited 10 families/households (five Latin American and five Latino-British) living in different metropolitan areas of Yorkshire and Greater Manchester, all including from two to four participants. There were a total of 30 informants, 18 adults (16 Latin American and two British) and 12 young people (second generation). Figure 3-2 below provides a summary of the case studies, membership and main background characteristics (as I will explain later, all names used are pseudonyms). Many of the families included other children who were too young to take part (for reasons of anonymity I do not provide this information). By using a qualitative approach and purposive sampling, I selected and studied in depth a set of families/households which illustrates a range of national origins, socio-economic backgrounds and migration routes/stories. However, the practical constraints I discussed above and the focus of

the research on the inclusion of second generation participants, over eight years of age who had resided in the UK for some time, to a certain extent limited the diversity of socio-economic backgrounds reflected in the participants. As can be seen in figure 3-2, I was more successful in recruiting families in longer settled and financially self-sufficient situations, whilst recent migrant families and those in more vulnerable circumstances (i.e. irregular status) are under-represented in the final sample. Notwithstanding, the participant households “[a]s case studies (...) [can be] used to illustrate aspects of social process (...)” (Wallman 1984, vii); as they provide the opportunity to explore in detail the dynamics between these families’ experiences and their contextual circumstances of integration, while, at the same time incorporating different levels of analysis.

Therefore, I believe that the findings of this research can contribute to at least two different wider debates. Firstly, it helps to develop a more nuanced picture of the Latin American population in the UK, specifically in relation to the diversity of circumstances which affect these migrants in different areas of the country, but also by starting to explore the experiences of the second generation growing up. As such, it also provides a foundation from which to develop further research. Secondly, it contributes to better theoretical understandings of everyday and embodied integration processes and their politics of visibility and invisibility (Nagel and Staeheli 2008a), transnationalism (by incorporating the perspective of sparse populations) and policy debates on social cohesion (through developing understandings of the impacts of notions of sameness and difference on everyday coexistence).

**Figure 3-2 Summary of case studies**

Household	Participant adults	Participant young people	Main characteristics and profile
1	<p><b>SUSANA:</b> mother, 40s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Colombia  <b>Citizenship:</b> dual - Colombian &amp; British</p>	<p><b>DUNCAN:</b> son, 12 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> dual - Colombian &amp; British  <b>Heritage:</b> Scottish father &amp; Colombian mother</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Migration for study reasons and subsequent marriage to British national (now divorced). Single parent household. <b>Long-term residence:</b> 20+ years  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Susana is a university graduate and is an educational professional.</p>

Household	Participant adults	Participant young people	Main characteristics and profile
2	<p><b>MARTINA:</b> mother, 50s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Colombia  (Martina's father is Spanish but she was born and grew up in Colombia)  <b>Citizenship:</b> Spanish</p>	<p><b>MIA:</b> daughter, 18 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> British  <b>Heritage:</b> Hispano-Colombian mother and Chilean father.</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Migration due to training/work and subsequent marriage to Chilean refugee (now separated). The father has had regular contact with Mia. <b>Long-term residence:</b> 20+ years  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Martina is a university graduate and has an administration job in the education sector.</p>
3	<p><b>JUANJO:</b> father, 40s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Honduras  <b>Citizenship:</b> Spanish  <b>JULIA:</b> mother, 40s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Honduras  <b>Citizenship:</b> Honduran  <b>JAIME:</b> son, 19 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Honduras  <b>Citizenship:</b> Spanish</p>	<p><b>MESSI:</b> son, 11 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Honduras (migrated to Spain at the age of six)  <b>Citizenship:</b> Spanish  <b>Heritage:</b> Honduran</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Onwards migration from Spain where they resided for a few years. Juanjo's father was Spanish and he re-claimed Spanish citizenship when the family migrated to Spain. <b>Recent migration:</b> less than 2 years residence.  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Both parents finished secondary school. The sons are studying. Julia cannot speak English which limits her chances to obtain a job and Juanjo works in a skilled manual job.</p>
4	<p><b>PABLO:</b> father, 30s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Ecuador  <b>Citizenship:</b> Ecuadorian  <b>PAULA:</b> mother, 30s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Ecuador  <b>Citizenship:</b> Ecuadorian</p>	<p><b>ELIZABETH:</b> 15 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Ecuador (came to the UK at the age of four)  <b>Citizenship:</b> Ecuadorian  <b>Heritage:</b> Ecuadorian</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Asylum seeking. They were given Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) a year before participation. They lived in London for several years and then were dispersed by National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to the city in the north where they reside. <b>Mid-term residence:</b> 10+ years.  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Both parents finished secondary school. Paula speaks little English which makes it difficult for her to obtain a job and also is the main carer for the children. Pablo works part-time in an unskilled job in the hospitality sector. Their income is supplemented by benefits.</p>

Household	Participant adults	Participant young people	Main characteristics and profile
5	<p><b>ERNESTO:</b> father, 50s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Chile  <b>Citizenship:</b> Chilean (with refugee status in the UK)</p>	<p><b>GENARO:</b> 18 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> dual, North-American and British  <b>CAROLINA:</b> 15 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> dual, North-American and British  <b>Heritage:</b> North-American mother, Chilean father.</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Ernesto is a political refugee. His children only spend part of the week with him. <b>Long-term residence:</b> 20+ years.  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Ernesto holds qualifications equivalent to A-Levels. He now works part-time in a semi-skilled job in the hospitality sector and also receives benefits.</p>
6	<p><b>MAURICIO:</b> father, 30s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Mexico  <b>Citizenship:</b> Mexican  <b>Ma JOSÉ:</b> mother, 30s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Mexico  <b>Citizenship:</b> Mexican</p>	<p><b>CONSTANZA:</b> daughter, 8 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Mexico (came to the UK at the age of 4)  <b>Citizenship:</b> Mexican  <b>Heritage:</b> Mexican</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Both partners migrated to the UK for postgraduate study reasons.  <b>Relatively recent migration:</b> 5 years.  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Both Ma José and Mauricio have university postgraduate degrees. Since participating they have both obtained professional jobs in the education sector.</p>
7	<p><b>MARTA:</b> mother, 40s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Chile  <b>Citizenship:</b> dual, Chilean and British  <b>MARTIN:</b> father, 50s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> British  <b>SAIKO:</b> Marta's niece, 19 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Chile  <b>Citizenship:</b> Chilean</p>	<p><b>BEN:</b> son, 12 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> dual, Chilean and British  <b>Heritage:</b> Chilean mother and British father</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Marta undertook onwards migration from Spain to marry her British partner Martin. When I met the family, Saiko (Marta's niece) was living temporarily in the household in order to learn English.  <b>Mid-term residence:</b> 10+ years.  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Marta has a postgraduate university qualification and a professional job in education. Martin is also a graduate but was not in employment at the time of participation. Ben attends a private school.</p>

Household	Participant adults	Participant young people	Main characteristics and profile
8	<p><b>KARLA:</b> mother, 30s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Mexico  <b>Citizenship:</b> dual, Mexican and British  * Karla's husband did not participate.</p>	<p><b>WILLIAM:</b> son, 10 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> dual, Mexican and British  <b>TOMAS:</b> son, 9 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> British  <b>Heritage:</b> Mexican mother and British father</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Karla met her British partner in Mexico where they married before coming to the UK. <b>Mid-term residence:</b> 10+ years.  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Both Karla and her husband are graduates and they own a business. Karla works part-time for the family business and is the main carer for the children.</p>
9	<p><b>FRANCES:</b> mother, 30s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> British  <b>JUAN:</b> father, 30s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Bolivia  <b>Citizenship:</b> Bolivian</p>	<p><b>SALLY:</b> daughter, 9 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> UK  <b>Citizenship:</b> British  <b>Heritage:</b> Bolivian father and British mother</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Juan met his British partner in Bolivia while she was studying in the country. Eventually, Juan came to join her in the UK and they married. <b>Mid-term residence:</b> 10 years.  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Frances has a university degree and a part-time professional job in education. Juan works in a semi-skilled job in the hospitality sector.</p>
10	<p><b>LOUISE:</b> mother, 30s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Chile  <b>Citizenship:</b> Chilean  <b>PACO:</b> step-father, 40s  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Chile  <b>Citizenship:</b> Chilean</p>	<p><b>JAKE:</b> son, 14 years of age  <b>Place of Birth:</b> Chile (came to the UK at the age of 12)  <b>Citizenship:</b> Chilean  <b>Heritage:</b> Chilean</p>	<p><b>Settlement circumstances:</b> Louise is a highly skilled professional who moved to the UK temporarily for study reasons. She came with her long-term partner Paco, who is also a highly skilled professional, and her son Jake. <b>Short-term migration.</b>  <b>Socio-economic background:</b> Their circumstances in the UK have been financially difficult. Paco is employed in an unskilled job in the hospitality sector and Louise is working part-time in the retail sector.</p>

### 3.3. Methodology

In this section, I provide an overview and appraisal of all the methods used in the case-studies with emphasis on the original aspects of the design, such as devising person-centred<sup>10</sup> methods which could work across a range of ages, abilities and preferences (including language choice) and working with biographical objects in the group interviews. I finish the section by outlining how I undertook the data analysis by combining a “within case study” account of each participant household with a “cross-case approach” which could identify common themes and allowed consideration of the different levels of analysis embedded in the cases (Creswell 2007, 75; Stake 2006; Yin 2009).

#### 3.3.1. Methods

As Yin (2009, 114-5) has noted, “a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence”, which in the present project translated into the need to develop in-depth accounts for the overall cases but also for each of the participants. In addition, scholarship on family research has established that interviewing all the household members can provide richer and more multifaceted research accounts than those relying on a single source of information – conventionally, the ‘domestic’ spokesperson i.e. housewife/mother (Finch and Mason 2000; Milburn 1995; Valentine 1999b, 67; Wallman 1984). Therefore, I adopted a mixed methods approach, based on the idea of ‘crystallization’, that is, I considered that using a diversity of methods would provide a more complex, multi-dimensional and in-depth view of the participants’ perspectives (and the overall case) and therefore, a more nuanced understanding of the issues under research (Darbyshire et al. 2005; Ellingson 2009; Mason 2006a, b; Richardson 2000).

On a practical level, my aim was “to make research engaging for everyone involved, while at the same time capturing the real experiences of dynamic, multi-dimensional, living systems such as families” (Deacon 2006, 106). Interviewing family or household

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<sup>10</sup> I use the expression person-centred methods instead of the more common child-centred, as I agree with Punch (2002, 337) that it is less patronizing towards children and they can also be used with adults who may find them more appealing than other traditional methods.

members separately provides the participants with more freedom to express their own opinions and perspectives (avoiding conflicts of power), therefore enabling a better insight into the different dimensions of family life (Lewis 2009; Valentine 1999b). In contrast, working with all the household members together allows the researcher to observe the power dynamics underlying a family's relationships and to obtain relational accounts (Aitken 2001; Larossa et al. 1981; Valentine 1999a). Therefore, I decided to use a range of qualitative mixed methods to work with the individual participants (adults and young people) and also a group activity to undertake with all the household members together (see figure 3-3 for a detailed list). Undertaking these fieldwork activities involved a minimum of four meetings with each family (usually one for each adult, two for each child and one for the family group); overall these resulted on 47 research encounters.

<b>Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Family diagram and family relationships table</li> <li>✓ In depth interview:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Narrative phase about migration experiences or story of meeting Latin American partner and settling in the UK for British members of Anglo-Latin couples</li> <li>○ Semi-structured phase to discuss topics related to settlement experiences, present family relationships, children's education and upbringing, cultural reproduction in the household, meanings of Latin Americanism and national identities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Family diagram and semi-structured interview about family network</li> <li>✓ Maps led semi-structured interview about attachments to places</li> <li>✓ Weekly activities diagram with semi-structured interview about everyday life, friendships and social networks</li> </ul>
<b>Household group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Group interview with significant biographical object chosen by the participants</li> </ul>

**Figure 3-3 Multiple fieldwork activities for each case study**

In addition, I conducted non-systematic participant observations by spending meal or other casual times with the informants; I took detailed notes of these observations in the fieldwork diary. As I will discuss later, the design of the tools also needed to accommodate the possibility of working in two different languages, English and Spanish.

Before starting the main data collection exercise, I undertook a pilot study with 4 families of Colombian and Anglo-Colombian descent<sup>11</sup>. This process was crucial for testing the methods, especially the graphic elicitation tools, and adjusting them accordingly (Glesne 1999; Sampson 2004). However, it also provided important insights into practical issues such as the language I used (both in English and Spanish), the process of informing and obtaining consent from all the participants (adults and children) and issues about negotiating time requirements and the conditions under which to conduct the fieldwork activities. As I learnt, conducting research with families is a much more challenging process than working with individuals, as finding the necessary time and appropriate place for each fieldwork activity (within the constraints of very busy family lives) demands considerable flexibility and improvisation skills (Aitken 2001; Valentine 1999b). I explore all of the methods and their related issues in more detail in the following subsections.

### ***3.3.1.1. Adults' methods***

Fieldwork with the adult participants took place through the completion of two interconnected activities. The first one consisted of a graphic elicitation method (family diagram and relationships table) and the second was an in-depth interview (narrative and semi-structured approaches combined). This design responded to Mason's (2006a, b) suggestion that lived experience is multi-dimensional and we need to open up our methodological tool box in order to find ways to capture this dimensional diversity and elicit non-verbal information (see also Bagnoli 2009; Gauntlett 2007). Due to my aim of engaging with the emotional attachments and embodied experiences of the participants, I deemed it important to include a visual approach in my fieldwork in combination with text-based interview techniques.

#### **Family diagram and relationships table**

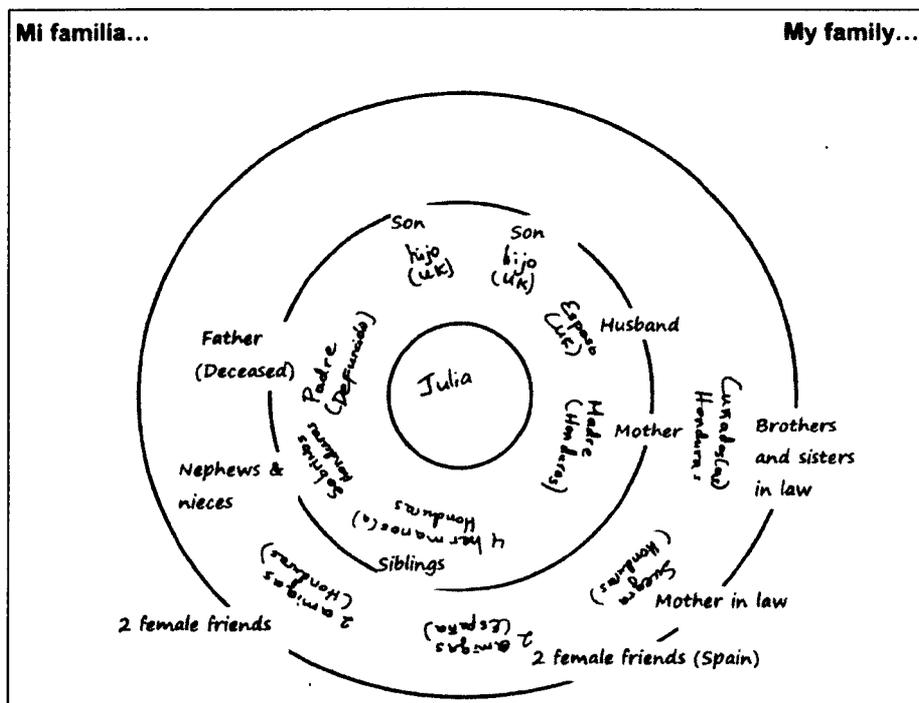
As Bagnoli (2009, 3) has explained, “[g]raphic elicitation methods usually involve the use of diagrams, which may either be produced by the researcher or by participants” and can also be employed to facilitate interviewing. These types of diagrams, also known as projective techniques, “include any set of procedures which, being minimally

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<sup>11</sup> Two of these families also took part in the main phase of the project.

structured, allow people to impose their own forms of organisation, bringing into expression their needs, motives, emotions and the like" (Bagnoli 2009, 3 drawing on Allen 1958).

With the intention of exploring the family and friendship relationships of the participants in this project (both adults and young people), I chose to work with a family diagram which followed models of relational maps used in kinship and social relationships research (e.g. Finch and Mason 1993; Josselson 1996; Roseneil 2006). This family diagram comprised three concentric circles (see figure 3-4 for an example).



**Figure 3-4 Julia's (40s, Honduran - household 3) family diagram with translations**

Participants were asked to situate themselves in the central circle and place in the subsequent circles their relatives and other significant people in their lives, according to how emotionally important they felt these people were - distance on the paper reflected greater or lesser emotional closeness (adapted from Antoniou 2007, 7).

Despite the diagram being called 'my family', I explained at the beginning of the activity that the respondents were free to include in it anyone who they considered emotionally important. Additionally, I asked them to indicate the relationship to the person (i.e. sister, friend, etc.) and their geographical location (in order to understand the local or translocal dimension of the relationship). This freedom also meant that

some participants, for instance, chose to include family members (normally parents) who had passed away but were still emotionally significant for them (see figure 3-4 on the previous page for an example).

Once the participants had finished the task, I proceeded to use a relationships table (adapted from Gunnarson 1990, 52-55) to collect more specific and systematic information about all the people included in the diagram, including frequency and type of contact (e.g. face-to-face, telephone) and type of support provided or received (e.g. child-related support, financial assistance, etc.). Respondents were also asked whether these support practices were transnational and reciprocal.

The routine of completing the diagram gave the participants time to think about those who were important in their lives and made their decision making process as meaningful (or more meaningful) than the finalized diagram. As Mason (2002a, 238) has insightfully pointed out, “the act of placing a relative in a chart often is treated by the person doing it as highly significant in itself; something is being done more than said, and something non-verbal is being expressed”. The diagrams worked successfully as a tool to capture visually the emotional relationships of the participants, although they were specific snapshots of how the respondents felt at the time of the interview, exposing the fluid and contingent nature of personal relationships.

For example, Ma José (30s, Mexican – household 6) provided a complex account of not only the emotional attachments that she was choosing to represent but also the emotional turmoil that the exercise itself provoked on her. Ma José’s father had been seriously ill and passed away while she was already living in the UK and about to give birth to her second daughter; she comes from a very close-knit family and this event had been deeply upsetting for her. During her father’s illness, however, she had disagreements with two of her sisters regarding the care and treatment that he needed. This changed the opinion she had always held of these sisters. At the time of her participation in the project, she was still struggling to deal with these emotions, which had an impact on her decision not to include these siblings on the diagram (although she also explained that at any other point in her life, she would not have hesitated in incorporating them). However, this omission also made her feel guilty as she reflected on what her parents would think of her decision. Therefore, it was

important to keep in mind the situated nature of the diagrams and explore the reasons why participants decided to include some people and not others; in this sense, the relationship table assisted in developing more nuanced understandings of the emotional representations that the chart had captured. In addition, the diagrams also functioned well as visual aids for the interviewing stage, as informants referred to them in order to make clear to me who they were talking about but also because they brought up additional issues for discussion (Bagnoli 2009; Mason 2002a).

However, as Bagnoli (2009, 22) has pointed out, using these types of diagrams is only partially participative. Although they provide a certain degree of freedom for the respondents to express their relationships flexibly and elaborate on points of interest to them; they do impose a specific way of thinking about social and kin relationships that, despite being useful for the aims of the research, may not be the most meaningful for the participants. This was the case for some of my informants, who either used the diagram in an extremely sketchy fashion or repeatedly searched for my confirmation that what they were doing was correct. On these occasions, apart from trying to reassure them that there was no right or wrong way of using the diagram, I also had to compensate for this lack of engagement during the interview process, which I consider next.

### **In-depth interviews combining narrative and semi-structured approaches**

In order to start the in-depth interview in a less constraining manner, I decided to use an approach parallel to the narrative interview (Bauer 1996). I considered that this approach would allow participants to tell me freely their direct or indirect experience of migration and settlements, with the idea of “[eliciting] a less imposed and therefore more valid account of the informant’s perspective” (Bauer 1996, 2). Only when the respondents had finished their story, did I start the questioning phase in a semi-structured format (e.g. Mason 2002a) with the aim of elaborating further any obscure episodes (regarding their migration or settlement) and exploring their views on present family relationships, children’s education and upbringing, cultural reproduction in the household and senses of identity and belonging. The last part of the interview covered topics related to their transnational practices, in case they had not been brought up during the rest of the fieldwork (see Appendix A for the interview schedule).

Scholarship covering the interviewing method has highlighted the socially constructed character of these “conversations with a purpose” (Burgess 1984, 102 cited in Mason 2002a, 225), accordingly the resulting accounts can be considered co-productions emanating from the interaction between the interviewee and the researcher (e.g. Mason 2002a). A diverse range of factors contribute to the type of account constructed, such as questions being asked (language and wording), social conventions in relation to the topic being discussed, contextual factors: setting and time of the interview, and importantly the positionality of the researcher and the power relations between participant and researcher (e.g. Eastmond 2007; Hammersley and Gomm 2008). Therefore, I did not regard the accounts collected as “straightforward descriptions of social experience” (Mason 2002a, 237) but I considered that by gathering multiple accounts and using mixed methods for each case study, the participants and myself would construct richer data (and more detailed contextual information) from which to develop contrasted views of the findings (cf. Eastmond 2007).

Overall, the combination of a narrative and semi-structured approach allowed me to be more flexible during the interview, actively responding to the fluid relational nature of the conversation (Aitken 2001). Some of the participants really engaged with the possibility of telling their story freely, crafting detailed and rich narratives of the migration events that had brought them to their present circumstances (cf. Bauer 1996). In contrast, others only provided sketchy and factually descriptive accounts and seemed to expect a more question-answer structure. The combination of interviewing styles, therefore, allowed me to respond to these different expectations as it provided a guide to guarantee the consistency of accounts I was collecting (Aitken 2001; Mason 2002a).

In general, women seemed to embrace the narrative approach with more ease and enjoyment than their male counterparts. Feminist researchers have long debated the extent to which, sharing gender positionality contributes to the rapport established during the interview and whether women talk more openly about private or domestic related matters (due to their structural position in society, e.g. Finch 1984; Oakley 1981; Ribbens 1989). In broad terms, some male participants were more ‘reluctant interviewees’ and often enquired about the intentionality of the topics of conversation

and ‘what I was looking for’ (Adler and Adler 2003). However, I believe that these dynamics were also influenced by the amount of time I had had to get to know the interviewee before we conducted the fieldwork activities. In addition, I consider that part of the dynamics I established with female participants were related to my wider professional experience in interviewing women, which provided me with more resources to navigate our interactions.

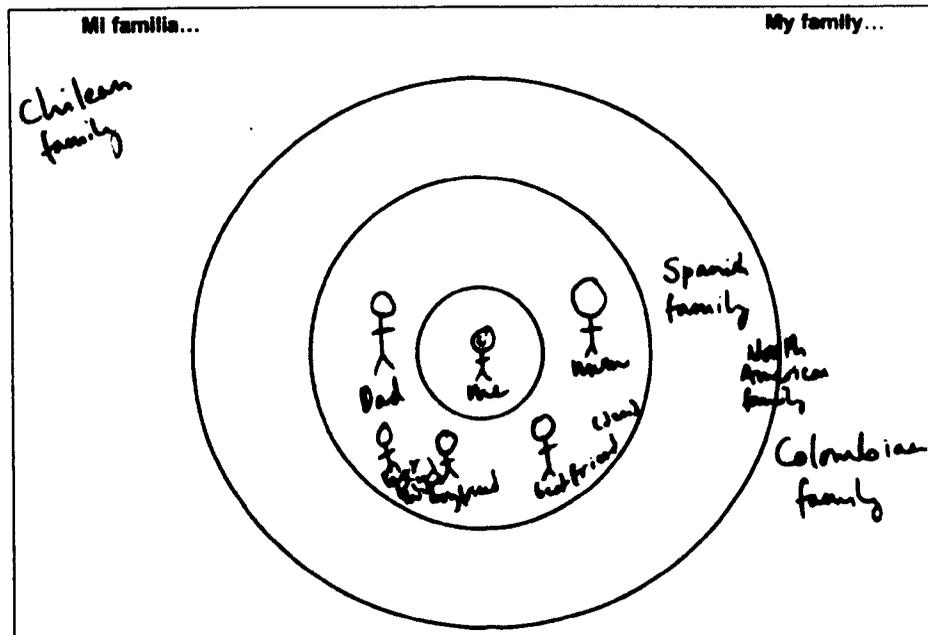
### ***3.3.1.2. Young people’s methods***

In order to explore more effectively the young participants’ everyday experiences and social worlds, I decided to use person-centred methods combined with semi-structured interviews (cf. O’Kane 2000). The intention was “to strike a balance between not patronizing children and recognizing their competencies, while maintaining their enjoyment of being involved with the research and facilitating their ability to communicate their view of the world” (Punch 2002, 337). The task of striking this balance was especially relevant for my project as I was working with children and young people of different ages who, I considered, would approach the research activities with different attitudes and abilities - more so than when working with a more similar age range of participants (Hill 2006). Therefore, I turned to the same kind of graphic elicitation tools I had adopted for the fieldwork with adults (e.g. Kesby et al. 2005; Punch 2002; Young and Barrett 2001), as I considered that they could facilitate working *with* the participants on their own terms and could help to reconstitute the researcher-participant power imbalance. With these aims in mind, I designed three different fieldwork activities constituted by a diagramming activity and a semi-structured interview which I describe next.

#### **Family diagram and semi-structured interview**

The first interview with the young participants explored the family relationships and social networks of the participant by using the same family diagram which I employed for the fieldwork with adults (see Appendix B for instructions and interview schedule). The young informants, therefore, could write or draw on the diagram according to their preferences. After they had completed it (or sometimes during the process), we proceeded to talk about the different people they represented in the diagram, exploring who and where they were and their relationships in more detail.

Using the same family diagram with the adults and the children provided a venue for contrasting their views, comparing the different relationships they presented and how they represented them. For instance, amongst second generation participants, it was quite common to depict their extended family in groups (without distinguishing individual members) in cases in which they had not had many opportunities to relate to this family as independent individuals – see figure 3-5 for an example from household 2, Mia (18, Hispano/Colombian-Chilean).



**Figure 3-5 Mia's (18, Hispano/Colombian-Chilean - household 2) family diagram**

However, the structured form of the activity (although minimal) did not always work towards lessening the unequal power relationship between myself as a researcher and the young participants, as some of them felt that there was a 'correct' way of completing the diagram and asked for reassurance that they were doing it right (this had also been the case for some of the adults) (cf. Punch 2002). As this was the first fieldwork activity that I conducted with each of the young participants; it also became necessary to spend some time building rapport. This was especially difficult with two of the teenage participants who were rather shy and seemed uncomfortable when we first started to talk. On these two occasions, I was concerned that their lack of engagement was in fact a sign of their implicit withdraw of consent (e.g. Hill 2005). Therefore, I delayed the beginning of the interview, using more time to discuss again who I was, what I was doing and why I was interested in their accounts and repeating

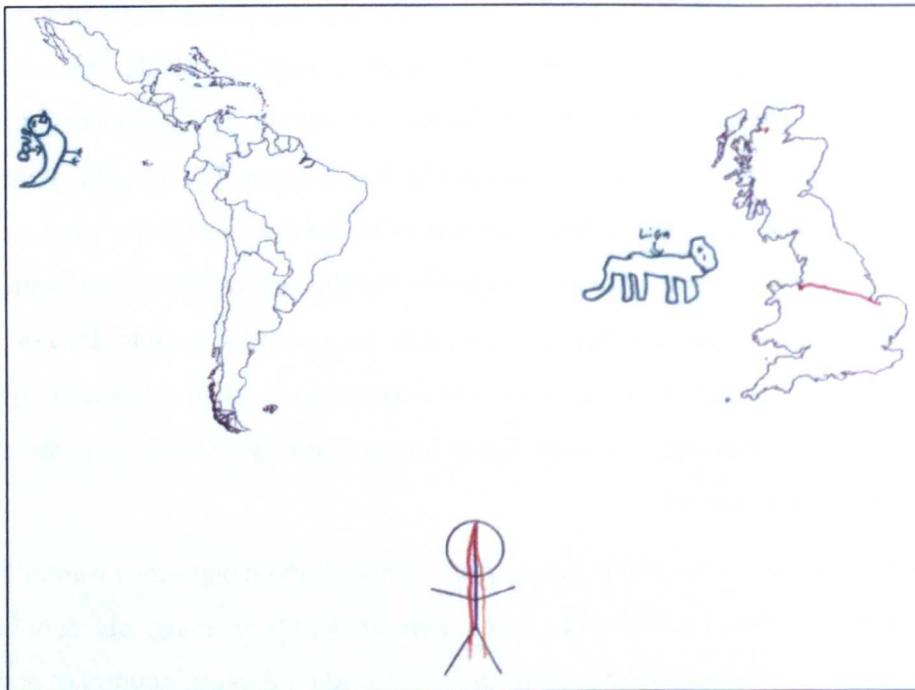
that they did not have to feel obliged to take part (I will return to the difficulties of obtaining informed consent from all the family members in the ethics section). Slowing the pace at which I entered the fieldwork phase helped to ease the conversation and facilitated the building of rapport.

### **Maps diagram and semi-structured interview**

The second interview covered the young participants' ideas and attachments to where they live and their own or their parents' places of origin (see Appendix B for instructions and interview schedule). This interview was supported by the use of a minimal vignette which included maps of Britain and Latin America and a stick figure - meant to represent the young person (see figure 3-6 on the next page for an example). The participants were free to write or draw on the paper or change its pictures. I considered that this minimal vignette provided the necessary flexibility when working with young people of diverse ages, as it could be used by the participants as a drawing canvas or it could simply become a visual aid for the interview (cf. Hill 2006; Punch 2002). Thinking about a flexible design proved to be the right decision as many of the older young participants did not feel inclined to use this tool creatively; for example, Jake (14, Chilean – household 10) was very clear about his reluctance to draw or change the illustrations: “Um, I’ve never been Rembrandt... I prefer to leave it, no, no, I don’t think it [the vignette] needs anything” (extract from Jake’s maps semi-structured interview - my translation).

To start this activity, I asked the participants to choose which place they wanted to talk about first. Once they had decided, I asked them to identify an image, object or idea which for them represented England or their own or their parents' country of origin (or Latin America) – depending on their choice and repeating the same exercise for all the places mentioned. The idea was that they would draw, write or represent these images on the vignette. As Deacon (2006, 101) has suggested, “[w]hen researchers ask participants to describe something in metaphors, participants have more freedom to use their creativity and own experiences to reflect on the specific topic”. My intention was to try to make the topic engaging, identifying an image that the participants could draw or reflect on before moving to more specific questions. I also wanted to explore the reasons why they chose a specific image and what it meant to them.

In some cases this metaphoric approach was not straightforward as the participants could not think of something to say. If that happened, I asked them instead to tell me about the things they liked and disliked about these different places. This approach provided rich information about the experiential and emotional attachments of the participants to these different places and the people who were part of them (see chapters 6 and 7). For example, in many cases the participants described in detail (verbally or graphically) contrasting landscapes and what they could do in them with friends or relatives. In other cases, the symbols they had identified became venues to explore in more detail which views and ideas they had of the different places that figured in their lives and how they felt about these different attachments – see figure 3-6 for an example from William (10, Anglo-Mexican – household 8).



**Figure 3-6 William's (10, Anglo-Mexican - household 8) maps diagram**

William decided to draw the figure of a dove to represent Mexico and a lion for England. These symbolic images prompted rich descriptions of the ideas and sentiments that he attached to both countries. In the case of Mexico, the dove was related to the Catholic faith that he felt was more dominant in his mother's country and which was an important part of his belief system. The lion, in contrast, portrayed his view of England as a richer and 'stronger' country; a place in which he would feel completely content if all his Mexican family could live nearby. Overall, the simple and

graphic representation of the 'scene' (the different countries and the participant) allowed for a situational approach to discuss emotional and abstract topics, which assisted and facilitated both non-verbal and verbal communication (cf. Barter and Renold 2000; Punch 2002; White et al. 2010).

### Weekly activities diagram and semi-structured interview

The third and final interview focused on the everyday activities and the friendships of the young participants by making use of a 'weekly activities diagram' (extracted and adapted from 'My week tool' in Christensen and James 2000, 163) – see figure 3-7 for an example.



Figure 3-7 Elizabeth's (15, Ecuadorian - household 4) weekly activities diagram with translations

Weekly tasks were represented according to the amount of time invested in each of them (normally in pie chart form but not always as participants were free to decide how to use it) and we discussed relationships with friends and other significant people with whom the informants interacted in the course of their everyday activities and in their different social terrains (see Appendix B for the instructions and topic list).

Discussing everyday activities proved a good way to elicit information about friendship groups and about the different practices in which they were engaged (Freeman and Mathison 2009; Punch 2007). This activity had approximately the same level of

structure as the family diagram, but there were more incidences of creative engagements with it than in the case of the family chart. For instance, Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian – household 4) provided a very detailed account of all the activities she undertook, how much time she spent on them, which ones she liked and which ones she disliked (see figure 3-7 on the previous page). This provided ample opportunity to discuss her friendships and all the other people with whom she interacted in her everyday life and spaces, while also providing a lot of detail of the relationships within the household and her own responsibilities.

In the case of some of the youngest participants this activity required a more flexible approach. Maybe due to their less developed sense of time, often they opted to use the diagram differently. For example, Constanza (8, Mexican – household 6) decided to use the circle of the diagram to draw a birthday cake with candles (as it was soon to be her birthday). Therefore, I led the conversation towards talking about who would be at her party (friends and family) and where and when it would be (this enabled me to go back to the different activities she was involved in and who she interacted with in her social spaces). These experiences illustrate the need to be prepared to adapt the fieldwork situation according to the preferences of the participants. In this way, researchers can manage the power relations of the encounter by being more participative and interactive, while still collecting useful information.

### ***3.3.1.3. Collective method: semi-structured group interview with biographical object***

I asked the participants to bring to the group interview a 'biographical object' (e.g. ornamental object, photograph, domestic item, etc. see Hoskins 1998) that they considered meaningful for their family. The basic premise was that this object had to be significant for all of the household participants (see Appendix C for the instructions and interview schedule). In the interview, we proceeded to discuss what the object was, the reasons why it had been chosen and the meanings attached to it, trying to elicit accounts from all the members of the household (it was an attempt to produce a joint analysis of the object, following Rose 2001, 188-90). In addition, I considered the object itself as a source of visual information, therefore I also requested permission from the participants to take a photograph of it (cf. Mason 2002b). The participant families chose a wide range of *objects* which included: photographs (2), computer and

internet connection (2), personal possessions (2, one wedding ring and one rattle toy), ornamental objects (2, one miniature Honduran flag and ornaments from Mexico) and miscellaneous items (2, food and miniature hamsters).

Although I am calling this method a group interview, it can also be considered a focus group as it involved a ‘focused’ activity, that is discussing the object (e.g. Farnsworth and Boon 2010; Kitzinger 1994). Furthermore, I was interested in the interaction of the participants and how they made sense of the object amongst themselves. Usually, group interviews are distinguished from focus groups on the basis of the position that the researcher adopts during the fieldwork activity (Farnsworth and Boon 2010, 608). It is considered that, in focus groups, the researcher becomes the “facilitator/moderator of group discussion *between participants*”, in opposition to the group interview in which the researcher takes a more central role in questioning and interacting with the participants (Parker and Tritter 2006, 26 cited in Farnsworth and Boon 2010, 608 italics in the original). I am calling this activity a group interview because, usually, after having discussed the object, the conversation expanded to related topics of interest for the project (it was the last fieldwork activity with the families). Therefore, the boundary between my role as a moderator and ‘the group’ became even fuzzier than in cases in which the group is brought together – often in a one-off basis – for the purpose to discuss a topic or issue of interest amongst themselves (e.g. Smithson 2000).

As Roberts (2002, 66) has pointed out “a whole range of individual or family “memorabilia” – watches, photographs, rings, presentational items and heirlooms of all kinds can have tremendous significance for people, evoking many memories and often forming part of family myths and traditions”. The use of the biographical object in the present research illustrated the potential of this method to elicit interactive and collaborative accounts regarding family stories, values and heritage. However, I also considered that the use of the object could help to negotiate the power dynamics of the group interview, which were especially complex due to the intersection of family hierarchies (parents and children) and my presence as a researcher (cf. Valentine 1999b). For example, I emphasized from the outset that I wanted to listen to everybody’s perspective. This provided me with an easy way to establish the ‘ground rules’ of the group activity, making sure that the young participants had the same chances to express their views as their parents and also to minimize the possibility that

one family member would dominate the conversation or impose a certain point of view (cf. Gibson 2007; Smithson 2000).

As Valentine (1999a, b) has discussed, interviewing couples or families together can become an ethical minefield for the researcher if disagreements or arguments arise between the participants (see also Lewis 2009; McCarthy et al. 2003). The most difficult dynamics to negotiate during the fieldwork arose from siblings' rivalry. This happened with the participants in household 8, Karla (30s, Mexican), William (10, Anglo-Mexican) and Tomas (9, Anglo-Mexican) and their choice of biographical object, I reproduce below the notes from my fieldwork diary regarding this group interview.

This group interview was not very successful as initially they had chosen an ornament they bought in Mexico (a model of the pyramid of *Chichen Itza*) and Tomas (the younger brother) was unhappy because he felt that it was not his object. I tried to correct the problem, by asking Tomas to also bring his own ornament (a coconut chimpanzee that they bought at the same time), which he was happy to do. The competitiveness between the two brothers was exacerbated by the group context. They argued at different points regarding who had said what first and about copying each other. (Research diary extract)

This extract also points towards one of the main issues which jeopardized the effectiveness of the method. In several occasions, participants had found it very difficult to choose an object which was significant for all of them. In cases in which they had not made a decision when I arrived to conduct the interview, I normally asked which options they had discussed and went over their different opinions. Ultimately, though, it was their decision. This made me realize that, for the method to work, I had to find a balance between giving participants freedom to choose and establishing clear guidance regarding the type of object and how it was going to be used. Examples of the success and failure of the biographical object method came from household 2 (see figure 3-8 on the next page) and household 9 (see figure 3-9 on the next page).

Martina and Mia (household 2) chose Martina's wedding ring as their object and provided an extremely rich account of the meaning that it had in their lives. Since Mia was a young child, Martina had used the embossed patterns (waves and dots) on the ring to tell her the story of their nuclear family. The object, therefore, was successful in eliciting not just verbal information about their shared values, memories and biography

but also in capturing materially a shared outlook of life, related to the need to be flexible when facing life's challenges (see Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010).



**Figure 3-8 Martina's wedding ring (biographical object chosen in household 2)**

On the other hand, Anglo-Bolivian household 9, Frances (30s), Juan (30s) and Sally (9) could not decide which object to focus on and finally settled for Sally's miniature hamsters, which she had been given as a present in her recent birthday. It was chosen as meaningful because of the division of opinions that these pets had caused in the household.



**Figure 3-9 Sally's miniature hamsters (biographical object chosen by household 9)**

Frances was very keen for Sally to have a pet to care for so she could learn to be responsible (it could not be a cat or a dog due to allergies in the family) and Juan, despite sharing this idea, deeply disliked the animals, to which he referred as 'rats' (and not pets). Despite the group interview being successful in illuminating the family dynamics, the different approaches to parenting that the adults had and how they negotiated them; the choice of 'object' did not provide a great deal of additional information about their shared family story, memories or attachments.

Part of the enjoyment of the group interview was related to the diverse and rich use of language (normally mixing different dialects of Spanish and English) that the families and I used and which was an important aspect of the research process.

### 3.3.2. Combining English and Spanish during the research process

As I have already mentioned, I designed all the materials of the research both in English and Spanish, this included information leaflets, research related tools and interview schedules. My aim was to facilitate the participation of those who could not speak English or felt more comfortable speaking in Spanish<sup>12</sup>, but also to provide participants with the option of using one or the other language (or both) when undertaking the fieldwork activities (cf. Temple 2005).

However, as scholars have pointed out, translating is not a *neutral* process and the decisions taken by researchers and translators in relation to it have an impact on the interpretation of the findings, how they are presented and on the power relations inherent in the research process, e.g. how participants are represented (e.g. Birbili 2000; Esposito 2001; Lopez et al. 2008; Temple 2005; Temple and Young 2004; Wong and Poon 2010). Such important epistemological and ethical issues require that researchers provide explicit explanations regarding their translation decisions and the techniques adopted when conducting translinguistic qualitative research (e.g. Birbili 2000; Temple 2005).

The task of translating from one language to another involves more than identifying meanings and finding equivalent terms and concepts. In fact, “[t]ranslators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhabit [sic inhabit] are “the same”. (...) In fact the process of meaning transfer has less to do with finding the cultural inscription of a term than in reconstructing its value” (Simon 1996, 137-8 cited in Temple 2005, 2.2). Therefore, translators are also analysts and cultural brokers in the sense that they take decisions in relation to meaning and cultural equivalences which

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<sup>12</sup> There was also the potential issue that I could find research participants whose mother tongue was one of the diverse indigenous languages in Latin America and not Spanish. Although that was not the case for the people who took part in the project (maybe because I published all the material in Spanish and English), I had planned (to the extent possible) to try to find someone who could interpret for me if that had been the case.

are not innocuous or free of subjective effects (Temple and Young 2004).

Consequently, there are multiple factors that influence the quality of translations. In cases in which the researcher and translator are the same person, some of these factors include the biography and personal characteristics of the individual in question, her/his knowledge of the language and culture of the participants and the researcher's skills and expertise in the language in which the research is presented (Birbili 2000, n.p.). All these factors have had an impact on the development of the research being presented in these pages. I cannot simply say that I shared a language with the participants (Spanish and/or English), as the reality of the fieldwork was more complex than this would imply. Most of the adults (and some of the young) participants and myself did indeed share a first language (Spanish) but there were dialect and cultural differences which needed to be taken into account on the course of our communication. For those participants whose first or preferred language was English, there was the additional issue that English for me is a third language (I am a bilingual Catalan-Spanish speaker) in which I express very comfortably but in which I do not have a native accent or command.

During the fieldwork, all of the adult participants, except for one British father, chose to speak in Spanish (this included a British mother who could speak Spanish fluently). In the children's case, there was a more mixed situation, with most of them choosing English (as they considered that they could express themselves better) or a mixture of the two languages (the interviewer would speak in Spanish and they would answer in English or a combination of the two). I believe that it is more pertinent to describe the fieldwork process as being mostly bilingual, with a combination of Spanish and English being used, or even language hybridity (with one language being used but with words and expressions from the other intersected or combined in the communication).

However, scholars tend to present participants in a rather passive light regarding how language is used during the qualitative research fieldwork (Esposito 2001; Lopez et al. 2008). As Lopez et al. (2008, 1736) have noted, in qualitative research, translations "need to capture the meaning, context and nuances in conversational speech"; that is communication is a dynamic and context dependent process. When conducting the fieldwork, I found that participants were equally aware of our dialect differences and often checked that a word or expression they were using had the same meaning for

me. This became more of an issue with the young participants as they were more versed on the Spanish that their parents spoke and not so used to interact with different dialects. However, I tried to be careful with how I expressed my questions, speaking clearly or even double-checking them in English (see Hill 2005 for recommendations on language use in research with children).

I transcribed<sup>13</sup> all the interviews verbatim in the original language or languages in which they had been spoken and I proceeded to analyze all the data collected by using both languages (I provide more detail of the analysis process in the next section). Translating all the interviews into English would have been highly time consuming, but I also considered that by working with the original languages, I could develop my analysis framework in a richer and less constrained manner, that is, not trying to translate too early on in the process of interpretation. As Temple and Young (2004, 174) have highlighted, “early ‘domestication’ of research into written English may mean that the ties between language and identity/culture are cut to the disadvantage of non-English speakers”. In fact, I have only translated the passages to be used in this thesis (or in other related texts written in English).

When translating my aim has been to convey the original meaning of the passages; this has involved researching ways to express ideas or concepts that had no direct equivalent between Spanish and English. In addition, I checked these translations with other bilingual and monolingual speakers in order to contrast my interpretations and check that the translations sounded natural and were comprehensible (e.g. Birbili 2000, n.p.; Esposito 2001, 577). In the quotes used in the following chapters, I have indicated in *italics* those passages that were originally spoken in English and in normal font those which I have translated. In those occasions in which participants used English expressions or sentences while speaking in Spanish, I have used italics to indicate these occurrences. In addition, bracket ellipsis (...) are used to indicate a cut in the text and three-dot ellipsis ... to indicate pauses in the speech; text between [brackets] indicates missing words or contextual clarifications. Finally, for all the translated quotes used in this thesis, I have provided the original Spanish text in Appendix D.

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<sup>13</sup> I had some external help in transcribing but all the transcripts were checked, corrected and elaborated by myself.

### 3.3.3. Analysis of the data

I undertook the analysis of the bilingual data in two main ways: firstly, by using a 'within-case analysis' of each participant family (description of the case and themes through the accounts of all participants); secondly, by adopting a 'cross-case approach' which identified common topics and allowed consideration of the accounts of adult and young participants separately, exploring similarities and differences between and across standpoints (adults and young people or parents and children) and individual participants (Creswell 2007, 75; McCarthy et al. 2003; Stake 2006; Yin 1994).

As scholars focusing on research conducted with family case studies have pointed out, one of the major challenges of tackling the analysis of multiple and related sets of data lies on the need to deploy analytical strategies which can accommodate the amount and complexity of the data generated (e.g. Ayres et al. 2003; Gabb 2010; McCarthy et al. 2003). It is, therefore, a manifold and time consuming process, which often also needs to take into account the combination of data generated through a combination of methods (Gabb 2010; Mason 2006a; Richardson 2000). Importantly, researchers need to have a clear idea of the epistemological and ontological standpoint from which they are approaching the analysis process (which is related to the overall approach of the research) (Gabb 2010; Jessop 1981; McCarthy et al. 2003). In the analysis of the data generated in the present project, I adopted an 'interpretationist' perspective, based on the premise that the different participants (from their own diverse standpoints i.e. generational, gendered and marked/unmarked embodiments, biographical, etc.) provided equally multi-dimensional and 'valid' accounts (Gabb 2010, 463; Jessop 1981; McCarthy et al. 2003).

This approach relates to how I accommodated the 'different voices' of the participants when undertaking the within-case study analysis. As scholars have pointed out, interviewing family members apart can result in contradictory or competing accounts (e.g. Hertz 1995; Valentine 1999b). This was also the case with the participants in this project, who, for example, recalled the 'story' of their migration and settlement in different ways. However, I found that more than contradicting each other, they were often emphasizing different aspects of the 'story', providing more detail of particular episodes which were related to their own subjective standpoints and how certain events had affected them personally (cf. McCarthy et al. 2003). However, my aim was

not to establish the *accuracy of the events* of the story of each family but to build a more nuanced overall picture of their related accounts, exploring how far the different members of the family were concerned with similar or different issues and how they made sense of them (cf. Finch and Mason 1993; McCarthy et al. 2003).

To analyze the information collected, I used a “thematic framework” approach (Ritchie et al. 2003, 220), which allowed me to organize the data starting with the key themes provided by the research aims and other topics that arose during the fieldwork as well as paying attention to the different groups of participants (broadly adults’ accounts and children’s accounts but also family accounts). Subsequently, I developed this thematic structure through the concepts and additional categories (in English and Spanish) emerging from the within-case studies analysis. For the within-case approach, I constructed a detailed descriptive summary for each household/family (Ayres et al. 2003; Creswell 2007; Yin 2009); which included individual narratives and the common and different themes across their accounts. I complemented this relational approach by taking into account the data collected in the group interview, developing analyses of both the whole group and the individual contributions (e.g. Ritchie et al. 2003, 258). Developing these case accounts provided the opportunity to consider the overall similarities and differences across the participant households/families.

The second phase focused on developing the cross-cases analysis, which I conducted by applying the thematic framework to the individual accounts (coding). This process also allowed me to conduct standpoint analysis (McCarthy et al. 2003, 18), i.e. adults, young people, mothers, fathers, etc., and take account of parameters such as gender, generation, marked or unmarked embodiments, class and migration background. Initially I had planned to use the qualitative analysis software NVIVO to facilitate this phase of the coding and analysis process. However, due to the amount of analytical work I had already developed during the within-case phase by using Microsoft Word software (creating folders and documents and organizing the data), I decided to proceed with the same approach (see La Pelle 2004; Ryan 2004). I did not take this decision due to concerns that using NVIVO (or any other computer-assisted analysis of qualitative data) would ‘narrow’ or limit my processes of analysis and abstraction (e.g. Coffey and Atkinson 1996). It was purely for practical reasons, as it allowed me to build on the analysis work I had already undertaken, as well as providing an easy way of

'copying and pasting', developing memos and incorporating fieldwork observations and visual data on my pre-writing up notes.

All this interpretation work included the analysis of the visual data generated by the person-centred activities. I did not consider that the visual information was more directly representational than the text based data (Mason 2002a); nor did I see it as an "add-on to text based analyses" (Bagnoli 2009, 23). The images had been created in relation to the topics of interest of the project and they provided different venues of access to the experiential and emotional dimensions of the participants' individual and shared lives (cf. Mason 2002a). Therefore, I opted for integrating the analysis of the diagrams, drawings and biographical objects to the overall thematic framework I was developing, making use of topics to identify the content and context of the diagram (cf. Mason 2006b). As Bagnoli (2009, 23) has suggested "[m]ixing methods allows one to see things from different perspectives and to interrogate our data in creative ways". In the present project, the diagrams highlighted additional themes to explore, such as the salience of 'landscapes' in interpreting the second generation participants' emotional attachments to their localities and inherited homelands (see chapter 7). To use Gabb's (2010, 464 italics in the original) eloquent words, "[g]raphic materials provided a *visual impression* of the emotional geographies of families". For instance, the biographical objects that the families had chosen often were material illustrations of the transnational symbolic and emotional geographies of the participants.

### **3.4. Ethical review and reflexive account**

As a feminist researcher, I embrace the principles that all knowledge is situated and that our 'positionality' (embodied multiple self) marks the way we see the world, the type of data we collect and interpretations we produce (e.g. Haraway 1991; Harding 1991; Rose 1997). Therefore, I consider it necessary to reflect on my own "positions" and to discuss their implications explicitly in my work (Valentine 2002, 117). As Rose (1997, 311) has argued, "transparent reflexivity" or assuming that it is possible to know ourselves and the power dynamics in which we are embedded completely is an unachievable pursuit (and somehow positivistic). However, focusing on "the tensions, conflicts and unexpected occurrences which emerge in the research process" can help us interrogate our certainties and assumptions reflexively (Valentine 2002, 126).

Furthermore, producing ethically sound research which respects principles of equity, voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality must be the guiding criterion of any empirical inquiry (e.g. Hill 2005; Larossa et al. 1981; Mason 2002b). As Gabb (2010, 465) has noted, in the UK research on the family has been shaped by a feminist “ethics of care” underpinned by the principle of respecting the “sense of privacy and the sensitivities” of personal relationships and their intimacy. In the following sections, I discuss the ethics of care (framework and practical applications) which guided my work with all the informants and participants. I also consider my positionality as a researcher and its potential impacts on the research process.

### **3.4.1. Ethical framework and informed consent**

In order to develop a complete ethics review for the project, I followed the “Framework for Research Ethics (FRE)” (Economic and Social Research Council 2005) and combined it with the specific set of ethical recommendations for conducting research with children provided by Alderson and Morrow (2004). However, as scholars have pointed out, these formal guidelines must be accompanied by an ongoing reflexive practice to manage the ethical dilemmas that arise when conducting research *on real situations and in everyday settings* (e.g. Mason 2002b; Mauthner et al. 2002).

The ethical review helped me to identify two especially critical aspects to the project. First, the possibility of working with a vulnerable population, that is irregular migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. As Black (2003, 49) has highlighted “[b]y revealing migrants’ or asylum seekers’ strategies that lie outside defined legal limits, research might simply assist states in the process of controlling both individuals and groups and thus breach the accepted ethical guideline of doing no harm to those being researched”. Despite that I did not work with any undocumented families, I undertook research with people in vulnerable situations, therefore my main concern throughout the process was to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity to all informants and not to release any potentially harmful information<sup>14</sup>. The second important aspect of the research was respecting the ethical guidelines that must be present in any project working with children (in order to undertake the fieldwork, I underwent a CRB check)

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<sup>14</sup> However, these issues became more relevant for the separate policy focused report I am writing for the research partner, the Refugee Council.

(e.g. Alderson and Morrow 2004). I discuss these ethical guidelines and practices in relation to the wider project in the rest of the section.

The principle at the centre of any ethically sound research is informed consent. That is, participation must be voluntary and the decision to take part has to be made on the basis of a clear understanding of what this entails – having the necessary information regarding what the research is about and how it is going to be used (Kent 1996, 19-20 cited in Silverman 2005, 258). As Alderson and Morrow (2004, 98-99) have pointed out, under British law, consent from young people can only be recognized as valid if they have the “competence” to take this decision. “Competence is defined as having ‘sufficient understanding and intelligence to understand what is proposed’ and ‘sufficient discretion to enable [a child] to make a wise choice for his or her own interests’” (Alderson and Morrow 2004, 99). However, this legal framework has been developed on the basis of medical treatment and research involving minors, whilst the legal regulations for participation in social research remain less clear (Greig et al. 2007, 177). Therefore, it is recommended that, when carrying out research involving legal minors, social researchers obtain consent from parents or legal guardians as well as from the children themselves (e.g. Greig et al. 2007; Hill 2005). In this project, I sought written consent from all the individuals involved, adults and children (see Appendix E for samples of the information sheets and consent forms)<sup>15</sup>. In the case of minors, the parent or guardian was also asked to consent to the researcher’s request to ask the child/children if they wanted to take part (opt in) and, in case the young person agreed, for their consent to their participation (cf. Alderson and Morrow 2004).

When conducting family research, the practical process of obtaining informed consent from all the individuals involved is especially complex (Gabb 2010; Lewis 2009). Pre-interview or fieldwork negotiations are crucial to secure that each individual is informed, has time to reflect and has the chance to decide freely if they want to participate (Hill 2005; Lewis 2009). This is particularly important in the case of children who may be in a disadvantaged position as a result of the power relations between researcher/participant and parent/child (e.g. Christensen and James 2000; Cree et al.

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<sup>15</sup> This documentation was produced according to the ethical guidelines of the Refugee Council (the research partner), as participants had to be informed that their contributions to the research could later be used as evidence based examples by this organization.

2002; Lewis 2009; Valentine 1999a). In order to facilitate this process, I designed information and consent forms with the two audiences in mind (adults and young people) and adapted the language and graphic design of the materials accordingly (e.g. Alderson and Morrow 2004; Hill 2005; Thomas and O'Kane 1998).

Similarly to other research conducted with families, I undertook the recruitment of the participants through one of the adults in the household (e.g. Gabb 2010; Lewis 2009). During the first contact (in person, by telephone or e-mail), I proceeded to explain the research in more detail and answer any doubts or questions posed. If the family contact was still interested, I suggested sending the information packs (one for each adult and child in the household, normally by e-mail) and requested that this was read by all of them separately so they had the time and space to make an informed decision. Specifically, I emphasized the need to let the young members of the family decide by themselves (Gabb 2010; Lewis 2009). As Hill (2005, 68) has pointed out, under the time pressures of conducting research (and I would add the time pressures of family life); it is often not "practicable to visit children twice, first to discuss consent and then to carry out the research" so researchers rely on written consent which is confirmed when the researcher meets the child or family group. In this project, I normally confirmed that informed consent had been given by all the eligible household members during the first visit to the family and again before starting each fieldwork activity.

There was only one occasion in which a father decided that he did not want to be involved in the research while mother and sons were interested in doing so (Anglo-Mexican household 8). According to my initial design, the refusal of one of the household members would have meant the exclusion of the whole case study (I had established this principle with the possibility of refusals from young people in mind but also in order to collect consistent accounts). However, after reflecting further on the particular circumstances of this case, I agreed with Gabb's (2010, 463) argument that "continu[ing] with the original design (...) [would have] imposed an exclusionary criterion that perpetuated gendered and generational inequalities of power which typically shape family life". Therefore, I decided to respect the right of the mother and children to take part, despite the father's disinterest.

At all points, I tried to make sure that children were not coerced into participation by their parents (or felt obliged to take part due to unequal power relations) while also

recognizing that consent is a “continual process” and not a “one-off decision” (Valentine 1999a, 144). However, my main ethical dilemma in relation to obtaining informed consent arose in the case of one of the participant fathers. The gatekeeper for this family had been the mother who had contacted me and expressed interest in the project. Despite that she told me that all the household members had had the chance to read the information and were happy to take part, when I visited the family for the first interview, I found out that the husband/father had not confirmed that he wanted to participate. The mother proceeded to dismiss his reluctance and directly told him that ‘he was taking part, that it was not much of an effort’ (fieldwork diary notes). With growing concern, I intervened and told him he had no obligation to do so. When I visited the household for the second time, he told me that he would like to take part and signed the consent form (affirming that it was his own decision); however, I still felt uncomfortable about the way in which this consent had been given. This incident shows the difficulties of securing that no household members have felt obliged or forced into participation due to the power dynamics of the family unit (cf. Gabb 2010). I always asked and repeated to participants (adults and children) that they could withdraw at any point without having to give me any explanation. However, I also realized that their concerns, if they had wanted to withdraw, may have not been directed to me but to the member of the family that had asked them to become involved in the first place. This illustrates the need to be especially careful when accessing a family through a singular spokesperson, so we are not perpetuating hidden couple and intergenerational inequalities unwillingly (e.g. Cree et al. 2002; Hill 2005; Valentine 1999b).

Other ethically related aspects of conducting research are the principles of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity (e.g. Gabb 2010; Hill 2005). In this project, all participants were guaranteed the customary anonymity and confidentiality of participation (Mauthner et al. 2002). The only possible exception to this confidentiality would have arisen in the case I had considered that a child or young person taking part was in danger – this clause was stated in the consent form (Alderson and Morrow 2004, 43). In this situation, I would have encouraged the young person to confide in another adult who could help or I would have sought consent from the participant to speak to another adult on their behalf (Alderson and Morrow 2004, 43). In order to help with

the anonymization process, I asked all participants to choose a pseudonym to replace their real names, which I have used in data storage and in all the written material related to the project, including the present thesis (Valentine 1999a). Permission to tape the interviews and to use the diagrams produced during the fieldwork was also sought in the consent form and again at the beginning of each fieldwork activity (Hill 2005).

However, as Gabb (2010, 468) has noted, when writing research based on family case studies, it is difficult to conceal the identity of the family to the outside world (due to the extremely detailed information gathered about all of the individuals and the family as a whole). It is even more difficult to avoid revealing “the identity of someone from those around them – those who know their story” (2010, 468). In this thesis, I have concealed the identities of the participants, their specific geographical locations and details about any third parties or organizations which could contribute to compromise the anonymity of the participants (Clark 2006). However, in order to preserve the richness of the data, I have maintained the relational accounts while making all the efforts possible not to reproduce any information which could jeopardize the trust that the participants invested in me as a researcher. Therefore, I have also been careful not to include any information revealed by one of the participants which I suspected was not known by the rest of his or her family (cf. Cree et al. 2002; Gabb 2010).

In order to try to guarantee privacy and confidentiality while conducting the fieldwork, I also adopted many strategies which I considered would help to facilitate the practical aspects of the process, while also taking into consideration the power dynamics present in the research setting (e.g. Hill 2005). Following Algate and Bradley (2004), who interviewed parents and their children for their project on families’ experiences of short-term accommodation, I decided to interview parents and adults first, which helped disperse any doubts that they might have had about the research. This strategy also helped me to avoid having to answer parents’ questions about their children’s accounts (Valentine 1999a). Some of the practical issues which become difficult to navigate when researching families are the time and space constraints involved in interviewing the different members separately (and privately) but within the shared household (Valentine 1999a). In this project, the most difficult negotiations arose when trying to establish the time and place for personal interviews with mothers of young

children (in a couple of occasions children interrupted and stopped the interview multiple times) or with the young people taking part (with younger children, sometimes I was required by the parents to undertake activities in the evening despite my concerns that the children would be tired and that they were not having any choice in the arrangements).

I tried to conduct the fieldwork with the young participants in a space and arrangement comfortable for them, for example with many of the children we sat on the floor around a coffee table in the living room and with the colour pens and the sheets of paper around us (e.g. Matthews et al. 1998 for recommendations about comfortable setting). In this sense, Punch warns of the need to overcome unbalanced power relations as these can have an impact on the validity and reliability of the data collected if children feel they need “to please adults” (Punch 2002, 328). Therefore, she suggests that “[t]ime needs to be invested to form a relationship and gain their trust” (Punch 2002, 328). This was an additional reason why I conducted the fieldwork with the adults first, as this often gave me the opportunity to meet the young people and spend some time with them before conducting their interviews and activities. In general, I tried to adopt the “least adult” or “unusual adult” role in order to try to balance the power relation between myself and the young participants (Valentine 1999a, 150 drawing on Mayall 1998). This role worked well with the younger participants, but, as I have mentioned, with some teenagers I had to spend more time establishing rapport and ‘distancing’ myself from their parents’ authority (another potential effect of accessing young participants through their parents). All these power dynamics were also related to my positionality as a researcher, which I consider in the final section.

### **3.4.2. Positionality**

When I started this project, one of my main concerns, which was probably a simplistic assumption, was that potential contacts and participants would see me as an *outsider* to the Latin American population and that this perception would mediate both how I would access the field and the type of relationships I would be able to establish. A second related concern was my Spanish nationality, which in my view, raised potentially problematic links to the colonial history of Spain and Latin America. However, as scholars have argued, viewing the research process in terms of

insider/outsider (or difference/sameness) dualisms is a form of essentialism which implies that we can reduce researchers' and participants' identities to a set of fixed social positions, i.e. gender, class, nationality, etc. (e.g. Hopkins 2007; Rose 1997; Valentine 2002; Wolf 1996). Instead, it has been emphasized that identity categories and the boundaries of the researcher-participant relationship are much more fluid and unstable and can give place to multiple senses of commonality and distance during research interactions (e.g. Mullings 1999; Valentine 2002).

The dynamics that I experienced in the field, indeed, illustrated this fluidity. As I have discussed at the beginning of the chapter, my position *outside* of the Latin American population in the north of England impacted on the ways I could access participants, simply because I did not have pre-existing contacts or involvement with Latin American activities and initiatives (cf. Bloch et al. 2009). However, this *outsider* position cannot be considered in absolute terms, as Spanish and Latin American immigrants often come together through shared linguistic interests (e.g. many of the conversation groups I came across included Spanish and Latin American families who wanted their children to practice the language) or even through religious practices (e.g. Catholic churches). However, these commonalities are also fluid and have blurred limits. For example, Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9) thought that Spanish as a common language was the most important shared element amongst Latin Americans (which points to the wider debate regarding the *exclusion* of Brazilians from this macro-category); however, he also jokingly pointed out to me that Spain was not included in this linguistic collectivity.

JUAN. Well, [how I define] Latin American [?], I define it as extending from Mexico to the south, well more than anything, it is defined by the Spanish language, but not Spain, I'm sorry (laughs). (Extract from Juan's individual interview, my translation)

The *colonial ghost* was often present in my interactions with the participants and the interviews transcripts and my fieldwork diary contain implicit or explicit exchanges and related reflections which concern the historical (and devastating) impact that Spain's imperialism had on the region (e.g. Eakin 2007; Meade 2010). All through the research project, however, I did not shy away from engaging in these types of conversations if the participants wanted to do so. For instance, during the group interview with Anglo-Mexican household 8, the colonial history dominated part of the conversation:

*TOMAS. You always tell us history about Mexico, like the Aztecs...*

*WILLIAM. And the Mayans, and the Spanish revolution...*

*TOMAS. The Spanish revolution...*

*KARLA. That would be the Mexican revolution...*

*INTERVIEWER. To get rid of the Spanish.*

*KARLA. Ah you're Spanish [all laugh].*

*WILLIAM. The Spanish invaded [whispering].*

*INTERVIEWER. I know, the Spanish did horrible things in Latin America.*

(Extract from group interview with household 8, original English)

At all points, I was open about my personal biography (my Spanish dialect and accent also reveals where I come from). Nevertheless, my positionality as 'Spanish' and my political views are also full of complexities and contestations. I was born in Catalonia, the history of my nation within the wider narrative of the Spanish nation-state is full of struggles for political recognition entangled with the Civil War (1936-1939) and General Franco's dictatorship which only finished a year after I was born. As such, some of the participants, who were more familiar with modern Spanish history, made different assumptions about 'my national identity'. For example, Juanjo (40s, Hispano-Honduran – household 3) who had lived in Spain before undertaking onwards migration to the UK and whose father had been born in the Basque Country, told me of his strong identification as Honduran and automatically contrasted it with how he thought I felt about my own national identity.

*JUANJO. (...) Well, definitively yes, I feel Honduran. Yes...*

*INTERVIEWER. Is it important...?*

*JUANJO. Contrary to you... isn't it? Because you feel Catalan, not Spanish...*

*INTERVIEWER. [Laughs] It is very complex...*

(Extract from individual interview with Juanjo, my translation)

Related aspects were the ethnic/racial identifications and misidentifications which, I assumed, may occur between the participants and myself. These aspects were not easy to discern, as I consider that the cultural, class, ethnic and racial elements of our multiple subjectivities were very much entangled. I would describe myself as white European (more by British convention than in a subjective sense), but I also consider that my embodiment in the UK is marked in some ways. Often, I have been mis/identified as Spanish, French or Italian and *my looks* have been characterized as Southern European or Mediterranean. Additionally, I have an accent when speaking in

English which quickly positions me as a *foreigner* in my everyday interactions. Therefore, personal experiences of *visibility, misidentification and otherness* provided ample opportunities for the participants and myself to find “positional spaces” in which our situated understandings “engender[ed] a level of trust and co-operation” (Mullings 1999, 4 cited in Valentine 2002, 119). In addition, there were many other characteristics that played a role in our interactions. I also perform (and I am perceived by) characteristics rooted in my class background, my gender, my sexual orientation, etc., and also as an adult woman without children researching families (cf. Hopkins 2007; Mullings 1999; Wolf 1996). Despite the impossibility of unpicking the multiple effects of all these characteristics (Valentine 2002, 119-20), I consider that my female gender, generally, helped me to build trust with parents and negotiate access to their children (cf. Barker and Smith 2001).

However, as Gabb (2010, 461 italics in the original) has noted, the amount of time spent with families when undertaking qualitative research with them, can lead us to “become embedded in the personal worlds of those being researched” and to develop “*vested interest*”, that is “a commitment to participants [which] can come into conflict with the academic need for a critical analytical mind”. It is, in fact, sometimes difficult to manage emotions during fieldwork and we must also reflect critically on the impact that these emotions have on our interpretations (Gaskell 2008; Widdowfield 2000). For example, two of the fieldwork moments that became difficult for me involved listening to the accounts of two of the participant mothers who could not speak much English and consequently were struggling to lead fully independent lives. I had to be careful in managing these encounters, as I did not want to ‘exploit’ their willingness to talk nor did I want to patronize them (Oakley 1981; Reinharz 1992; Ribbens 1989). I consider that by interrogating my emotions at every step of the way, I was more able to face the fluid power relations which unfolded during the fieldwork and interpretation process, always trying to respect the trust that the participant families had invested in me and the project.

### **3.5. Conclusions**

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of the research approach and methodology underpinning the project on which this thesis is based. Additionally, my intention has

been to highlight the original aspects of this process and their effectiveness or shortcomings, and to reflect on the practical lessons learnt during its undertaking. To conclude, I consider the most salient aspects of this discussion in order to explore how they may contribute to research practice.

One of the main methodological issues encountered when designing this research project was the hard-to-reach conditions which characterize the Latin American population in the north of England. Despite the scarcity of formal organizations and cultural groups that could assist the process of accessing potential participants (cf. Benoit et al. 2005), I used an approach which involved adopting a broad understanding of who could act as a 'gatekeeper'. Approaching all kinds of commercial and non-for-profit initiatives, such as restaurants, clubs, Spanish language magazine, etc., often provided opportunities to interact face-to-face with members of the population and present the project in person, fostering the 'good-will' of the research. One of the main benefits of this diversification of contacts came from being able to 'follow the action' and incorporate grass-roots views and opinions into the overall approach of the project. However, my experience also highlighted the importance of having enough time to invest in the recruitment and fieldwork phase. Ultimately, the necessary time constraints of this doctoral project did not allow me to build the types of trusting relationships which could have provided access to the 'hidden' (i.e. undocumented) part of the Latin American population in this region.

In addition, the multiple cases approach facilitated the study in depth of the everyday embodied interactions and situated views of the participants (as family groups and individuals), while taking into account their everyday familial and integration context. This approach was further supported by the use of a diversity of qualitative research methods (text and visually based) aimed to capture the multi-dimensional character of their experiences and dynamic family life, while recognizing the equality of all the participants (cf. Mason 2006a). The adoption of person-centred methods (i.e. graphic elicitation techniques) facilitated access to emotional layers of experience and abstract sentiments and values, while supporting flexible ways to work with both adults and children. I consider that developing flexible research tools was the corner stone of my methodological approach, which assisted working with participants from a wide range of ages, while respecting their preferences and abilities (including linguistic choice).

However, it must also be taken into account that these tools, through their (minimal) structured format, impose a specific way of approaching a topic of interest, which to a certain extent, limits their participatory potential (Bagnoli 2009). Moreover, despite that these techniques are considered to ease the unbalanced power relations between participants and researcher, I found that this 'equalizing' potential strongly relies on how the researcher manages the fieldwork encounter (reacting flexibly to the participants' responses) and not on the person-centred method per se. Requesting that a participant writes or draws on a diagram may not be in itself less 'imposing' than asking for a verbal account. As has been highlighted, this dynamic points towards the fluid nature of power and how it is constantly reconstituted by the relational context of research encounters (Gallacher and Gallagher 2008; Gallagher 2008; Hemming 2008). It is up to the researcher to create a space for participants (adults and children) in which fruitful and positive negotiations of wider power dynamics can take place.

There are two further aspects of the methodology which I would like to highlight. The first one refers to the potential of conducting multiple methods qualitative research with families. Overall, there is a need to expand family research within geography which takes account of the perspectives of both adults and children (cf. Holt 2011). This involves developing techniques which can capture the multi-dimensional and relational nature of the family and its emotional geographies. For instance, there are important insights to be gained from using biographical objects when working with families (cf. Hoskins 1998). The experience gathered in this project strongly indicates that, if managed carefully by the researcher, that is establishing specific criteria for choosing the object, this method has the potential to elicit rich relational accounts about the shared values, attachments, memories and biographies of family groups. In many of the cases in this project, biographical objects provided an alternative avenue to explore the emotional and symbolic transnational geographies of the participants' lives (see chapter 6).

The second methodological aspect, which I would like to highlight, relates to conducting translanguistic qualitative research. As scholars have emphasized, the linguistic decisions, interpretations and representations undertaken when conducting research in more than one language are not innocuous or free from the positionalities of the researchers or translators involved (e.g. Birbili 2000; Temple 2005). Therefore,

we are ethically bound to discuss these issues explicitly in our research. However, existing literature presents research participants as somewhat passive elements in the qualitative research communication process (e.g. Esposito 2001; Lopez et al. 2008). The experience in this project points towards the need to acknowledge their active role in constructing collaborative verbal accounts with the researcher/interpreter (participants are agential individuals who are also aware of linguistic differences). Research encounters are interactive and verbal/non-verbal processes of communication. It is in linguistic collaboration with the participants that researchers/interpreters can develop better understandings of the cultural and social meanings carried by the terms and expressions used in the research encounter.

Recognizing the active linguistic/communicative role of participants is an integral part of accepting the constructed nature of knowledge. With the exception of fully participative research approaches, ultimately the power to interpret and represent the data collected will lie in the researchers' hands (who must do so critically and reflexively). However, by making sure that we create the positional spaces and tools to co-operate more fully with the participants, we can "work towards a critical politics of power/knowledge production" (Rose 1997, 318).

## 4. Envisioning socio-cultural invisibility

### 4.1. Introduction

In this thesis, as I discussed in the introduction, the invisibility of the Latin American population in the north of England is understood in two ways: firstly, as the generalized lack of public and state awareness of the presence of Latin Americans in the UK; and secondly, as the embodied everyday experiences of visibility/invisibility, which northern Latin American adults and children negotiate, perform and even reproduce strategically. This chapter focuses on the first understanding of invisibility by exploring the characteristics of the population of Latin American descent in the UK and, more specifically and to the extent to which is possible, in the north of England; the second is the subject of chapter 5.

In material terms and in the north of the country, this imperceptibility manifests itself through the dearth of *visible Latin American spaces* (support or cultural groups and other informal spaces) and the consequential shortage of opportunities for migrants and their descendants to establish social relationships and reproduce language and culture in their immediate residential contexts. The chapter uses data from the statistical benchmarking exercise and the accounts of the case-studies' participants and other informants. In so doing, I address issues of state produced invisibility (omissions from official classifications), sending states' related invisibility and contested conceptualizations of the Latin American collective identity and its local manifestations.

### 4.2. Latin American migration to the UK: official invisibility

The invisibility which characterizes the Latin American population in the UK is produced by a combination of factors. On the one hand, there has been a lack of attention from the British State and its *public gaze* (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007). On the other hand, there is a significant interplay between the relative novelty of these migration flows, the smaller size of the population in comparison to longer established immigrant groups, their multiplicity of arrival routes, socio-demographic diversity and settlement circumstances (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007).

The lack of official attention can be seen in the use of statistical classifications that do not contemplate distinctive ethnic categories to describe Latin Americans and

therefore include them into the *all-encompassing* group of *Others*. Despite this, in the next section I have gathered a selection of the information available in order to develop a deeper understanding of the complex factors which characterize their present circumstances (nationally and more specifically in the northern regions).

#### **4.2.1. Benchmarking the Latin American population in the UK**

Latin Americans have only been migrating to the British Isles in significant numbers since the 1970s (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007). The first flows of migration were characterised by the arrival of people seeking refuge from the violence and/or the repression of military dictatorships, e.g. Brazil, Chile and Argentina, followed later, mainly during the 1980s, by Colombians (Bermúdez Torres 2003; Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007). Subsequently, these political refugees have been joined by people fleeing economic hardship, especially Ecuadorians during the 1990s, but also Peruvians, Brazilians, Argentineans and later still Bolivians; all have contributed to enrich the already culturally diverse population of London and the wider country (McIlwaine 2007, 5 with information extracted from Carlisle 2006, 236).

The following subsections highlight the most relevant statistical figures I collected through the preliminary benchmarking exercise. However, most sources refer only to first generation migrants (people born in Latin American countries who have settled in the UK).

##### **4.2.1.1. Present Latin American population in England and Wales and characteristics of the migration flows**

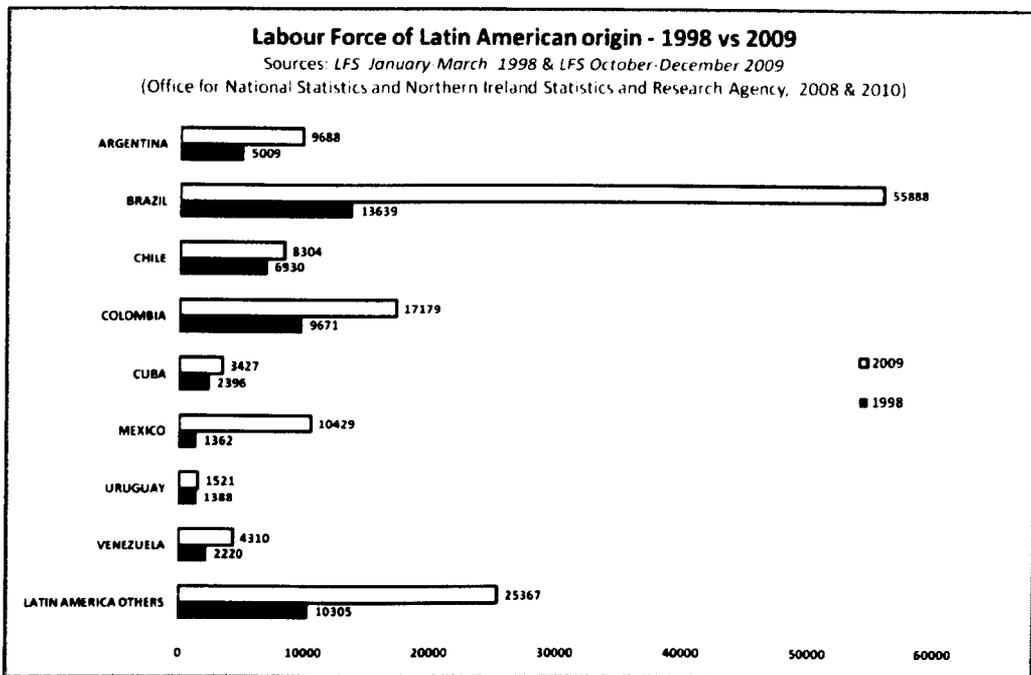
According to the figures provided by the last *Census* in 2001 (Office for National Statistics 2004a), there were 59,355 people born in Latin American countries<sup>16</sup> residing in England and Wales at the beginning of the decade; the largest groups were by far those from Brazil (14,555) and Colombia (12,039), followed by Argentineans (6,371), Mexicans (4,746) and Chileans (4,720). However, McIlwaine (2007, 6) suggests, a more up to date picture can be obtained from data provided by the *Labour Force Survey* [LFS]. The *LFS* dataset from October to December 2009 (Office for National Statistics

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<sup>16</sup> The overall figure from the 2001 Census does not include people born in Paraguay as there was no data available for this country in the Census' data table "Residents of England and Wales by selected Country of Birth" (Office for National Statistics 2004a).

and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b), recorded a total of 143,462 individuals from the Latin American region in the whole of the UK<sup>17</sup>. In comparison to the 2001 Census figure, the LFS indicates that the overall population has more than doubled in the last decade.

A more appropriate comparison, however, is to use the same source and explore the changes over time. Figure 4-1 shows the comparison between the data provided by the LFS January-March 1998 (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2008) and that collected by the LFS October-December 2009 (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b). It must be noted that the 1998 dataset does not include a breakdown of figures for all the national groups<sup>18</sup> detailed in 2009.



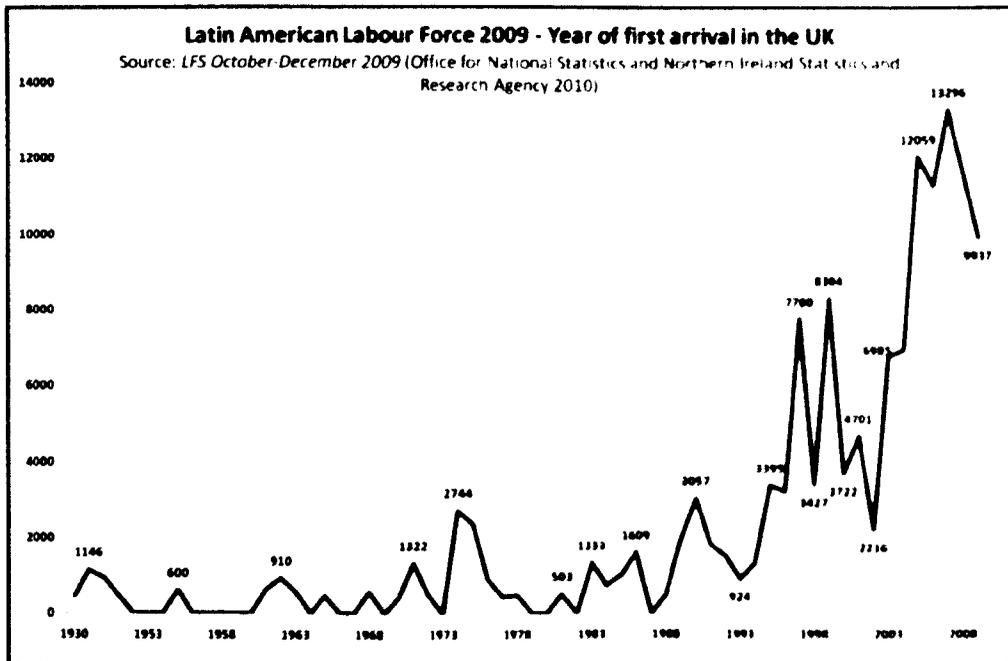
**Figure 4-1 Labour Force of Latin American origin in the UK – 1998 vs. 2009**

<sup>17</sup> It must be emphasized that due to the methodology employed in collecting the *Labour Force Survey*, which is based on 60,000 responding households every quarter and it is consequently applied weighting measures, its accuracy decreases when dealing with small populations. Furthermore, this data only refers to the official working population. Therefore, all these figures must be approached with caution.

<sup>18</sup> The 1998 dataset only contains separate figures for the countries of origin included in figure 3, the group "Latin American Others" shows the aggregated data from the LFS' categories "Other Central America" and "Other South America". For the 2009 case, "Latin American Others" include figures for: Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and "South America others".

Figure 4-1 indicates that Brazilians (quadrupling) and Mexicans (sevenfold increment) have experienced the greatest increase. Argentineans, Colombians and Venezuelans all have (nearly) doubled while Chileans, Cubans and Uruguayans have shown a moderate growth.

These changes are further illustrated by the *LFS October-December 2009* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b) which records the first year of arrival<sup>19</sup> in the UK of people surveyed who were not born in the country. Figure 4-2 shows the timeline of arrivals in the country for workers of Latin American origin and provides a strong visual representation of the considerable increase of the migratory flows during the first decade of the 21st century.



**Figure 4-2 Latin American Labour Force at the end of 2009 – Year of arrival in the UK**

It is worth noting that the peaks of arrivals follow the patterns of historical events which have characterized the migration of Latin Americans to the UK. For example, the 1960s and 1970s were marked by the arrival of political refugees, mainly from Brazil, Chile and Argentina (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007). The next two decades witnessed

<sup>19</sup>The *LFS* collects two variables related to the time of arrival to take up residence for those not born in the UK. This table refers to the year in which the respondents first settled in the UK, independent of any subsequent stays outside of the country (Office for National Statistics 2009, 43).

the worsening of the violent conflicts in Colombia and consequently larger numbers of asylum seekers from this country arrived in the UK (Bermúdez Torres 2003; Carlisle 2006). However, the introduction of visa requirements in 1997 made it much more difficult for Colombians to be able to claim asylum in the country, which had a dramatic effect in reducing the number of applications (Bermúdez Torres 2003; Refugee Council 1997). During the 1990s and 2000s more Latin Americans started to migrate to escape economic crises, which increased the number of migrants and diversified their geographical origins. It has also been suggested that the migration legislation reforms introduced by the US after the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001 contributed to diverting to Europe part of the Latin American migration flows (Pellegrino 2004, 45). Figure 4-2 seems to echo these trends, showing that the population would have grown considerably during the 2000s (especially for the case of Brazilians, Colombians, Argentineans and Mexicans), with the total figure in 2007 representing an 80% more than in 2002.

Overall, these official statistics show that the presence of Latin American populations in the UK is rather moderate (in absolute terms and in comparison to other minority ethnic groups, see Office for National Statistics 2004b for detailed figures), although their growth has accelerated considerably during the last decade. McIlwaine (2007, 6) has emphasised that “these official statistics are widely believed to be gross under-estimates mainly because of the high proportion of undocumented Latin Americans and their invisibility as a population in London (and the UK more generally)”. To address this, over the last few years researchers and support organizations have tried to fill in the vacuum to provide more accurate estimates of the real dimensions of Latin American populations in the country. For example, McIlwaine<sup>20</sup> (2007, 5) compiles the estimates from different researchers and support organization sources starting with a paper published by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO 2007) which “suggested that there are between 700,000 and 1,000,000 Latin Americans visiting or living in the UK, including 200,000 Brazilians, 140,000 Colombians, 70-90,000 Ecuadorians and 10-15,000 Peruvians”. This figure is however much higher than the earlier estimates published by a non-for-profit group called Open Channels in 2000 that

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<sup>20</sup> For more up to date and accurate estimates see McIlwaine et al. (2011), a report published when this thesis was in examination.

situated the overall population somewhere between 85,000 and 150,000 people, with 50,000 thought to be Colombian and mainly settled in London (e.g. Bermúdez Torres 2003, 14; Carlisle 2006, 237).

The difference between official statistical figures and the above estimates, would suggest that a very significant proportion of the Latin American population in the UK is undocumented (McIlwaine 2007). However, some caution must be applied. As Guarnizo (2008, 17) has pointed out, some of those who do not appear in official statistics have in fact arrived as secondary migrants and, therefore, have entered the country as citizens of another European or North American nation. More recently, a seminar about 'The Secondary Migration of non-EU nationals in Europe' organized by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in London (22nd April 2008) confirmed that for Latin American migrants, secondary or onwards migration is an increasingly common form of arrival to the UK.

#### ***4.2.1.2. Latin Americans' migration routes***

Historically there has been a flow of Latin Americans coming to the UK in search of political refuge. For example, a significant number of Chilean refugees who arrived in the mid 1970s settled in the north of the country, e.g. South Yorkshire (CSCDA<sup>21</sup> stakeholder in conversation with the author). However, the last decade has been witness to a dramatic fall in the number of people from Latin America applying for asylum: in 2009 applications from Colombians represented 1.5% of what they were in 1997, from Ecuadorians a mere 0.8% of what they were in 1997 and the ones from Americas Other had fluctuated between a maximum of 240 requests in 1999 and 2002 and a minimum of 95 in 2006 (Home Office 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010).

For instance it has been pointed out that the case of Colombia continues to be very complex, with reports of persisting human rights violations, population displacement and political violence entangled with economic problems (e.g. Bermúdez Torres 2003; Human Rights Watch 2011; McIlwaine 2005). However, the view of the Colombian Government and the Home Office is that the country is a democracy and migrants from this country tend to be considered as in search of economic improvement and not fleeing from violence (Bermúdez Torres 2003; UN Refugee Agency 2002). Therefore,

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<sup>21</sup> Chile: Sports, Culture and Development Association.

“[m]any Colombians do not claim asylum because of the fear of it being denied or because they cannot apply for refuge on Convention grounds” (Bermúdez Torres 2003, 15). These fears seem to be well grounded if we take into account the dramatic decrease of people of Colombian (and Latin American origin in general) who have been granted refugee status or given exceptional, humanitarian or discretionary leave to remain in the 1997-2009 period, with the grants for 2009 amounting just to a handful of cases (Home Office 2007, 2010). As Koser (2000) has highlighted, the restrictions in applying for asylum introduced by many Western countries have been accompanied by an increased use of smuggling<sup>22</sup> networks and counterfeiters of documents, and have diversified further the range of forms of arrival, settling and organization of all types of migrants.

Researchers have found that Latin Americans entering Europe use a diversity of routes (e.g. Guarnizo 2008; Jokisch and Pribilsky 2002; Pellegrino 2004). It is common to travel through Spain using both legal, secondary or onwards migration, and illegal means, making use of counterfeit documents (McIlwaine 2007, 21). Nonetheless, many of the Latin American migrants enter the UK legally, mainly with a student visa or transforming a tourist visa into a student one once in the country; afterwards, they may work ‘illegally’ – contravening their visa allowance – or overstay their visas once they have expired (e.g. Carlisle 2006; Guarnizo 2008; McIlwaine 2007). In addition, informants in the northern region, suggest that there is an increasing number of skilled migrants, who after undertaking postgraduate studies remain in the UK to work.

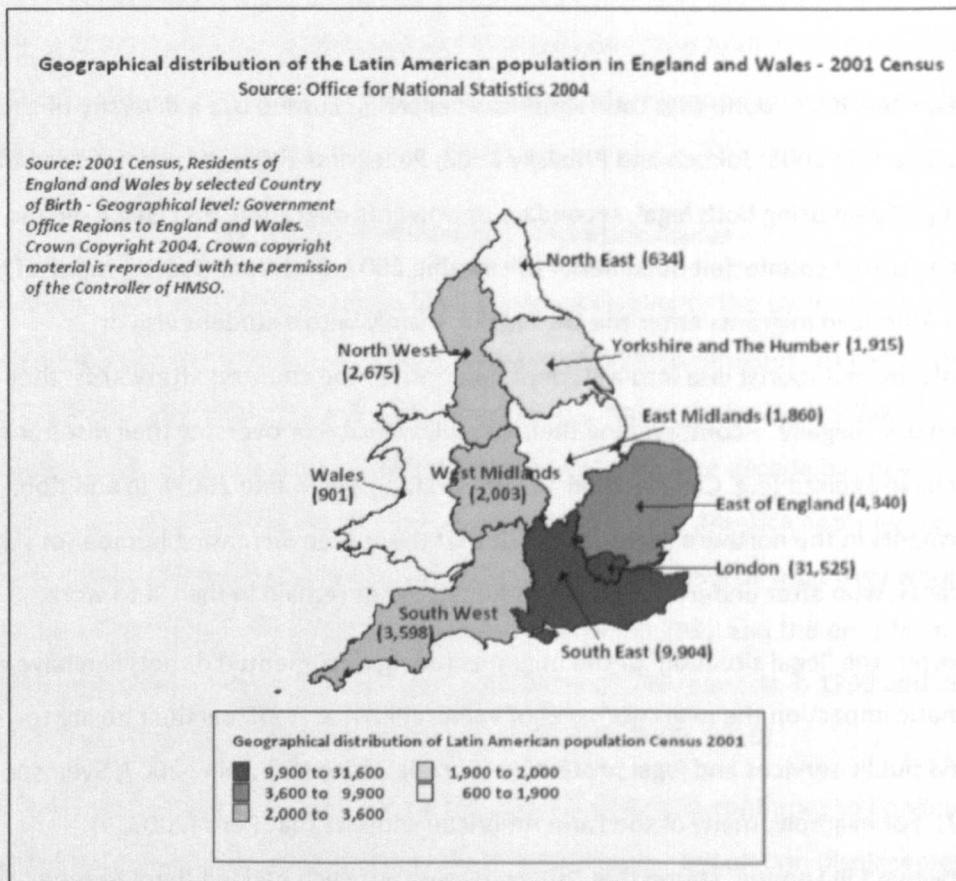
However, the ‘legal situation’ of the migrants (being documented or not) can have a dramatic impact on the migrants’ level of vulnerability, as it affects their ability to access public services and legal protection (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007; Sveinsson 2007). For example, many of the Latin American activists that Però (2007, 9) interviewed in London, stated that the main reasons which had led them to mobilize politically included the problems of exploitation, marginalization and lack of legal status which affect important sectors of the population.

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<sup>22</sup> Increasingly there is a conceptual distinction between “trafficking” and “smuggling”. Trafficking is being used to make reference to exploitation and illicit movement of human beings against their will or with the intention to exploit them and “smuggling is being defined simply as the illicit movement of people across international boundaries” (Koser, 2001:59).

#### 4.2.1.3. Geographical distribution and the northern population

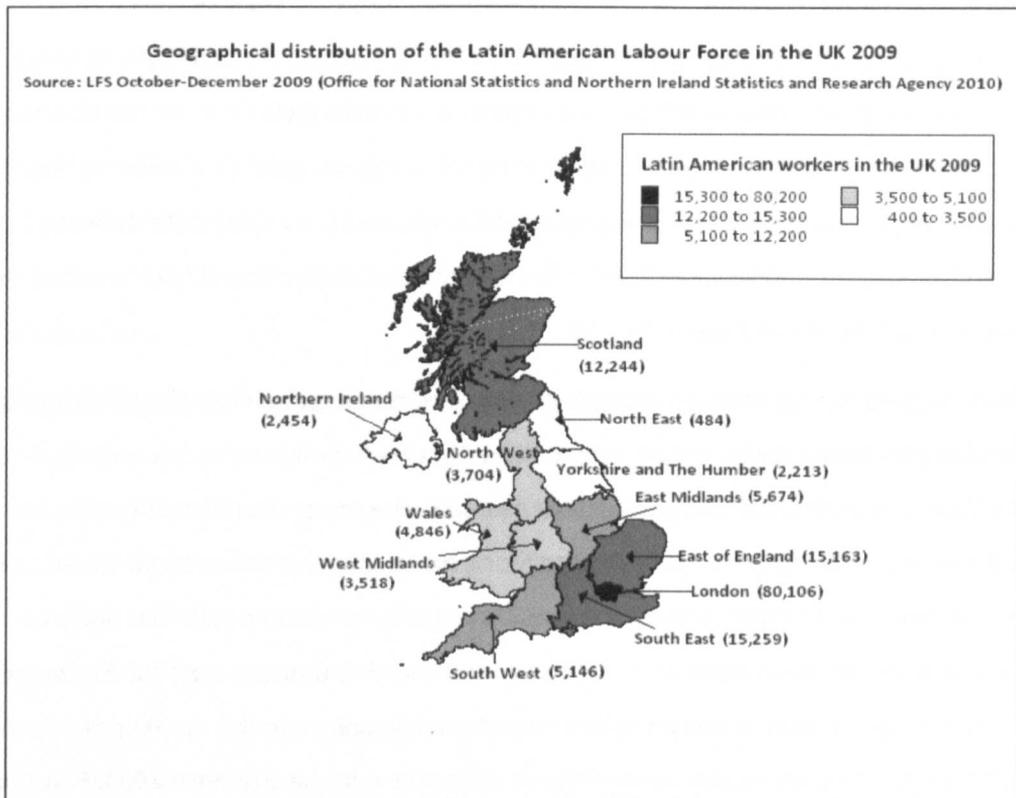
The available information on the geographical distribution of the Latin American populations in the UK is scarce beyond London where most of the migrants are concentrated. However, official statistics offer some indication of their dispersal across the country. The *2001 Census* (Office for National Statistics 2004a) shows that at the beginning of the decade, 8.8% of the total Latin American population lived in the northern regions (North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber), totalling 5,224 individuals (see figure 4-3). This overall figure was dominated by Brazilians (1,108), Mexicans (725), Argentineans (622), Chileans (608) and Colombians (484).



**Figure 4-3 Geographical distribution of the Latin American population in England and Wales – 2001 Census**

As can be observed in figure 4-4 (on the next page), the data from the *LFS October-December 2009* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b) corroborates this geographical distribution for more recent times. Despite the capital and the South East still dominating the picture, there would

have been some variations in other regions, for example a significant increase of population in Eastern England and East Midlands. Once more, smaller clusters can be found in Yorkshire and Humberside and North East and West regions. However, if we take into account the total Latin American population for England and Wales according to this survey (136,113), the proportion of residents in the northern regions would have decreased, representing a mere 4.7% of the total (6,401 individuals).



**Figure 4-4 Geographical distribution of the Latin American labour force in the UK 2009**

Nonetheless, the proportional decrease (and small scale increase in absolute numbers) of the northern population (illustrated by the comparison of the official figures above) seems to be at odds with the perceptions of the Latin American stakeholders and informants I interviewed for this project, who believe that the population has grown and diversified further since 2004. One of the factors that seems to have contributed to this diversification has been the increase of Latin American asylum seekers who have been dispersed to northern cities and towns by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). Despite that at the end of 2007, only 46 applicants and their dependants were supported in the north (Home Office 2008), their dispersal seems to have contributed

to altering the settlement pattern of this population (i.e. residing in medium size towns and not solely in major cities). For instance, the Evangelical pastor I interviewed was purposely sent to the north of the country to provide support for the growing numbers of Latin Americans residing in the region. He explained that when he first arrived in Yorkshire in 2004, he had a community of 30-40 people, which in two years increased to 140 (across several towns).

Unfortunately, the *LFS* does not provide precise estimates for small populations due to its being based on a limited survey sample to which weighting measures are applied. This impedes a reliable analysis of the composition and characteristics of the northern Latin American labour force. If we were to use its data in an indicative way, the larger 'official' populations would be Brazilians and Peruvians, followed by Argentineans, Mexicans, Cubans and Salvadorians (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b).

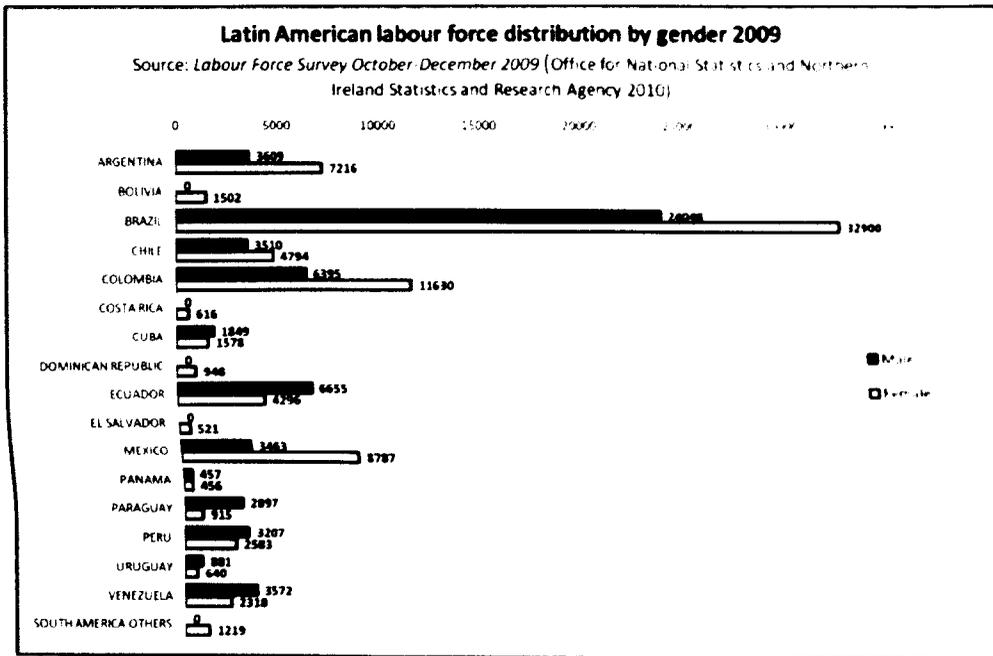
However, this distribution of nationalities does not match completely the perceptions of study participant stakeholders, who believe that the Colombian and Ecuadorian populations are also quite significant. For example, the Evangelical pastor counted numerous Colombians and Ecuadorians among his religious community, which included people from the approximately 1,200 families of Latin American origin that had been identified in one of the main cities of Yorkshire alone. Another example can be found in Liverpool, where there are reports of a considerable increase in the number of Bolivians, Colombians, Brazilians and Peruvians arriving in the city since 2004. Francisco Carrasco co-founder of "All things Latin" in Liverpool, a restaurant and club promoting Latin American culture, believes that his city could now be host to the second largest Latin American population in the country after London (Liverpool.com 2007 and in conversation with the author). In addition, all the stakeholders pointed out that there were considerable numbers of Latin American university students in the northern cities, who might be short-term residents but added to the existing diversity; for instance, in South Yorkshire one of the most active cultural groups (a part from CSCDA - Chile Sports and Cultural Development Association) is the 'Mexican & Latin American society' in the Student Union at the University of Sheffield.

#### 4.2.1.4. *Main demographic characteristics*

Both the data from the *2001 Census* (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2005) and the *LFS October-December 2009* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b) show that, overall, the Latin American population in the UK consists of a slight majority of women (57.80% in the LFS) and this tendency would have not changed much during the present decade. The feminization of this migration has been connected to the dynamics of the labour markets in European countries; in Spain, for example, the demand for domestic and care workers has been considered as an important factor to explain the greater number of Latin American women who have settled in this country (e.g. Pellegrino 2004; Solé and Parella 2005). Sørensen (2005, 4) also highlights the concentration of Latin American women in the wider European service sector, mainly domestic service and sex industry.

In the UK, all the main populations according to the *LFS October-December 2009* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b), that is Brazilians, Colombians, Argentineans and Mexicans show a considerable gender imbalance, with the number of women doubling or nearly doubling the number of men and in the case of Brazil, the female group is nearly a third larger (see figure 4-5 on the next page). On the other hand, the Ecuadorian, Paraguayan, Peruvian and Venezuelan populations would be formed by a majority of men. However, care needs to be exercised in interpreting these data due to the methodological constraints of the *LFS* (i.e. Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador in figure 4-5).

Scholars researching the population in London have found that, generally, women were less likely to arrive and live undocumented in the UK (e.g. Guarnizo 2008; McIlwaine 2005), which could have an impact on these official figures. Overall, the gender balance of the population is believed to be greater than in other European countries such as Spain, although with slight majority of women (e.g. Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2008). In addition, the northern population, if we take the data from the *LFS October-December 2009* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b) in a pure indicative manner, seems to follow the same feminization pattern (59% women vs. 41% men).

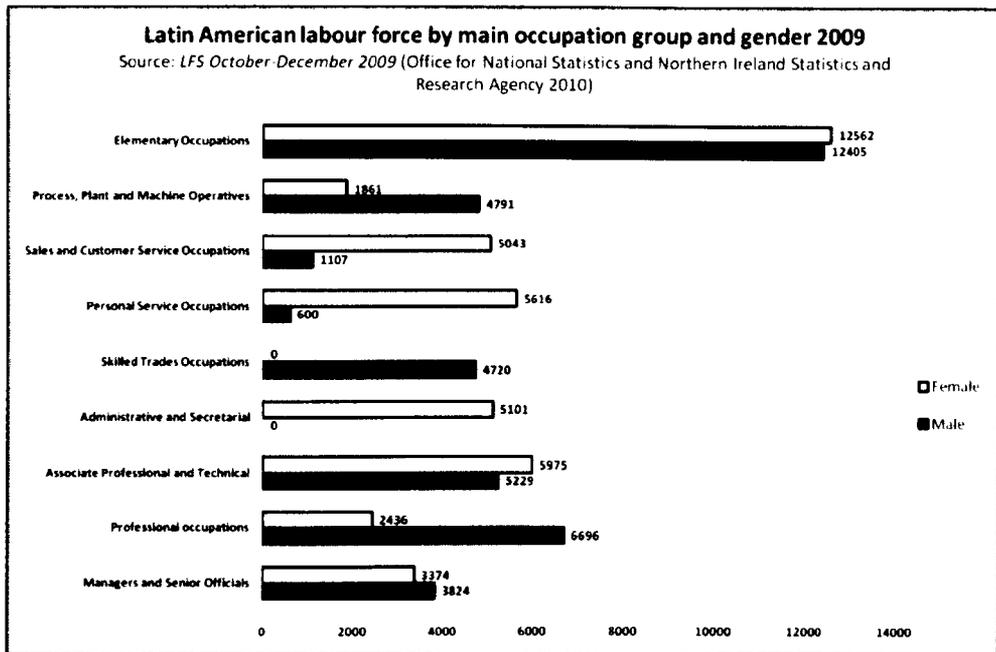


**Figure 4-5 Latin American labour force distribution by gender 2009**

The *LFS October-December 2009* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b) also shows that the Latin American population is mainly young, with the larger demographic groups being those between the ages of 25-34. There is also an evenly distribution between those who do not have dependent children under the age of 19 (48.53%) and those who are responsible for between 1 child and 4 children (51.47%), with the majority within this group having 1 or 2 young dependents (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b).

There seems to be a consensus among researchers that the majority of documented and undocumented Latin American migrants are taking jobs in the services sector (cleaning, hospitality, domestic service, etc.) and in general de-skilling when incorporating into the British jobs market (e.g. Bermúdez Torres 2003; Carlisle 2006; Guarnizo 2006; 2008; McIlwaine 2007; Sveinsoon 2007). This dynamic is in line with what Pellegrino (2003, 32) had noted for Spain, where 85% of Latin American documented workers were employed in the service industry at the beginning of the 2000s. Once more, the data provided by the *LFS October-December 2009* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b) confirms that an important percentage of the documented population, both men and

women, are employed in “Elementary occupations”. However, it also shows a significant number of Latin American migrants undertaking managerial, technical or professional jobs (see figure 4-6).



**Figure 4-6 UK’s Latin American labour force by major occupation group (main job) and gender 2009**

On the one hand, approximately 31% of Latin American men and 30% of women are employed in “Elementary occupations”. However, if account is taken of other categories which could be considered as relatively low-skilled or related to the service sector (i.e. “Process, plant and machine operatives”, “Sales and customer service” and “Personal service occupations”); these percentages would rise to about 48% in the case of men and 60% in the case of women. On the other hand, a sharp gender gap is evident at the other end of the spectrum, in which if the categories “Associate Professional and Technical”, “Professional occupations” and “Managers and Senior Officials” are added together. This leads to the estimate of 40% of Latin American men and only 28% of women are employed in highly skilled professions (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b). Unfortunately, the numbers for the north are very small and reliable inferences are not possible.

Comparing these occupational figures with the educational levels of the Latin American work force confirms the tendency of these migrants to de-skill when entering the UK’s

labour market. Only about 8% of them report having no qualifications and a significant proportion have university or higher education degrees (approx. 30%) (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b). However, 47% declare to have “Other qualifications” and a high incidence of these respondents (70%) explain that these are foreign qualifications (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b). This may indicate that they encounter difficulties when trying to have their academic awards recognized in the UK (these difficulties were confirmed by the participants in this project). It is important to note though, that according to these figures, de-skilling would seem to be affecting women more than men.

#### ***4.2.1.5. Latin American children and young people***

Importantly, some Local Education Authorities (LEAs) have started to use extended “Other ethnic group ethnicity codes” in their annual school censuses which include a category for pupils from Central/South America, Cuba and Belize – “OLAM” (Department for Education and Skills 2006, 13). I have obtained the available data for children of Latin American origin attending British schools in the Autumn term of 2008 (Department for Children Schools and Families 2008), but it must be emphasized that this data is not exhaustive as not all the LEAs collect the level of detail necessary; still, it can provide us with some indications.

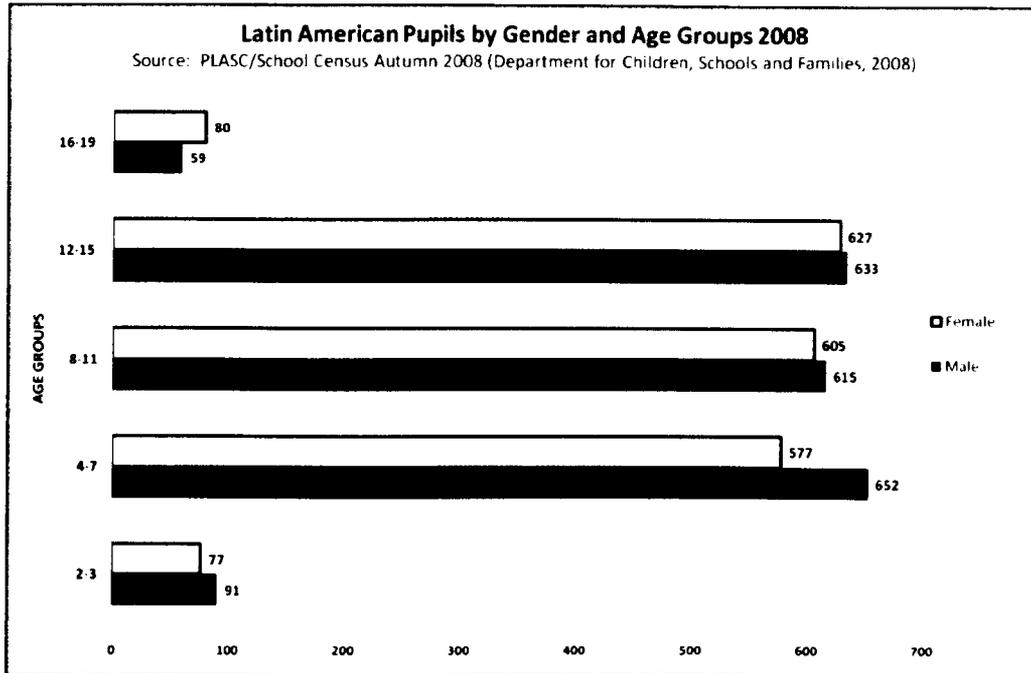
As expected the greater number of Latin American pupils can be found in the schools of London (96%), with one of the central boroughs<sup>23</sup> accounting for nearly a thousand of the 3,839 young people listed by the Census. However, some pupils from this group can also be found in the South East and West of the country, East of England, East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber and the North West. Although they are fairly small figures, after London the area accounting for more pupils is the South East (2.5%) and the third one is the North West (0.85%).

Figure 4-7 (on the next page) displays the gender and age distribution of the known school population of Latin American descent which shows a balanced diversity. The patterns identified by this data are in line with the clusters of Latin American labour

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<sup>23</sup> Due to the small numbers to which this dataset refers, it is not possible to identify further the geographical distribution of these groups in order to respect anonymity.

force depicted by the *LFS January-March 2007* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010a), with the exception of the North East region. Unfortunately, it is not possible to arrive to any further conclusions regarding these figures, because very few northern Local Education Authorities are using this extended ethnic code.



**Figure 4-7 Latin American Pupils, distribution by Gender and Age Groups 2008**

In summary, the characteristics gathered through this analysis help us understand further the socio-cultural invisibility which affects Latin Americans in the UK, generally, and in the north specifically. The disparity between the 'official' statistical size of the population and the estimates provided by community and support groups in London, the relatively recent history of their increase, their diversity of arrival routes (asylum seekers, onwards migration, study migration, professional migration, etc.) and socio-economic backgrounds (concentration at the two ends of the labour market) define the heterogeneity of this group. As we have seen, the dearth of information about the northern population is more pronounced than in the case of London (mainly due to their small numbers). Despite this, there are indications that the real size and diversity of the population in the north may be greater than the picture provided by official sources at the present time.

#### 4.2.2. Sending states related invisibility

As I discussed in chapter 2, researchers challenging the celebratory tone of some 'grass-roots' transnational scholarship have instead foregrounded the role of state led transnationalism or transnational governance in consolidating nation-states powers and structures (e.g. Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001; Pratt and Yeoh 2003). State led transnationalism has been defined as "institutionalized national policies and programs that attempt to expand the scope of a national state's political, economic, social and moral regulation to include migrants and their descendants outside the national territory" (Goldring 2002, 64 cited in Margheritis 2007, 89). Such practices, which often rely on dual citizenship allowances and off-shore voting rights provision, aim at expanding the influence and control of the sending states over the transnational ties of their emigrant population by extending national membership beyond their territorial borders (e.g. Cohen 1997; Dickinson and Bailey 2007; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003). With these strategies, for example, sending states aim at benefiting from the economic remittances of their emigrant populations and from the potential role of these expatriates in exerting political influence in host countries (e.g. Castles and Davidson 2000).

The dimension of 'official' invisibility which I discuss in this section connects from a grassroots perspective with geopolitical studies considering these state led transnational practices and the ways in which emigration states engage with their migrant populations or diasporas<sup>24</sup> (e.g. De Haas 2006; Gamlen 2006; 2008; Vezzoli and Lacroix 2010). It is beyond the scope of this project to contribute to scholarship studying this type of state transnational strategies. However, in order to understand the complexity of factors which play a role in the socio-cultural invisibility of the Latin American population in the north of England, there is a need to take into account what the immigrant participants perceived is a 'lack of engagement' from the government apparatuses of their sending states with themselves as expatriates, as well as with ideas of 'making more visible' their countries of origin and cultures in their host society.

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<sup>24</sup> It is not my intention to imply that the Latin American populations in the UK constitute a 'diaspora' or a set of 'diasporas', or to engage in debates about the conceptual scope of this term alongside transnational approaches. However, in the present context I am using the terminology preferred by scholars analysing emigration states engagements with nationals of their countries settled abroad (cf. De Haas 2006; Gamlen 2008).

In a recent study, Gamlen (2008, 842) undertook a systematic review of how a number of states, including some Latin American ones, engaged with their “extra-territorial populations” and suggested that states use two basic types of “mechanisms” to do so. One type focuses on “cultivat[ing] diasporic identities and community structures” as well as “recogniz[ing] (or reify[ing]) existing diaspora communities” (Gamlen 2008, 843). The other includes “the mechanisms through which states instill [sic] or capitalize on feelings of responsibility, loyalty and obligation in their diasporas” (Gamlen 2008, 850). The author concluded that it is through these mechanisms that sending states project their influence on different groups of emigrants and their descendants and constitute them as a diaspora (Gamlen 2008, 851).

Due to the issues that the participants in the project highlighted, I wish to pay specific attention to the first type of mechanisms that Gamlen (2008) identifies. These mechanisms are directly related to aspects of recognition and construction of extra-territorial communities and membership (see also Dickinson and Bailey 2007), aspects in which all the informants felt their sending states’ bureaucratic structures in the UK were failing to deliver. However, before exploring the respondents’ accounts, it is necessary to emphasize that many of the participants’ emigration states do, to a greater or lesser extent, have policies which aim to engage with their emigrant populations (Gamlen 2008). Figure 4-8 (on the next page), extracted from Gamlen’s (2008, 845-6) findings illustrates their level of activity.

It is important to note that Chile, Colombia and Mexico, the sending states of some of the participants in the project, are highly engaged in activities aiming at “recognizing the diaspora” (Gamlen 2008, 844). These activities include creating “dedicated bureaucratic structures” such as expanded consular services, but also financing research which can provide a better understanding of the characteristics and size of the resident population and their needs in order to plan activities and services (Gamlen 2008, 844).

	Diaspora Building		Diaspora integration		
	Cultivating a diaspora:	Recognizing the diaspora:	Extending rights:	Extracting obligations:	
	Celebrating national holidays; honoring expatriates with awards; convening diaspora congresses; proclaiming affinity with and responsibility for diaspora; issuing special IDs/visas; national language and history education; extended media coverage	Expanded consular units; commissioning studies or reports; improving statistics; maintaining a diaspora program, bureaucratic unit, or dedicated ministry	Permitting dual nationality, dual citizenship or external voting rights; special legislative representation; consulting expatriate councils or advisory bodies	Providing pre-departure services; extensive bilateral agreements; intervening in labor relations; supplementing health; welfare and education services support; upholding property rights	Taxing expatriates, customs/import incentives, special economic zones, investment services, tax incentives, matching fund programs, diaspora bonds & financial products, facilitating remittances, fellowships, skilled expatriate networks
Argentina					
Brazil					
Chile*					
Colombia*					
Dominican Republic					
Ecuador*					
El Salvador					
Guatemala					
Haiti					
Honduras*					
Mexico*					
Peru					
Uruguay					
Venezuela					

**Figure 4-8 Latin American states' diaspora mechanisms**

Selected and reproduced from: "Table 1: Diaspora mechanisms in selected states" in Gamlen (2008, 845-6). Legend: dark grey – high incidence of mechanisms, grey – some incidence of mechanisms and white – no presence of mechanisms<sup>25</sup>. \*Those marked with an asterisk are the emigration states of some of the participants in the project.

In the UK, Latin American consulates have started to develop community activities (e.g. classes, workshops, competitions, etc.) and other outreach services for their expatriates (Consulado General de Colombia en Londres [2011]; Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores Comercio e Integración. República del Ecuador [2011]; Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Gobierno de Chile [2011]; Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores México [2011]). For instance, the Colombian Consulate has introduced a 'Mobile Consulate' (*Consulado Móvil*) program which occasionally delivers services outside of London (Consulado General de Colombia en Londres [2011]). In addition, most Latin American governments are making use of websites and other internet based networking tools to maintain contact with and recognize (i.e. granting voting rights) their increasingly geographically dispersed diasporas. These activities are often organized and delivered by specific governmental departments or programmes such as,

<sup>25</sup> Gamlen describes that the table was constructed by reviewing "sources on state-emigrant relations, which found fragmentary data on the institutions and practices of over 70 states" (2008, 844 in note). In figure 6, I included the Latin American countries for which there was information available.

the Direction of Chilean Communities Living Abroad – *DICOEX* – (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores. Gobierno de Chile 2011), Colombia Unites Us – *ColombiaNos Une* – (Consulado General de Colombia en Londres 2011) and the Ecuadorian National Secretariat for the Migrant (Secretaría Nacional del Migrante. República del Ecuador 2011).

In the case of Mexico, Gamlen (2008, 844) reports on the complex network of consular units that this State has developed in the US, the main migration destination for its citizens, as well as the range of related services that connect, promote and provide educational and cultural resources for migrants. However, it is interesting to contrast this situation with the accounts that the Mexican participants in this project presented, which were critical of their State's centralization of consular services in London for those living in the UK, a centralization which they felt mainly served the needs of those established in the capital. Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8) summarized this situation:

KARLA. (...) I know that in London, because I've been told, they have several activities which are organized by the embassy but it is all in London, everything, everything is in London and the people who work there they know each other very well, they all get to meet for one thing or another because yes, then they organize things among themselves so they don't need to have something organized officially, it would be a lot of work for someone... see?

This aspect of centralization was commented upon by most of the informants, independently of their country of origin. As Margheritis (2007, 87) has noted, research to date seems to indicate that sending states are more likely to develop policies and provisions for their emigrant populations "as a response to migrants' demands and increasing capacity to organize and lobby". In part, the lack of transnational governance infrastructure of Latin American countries in the UK probably responds to the 'official smaller size' of their migrant populations in this country (and as we have seen their tendency to cluster in London). Unfortunately, according to the participants in this project, the efforts that Latin American consulates in London have made to expand their services and activities have yet to be felt by those settled in the north of the country. In fact, participants highlighted the practical and everyday impact of what they considered was neglect from their consular services. For example, Chilean Louise (30s

– household 10) described the functional effects of the London-centrism of her consulate:

LOUISE. (...) The Chilean consular system is very bad because, well, it is not that it is very bad, it is centralized in London, then for anything you need you have to go to London, which costs a fortune, so you spend the money going to London and it takes several hours. (...) The other issue is that they do not have a clue that we are here [laughs] see? The first time [I went to the consulate] I introduced myself, [and it was like] 'Oh, how nice to know you are here, that you exist', more or less, 'why don't you fill in this form, please?' (...) The only thing they did was to ask me for an e-mail address to put me on a mailing list which supposedly would tell me about the activities of the Chilean consulate but I've never received anything, not a single e-mail from the consulate [laughs].

This lived 'lack of engagement' with the official apparatuses of their countries of emigration is significant in two fronts. First, because migrants describe it as a vacuum of full institutional representation which contributes to the official invisibility of their populations in the UK and the perceived generalized unawareness of the British public regarding the history of the region and its richness of cultures. For instance, embassies and consulates are not seen as undertaking activities to promote their countries in the UK or to seek governmental collaborations which may counteract the dearth of bilateral political relations. Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian- household 2) provided an example of this perception. She was highly critical about the lack of institutional engagement between Colombia and the UK, and the complicity of the consulate and the embassy on perpetuating the 'invisibility' of her country in front of the British state and consequently the British *public gaze*.

MARTINA. Yes, the stereotype is there [about Colombia as a drug-ridden and violent country], it's there, there is nothing to contradict that stereotype, absolutely nothing, but I think that what affects me more than that it's the vacuum, because it is like if [Colombia] didn't exist, it's like if we didn't exist and, or like if we were completely, if we belonged completely to the United States. Then 'we [the UK] don't engage with Colombia because that's the United States' problem'. I think that's the most frightening thing after all, this lack [of engagement] at the institutional level, at the level of... because there are people who are trying to promote [Colombia] but it is, it is, I think that it is at the highest level that they don't want to have contact with

Colombia. (...) It is part of the disinformation campaign [about Colombia], the Consulate is part of that disinformation campaign.

The second reason why the perceived 'lack of engagement' of the sending states is significant is because consulates and embassies are described as not being interested in providing efficient services and failing to cultivate cultural and social bonds amongst those residing in this country, therefore perpetuating the lack of shared spaces and 'frontiering' opportunities for the migrants (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). For example, they feel discriminated against due to their choice of residence and more importantly, criticize the consular services for not organizing gathering events outside of London or not promoting and designing communication structures, such as mailing lists, which could help to establish 'community' networks. In this sense, Mauricio (30s, Mexican – household 6) highlighted the potential benefits of having Mexican events and celebrations outside of the capital.

MAURICIO. (...) They could try to bring people together for Mexican national celebrations, try to do something, not only in London but also in other places, maybe, I think that would make people to meet each other, to get to know each other, because probably [Mexican] people don't even know that others exist.

Importantly, it is the lack of cultural initiatives and advocacy that the migrants feel are some of the main shortcomings. Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9) explained how he regretted that his embassy had stopped organizing collaborative events with representatives from other Latin American countries, events which promoted their common heritages and which he thought were the right activities to undertake.

JUAN. (...) A few years ago I did like receiving e-mails from the embassy, because they had, they had a lot of intercultural events and I tried to take [my daughter] to them, they organized cultural exhibitions of Bolivia and Peru, because sometimes they use to get together Peru and Bolivia and they had vestments, they told about cultures, indigenous peoples and all that but they don't do that anymore, so it gets lost.

In summary, the lack of consular and ambassadorial initiatives (individual but also collaborative between different Latin American countries' representative institutions in the UK) was seen, on the one hand, as perpetuating public British unfamiliarity with their nations, cultures and histories, and their potential contributions to the host

country's society; and on the other, as reinforcing the scarcity of communication and interaction among resident compatriots. Therefore, for these participants, what they perceived as the disengagement of their emigration states contributed to their official invisibility in their host country.

As I have mentioned above, a possibly decisive factor for this lack of expanded consular infrastructure is the size of these migrant populations in the country and the lack of immigrant organizations which can lobby to obtain more support or political response from sending states. However, the situation is more complex than it would seem. Apart from the efforts of some Latin American consulates which I explained earlier, in the last decade, the population in London has become increasingly organized in order to address the long-term integration problems which affect many members of this group (e.g. Bermúdez 2010; Però 2007; Torres 2008). Independently from the political impact or success that these different initiatives have accrued in the capital, their mobilization efforts have not had much consequence amongst many immigrants living in the north of the country. Additionally, the circumstances in which an important part of Latin Americans arrived in the country (i.e. fleeing from political violence or from economic oppression caused by the policies of the governments in charge) make the relationship between immigrants and their sending states problematic. Furthermore, as Margheritis (2007, 100) has noted in the case of Argentina, the history of authoritarian regimes and subsequent neo-liberal re-structuring measures which have afflicted Latin American nations and economies (e.g. Potter 2007; Robinson 2004), have had a lingering effect on the perceptions of citizens from these countries, who in many cases still regard their governments and elites with varying degrees of scepticism or even mistrust.

However, the lack of institutional engagement with this population both from their host and sending states is not the only factor that contributes to their invisibility in the north of England. In fact, the contested meanings of Latin America/ns and how migrants relate to these categories also play an important role in the production and maintenance of this socio-cultural invisibility, to which I now turn.

### 4.3. Latin American identifications and misidentifications

At the beginning of this chapter, I explored the lack of direct attention that, currently, the Latin American population receives in the UK and which is basically illustrated by the frequent failing of statistical surveys to, so far, include a distinctive ethnic category for Latin Americans (McIlwaine 2007). However, suggesting the use of Latin American as an ethnic group is not a straight forward undertaking. In fact, the contested origins of the term find an equally complex debate about its meanings and understandings amongst those who it is supposed to describe. That is, not all the people born or connected to South and Central American countries identify with this term.

Additionally, the development of the panethnic categories Latino or Hispanic have complicated further how migrants from these countries, their subsequent generations, and even some people based in Central or South American territories define themselves (e.g. Bulmer and Solomos 2009; Diaz McConnell and Delgado-Romero 2004; Gracia 2000; Roth 2009).

In addition, this controversy is entangled with debates that surround the meaning and uses of the concept of ethnicity and related ethnic group (e.g. Fenton 2003; Guibernau and Rex 1997). Scholars have highlighted that the term ethnicity started to be employed as an alternative to 'race' after the dismantling of scientific racism in the post Second World War era and its usage proliferated in parallel with the increase of immigrant populations in Western countries (e.g. Guibernau and Rex 1997; Wade 1997). As Wade has pointed out (1997, 16), although 'race' and ethnicity are both socially constructed, the consensus has been that the latter refers to cultural differences whilst the former relies on phenotypical ones (differences which are also socially constructed). However, the fact that these categories have often been used interchangeably and have both been at the basis of racist and discriminatory discourses and practices has complicated further their connotations (e.g. Fenton 2003; Wade 1997).

Despite the lack of clarity which affects the concept of ethnicity, it is generally understood that its meaning relies on notions of "shared descent and culture" (Fenton 2003, 3) and includes facets such as "heritage, community, language, religion, lineage, geographical origin and shared symbolic elements" (Ahmad 1999, 124). Importantly,

ethnicity is also defined in terms of self-ascription, that is an ethnic group comes into existence (and continues to exist on the basis of fluid and dynamic negotiations) because its members “consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups” (Eriksen 1997, 39). Furthermore, Wade (1997, 18 italics in the original) suggests “that ethnicity is, of course, about cultural differentiation, but tends to use the language of *place*”, therefore it is related to “location, or rather people’s putative origin in certain places”. This spatial dimension of ethnicity explains that the use of the term spread in Western immigrant receiving countries with the arrival of non-Western immigrants (Guibernau and Rex 1997). It also lies at the basis of the misconceived idea in these countries that ethnicity or ethnic groups are categories which apply solely to ‘minorities’ (Fenton 2003; Guibernau and Rex 1997).

In the UK, the collection of ‘racial’ or ethnic origin information in the census did not start until 1991. Up until that time, proxy questions had been used to assess the size and characteristics of the non-white population, i.e. country of origin (Fenton 2003, 40). Arguments in favour of compiling this type of data have relied on policy requirements such as responding to population needs (including specific services for different groups), ensuring equity and supporting anti-discrimination legislation (Ahmad 1999, 128). In contrast, arguments in opposition have feared that these data could be used against minority groups, that the collection of such data does not in itself promote political or social change and that the standard categories used result on the creation of identities to ‘fit’ the definitions devised by the State (Ahmad 1999, 128-9). However, developing classifications of ethnic categories which could capture the fluid and multiple identifications of individuals has proved difficult and controversial. In the UK, for example, “the group names listed in the census are a curious mixture of race (colour) categories and national origin categories” (Fenton 2003, 41); this is not very effective in providing clarity of meaning or responding to people’s self-definitions.

In the following subsections, I engage with these debates in order to discuss how the participants in this project related to notions of Latin American as collective identity and how these contested understandings contribute to their *soft ethnic or panethnic* affiliations.

#### 4.3.1. Contested conceptualizations of the Latin American collective identity

As I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the term Latin America/n has colonial origins and therefore disregards the rich multi-ethnic heritage of the region (e.g. Eakin 2007); furthermore, its 'geographical boundaries' are highly contested creating a muddled diversity of possible territorial inclusions and exclusions. In addition, and as Mignolo (2005, 59) has pointed out, after obtaining independence from Spain, white Creole<sup>26</sup> and Mestizo<sup>27</sup> dominant classes in South American and Caribbean ex-colonies appropriated this macro-identity in order to build their political agendas and secure their power over the population of indigenous and African descent, further exacerbating the discriminatory connotations of this term (see also Eakin 2007; Meade 2010; Wade 1997).

The controversy of this nomenclature has also been intensified by the growth of Latin American migrant populations and their descendants around the world, but mainly in the US, where they constitute the largest minority group - 46.9 million people, nearly 15% of the total population (US Census Bureau 2010). As Gracia (2000, 1) highlights, the remit of the concept of Latin American (and its relative 'Ibero American') excludes those populations who have family roots in the region but were born outside of Central and South American countries. Increasingly, Latin American migrant and minority populations in the US are adopting *panethnic* categories such as Hispanic or Latino to define themselves and acquire political representation (Diaz McConnell and Delgado-Romero 2004). In this context, panethnic groups are created by "[the extension of] ethnic boundaries to incorporate several groups that previously considered themselves distinct ethnicities" (Roth 2009, 929). Hispanic and Latino panethnic categories are in themselves highly controversial (see Gracia 2000 for an in-depth discussion), as they are subject to 'colonialist' problems similar to those affecting the concept of Latin America, but also incorporate further issues related to their core defining features, such as culture, language/s, political boundaries, racial characteristics, etc., and to the external influences for their creation (e.g. policy frameworks and Census groups in the

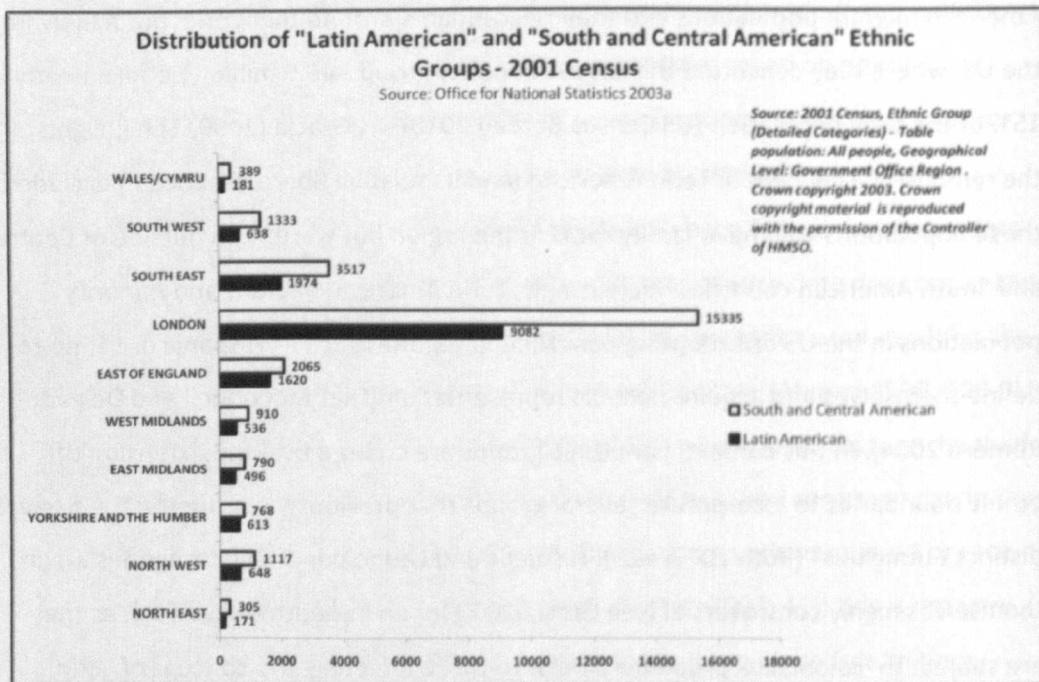
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<sup>26</sup> "Creole (criollo/a): person of Iberian nationality born in the Americas" (Meade 2010, 342).

<sup>27</sup> "Mestizo: person of European (Spanish usually) and indigenous descent" (Meade 2010, 343).

US). All these constructed and dynamic categories are highly problematic and do not provide a straightforward basis of ethnic identification for those coming from Central and South American countries or their descendants. A situation, which in my view, has so far contributed to the *statistical invisibility* of this population in the UK.

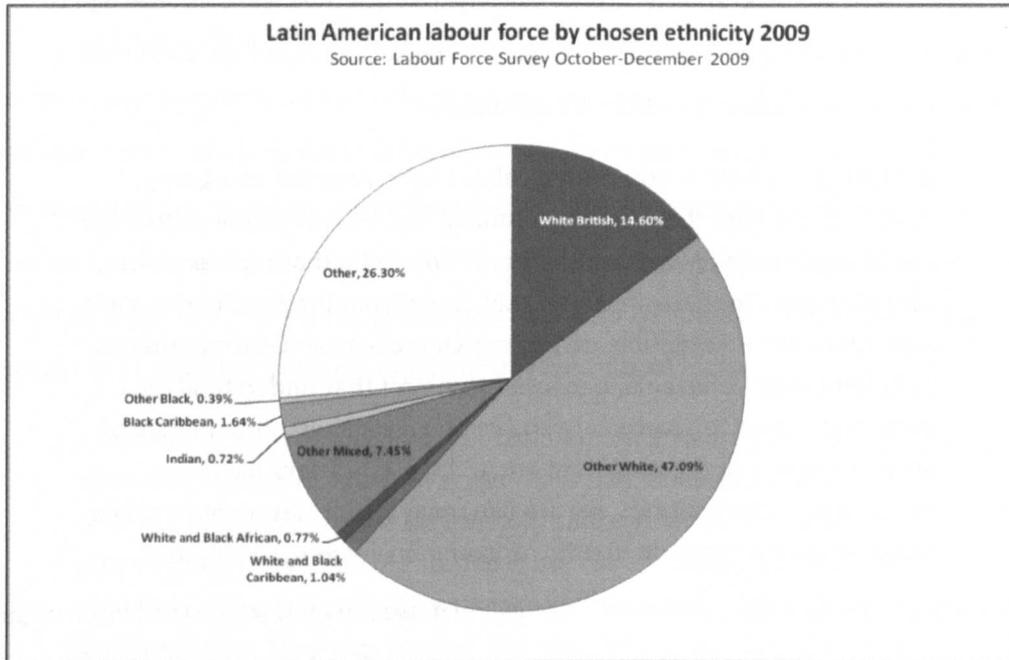
An example of the extent to which people born in this region identify or misidentify with the category Latin American can be found in the *2001 Census* (Office for National Statistics 2003). Figure 4-9 shows the data for people who, in this survey, chose to describe their ethnicity as 'Latin American' versus those who, instead, preferred to use the terms 'Central or South American' (information which was gathered through the written answers of the participants, 42,488 people provided this clarification after ticking the category 'Other'). As can be seen, in all the regions of the country, a greater number of Census' participants decided to define themselves as 'Central and South American' (62% of the total) rather than as 'Latin Americans' (38% of the total).



**Figure 4-9 Distribution of "Latin American" and "South and Central American" ethnic groups (self-definitions) in 2001 Census**

The problem remains that using 'Latin American' as an ethnic category does not capture the diversity of self-identifications of people born in these countries. In this case, the *LFS October-December 2009* (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b) provides an illustration of the multiplicity

of ethnic affiliations that characterize this group. Figure 4-10 shows the chosen ethnicity categories for the labour force born in Latin American countries (Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency 2010b) providing an idea of the high percentage of people who define themselves as 'other white', 'other mixed' groups and generic 'other', and as we have seen in the case of the *2001 Census*, it cannot be assumed that all of them would describe themselves as Latin American.



**Figure 4-10 Latin American labour force by chosen ethnicity 2009**

These multiple ethnic and 'racial' identifications need to be understood in relation to how the idea of 'race' has been constructed and utilized in Latin America. Since Colonial times, complex 'racial' hierarchies have operated in the region which are based on a continuum with white/Europeans at one end and indigenous and black at the other, a gradual categorization approach based on ideas of 'mestizaje' ('racial mixing') (Guibernau and Rex 1997, 7; Meade 2010, 4). This continuum, in turn, is further complicated by class hierarchies, through which financial status and education can alter 'racial or ethnic perceptions' (Meade 2010; Wade 1997). These understandings may play a role on how Latin Americans self-identify when encountering the more dual racial and ethnic constructs which dominate the ethnic categories system in the UK.

In fact, among the participants in the project, the category Latin American was often perceived as not describing *an ethnicity* but as a *geographical origin group sharing certain cultural commonalities* which embraces a multiplicity of ethnic affiliations. Despite agreeing that there was some common ground shared by all Latin Americans (e.g. geographical closeness, entangled histories and common cultural referents); this broad and cultural definition was undermined by what many of the participants considered the intrinsic diversity which characterizes their home region. In other words, there were social and cultural commonalities but they were not enough to provide a strong sense of supra-national group identity. Susana (40s, Colombia – household 1) summarized this diversity as follows:

SUSANA. I don't think you can talk about Latin America as a group, I think that is where the misunderstanding lies. We are many cultures in a *landmass* and we have things in common but others very, very, very different. Then the interests that come from the South Americans, from Chile, from Argentina, do not match those from Central America, or Colombia or Venezuela, because there isn't that understanding, I think that even if we were in Latin America, we could not understand what the needs of the continent are. (...) No, it is a very big place, because we are minorities, we are like many minorities within a single place without a common identity or common *column*, I think so.

This lack of 'strong roots', as Susana later called it, was related to the contested origin of the term Latin America/n, the sense that it was an identity imposed by the West (with colonial connotations) and to the political divisions that have characterized the history of the region. These divisions also need to be understood in terms of the trajectories of each nation after independence and the common features (i.e. geographical location or social factors) which unite some countries more than others (Larrain 2000, 3). For instance, the majority of European migrants of the 19th and early 20th century settled in the Southern Cone (i.e. Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and most southern part of Brazil); countries which in certain political discourses have tried to 'distance' themselves from those with more significant indigenous and mixed populations (Meade 2010, 4). Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7), for example, had the view that Latin American identity did not really exist, that it was a construct which had been imposed on them from 'outside' and which was fraught with historical rivalries and conflicts amongst the different countries in the region.

MARTA. (...) Unfortunately in Latin America, the problem we have is that each one of us is like an island, and we always fight amongst ourselves, and we do not have a defined identity. The identity has been given to us from outside. Here they call us Latin American, but as Latin Americans, we know perfectly when it is a Colombian talking, when it is an Ecuadorian, a Peruvian, a Bolivian, an Argentinean, a Chilean. (...) I think that we spend the time fighting like cats and dogs. (...) Then that Latin American identity I don't think it exists. It is my personal opinion, what does exist is... the Chilean always wants to be Chilean, they feel the best, the Argentinean feels the best, the Peruvian feels the best (...) So I don't think that there is one [unified] identity.

However, the *geographical and culturally loose* understanding of this macro-identity was also contested by the fact that some of the participants used the term Latin American and the panethnic expression Latino interchangeably, providing a combined conception of a collective identity with its cultural origins in the centre and south of the American continent. During the group interview with his family, Ernesto (50s, Chilean – household 5) provided a clear example of this conceptual fusion.

*ERNESTO. (...) We're talking about Latin America, Latin America as a continent, culture (...) What we refer to as Latinoamérica [Latin America] is being from the continent of Latinoamérica. You know? (...) I mean I come up with all the stuff like, oh 'cos I'm Latino, you know and in certain ways, in certain ways I make a difference between Latinos and Europeans, the way we feel, the way we are, the way, you know, even though I don't like to (...) make that difference, to me people are people but occasionally it happens, it comes in my head, and I think I want to get rid of this but it's impossible because it is there, you have to cope with it, you know?*

Scholars researching Latino/a and Hispanic panethnicities in the US have long struggled to ascertain whether these identities have developed to capture a meaningful sense of shared culture and political activism amongst migrants from Latin America and their descendants or, instead, they have been a by-product of how statistical and policy tools in the US have classified them (Diaz McConnell and Delgado-Romero 2004). It does seem that probably the answer lies between these two possibilities and their interactions (Diaz McConnell and Delgado-Romero 2004). The fluidity that characterizes these collective identities finds its dynamism in how migrants and their descendants come into terms with the circumstances that they face once outside their countries of origin, where they encounter the Latin American, Latino/a, and/or Hispanic

constructs directly, and through which they have to negotiate their situation and positionality in their host societies.

For example, the participant stakeholder from the Chile Sports and Cultural Development Association [CSCDA] considered that Latin American identifications acquire more salience for people from Central and South America once they are settled in other countries, displacing national identities to a secondary position. In this sense, Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10) summarized the ways in which settling in the UK, brought to the fore issues about his own identity and reinforced his sense of being Chilean and Latin American.

PACO. (...) The subject of [ethnic] classifications has become much more evident to me in my everyday life here in contrast to being in Chile, because when I fill in this sheet, when I fill in applications [which ask] about race, skin colour, things like that, which [is my] ethnic group, for me that type of questions are more evident here, because they are not in the documents I use in Chile, they aren't there, the identity system, because it isn't my skin colour, because it isn't my language and because they aren't my people, the matter of identity is much more quotidian to me here. (...) And that has made me feel part of Chile or Latin America much more, as referents, that is, while being there [in Chile] feeling Chilean or Latin American was not an important issue, it wasn't on my daily life (...).

In the UK, wider negotiations of *panethnic identification* are likely to take place as the population and the second generations grow in number, acquire more visibility and start to organize politically. This trend can already be seen in the case of London, where in recent years there have been some initiatives aimed at mobilizing around the macro-identities Latin Americans/Latinos (Però 2007) and Iberoamericans (Ovalle 2010). Unfortunately, these campaigns for recognition have also been affected by the controversial (and potentially divisive) nature of all these panethnic terms. For example, in September 2010, the mayor and deputy-mayor of London announced that all official forms to be used by the Greater London Authority would start to include the ethnic category "Iberian American/Latin American" (Latino Times 2010). This decision seems to have been the result of lobbying undertaken by the Iberian-American Alliance (*Alianza Iberoamericana*) (Latino Times 2010; Mancera 2010), which has campaigned for the 'Iberian-American' (*Iberoamericanos*) ethnic category which brings together

peoples from the Iberian Peninsula, all Latin American countries (where Spanish or Portuguese is spoken) and even other Lusophone African countries.

Conflictingly, there have also been calls to recognize the 'Latin American community in the UK' through the *Coordinadora Latinoamericana* (Latin American Coordinating Committee), an umbrella organization which includes several grassroots Latin American groups based in the capital, and which directly opposes proposals to use terms such as 'Iberoamerican Spanish, Spanish and Portuguese Speaking' (IS/SPS) to describe their 'community'. This group highlights that Latin Americans are affected by migration restrictions, unlike people coming from Spain and Portugal. It also opposes the colonial connotations of the IS/SPS terms, which they argue imply the exclusion of American indigenous languages and cultures from this collective (Coordinadora Latinoamericana 2010, n. p.). Consequently, the members of the Latin American Recognition Campaign (from the *Coordinadora Latinoamericana*) released a statement in which they requested to be recognized as Latin American in ethnic classifications (e.g. the census) and also published a letter criticizing the decision of City Hall to use the category 'Latin American/Iberian American' (Latin American Recognition Campaign 2010).

Overall, these initiatives and contestations illustrate the dynamics of the multicultural integration framework of the UK, which *encourages* immigrants to mobilize and compete for resources through notions of ethnicity (cf. Però 2007). However, as I will discuss in more depth in chapter 5, current attitudes towards processes of recognition within this population in the north are still characterized by ambivalent positions in relation to the politics of visibility and invisibility which define this multicultural framework.

Furthermore, there are also processes of connection and disconnection with all these collective identity constructs among the second generation. Mainly in the case of some of the youngest participants, there were vague understandings of the collective idea of Latin America. Others, despite having an awareness of the concept, did not express a strong sense of identification (see chapter 7 for a discussion of the participants' senses of identity and belonging). For example, Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean – household 7) had a strong emotional connection with Chile through his mother's family and when faced with the Latin American map, he felt Chile was the only country which had meaning for

him, leaving aside any commonalities that could exist across the region. Therefore, he decided to cross out on the map all the countries except for Chile (see figure 4-11).



*INTERVIEWER. So does Latin America mean anything to you...?*

*BEN. Latin America just means Chile to me, it doesn't really mean anything else.*

*INTERVIEWER. You don't feel anything in common with people from other Latin American countries?*

*BEN. I think there is commonly but... I don't see that.*

**Figure 4-11 Extract from Ben's (12, Anglo-Chilean – household 7) maps activity**

It was interesting to contrast these accounts with those of older young participants who engaged with notions of the panethnicity Latino, or did not make distinctions between Latin American and Latino. In this case, Carolina (15, Americano-Chilean – household 5) brought to the fore the power of the “mediascapes” and “ideoscapes” (Appadurai 1990, 9) to transmit ‘fashionable’ identity images of ‘Latinos/as’ from the US.

*CAROLINA. Um well I've got a friend, he's half-Argentinean, half-Chilean. And he's always like, 'Oh Latinos, Latinos...' da-da-da-da-da. [chuckles] (...) It's just that, you know, he thinks it's fashionable 'cause it's Latino and like, you know, he thinks is good. (...)*

*INTERVIEWER. And (...) this fashionable image of Latinos, how, how would you describe it to me?*

*CAROLINA. Well people think that it's, well I've said Jennifer Lopez. The kids and their like dark hair and dark eyes and stuff. And, people like it. [chuckles] (...) I like Eva Longoria, do you, you know her? Yeah? I kind of look up to her. Yeah. [chuckles].*

In addition, Jaime (19, Honduran – household 3) provided an illustration of the fusion of the Latin American and Latino concepts and explained the ease of appealing to this shared identity among his peers.

INTERVIEWER. And do you think that there is something common to all the Latin American countries? Maybe something that can be shared, when you have met people from other Latin American countries...

JAIME. Yes, yes, only with the fact of saying that you are Latino, that's enough, it doesn't matter from which exact country you are, if you are Latino it's like... ok!

INTERVIEWER. Is like something shared? A feeling?

JAIME. Of course, yes, that's the truth.

In fact, in the group interview of household 3, Jaime and his family made generational distinctions regarding the bonding potential of the 'Latino' macro-identity. They all agreed that, in their view, it was easier for the younger generations to find common ground on this panethnicity, as they were not so set in their own national histories and traditions, and were more flexible when establishing social bonds.

All these processes echo Roth's (2009) study on how panethnic identities, through transnational social fields and transnational media, expand their boundaries to include people who have never migrated and still reside in the societies of origin. Similarly, the expansion of the panethnic notion Latino also seems to be taking place through the 'new' migration routes and destinations of Latin Americans, as we have seen in the examples of Ernesto, Carolina and Jaime. A recent survey conducted amongst 52 second generation Latin Americans in London (average age of 21) also confirms this dynamic, as nearly a half of them self-identified as British Latino and another third as Latin American (McIlwaine et al. 2011, 112). However, this is not a generalized trend and the population of Central and South American descent in the north of England, as has been explored in this section, is still characterized by multiple ethnic identifications and contested understandings of which are (or are not) the communalities that potentially unite them. In fact, as I will discuss next, this diversity of perspectives and loose sense of commonality are important elements which contribute to the scarcity of Latin American cultural groups and initiatives in the northern region and consequently to the socio-cultural invisibility of the population.

#### **4.3.2. Local manifestations of the Latin American collectivity**

Participants in the north explained that, at the grassroots level, migrants or anyone trying to organize communal activities or cultural groups must engage with the contested definitions of Latin America/n shown in the previous section, and negotiate

inclusive standpoints which can accommodate the diversity of perspectives that different people from the region may have (as well as their multiplicity of life situations). For example, Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2) summarized the variety of interpretations that members of a cultural group she had been involved in displayed regarding the meaning of Latin American.

MARTINA. There were a diversity of meanings because for some it meant people with indigenous roots, for example, it was very important for them, and only people with those roots, then Latin America was primarily of indigenous root; for me being Colombian, the indigenous part was not important, other things were important, culture, history, politics, even religion but not, let's say, the racial part. And for other people the concept of Latin America was even wider and for example, they didn't mind to get into the stereotype of how the North Americans see Latin Americans, and then for them, any person, they assume that any person who is Latin American is Latin American, and then... well, better said there were people who strongly rejected the Latino stereotype which exists (...) in the United States. Then [the group in which she was involved] tried to maintain the identity, an identity which was less commercialized and less... dictated by the mass media, so there were different people who saw the Latin American concept in different ways. (...)

It is worth paying further attention to Martina and Susana's (40s, Colombian – household 1) experiences, as for more than ten years they were both involved in a Latin American group in the northern region, roles that they eventually gave up because of exhaustion and disagreements in the group. At the grassroots level, the diversity of individual understandings of what it means to be Latin American gets entangled with the heterogeneity of socio-demographic and migratory factors which, as we saw, characterize this population. There are multiplicity of life situations based on migration routes, settlement circumstances, legal status, nationality, educational and social background, political views and life cycle stage amongst others, and any Latin American organized group must negotiate this diversity if it aims to be inclusive. Again, in the case of Martina and Susana's group, they explained that in practice this diversity meant they could be united in terms of language, food and social activities, etc. (the broad and loose definition that we have encountered before) but not on the basis of their needs, which were too diverse. However, they did feel that there were clear benefits in meeting, socializing and undertaking activities together, despite the

lack of commitment which in their view characterizes Latin Americans in the north, and which in the long-term contributes to the demise of any 'community' initiatives.

SUSANA. (...) It is necessary to establish very clear principles, one establishes mutually what type of solidarity because our culture is not, here, I don't know whether in London but here in [her city], we aren't, we aren't organized and if we were I think we would enjoy ourselves much more. I know because I did a lot of work for the community, [my best friend] was another person who worked a lot on it and once we had established a rhythm of work, a rhythm of cultural and social activities, it was obvious, the benefits were obvious, it was obvious that we enjoyed being together under the same roof, that we had things in common but you have to work for it and one gets tired to work for others... so yes, I think it is necessary but we are not [supportive], we don't have an established network.

At a certain point, Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2) felt that proper resources were needed to respond to the multiplicity of support requirements that were identified within and through the group (e.g. Spanish speaking counsellor, social worker, work and legal advisers, etc.); therefore, she tried to lead the association towards asking the local Council to recognize Latin Americans as an ethnic minority. However, as she explains in the next extract, there was not the collective willingness to do so. In summary, members of this group did not self-ascribe to a shared understanding of having a common descent and being culturally distinctive, which as I discussed earlier, are important elements of constructing an 'ethnic identification' (Fenton 2003, 3).

MARTINA. There reached a point when I wanted the Council to recognize the Latin Americans as a minority, and I believe that to be recognized as a minority, the only thing they had to do was to say that they were a minority and they never did. Then I think that is what, I think that... what we do not have is because we have not asked for it, I think that (...) we did not consider ourselves a minority, well better said, we come from all the countries then I think that is a factor which influences, because in [another city in the north], I lived in [this other city] for a while (...) and the difference was that in [this other city] there was political homogeneity, which there wasn't here, and there was homogeneity in the sense of where people came from, which there wasn't here, then really we were a support network but we did not feel like a minority because each of us was a minority within a minority, then... I believe that we functioned well as... well we called

ourselves Latin American community and functioned as such but not as a minority, I don't think we saw ourselves as such... (...) [and] maybe we didn't feel as such either.

In this sense, many participants highlighted that in order to have viable cultural groups based on the Latin American collective identity, there was the need to have leading people who could work on building a sense of 'community' and help negotiate the group's differences, something which so far had not had continuity in the northern region. One of the stakeholders, the Evangelical pastor (Colombian) summarized it as follows:

PASTOR. (...) Yes, it would be good to be able to meet in community, but it isn't easy, we are all different, all behave differently, it is a matter of respecting each other and trying to work together, see how to work together, but you need people to motivate that, people who, people who can create that type of unity.

The current situation in the north is perhaps better defined as a mosaic of local, one-off, small-scale, sometimes nationally defined, and even private, social and cultural initiatives which respond to specific events, life circumstances or personal interests of Latin Americans. For example there are 'community' groups such as the Chile SCDA in Sheffield (founded by Chilean refugees in the 1970s), *Hola Leeds* a non-profit organization (which publishes a magazine entitled *Hola Norte*, aimed at supporting the Spanish speaking community in northern England and promoting Latin American and Spanish culture), Latin American sports groups (e.g. games of football), language based groups (language exchange or groups for children of Spanish and Latin American descent to practice the language); and also private enterprises such as All things Latin in Liverpool, Salsa Theatre Productions in Leeds, or the Copacabana Club in Manchester. Nonetheless, many of this cultural and social groups work on a very informal and spontaneous way and not as organized, full-time enterprises.

Some practical constraints help to explain this situation; for example Mauricio (30s, Mexican – household 6) related it to the spatial dispersion of the northern population, which in his view may overall be as big as in London but is scattered across the region and five main cities. In addition, the legal status of migrants was also considered to play an important role in people's reluctance to get involved in group activities, as Ecuadorian household 4 – Elizabeth (15), Paula (30s) and Pablo (30s) – explained:

ELIZABETH. (...) There are people who... who feel is better to be, well alone like this, they don't need people, sometimes is better to be alone with your family than with other people.

INTERVIEWER. And what are the reasons for them to think like this?

PAULA. Many people because of their situation, see?, without documents, and there are people who don't like talking about their lives, they don't like it.

PABLO. And it also depends on where they come from and the problems that they have had.

One of the aspects in which there was a clear misidentification with fellow Latin American migrants was on the basis of political attitudes and types of migration. Ernesto (50s, Chilean – household 5), who had come as a political refugee in the 1970s reflected on the leftist political homogeneity that had united Chileans and other Latin American refugees in the 1970s to early 1990s era, a political homogeneity that had greatly enhanced their sense of common purpose and cohesion. As the arrival of political refugees declined and the migratory flows diversified, this commonality had progressively lost momentum, having an important effect on the sense of shared experience amongst Latin Americans. Thus, the contemporary diversity that characterizes this population hinders possibilities of cohesion.

ERNESTO. (...) Because we could say that we are all settled now, all have our responsibilities, our jobs, our families, then it's like if we left aside so much dedication, we achieved what we wanted, but no, we don't forget that it still exists [political oppression]; now Chileans don't arrive as refugees, since the end of the arrival of Chilean refugees, well there aren't Chilean refugees anymore, then we left it a bit behind, we left aside all these activities, like demonstrations... but now, for example, refugees, Latino refugees? There are very few, arriving now I mean, arriving now, during, I don't know, ten years ago, they arrived from, they were still arriving from... Bolivia, Uruguay, I don't know from where, but now, the numbers have gone down, see? Now you have tourists, or economic refugees who don't have much money over there and come here because they can earn more [here], like now, people who live here, there are people from El Salvador, from Nicaragua, from Mexico and... some have come for political reasons, others have come because they got married to English people, then there are different, different, different... how would I say it?... circumstances among Latinos, see?

Furthermore, the different life stages of the migrants often imply different social needs. For instance, those with children do not partake on the night scene of the single and young Latin Americans (which they feel is a big part of the population), and look for activities which are inclusive for their children. In addition, those married to British partners highlighted that their needs to socialize or to meet other Latin Americans were not shared by their spouses to the same extent, and often this meant that they opted for adapting themselves to the English social environment of their partners instead of having to make the effort to find other Latin Americans who shared similar life situations. Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8) illustrated this situation and expressed her wish to have a ‘physical’ and ‘visible’ space where to gather and where activities and support initiatives could be organized and publicized easily.

**KARLA.** (...) And when you have children, I feel because I see it with my sister, I think that if you are single there are lots of things to get involved in, there are because you have more time, but when you have family, and more if your husband is English and does not necessarily have the same need that you have, it is much easier to become part of the English group and adapt yourself than to make the effort to, because it has to be you who organizes it or you who puts all the effort in it (...) I feel that if there was... like the Irish, I know a lot of Irish people, they have the Irish Centre, and of course there are classes there, they can go and have a drink there, that is, there is a place, a physical place to meet, a place where there are posters announcing what people are doing, this is one help, this is another (...).

Often life cycle asynchronizations, social class and educational differences among migrants were mentioned by the participants as reasons for not engaging with fellow migrants and even mistrusting them. For example, for Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10) the class and education differences that he had found amongst the Latin Americans in his city were unassailable and he considered them more a potential source of problems than a possible support network.

**PACO.** There is, there is the feeling that there are people than more than making your life easier through emotional support, as part of the [support] network, through the joy of being able to share, there are a group of people who can be a source of problems, such, they have problems here and they could get you involved in those problems or they can ask for a favour, they can demand things from you, or they can need something from you. Then it's like, I already have problems

with my immigration, I have to make sure that my family is protected and at peace, and I don't, I don't want to do anything that potentially could contribute to them suffering or being involved in problems. (...) I don't directly relate eh sharing problems because of the experience of coming to the same country, [being] from the same culture, [having] the same language, with [the assumption] that we are going to support each other instantly. (...) I have met several Colombians in [his city], but when I speak to them I take up a different class position nothing more, or a [different position in] educational or study terms; then there are people there, (...) there are very young people without education, immigrant, from working class background so I don't see an emotional support network in them, rather I see a source of problems.

In summary, the contested understandings of the Latin American collective identity combined with their diversity of migration routes, settlement circumstances, legal statuses, socio-economic and educational backgrounds, and life cycle needs of the migrants and their children contribute to a *soft* sense of commonality among the population in the north. Geographers have foregrounded the ways in which “[i]dentity construction is intricately linked to the social production of place(s)”; as such, shared or communal spaces “foster both expressions of identities and reinforce them” (Ehrkamp 2005, 349; Nagar 1997a; 1997b). In the case of these Latin American participants, *soft* senses of collective identification have so far undermined the creation of such shared places and, in turn, the lack of spaces weakens possibilities to nurture stronger senses of commonality.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

I started this chapter by considering the factors which help explain the official invisibility which characterizes the Latin American population in the UK generally and more specifically in the north of England. Following other scholars (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007), I concurred that the failure of statistical classifications to include a pertinent ethnic category for Latin Americans, renders this population invisible in front of the British state and its *public gaze*. In the case of the northern population, this official omission is aggravated by their smaller numbers and by the lack of support or cultural organizations which can supplement the dearth of information available.

Nonetheless, the analysis of the existing figures together with the accounts provided by the participant stakeholders highlighted that the dimensions of the population in this

region may be greater than what the limited official numbers suggest (only 5% of the total), having grown considerably in the last few years. In addition, there are indications that their settlement patterns, socio-economic backgrounds and migration routes have also diversified further during the present decade. In the case of children and young people, the recent introduction of an ethnic category for pupils of “Central/South America, Cuba and Belize”(Department for Education and Skills 2006) has not been taken by many Local Education Authorities in the north, which further constrains the information available and perpetuates their generalized official invisibility in this region.

The participants in this project also emphasized another dimension of their official invisibility which was related to the lack of transnational governance engagement of their sending states with themselves as diasporic nationals. I argued that this lack of engagement was significant because migrants considered it as a vacuum of institutional representation of their countries and cultures in the UK. Additionally, consulates were seen as failing to cultivate cultural and social bonds amongst those residing in this country (especially in the north), therefore perpetuating the lack of shared spaces and possibilities to ‘frontier’ of the migrants (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). In this sense, the lack of recognition that they experienced in their host society was, in their view, produced by the complicity of their sending states which did not acknowledge them as diasporic citizens nor did support them in constructing extra-territorial ‘communities’. This migrant-centred perspective brings to the fore the interconnection between structural and agential elements in reproducing the socio-cultural invisibility of Latin Americans in the UK against the background of the receiving system of multicultural recognition.

Latin American migrants encounter directly the Latin American and Latino identity constructs once outside their countries of origin and when facing the *Western gaze*. As Però (2007) has highlighted, in the case of the British incorporation system, migrants are encouraged (*forced by the system*) to mobilize and get organized around notions of ethnicity. There are already migrant groups in London trying to use the Latino/Latin American or Iberoamerican collective identities strategically and in order to be recognized politically (e.g. Latino Times 2010); as I have pointed out, there are also small scale initiatives that make use of these terms in the northern region. For some of

the participants, the sense of dislocation provoked by the act of migrating brought to the fore issues of identity, making them quotidian experiences. The immediacy of these issues had led some of them to re-negotiate their self-identifications, privileging the commonalities that they considered existed across their real or inherited region of origin ahead of national identities. In fact, some of the participants (adults and older young people) displayed the adoption of collective identifications which fused the term Latin American with the panethnic expression Latino. In addition, there were signs that these panethnic identifications are being reproduced by transnational social fields and media which are expanding the boundaries of the Latino construct to include those in new migration destinations such as the UK (cf. Roth 2009).

However, currently the most accepted definition of Latin American amongst participants relies on the notion of a *geographical origin group sharing certain cultural commonalities*, which can embrace *multiplicity of ethnic identifications*. Often, there was not the strong sense of self-ascription which theoretically should be expected from an ethnic or panethnic formation (Eriksen 1997, 39). Instead, many first generation participants highlighted the differences (i.e. national political histories and trajectories, migration routes, class and socio-economic backgrounds) which, so far, have proved decisive in maintaining a lack of cohesion among members of this diverse group. These differences were also considered to be one of the main reasons behind the failure in establishing long-lasting and far-reaching Latin American initiatives in the northern regions. This situation may change as the population grows larger and the needs of some sectors (i.e. undocumented, refugees and asylum seekers, economically vulnerable migrants) acquire more salience in the north.

Despite having denounced their sending states in contributing to their 'lack of recognition' and 'lack of positive visibility' in the host country; the participants' accounts regarding the collective identity Latin American revealed a more fractured relationship with the system of 'ethnic' (multicultural) recognition which operates in the UK. I believe that their *soft* panethnic identifications were also related to their reluctance to be defined as an 'ethnic minority'. This reluctance was mainly rooted in fears of acquiring the 'wrong type of visibility' and, therefore, being made object of racialization and stereotyping processes. This problematic relationship became much

more apparent when discussing everyday, embodied experiences of visibility and invisibility and are the focus of the next chapter.

## 5. Negotiating invisibility

### 5.1. Introduction

The race/ethnicity relations system underpinning multicultural and integration policies in Britain has created an immigrant incorporation context dominated by a visual regime of difference and sameness based on racial and ethno-cultural cues (Joppke 1999b; Nagel and Staeheli 2008b, see chapter 2). This visual regime also needs to be understood in relation to how Western colonialism (and science) has perpetuated the construct of 'race' as a dominant "way of seeing, and then categorising, difference", subsequently placing these differences "in a hierarchy of power and value" which is at the basis of racist practices (Byrne 2006, 21). For instance, in the case of Latin America, Bonnet (2000, 49) has provided a historical account of how Portuguese and Spanish colonial powers made use of constructs such as "'Christian, 'civilised', and 'white'" to justify their dominance in the region and "to organise the economic and social structure of colonial societies". As he notes, within this triad, the most "inflexible of these identities" was whiteness, which consequently became "the key symbol of access to economic and social status" (Bonnett 2000, 49). In turn, the same constructs were adopted by the Creole<sup>28</sup> elites leading the Latin American independent movements in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for their own political designs and with the aim of "founding an independent, decolonised American society and culture, while retaining European values and white supremacy" (Pratt 1992, 175 cited in Bonnett 2000, 50). As I mentioned in the previous chapter, an important aspect of these colonial impositions is their legacy in terms of racial hierarchy in Latin America, within which 'whiteness' is still associated with providing privileged social status (e.g. Wade 1997; Yelvington 1997). In addition, the symbolic connection between Europeanness/whiteness and modernity (conceived as 'developed' and 'advanced') has also had a lasting influence in the region (highly contested and with a long history of counter narratives, e.g. Larrain 2000; Romero 2001).

These dominant ways of seeing difference are crucial when trying to understand the experiences of integration of ethnic minorities and immigrants in Western societies, whose marked or unmarked embodiments have considerable impacts on the ways in which they

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<sup>28</sup> "Creole (criollo/a): person of Iberian nationality born in the Americas" (Meade 2010, 342).

can negotiate sameness and membership in their countries of settlement (Colic-Peisker 2005; Nagel and Staeheli 2008b; Van Riemsdijk 2010). Critical studies on race, disability, sexuality, religion, etc., have shown how certain 'visible traits' (e.g. skin colour, bodily differences, dressing styles) have been considered to be 'out of place', exposing individuals with these traits to stereotyping, violence and discrimination (Nagel and Staeheli 2008b, 85; Sibley 1995). Additionally, these critical scholarships have also brought to the fore the complex visibility/invisibility negotiations that minority individuals often face in everyday social contexts – both in their *own groups* and wider social terrains (e.g. Davidson and Henderson 2010; Samuels 2003; Schlossberg 2001; Sherry 2004; Walker 1993). Within this literature, issues of *passing* (as straight, white, nondisabled, etc.) or *coming out* (revealing or explaining one's own identity perception) have been object of considerable debate (e.g. Ginsberg 1996; Weeks 1990).

As Walker (2001, 8) has noted, in a traditional sense, "passing (for straight, for white) has been read as a conservative form of self-representation that the subject chooses in order to assume the privileges of the dominant identity"; therefore being conceptualized as a form of "selling-out" or "being the victim" of oppression and complicit in the reproduction of the dominant order. Subsequent political re-workings, however, have endorsed passing as a "radical and transgressive practice" which can undermine the "system of knowledge and vision upon which subjectivity and identity precariously rests" (Ahmed 1999b, 88). Additionally, the visibility politics developed by minority groups through the 1970s-1980s relied on principles of using visibility in order to reclaim "identifiable marks of difference", fight against discrimination and demand social equality (Walker 2001, 1). Within this paradigm, coming out practices have been central to projects of recognition and social change (Samuels 2003, 244). However, this reliance on visibility has subsequently been criticized, especially in queer and disability critical studies, for resulting on exclusionary practices towards those who do not display or embody the traits which are supposed to *signify visually* their group identity (Samuels 2003, 244).

In the case of Latin Americans in the north of England, their diverse embodiments dictate the ways in which they are *read* in their everyday interactions: either they are not perceived as physically marked (i.e. many of them consider themselves white) or, if they are *seen* as having *physiological non-white* traits, they are misidentified as belonging to the *wrong* ethnic group, therefore being *invisible* as Latin Americans or their chosen ethnicity

but marked as a *generic other*. Drawing on Nagel's (2009, 403 italics in the original) suggestion to consider assimilation as a "relational process of *making sameness*"; in this chapter, I discuss the ways in which the participants negotiated the ethno-cultural visual regime which characterizes their integration context. From this basis, I argue that their *invisibility* can be understood in two ways. Firstly, as processes of making or reproducing dominant notions of sameness, that is maintaining *invisibility* and protecting their position vis-à-vis the perceived British *mainstream*<sup>29</sup>. Secondly, as a set of agential strategies (i.e. 'passing' or 'silencing difference') used to avoid visibility and racialization. Additionally, I sustain that, in the case of second generation participants, *visibility* (i.e. being seen as marked or 'coming out' as Latin American) is also employed as a way of reinterpreting notions of sameness in terms of multicultural diversity.

The chapter starts by considering how the participants perceived their host society and its social systems and how they constructed and/or reproduced sameness in order to negotiate membership within it. The second part turns to their encounters with visibility and otherness and their strategic behaviours to protect themselves from enforced racialization processes and, in some cases, resist mainstream notions of sameness.

## **5.2. Narratives of sameness: invisibility as a signifier of integration**

In order to start to explore how participants, who had immigrated themselves, perceived their host society and the social system that they were joining when settling in England, it is necessary to take into account the narratives that they presented when reflecting on their migration stories and the complexities of factors that had brought them to make the UK their residence and that of their children. In this sense, first generation adult participants referred to their immigration as paths to improve themselves professionally and socially (or achieving a guarantee of protection and political freedom in the case of refugees), but also crucially, to provide a better education and future for their offspring. The attraction that Europe represented for many Latin Americans was summarized by Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1), when she was reflecting on her experiences of

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<sup>29</sup> I do not wish to imply that there is an absolute and homogeneous *mainstream* or *host* British society, but I am using both terms to make reference to what was perceived by the participants as the dominant British culture.

having lived in the UK for more than 20 years. She emphasized the possibilities she had had to better herself and deplored the trends which had influenced her generation towards leaving their countries of origin in order to obtain a higher regarded education and aspire to better lives.

SUSANA. (...) I don't know if it is a socio-economic or socio-political question but here in Europe there is that ease that any person can have access to whatever they want and they can do it, if they have the ability to work for it, without having to pay... it seems that there, in Latin America, to be able to climb the [social] ladder you have to put money into it, not *skills*, not abilities or things like that. I think that is the most painful aspect of it and it's a shame. But at this moment I don't know what is the situation with young people in Colombia or in Venezuela or in Peru, I wouldn't know, I don't know what they think, but the whole of my generation aspired to study in the US, come to Germany, study in Europe, study in England, the whole of my generation, of the three colleges which I attended, all the parents wanted their children to leave the country... and obviously, at some point I copied that because there wasn't anyone in the family that told me to *think* about it. You have to have an education from somewhere else and I fought for my education.

Parallel to this type of narrative, many participants considered that their countries of origin could not provide the same standard of living and safety for their children. For example, Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9) reflected on the last visit the whole family had made to Bolivia and how it had brought him to decide that, for the time being, it was not possible to return as there were not the stable and public safety conditions to give his family a good standard of life.

JUAN. (...) When you have family, you want the utmost safety for them and the country [Bolivia] is upside down. Because when I was there... then no. No, I told her [his wife Frances], I told her: do you remember I said about going back to Bolivia for a year? Forget it! [laughs]. No, you want all the safety that you can give to your children, and know that they are free but safe, and there they wouldn't be. Then, no, it's not possible.

One of the dominant ideas introduced by the participants was that they considered that their children would receive a better education in the UK and consequently would have access to more prosperous futures. Marta (40s, Chilean), Martin (50s, British) and their son Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean) in household 7 all discussed the higher quality of education in the

UK, but illustratively Ben highlighted that one of his own reasons to live in England was his education.

*BEN. (...) Britain all it really means to me is erm fish and chips, football and education. Those are the only three things I'm actually here for. (...) Yeah, it is, education is important because it will get you where you need to be.*

Overall, the interdependent life paths of the members of the different participant families and their long-term projects of educational and/or social mobility were at the basis of how they rationalized their migration and settlement decisions and how they continued to make sense of their changing circumstances (cf. Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010). For the adult immigrant participants, the 'sacrifices' (i.e. being separated from extended kin and family) and 'adaptation efforts' (i.e. 'fitting in') that they undertook were offset by the present and perceived future benefits for themselves and their families.

These accounts, however, can also be understood in relation to how the UK, and Europe more generally, as cultural and social constructions have been conceived in Latin America; notions which, as I discussed in the introduction, are linked to colonial legacies. I do not mean to imply that these are exclusive narratives, as there have also been very influential Latin American intellectual movements and post-colonial counter-narratives of deconstruction (see for example, Dussel 1993; Romero 2001). However, in the present case, it is important to highlight two effects of these legacies which were reflected in many of the participants' accounts. First, from the perspective of 'Europe as modernity', to 'acquire' Europeaness (or by extend 'Westernness') can be understood as an aspiration to become a member of 'modernity' and to have access to its educational, social and economic opportunities. For example, it has been documented that Latin American intellectual and diplomatic elites regarded London as a place of political freedom, cultured and highly progressive, as far back as the 18<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. Buchuck 2006; McIlwaine 2007). Second, the status of 'whiteness' can be perceived as 'advantageous' in the sense of facilitating social advancement and protecting from experiences of racialization, othering and discrimination. Therefore, for the participants in this project, negotiating sameness in their host society can be considered as negotiating membership to this modernity. Furthermore, as I explore next, their socio-cultural and embodied 'invisibility' can also be read as the result of agential strategies to avoid being 'racialized' or 'othered', therefore

protecting their *mainstream* status in the UK but also their personal safety (e.g. avoiding racism).

### 5.2.1. Invisibility as sameness

In order to understand the everyday embodied experiences of Latin Americans in the north, it is necessary to start by focusing on the factors that the adult participants highlighted as playing a role in their invisibility in the places where they reside. These factors are related to the perceived degree of 'integration' of this population, that is of their level of synergy with what are considered mainstream values and dominant norms (cf. Fortier 2003; Juul 2011; Nagel and Staeheli 2008b). I think it is illustrative to begin with the account that Frances (30s, British married to Bolivian partner – household 9) provided in relation to this invisibility, as she highlighted several issues that are at the basis of what could be considered *invisibility as sameness*, that is the characteristics and behaviours that 'make Latin Americans the same as' mainstream British society according to her perception.

FRANCES. I think they [Latin Americans] mix up with the population more. (...) But I don't know, maybe because of the numbers, maybe because there aren't things such as cultural traits that the *Councils* must observe and all that, because obviously with the Pakistanis there are always issues relating to mosques, of observing their holidays and all that, but with the Latinos because they are Catholics the same as, well Christians, the same as none of the Britons (laughs) but it is the culture of the country, see? It is the same. (...) Then I don't think there are any special considerations to make and therefore there is no pressure. Then they become invisible because they don't make themselves heard. But I suppose that... I don't know, many Latinos get married to English people too, and then the families become English. (...) Many Latinos see themselves white, they see themselves like us, as it is said, they want to work like everybody else, so they do not have anything to make them different, except for the language. And maybe because they look, maybe because people see them as Asian, they are not seen, I don't know... because there isn't a shared identity which people will necessarily recognize. (...)

Frances provides a set of characteristics that she considers explain why Latin Americans are seen to be (or consider themselves) the same as mainstream British society. Especially she emphasizes that, in the case of Latin Americans, there is no need to accommodate religious or cultural differences as they share the 'official' Christian calendar and customs.

In addition, their lack of easily identifiable group identity reinforces their invisibility: many of them consider themselves white and they cannot be easily *noticed* as Latin Americans (they are often mistaken for Asian). In fact, Frances' narrative is about how she believes British mainstream society perceives difference and what differences are considered to be significant to set population groups apart. For example, the image of Latin Americans 'wanting to work like everybody else' echoes notions of prejudice observed amongst the majority population. Valentine (2010, 526) found that majority people in order to deflect potential charges of prejudice drew on imagined narratives of "Britishness" and "British values", such as "fairness" and "justice", to legitimize their attitudes towards minority groups. In some cases, discourses of "economic based injustices" were deployed in relation to minorities being treated preferentially in terms of employment opportunities, welfare benefits and public housing in detriment of the "'hard-working' majority population" (Valentine 2010, 527). As I continue to discuss in this section, Frances' arguments and other narratives of sameness provided by adult participants did, in fact, reflect both the lingering influence of colonial constructs of power, such as 'Christian' and 'white' (Bonnett 2000, 49), as well as prevalent articulations of prejudice amongst majority people in Britain (Valentine 2010).

One of the factors which appeared in most of the narratives of sameness of the adult participants (and the few young people who had immigrated more recently) was the commonality of the Christian traditions and calendar (e.g. significant holidays), which was considered to provide a shared cultural understanding and lived experience between Latin Americans and Britons. For example, Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8) emphasized the importance that attending her local Catholic church had had for her wellbeing when settling in England, as it had provided her with a cultural backdrop that was familiar and 'the same' as the one she had grown up with in Mexico. This situation had provided her with the chance to reproduce the values of her own upbringing for her children and had also allowed her to establish friendships with British people with whom she could share these common values.

KARLA. (...) When I arrived here I did not find a group of Latin Americans, because I was in this village, everything was in [big city nearby] and I started to go to, we started to go to the church again, and there I found something which was not so much about going to church, but something of my culture, which is how... My parents brought me up going to church

and all that then, so I met them [some British friends] because of this. Then we also have... I think we also talk about spiritual matters, yes, about spiritual matters and it is very strange because I have found many similar things between how I was educated and how they were educated. Then, even though they aren't Latin American, we have things in common, from our past, in how our parents treated us, what we want for our children, what we want [for ourselves], things like that... (...)

Due to the increasing secularization of British and European societies more generally (e.g. Martin 2005; Voas and Crockett 2005), it is important to emphasize that these narratives often did not refer to religious practice (i.e. church going) but to the perceived Christian culture and ethos which characterizes the institutional organization of the UK. In fact, Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9) directly highlighted the common traditions between Catholics and Anglicans in terms of celebrations and festivities but also how the Christian praxis provided a framework of sameness in which his British wife and himself could educate their children.

JUAN. (...) Anglicans have nearly the same festivities as Catholics anyway, so it is not so... there is not so much difference, maybe a bit on the dates but from there, nothing else, from there nearly everything is the same. (...) But to be honest, I think I don't mind religion so much as far as you know you are with Christ, you know that you're Catho... there isn't one thing Catholic or Anglican or Adventist, then you believe in Christ, and that's it, no... (...) so you can give them [the children] a Christian education and that's fine.

In addition, adult participants also constructed narratives of sameness by emphasizing that the sources of disparity with local society or between Latin American and British partners were actually related to differences in gender, class or educational background. Household 7 provided clear examples of these types of constructions; in fact, British father Martin (50s married to Marta – 40s, Chilean) engaged in rich digressions during his personal interview which aimed at establishing the sameness between himself and his wife. Martin highlighted that when he first married Marta and they settled in the UK, the meaningful differences that he found between himself and his wife were in fact due to gender aspirations and attitudes, about leaving singlehood behind and starting a family. For Martin, Marta and himself belonged to the same generation and shared the same values (except from certain popular traditions) which were at the basis of their commonality, and

he rejected any other significant notion of difference apart from that rooted in their genders.

*MARTIN. Um to be honest with you I didn't find anything stranger than it was. It was strange, right? But it wasn't strange in the way that I thought it'd be 'cause it was, she was from a different country. It was strange because she was a woman. She had different aspir-, uh aspirations in life. She had a, she wanted a baby and we had to sort out our whole family life. (...) No, the thing with Marta and myself we would grow up to be the same generation. We more or less play the same music, yeah? (...) So what we're trying to pass onto him [their son] is probably the same. (...)*

However, Martin (50s, British – household 7) also reinforced his argument of sameness by contrasting European and Latin American cultures to Asian Muslims and consequently positioning them as the actual 'Other'. Differences attached to the Muslim religion and way of life were, in his view, 'too overwhelming' and 'imposing'. In turn, this relational positioning allowed him to emphasize the sameness between his wife and himself.

*MARTIN. Well it makes you appreciate the traditions that we use to have here which have been swamped by all this cultural influence from abroad. I mean, I, I don't mind the Latin Americans, and the Spanish, and the French, and the Germans, but I really don't like a lot of the Asian stuff [sic]. Because it is just too overwhelming. They impose it rather than uh – what's the word? – allow it to integrate into the society. And all this political correctness is uh, well causing a lot of problems and it's usually to do with the Asian culture. And I mean Asian – uh I don't mean the Japanese or the, the Chinese – it's the, you know, certain uh religious groups.*  
*INTERVIEWER. Identified more with Muslims or...?*  
*MARTIN. Well, yeah, because they're, they don't respect the culture to be honest with you – I don't think they do anyway. It's their culture and our culture. (...)*

This narrative can be understood in relation to the perceived shared Christian cultural background discussed above, but also in relation to discourses of national identity which have historically defined Britain as 'a Christian country' (e.g. Cesarani 1996; Ipsos Mori 2007). Against the background of a Christian society increasingly secularized, Islam has been constructed as the ultimate religious 'Other' on the basis of perceived terrorist threats and Islamic extremism (e.g. Modood 2005; Poole 2002). However, it is the 'visibility' of Muslims in public space, through embodied elements, dressing codes and the presence of mosques, to which Martin referred above. In fact, Valentine (2010, 531) found

that this visibility in public space was central to majority people's articulations of "the perceived cultural threat posed by minority groups". By not altering the majority population's scopic regime of sameness in relation to public spaces and behaviours, Latin Americans (and Europeans) are presented as being 'the same' and bringing 'acceptable' diversity to British society. However, as I will discuss later, when it comes to marked/unmarked embodiments and being made object of *othering gazes*, the invisibility of Latin Americans is much more fractured than this account implies.

At the end of the interview, I inadvertently used the expression 'mixed' to refer to the combination of different geographical origins in the heritage that Martin and Marta were passing onto their son. Martin (50s, British – household 7) took exception to the use of this expression and explained that he did not consider his marriage a 'mixed relationship', neither saw his son's heritage as 'mixed'. Using the expression 'mixed' implied difference and projected racial connotations which did not figure on Martin's understanding of his partnership or son's heritage (cf. Ifekwunigwe 2004). For him the only diversity within his family was a diversity of traditions (i.e. music, dance, social conventions, etc.) and gender roles, which were neither significant nor visible (therefore white).

*MARTIN. I don't see it as a mixed relationship. It's never been, never felt as a mixed relationship – it's just my life. He's my son. It's never, you don't consider it a mixed relationship. (...) You have to be careful when you say it 'cause some people can be really offended. I'm not one of them, so you're alright then. Um I don't feel it is a mixed relationship. The only mix is the male-female thing really. There is interesting aspects that she's bringing, I mean for example you were saying before about her cooking, a different way of eating food. (...) The traditions like dancing, singing, and plays, and whatever, yeah. I like that sort of stuff. Yeah, but you don't get that in France, Spain, or wherever you go in the world, so that's interesting. Um I don't see that as a handicap, I see that as enriching your life. (...)*

Another narrative that the participants used to construct notions of commonality between their countries of origin and settlement had its grounding on the class structures that were seen to operate in both societies. For example, when I asked Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10) about the 'differences' (if any) that he had encountered in the UK, he reflected on his unskilled work experiences which contrasted strongly with his middle-class life in Chile. This led the conversation to issues of social class systems, which he considered structured people's lives in the same way both in his native Chile and the UK.

PACO. I feel at home (laughs), [the class system] works exactly in the same way (...). And related to social class there is education, language [dialects and accent], residence, skin colour, eye colour, physical appearance, themes of conversation, television programmes, music, a group of cultural issues which are related to a life style and to a specific social class and that's exactly the same (...).

All these accounts were actually constructing sameness on the basis of the gender, class and educational distinctions that the participants had encountered in their society of settlement. As has been noted, concepts such as *mainstream* and *host society* connote homogeneity and ignore the class, gender, ethnic, etc., differences which function in any social grouping (e.g. Nagel 2002; Portes and Zhou 1993). It is in relation to these stratified mainstream realities that migrants negotiate and discursively construct sameness and difference. Thus, for the adult participants relationally making sameness with the perceived British mainstream (or within it for dual couples), often became a matter of reproducing dominant systems of differentiation and prejudices. In turn, second generation participants practiced sameness by turning to their socialization experiences and by silencing any potential differences.

### 5.2.2. Reproducing sameness

Generally, second generation participants provided accounts of the sameness that they shared with their friends by highlighting what they had in common (e.g. having the same preferences regarding sports or games) and what they liked doing together (e.g. playing in each other's homes, riding on their bicycles). For example, during the weekly activities diagram, one of the youngest participants Sally (9, Anglo-Bolivian – household 9) emphasized the commonalities that she shared with her groups of friends. She was one of the only children who had the chance to meet every other week with young people of Latin American descent, but the emphasis on making sameness through their games and their likes and dislikes applied equally to all her friendships.

*SALLY. Um so, most of them are from [city where she lives], but like a few are from different places. Yeah we have a lot in common, all of us.*

*INTERVIEWER. Can you tell me a bit about what you have in common? What do you think?*

*SALLY. All are from, well most of us are from the same hospital and, city. We like the same hobbies, like drawing, athletics. Um musical instruments,*

*and um TV programs – we always talk about them. [chuckles] And TV games, computer games, electrical games, and um. We all like to play games in the playground like chase, spying, hide and seek (...). But um we do have, and we're in the same class but we do sometimes fall out. [Pause] But um we just normally play together and stay together. (...)*

*INTERVIEWER. Do you ever tell them anything about your heritage?*

*SALLY. Yeah, sometimes they're not very interested. Like they sometimes say, like J and that and become rude and say like, 'Boring!' and he puts off the whole thing and he wouldn't want to listen to the story.*

*INTERVIEWER. That's when you're telling them about... they're not interested at all?*

*SALLY. No, they're just boyish boys who talk about football and everything – not very interested. So I don't really.*

*INTERVIEWER. And with your friends in the Latin American lunch (...) do you ever talk about these things? You know, what you have in common?*

*SALLY. No, we just like playing games to each other. We don't really care about other things. [chuckles]*

These accounts of sameness accord with research on children's identities and socialization experiences, which has brought to the fore the importance that children attach to 'fitting in' and feeling the same as their peers (e.g. Devine and Kelly 2006; James 1993). However, negotiating this everyday sameness requires navigating the fluid and unstable boundaries between notions of normality and difference (James 1993). As can be gathered by Sally's account, many of the young participants in this project explained that in general they did not talk about their backgrounds or heritages with their friends. In Samuels' (2003, 240) terms, these young participants took advantage of opportunities of "passing by default" (perceptions of being the same) and selectively opting for "passing deliberately" to protect themselves. Thus, they negotiated their day-to-day lives and friendships in a context of sameness which was sometimes maintained by silencing any potential differences.

Some of the participants elaborated further on this strategic silence by explaining that they did not want to 'mix up' their two different worlds. For instance, Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean – household 7) thought that revealing his heritage in England would be 'showing off' and explained that he did not feel comfortable telling his peers about his familial background. In fact, he considered Chile as his private space and, as he expressed it, he did not want people in England to 'interfere' with this intimate sphere.

*BEN. It feels erm, when you say when you're here.... in Chile and say oh I'm part Chilean then people like take an interest but, you know, (...) it's a*

*conversation but this, when you say I'm Chilean here [in England] it's more of a erm... like... a show off. (...) Erm no I wouldn't feel comfortable telling people where I'm from, they just take, some people would, you know, say oh that's interesting, some people would say just take the mick and other people would just wouldn't really care.*

In his everyday life, Ben maintains his 'English space' separated from his 'Chilean space'. Not talking about his heritage with his peers is a form of protection, as he feels they would not care or they would make fun of it. Equally, he does not want to 'show it off' either, he wants to avoid making any difference 'visible', which he can easily achieve as his physical aspect, his name and surname and his accent in English allow him to do so.

*BEN. I think that area [speaking Spanish] is more... I left, I think it should be left for Chile, 'cos to me England is England and Chile is Chile I don't want to... mix.*

*INTERVIEWER. May I ask, why is that? (...)*

*BEN. Because I don't want because I don't generally like England so I don't want England to interfere with Chile.*

*INTERVIEWER. Ok... how does it interfere? I just want to understand...*

*BEN. I don't want it to interfere like people, because people here [England], I don't want them... you know, I don't want them to come over here [Chile], because over here it's my space, it's somewhere that I can go, so I don't want them there... (...)*

*INTERVIEWER. Have you ever told anyone about that, that Chilean heritage (...)?*

*BEN. Only like my mum's friends, but... no, no one my own age, no one like that, no.*

Ben's passing can be considered as a conscious strategy to reproduce sameness (in assimilative terms to confine any differences to the private sphere) but also as a method of protection used to guard his intimacy and private sense of self in front of a potentially hostile reception context (see Samuels 2003, 242). However, the complexity of the spectrum of visibility/invisibility which characterizes the lives of these young participants became apparent in relation to their embodied everyday interactions. In contrast to these invisibility practices, some informants reported that they had been questioned about their origins in their everyday encounters due to their physical appearance, experiences which had an impact on how they positioned themselves and how they negotiated sameness on the basis of visibility. I will focus on their strategies later in the chapter when exploring their encounters with otherness.

### 5.3. Negotiating alterity

The embodied experiences of all participants (adults and young people) in interacting with their social contexts were highly diverse depending on their marked or unmarked embodiments. Factors such as physical aspect, accent when speaking English and other embodied features (i.e. dark hair or dark eyes) were highlighted as having an impact on how they were perceived in their everyday environments (cf. O'Connor 2010). In the case of second generation participants, accent and command of the language were not mentioned as visibility issues as most of them spoke English with local regional accents.

Therefore, the ways in which participants' embodiments were *read* by others had a direct impact on the extent to which they were made object of racialization processes and on their level of freedom to perform "flexible ethnicity", that is "the ability to deftly and effectively navigate different racial terrains and be considered an "insider" in more than one racial or ethnic group" (Vasquez 2010, 46). In the next subsections, I explore the othering experiences that the participants reported and the ways in which they negotiated, subverted and/or resisted these experiences.

#### 5.3.1. Encountering 'otherness'

One of the most common occurrences that participants (adults and young people) recalled was to be misidentified as being of Asian ethnicity (and consequently Muslim). This happened mostly when being in public spaces and *being read* purely through physical traits, but also when they were enquired about their cultural heritage or ethnicity.

In the case of being misidentified when in public spaces, some of them had been subjected to the same racial verbal abuses that Asian and Muslims may encounter in the UK (e.g. Abbas 2005). Therefore, they were object of "cross discrimination" (Feagin 1991, 111 cited in Vasquez 2010, 52), that is "discrimination [practices] aimed at a *different* minority group" (Vasquez 2010, 52 italics in the original), which could have an effect on their everyday life and wellbeing. Their experiences echoed the extreme case of Brazilian Jean Charles De Menezes, who was shot dead when he was mistakenly identified as one of the South Asian suspects of the bombings of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2005 in London, therefore falling victim of controversial racial profiling practices (e.g. Pugliese 2006). It is interesting to note that, despite the higher 'visibility' of Latin Americans in the US, similar misidentifications have

been reported by Latinos in that country (Vasquez 2010, 53). For example, Frances (30s, British - household 9) explained that her husband Juan (30s, Bolivian - household 9) had been subject to 'cross racist' verbal abuse.

FRANCES. Juan said, Juan has had... there are some ignorant people who pass by drunk in the city centre and they say to him 'go back to Pakistan' [laughs]. Then, yes there have been occasions. There have been several things that have happened but not to the children.

However, some participants also reported being questioned about their heritage, mainly when people assumed that they were of Pakistani or Asian descent; importantly though, these type of assumptions were made by people from all ethnic backgrounds and not exclusively by the white population. For example, Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian – household 4) explained that she had been misidentified as being of Pakistani origin, an experience that she related to the fact that there were not many Latin Americans where she lives so people were not aware of them. She also expressed her frustration in front of the misguided assumptions and lack of understanding of the 'Latino character' that her peers showed, that is the lack of recognition of Latin Americans as part of British society.

ELIZABETH. (...) Sometimes they mistake me for Pakistani because there aren't Latinos here... [laughs]. (...) Because there aren't Latinos. (...) They don't know anything. They think that Latinos are boring people... and that's not right. No... so, the English are boring and they don't come to my place much because they don't know how the Spaniards [sic used in the sense of Spanish speakers] are, they don't know our traditions, that is they assume things, they don't know how Latin life is, they don't know, we are respectable and very funny.

This unawareness also finds expression through the lack of dominant stereotypes (positive or negative) about Latin Americans in the UK. Sibley (1995, 19) suggests that "the social self could also be seen as a place-related self, and this applies also to stereotypes of the other which assume negative or positive qualities according to whether the stereotyped individual or group is 'in place' or 'out of place'". It could be argued that, in the case of Latin Americans, they are not seen 'in or out of place' as their invisibility, to a great extent and so far, has removed them from processes of good or bad stereotyping. However, this situation has both positive and negative impacts. On the one hand, it protects them from potentially being racialized and/or homogenized through bad stereotyping as Latin Americans or Latinos, but on the other, it undermines possibilities of cultural recognition

as Elizabeth exemplified in the former excerpt (cf. Nagel and Staeheli 2008b). Unfortunately, this does not mean that Latin Americans are not racialized or target of othering experiences, as we have seen above when being misidentified as Asians, or as I will explore below when being categorized as a *generic other*. For instance, Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1) summarized how the unidentifiable *visibility* of Latin Americans becomes a signifier of generic otherness and foreignness.

SUSANA. I think that in the UK is more about lack of knowledge, because I had the experience of being Latin American in Spain, and the Spanish are racist, and they say it directly to your face, wham!<sup>30</sup> and you're left like that whew, precisely for being Colombian, for being Latino, they say it to you and that's it. Here it is *mellow*, it's not... there is a lot of ignorance, then it is not known, it is *foreign*, then one can be... I'm taken for a person from Pakistan, from China, from Asia... I'm never taken first for Colombian, never, never. (...) I think that it gets lost significantly, but I don't believe either that Latin America has a stereotype, then it becomes very complicated for them to try to find a Latin American stereotype. Maybe they can think of an Ecuadorian or Peruvian but generally the ignorance is such that they don't have a clue of where to put it.

However, before I proceed to explore further the experiences attached to being categorized as a *generic other*, it is important to note that it is not completely accurate to affirm that there are no stereotypes attached to Latin Americans in the UK. I would argue that, in fact, there are stereotypes that do not function at the level of general perceptions of visibility but that come into action once someone has been already identified as Latin American. One of the most dominant ones is the gendered stereotype attached to the images of Latinas as 'exotic other' (cf. Ali 2005; Gómez 2007; Vasquez 2010). One of the participants, Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7) provided an illustrative account of this type of stereotyping, which had affected how she was perceived within her British husband's social circle.

MARTA. (...) Well, let's see... a bit, it's like a bit funny, because being Latino... within the environment of a couple they type-cast you and besides Martin's colleagues play jokes on him because he is married to a Latina. Because I'm like a *hot lady* [soft laughs]. And that partly bothers me... because you go to a party and it is like come on, Martin's wife, the

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<sup>30</sup> She uses the Spanish onomatopoeic expression '*iraca!*' similar to 'wham!' in English. It is used to emphasise the physical sensation of being verbally abused.

exotic one who has to arrive [dressed] like... because that's what they expect, see? In that sense, if I didn't have any education or culture I would feel bad about it, but at the end of the day it makes me laugh. But I don't like it very much, really. (...) And they give you spicy food or they put music on a bit, a bit like *Dirty Dance* [sic], and they nearly expect you to start [dancing] there... [laughs]. I like dancing, I do but not... I don't know, it's like what they expect from you. That really has happened to me, mainly with Martin. And Martin is happy because he loves that his colleagues know he is married to a Latina [laughs]. None other than a hot Latina, they say, *the hot lady*, that's how they see me [laughs].

Marta feels that the gendered stereotype of 'hot Latina' looms large on the expectations some people from her husband's social circle have about her: 'being sexy, dancing with passion', expectations that make her feel objectified and othered. However, for her husband this is a subject of fun and male pride, something that he can joke about with his colleagues. These stereotypes point towards the few elements which are attached to the current dominant idea of 'what is Latino' in the UK: spicy food (due mainly to Mexican food), salsa dancing and exotic, sensuous women. However, these sexualized (and racialized) stereotypes need to be understood in terms of wider colonial and post-colonial narratives of Latin America as an 'exotic land' which acquired special force in the British imaginary through the travel writing of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Pratt 1992). These narratives echo Said's (2003 [1978]) notion of Orientalism, the process of representation by which the East was constructed as the 'Other' in the Western mind. As Chant and Craske (2003, 138 quoting Stavans 1998, 230) have summarized "Latin America has also been a terrain for exoticised representations of sensuality revolving around the power of the *macho* and his member, and 'flamboyant women' portrayed as 'provocative, well-built, sensual, lascivious, with indomitable, even bestial, nerve and intensity'". These constructed stereotypical images of the 'Other' as 'exotic, sexualized and naturally wild' (cf. Gómez 2007; Vasquez 2010) still have popular currency and, as we have seen, Marta comprehensibly resents them.

Despite this, the most common discriminatory practices which adult participants related were based on notions of being classified as a *generic other*, mostly understood as a generic immigrant or foreigner, which was charged with mainstream prejudices against immigrants and therefore object of cross discrimination. Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10) provided a definition of this generic category which he felt that his work colleagues

considered him a member of; a category which aimed at marking difference and perpetuating the hierarchies of dominant power in place.

PACO. (...) So the difference lies on the fact that being immigrant here is an issue (...) and there are a set of perceptions, way of treating someone, conversations, you can integrate in many aspects of life, but there is a label that you must not share, which is serious. (...) Immigrants are a big category, I'm sure that I'm in the category 'Paki', like a very broad immigrant category. I have a friend, well a colleague, I have a colleague at work that when Italian immigrants were coming to work for a firm [here in the UK] which caused a lot of tension, he used the word 'Paki' to talk about this group of people, that is, in this sense 'Paki' is, well for me Italians are not 'Paki', but his concept of 'Paki' is of non-English immigrant in a way.

In general, all first generation adult participants felt that the majority of discriminatory experiences they had faced in England were rooted in being identified as this *generic other* and not because of any prejudice towards Latin Americans specifically. Othering experiences had been encountered due to their foreign accents and their physical traits but also because of their educational degrees and professional experience being considered of lower quality or not recognized by potential employers. These experiences were not limited to their interactions with the wider society but in the case of some participants, who were married to English partners, also happened within the closer sphere of the in-law families and friends. In this sense, Karla (30s, Mexican – household 7) was treated with suspicion by her in-law family, who considered her a 'foreigner who was using their son' to settle in the UK; in the following excerpt she reflected on how her parents-in-law regarded her at the beginning of the relationship with her now husband.

KARLA. Erm... uneducated, erm... yes, I think that more as uneducated, like if I was taking advantage of the situation... to come to England, like if, that feeling which is so common in English people of 'why are they coming to my country?' I felt, I felt they saw me as a forced relationship to be able to come to live in England, because 'what a wonderful country England!' [laughs].

All through the accounts of the participants it can be gathered that this *generic other* is generally attributed prejudices of 'backwardness', therefore being relegated to inferiority from the symbolic 'modern and advanced society' which England represents (cf. Sibley 1995). Furthermore, being identified as non-European also could lead to being racialized

independently from physical traits or marked embodiments. Ma José (30s, Mexican – household 6) provided an example of how her daughter Constanza had been racially marked when being identified as ‘Mexican’ during a visit to the doctor to treat an allergic reaction she had suffered to an insect bite.

MA JOSÉ. Besides it was like on the whole of her arm, and I told her, she has very strong [allergic] reactions, it could have been a mosquito, “in this country mosquitoes, maybe in other [countries], and the climate, the conditions...” (...) But it was like, it was like a situation of “don’t you know that this animal doesn’t exist here?!” And I thought, well then, she can believe that. And then she says: it is also related to the skin tone, and Constanza was itching all over, whatever you say, the child is transparent, that is [laughs]... Not because I say it, she is, compared to [younger daughter], for example Constanza is much whiter (...) and she continued: yes but the darker complexion, and I was like, well [laughs], I understand, she is dark-skinned, well... (...) Then, that time I listened, but well, it makes you think, my God, Constanza here is dark-skinned, and I told her, well it is true, she is not Saxon, that’s evident but that should not be conflictive, should it? For me it was more like confirming that this particular person had a problem, for not seeing that, didn’t she? That [Constanza] reacted to a mosquito bite had nothing to do with race (...).

Despite their considerable degree of invisibility, many participants (adults and young people) could not escape experiences of discrimination and racialization, which due to the lack of visible dominant stereotypes about Latin Americans were mainly rooted in generic ideas of the ‘Other’. In those cases in which physical appearance and accent were not markers of difference, participants had also been racially marked once they had been identified as of non-European descent. However, potential ‘othering’ experiences were counteracted by adopting invisibility strategies which are the focus of the next section.

### **5.3.2. Negotiating ‘otherness’**

In her study about the construction of sameness and difference among British Arabs, Nagel (2002, 263) suggests that completely rejecting the concept of assimilation may drive us away from understanding migrant and minority groups’ acts of “sameness, conformity and ‘blending in’”. She adds “[p]ractices of sameness must be made a more explicit component of our studies of difference, lest we create an incomplete and unbalanced picture of immigrant-host society relationships” (Nagel 2002, 267). Following her suggestions and in

order to understand more fully the integration experiences of Latin Americans in the north of England, I explore next how participants actively pursued sameness by using invisibility (i.e. passing) and visibility (i.e. 'coming out') in several ways.

### **5.3.2.1. Strategic invisibilities**

Many of the migrant participants (adults and first generation young people) emphasized how they had made efforts to 'fit in' and learn the social conventions and behaviours of their host society in order to be able to function in the UK. Efforts to 'fit in' and the behavioural changes attached to this adaptation strategies were interpreted differently among the participants; in some instances they were seen as very positive and enriching experiences, but in others, they were perceived with mixed-feelings and a sense of loss of 'identity'. These positions, which were not absolute and sometimes were expressed contradictorily, often worked through class lines, with middle-class, professional participants more often interpreting their successful adaptation as a positive outcome of their settlement in the UK, in contrast to participants from less privileged backgrounds.

The 'positive' interpretations of adaptation are in line with the attitudes that Nagel (2002, 272) describes among British Arabs "middle-class negotiators", who "explicitly attempt to accommodate dominant social mores and to show that they can be both 'Western' and 'Arab' by adhering to middle-class English sensibilities". In this sense, Nagel's (2002, 273) participants emphasized the need to not be seen as different (i.e. not wearing religious clothing) and to behave as "good guests" in their host society. In the case of some of the middle-class participants in this project, narratives of accommodation to 'dominant social mores' tended to be described in terms of cosmopolitan enrichment, which had allowed them to acquire broader outlooks in life and learn about other cultures. Therefore, it was not a purely unilateral effort of accommodating to dominant forms but it was also considered as a process of personal development and a flexible approach to facing life's changing circumstances. For example, Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1), who has had a professional job for many years, explained how she had adopted 'values' that allowed her to function effectively in her working life but also enriched her personal and political activities. Importantly, however, this was also presented as a process which demanded effort (conscious undertaking) and emotional investment from the side of the newcomer.

SUSANA. (...) Erm, culture wise, I think that the culture is there, I think that at some point I have acquired a lot of British values in order to function, to be here but which are also things that one, that I'm grateful to have because they have allowed me to establish connections with the cultures I have to be in contact with, because of my work, of my social life, of my political interests and my personal interests, this allows me, it has been a tool which has allowed me to be permeable. (...) I think you need to make an effort, I think it is the one who arrives who has to make an extraterrestrial effort to... that, that may be a drawback, see? That we have to work very hard for it, I have had to work very hard to be able to maintain friendships with the locals, locals, and they are great people but it takes time to get to know them, it is easy to give up.

On the other hand, participants from less privileged backgrounds sometimes found that processes of 'blending in' meant a weakening of their cultural expressions. Mixed-feelings were expressed by all the members of household 4, who had had the experience of residing in London before being dispersed to the north of the country by NASS. During the group interview they contrasted their experiences in the capital with those in their current residential area; and expressed their dissatisfaction with the 'changes' that they perceived among the behaviour of fellow Latin American migrants, who in the north often socialized in more culturally mixed environments.

PAULA. Here they've changed... in many parties where I have been, it is, they sit down, only to talk, talk, talk, talk and talk, it's not like in our country, we play music, dance, eat, have fun, but here is only talk, talk, talk and talk, they only pass the time talking.

PABLO. There's no atmosphere...

PAULA. There's no atmosphere, they talk and don't...

INTERVIEWER. But do you think that Latin Americans who live here also adopt this...?

PAULA. Yes, they have changed to be that way. That is, dancing does not interest them. They're only interested in watching television, videos or talking, it is a gathering like the ones here. (...) That's where I have noted a change here, here, in London, on the other hand, is different...

INTERVIEWER. Why do you think is different in London?

PAULA. Because there are more people from our country, from our own culture, in contrast here when you go to a party, you see a lot of other people, different people.

These adaptation processes had direct impacts on how participants expressed their senses of identity and belonging (see chapter 7), as efforts to 'fit in' were considered to take an

emotional toll on the attachments to their home countries and heritage. At this point, though, it is important to focus on the agential strategies that participants engaged in when trying to ‘blend in’ and maintain their *embodied invisibility* in the places where they live.

As I stated earlier, possibilities of passing for Latin Americans mainly depend on their marked or unmarked embodiments, which allow them different possibilities to perform “flexible ethnicity” (Vasquez 2010, 58). In addition, foreign accent when speaking in English was also considered an important marker of difference. O’Connor (2010) explains the importance that Irish accent when speaking in English has for contemporary Irish migrants in Australia, who may tone it down to negotiate their day-to-day relationships in their host country. At the same time, maintaining the accent is also understood as a way of preserving their Irish identity; therefore, showing the salience that *audible traits* can acquire as identity markers. However, I would suggest that having what can be considered a *native* accent (from a different region or country of the English speaking world) has different connotations to speaking English with what can be marked as a *foreign* accent or command (level of ability to express in the language). In the case of the immigrant Latin American participants, having a foreign accent when speaking in English was considered another way in which they could be *generically othered* (marked ‘out of place’) and therefore made object of prejudice and even hostility (cf. Sibley 1995). In order to negotiate this marker of difference, some participants reported keeping silent in situations in which they did not feel comfortable, therefore using silence as a form of protection and taking advantage of the possibilities awarded by embodiments which were not easily *readable*. Louise (30s, Chilean – household 10) illustrated this type of strategic behaviour.

LOUISE. (...) Then it is either your colour, in the first instance, still I can pass a bit camouflaged sometimes, because you never know, colours, it is all mixed up, but if you open your mouth, you’re immediately identified.

INTERVIEWER. Is it because of the accent which is not...?

LOUISE. Of course, of course the accent. Sometimes I pass, I try to pass a bit, not speaking, if I feel a bit intimidated, or I feel that I’m not comfortable, I don’t speak, so I can... pass.

Household 10, showed a consistent use of strategic silence to avoid visibility in their everyday life. Jake (14, Chilean – household 10), Louise’s son, reported not talking about his life in Chile with his peers in England in order to keep both places completely

separated. In this sense, both generations considered silence an effective protection strategy. Their level of sensitivity to this type of potential othering (and perception of risk) is related to an episode of racist verbal abuse and threat of violence that Louise experienced when travelling on the bus shortly after settling in the city where they reside. Therefore, this family's efforts to pass can also be understood as a "defensive withdrawal" or "strategy of 'invisibilisation'" adopted in order to minimize the risk of racist violence (Hopkins and Smith 2008, 106).

However, there is a more far-reaching strategic aspect to how Latin Americans perceive their own invisibility in the north of the country and which is related to ideas of managing their *group identity*. I am referring to the willingness reported by some of the adult participants to maintain and reproduce the invisibility of the population; a strategic *group passing* which was constructed in opposition to the idea of visibility as problematic. It is interesting to compare this approach to the one of another invisible population in the UK, that of British Arabs studied by Nagel and Staeheli (2008b). A critical difference between British Arabs and Latin Americans in the UK seems to be that the former suffer from a "hypervisibility of negative stereotypes" (Nagel & Staeheli 2008, 89), whilst the latter do not. In order to correct this negative 'hypervisibility', Nagel and Staeheli (2008b, 90) reported that among many of the British Arabs activists with whom they had spoken "there was a sense of urgency about 'coming out', as it were, as Arabs – that is, to cease to fear their identity, to project it in a positive way, and to allow the British 'mainstream' to see Arabs as contributing to society". So, for this population the way to manage and correct the generalized negative perceptions about Arabs was to try to 'make visible' their own positive ideas about their collective identity (ideas which were diverse both in content and in approaches to achieving it). In contrast, some of the northern adult Latin American participants and informants, talked about keeping the 'community' silent and invisible ('in the closet') as a way to maintain their non-racialized and non-stereotyped position within the mainstream society. This strategic invisibility relates to their reluctance to be considered an 'ethnic minority' which I discussed in the previous chapter. As Fortier (2003, 243) has noted in relation to the accounts of the British Italian women who participated in her research, "[b]eing defined as 'minority' is equivalent to being marked as cultural and economic 'outsider'" (see also Gray 2002). Some of the Latin American adult participants were strategically trying to avoid this type of 'subordination' and

'outsiderness' in their host society; being 'visible' would, on the one hand threaten their status vis-à-vis the mainstream, and on the other, make them a potential object of the public *othering gaze*.

For example, one of the participants, Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9) reflected on this issue at length, and compared the situation in the north with the 'higher visibility' of the population in London – where he had also lived. According to his perception, the northern 'communities' have an idea of how they want to be seen and what behaviours they consider acceptable within their group; consequently, they discipline membership to the 'community' by including or excluding members according to this desirable image. A desirable image which is based on ideas of long-term settlement, support among the members, individuals or families who want to 'integrate' and who 'respect' the mainstream norms of their host land.

INTERVIEWER. And what are the reasons for [northern Latin Americans keeping their presence unnoticed]?

JUAN. It is because they don't want it to be a direct invasion, as it has happened in London or in Manchester, because it has also happened in Manchester.

INTERVIEWER. Ok, I wasn't aware...

JUAN. You didn't know? There were many people that... Latinos who arrived and said, oh well London is, there isn't much work because of this and that, which is the next big city? Manchester, and they went to Manchester and it was more or less the same as in London. But if you are in... well, in [city of Yorkshire] there is a Latin community there too but very quiet, why? Because they prefer it, because it's calmer, because otherwise all of them would arrive, and the truth is that for a while there were many here, only Ecuadorians and they started to give a very bad image to Latinos.

INTERVIEWER. Ok, what happened?

JUAN. Well, they drunk, and drunk, what all Latinos do in London, drink but when they drink, they get terribly drunk, and say 'I'm Latino, I don't give a damn about any this' and people here are not like that, even the same English people don't like arrogance, they like normal people, they don't like being intimidated or to intimidate, nothing of that. Then they started, the same Latinos, started to exclude these Ecuadorians, they didn't even speak to them, then they left, they left, if I'm not wrong they went to [city in the Midlands], why? Because they were being excluded. And that's why I think that it is better, that's why they try to keep it more

quiet, they prefer to have [families] coming, or students but not, not people who don't know how to work. I think that is the reason why they try to keep it calmer.

It is revealing to note that Juan's narrative regarding how northern Latin American 'communities' manage their membership echoes some of the constructs that Valentine's (2010) majority participants used to justify and articulate prejudice towards minorities. For example, Juan's use of the expression 'invasion' to describe the arrival of significant number of Latin Americans is the same kind of spatial metaphor that majority people used to "justify the cultural threat allegedly posed by 'difference'" (Valentine 2010, 531). Equally, as I discussed earlier, 'knowing how to work' refers to the purported majority population's hard-working culture in opposition to the supposed "unproductive" minorities (Valentine 2010, 527). It could be argued that, for some of these Latin American migrants, making sameness involves reproducing or internalizing the same type of attitudes found amongst the mainstream population. In order to avoid being othered as a group by mainstream society, they proceed to other (and exclude) those amongst their midst who do not comply with maintaining the population invisible, that is conforming with the majority group and adhering to assimilation principles.

I do not wish to imply that this was the view of all participants. In the same way that Nagel and Staeheli (2008b, 92) observed "a lack of consensus" in relation to the notion of Arabness that their diverse participants wanted to project; issues of political and social diversity also played a role in how different Latin American participants perceived their fellow immigrants and the extent to which they thought they could all be considered as a 'community'. As I discussed in chapter 4, the extreme diversity which characterizes the northern population in terms of migratory circumstances, length of settlement, lifecycle stage, social background, educational levels, etc., plays a critical role on the lack of sense of homogeneity and cohesion among Latin American migrants in this region. From this perspective, there were multiple approaches to understandings of individual and/or collective identifications and to the advantages and drawbacks of maintaining their invisibility or engaging in recognition processes. Generally, the socio-economic circumstances and length of settlement of the participant households played a role on how they perceived not having Latin American cultural or support groups in the localities where they reside. Financial and social difficulties led some participants (e.g. Honduran

household 3 or Ecuadorian household 4) to deplore the lack of Latin American (or specific national) support networks or organizations and their lack of recognition (invisibility) within British society. In addition, as I discuss next, some second generation participants provided a different approach to ideas of strategic visibility.

### **5.3.2.2. Strategic visibility: making sameness out of diversity**

For some of the young participants who had been born or had lived most of their lives in the UK, having been questioned about their cultural background had an impact on how they presented themselves and on the type of positioning they adopted among their peers. In general terms, these participants negotiated sameness by establishing friendships and affiliations with young people from other minority ethnic backgrounds; therefore, using visibility as a basis for sameness. For this participants, “flexible ethnicity” (Vasquez 2010, 58) practices were possible within the non-white group, as it helped them negotiate forms of membership. It could be argued that they used their ‘visibility’ strategically and by subverting how they were *read* by public at large. When being misidentified as belonging to the *wrong* ethnic group, these participants could take advantage of “passing by default” (Samuels 2003, 240) as members of ethnic minorities who are larger and more established in the places where they live. For example, during the group interview, Carolina (15, American-Chilean – household 5) who recounted being questioned about her heritage because of her embodied traits, emphasized that she had grown up in a very culturally diverse neighbourhood and that all her friends had minority ethnic backgrounds.

*ERNESTO (father). She is not... you are more involved with, well no the Asians, but the West Indians, you know, she's got friends from all over...  
CAROLINA. Yeah, 'cos we've always lived in an area that there are Asian people, like I get on with them, but most of my friends are like from Jamaica, well they are from here but they're of Jamaican...[heritage] Yeah, and they're mostly, sort of like, ethnic, really.*

Importantly though, participants who had unmarked embodiments also reported using their cultural heritage strategically, that is ‘coming out’ as Latin Americans selectively (see Bailey et al. 2002, 136 for a related notion of ‘strategic visibility’). In this instance, it is interesting to consider Genaro’s case (18, American-Chilean – household 5), that unlike his sister Carolina, who we encountered above, does not have any physical traits through

which he may be marked (in comparison to the white majority), except perhaps for his Italian sounding name. He provided a clear example of how his heritage allows him to set himself apart if he wishes to do so, therefore he takes advantage of the greater freedom to use “flexible ethnicity” (Vasquez 2010, 51) which his unmarked embodiment grants him.

*GENARO. (...) I guess I like to be mixed up a little bit, you know, 'cause I always like to try and stand out and look as different as possible and be as different. I mean with a name like mine it's not that hard to achieve. (...) Some people have expectations, but, you know, if um obviously if I let them down then it's not my fault then, it's just what they expected and well didn't really know, just sort of assumed. But if their assumption is wrong, then I'll let them know and I'll just let them know what I'm about.*

The narratives presented by these young participants resonate with Samuels' (2003, 241) account of the difficulties faced by people with non-visible disabilities or 'racial traits' who need to claim “identity through speech”. This author also recalls that for “people who pass racially” the act of coming out verbally often leads to “interrogations about their ancestry” or to a questioning of the authenticity of their claims (Samuels 2003, 242; see also Vasquez 2010). It is important to note, though, that in the case of the young participants in this project, the need to come out verbally also applies to those with marked embodiments, who in front of the dominant visual regime of Britain are either generically othered or misidentified as Asian and rarely recognized as being of Latin American descent. These acts of ‘coming out’, however, can also be read as subversive practices which the participants use selectively in order to destabilize mainstream notions of sameness which otherwise invisibilize their perception of themselves and their heritage. As I will explore in chapter 7, these forms of negotiating sameness are directly related to the notions of belonging in diversity that the participants displayed and which draw from narratives of Britain as a multicultural society.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have explored the ways in which the participants navigated the ethno-cultural visual regime of difference which characterizes their integration context. I have argued that, from this everyday embodied perspective, their invisibility can be understood in two related ways. Firstly, as processes of making or reproducing dominant notions of sameness, that is maintaining invisibility in order to protect their status vis-à-vis the

perceived British mainstream (resisting being categorized as an ethnic minority). Secondly, as a set of agential strategies (i.e. passing or silencing differences) used to avoid becoming visible and being racialized or othered. In the case of the second generation young participants, however, visibility (i.e. being perceived as marked or 'coming out' as Latin American) is also employed as a way of reinterpreting notions of sameness in terms of cultural/ethnic diversity. Therefore, the participants' experiences and accounts provide a deeper insight into the embodied relational dynamics of making sameness and their politics of visibility and invisibility (Nagel 2009; Nagel and Staeheli 2008b). This analysis has also foregrounded that making sameness in terms of the *ethno-cultural dominant gaze* leaves Latin American migrants and their children little space for manoeuvre.

For the immigrant participants in this project, the potential benefits of becoming 'full members' of a 'modern' society offset the emotional costs of having to make efforts to 'blend in'. Amongst adult participants (and a few young participants who had migrated more recently), sameness was pursued by emphasizing the commonalities that they could see between their societies of origin and settlement. Notions of a shared Christian culture were evoked as providing a backdrop of commonality between Latin American migrants and their host society or between British and Latin American partners. This dynamic, however, led to the reproduction of mainstream value systems and prejudices (and to certain extent, of colonial constructs such as Christianity and whiteness as providing dominant status). According to British participants, Latin Americans were regarded as the same in so far they did not disrupt the scopic regime of sameness of the public sphere, bringing 'acceptable' diversity to an imagined mainstream society. This narrative of sameness was reinforced by opposing it to Muslims who were presented as the real 'Other'. In turn, second generation young participants brought to the fore how notions of sameness needed to be reproduced on an everyday basis, protecting them through silencing strategies ("passing deliberately", Samuels 2003, 240) which kept difference constrained to the private personal or familial sphere (therefore concurring with 'traditional' assimilation principles, cf. Alexander 2001).

However, the participants' (adults and young people) encounters with the marked/unmarked visual regime of differentiation exposed the precarious and unstable realities of these narratives of sameness. Their embodied physical and aural traits dictated the extent and the ways in which they could reproduce sameness. As Vasquez (2010, 63)

noted for the third generation Mexican Americans who participated in her research, “[f]lexible ethnicity’ posits that a variety of ethnic scripts or presentations of the self are available to actors, but the array of options is constrained by racialization”. In the present case, participants’ embodied experiences confirmed these racialization constraints but also exposed the blurred boundaries of these ethnic scripts and presentations. Latin Americans (and their diverse marked/unmarked embodiments) challenge the current dominant visual stereotypes of ethnic/racial groups in the UK, exposing the fluid and constructed nature of these constructs and the power relations which sustain them. The unidentifiable *visibility* of this group leads them to be either misidentified as Asian (and Muslim) or to be categorized as a *generic other* who is defined as foreigner and racialized, reflecting majority prejudices against Muslims and public anti-immigration sentiments (e.g. Abbas 2005; Lowles 26 February 2011). In addition, despite the lack of Latino stereotypes at the level of general perceptions of visibility, participants also provided examples of the currency of the gendered stereotype of the ‘exotic Latina’ and experiences of being racialized or imposed ‘inferior status’ once they had been identified as non-European.

In the light of these dynamics of enforced racialization, adult and young participants also recounted adopting invisibility strategies in order to counteract potential othering or to reproduce sameness. An everyday protective strategy was “passing deliberately” (Samuels 2003, 240) by using the blurred visibility of “flexible ethnicity” (Vasquez 2010, 51) but also by remaining silent and not revealing their accents when speaking English (or not talking about their heritage in the case of young participants). In addition, some adult participants also reported a more far-reaching invisibility strategy aimed at managing the ‘group identity’ of the population and by doing so perpetuating its invisibility (a kind of ‘group passing’). In this case, ‘visibility’ was considered problematic and potentially dangerous as it could subject them to processes of racialization and negative stereotyping which, in turn, would undermine their sameness status versus the perceived British mainstream. These findings concur with the accounts provided by other invisible minorities who regard being categorized as an ethnic minority (or a minority per se) as implying subordination and outsidersness (cf. Fortier 2003). However, I must point out that this view amongst some participants may reflect greater middle-class status and long-term settlement amongst the participant families, who, except for three of the cases, did not report

struggling financially or socially in their day-to-day lives in Britain. Those in more vulnerable socio-economic circumstances, in contrast, tended to deplore the lack of *visibility* and recognition that characterizes Latin Americans in the places where they reside.

Yet, second generation young participants (who had been born or had spent most of their lives in the UK) provided examples of more affirmative uses of visibility. Participants with marked embodiments reported “passing by default” (Samuels 2003, 240) within the *marked spectrum* and establishing affiliations with young people from other ethnic backgrounds. Therefore they subverted how their physical traits were *read* by people who they encountered in their everyday lives. Additionally, both participants with marked and unmarked embodiments explained coming out as Latin Americans selectively and verbally in order to foreground their own perceptions of themselves and subvert the ‘invisibilization’ regime which they face in the places where they live.

I believe that thinking about the participants’ strategies in terms of passing and coming out foregrounds the degree of agency that the participants could display in navigating the visual regime of ethno-cultural difference which characterizes their integration context (cf. Nagel and Staeheli 2008b). However, these agential negotiations need to be understood in terms of the perceived risks that visibility poses for participants. In this sense, their passing and coming out strategies have both conservative and subversive undertones (e.g. Ahmed 1999b; Walker 2001). On one hand, the processes of re-producing sameness (and passing) that the participants presented can be considered as an assimilative strategy aimed at achieving full membership to their society of settlement and benefit from mainstream status (being complicit in reproducing the power structures in place). On the other, the adults’ resistance to engage with the system of multicultural recognition can also be understood in terms of a certain degree of distrust in the success of this system to provide equality for all population groups. Thus, it can be conceived as a form of resistance to be defined in terms of cultural or ethnic identity. The lingering perception that policies of multicultural and multi-ethnic recognition singularize (and subordinate) minority groups seriously undermines their effectiveness (cf. Gilroy 2002 [1987]). In contrast, young second generation participants provided a more positive outlook of the multicultural system which they used to re-define notions of sameness on the basis of diversity (I will discuss this in-depth in chapter 7 in relation to the senses of belonging of the participants). Their

strategies of visibility or 'coming out as Latin Americans' signals a more comfortable positioning within the urban multi-ethnic environments in which they reside.

On a practical level, the socio-cultural invisibility which characterizes the Latin American population in the north of England has clear impacts on the opportunities that migrants and their children have to interact with fellow migrants or reproduce forms of *Latin Americanism*. The next chapter focuses on how the participant households addressed issues of cultural transmission in these circumstances.

## 6. Cultural transmission and familyhood within conditions of socio-cultural invisibility

### 6.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on how the participant households approached issues of cultural transmission and maintenance (i.e. Spanish language, popular traditions and cultural/social mores from societies of origin) against the background of socio-cultural invisibility which characterizes the places where they live. Specifically, it explores how they constructed familyhood transnationally and recreated values that were seen as intrinsic to the meaning of membership to the family and to the cultural heritage. For the aims of the research and the context of this thesis (see chapter 3), I have used the concept of household to refer to the local unit of co-residence of the participants, which in some instances overlapped with the participants' notion of their nuclear family<sup>31</sup>. In the present chapter, I employ the term 'family' in a broader sense and to reflect the participants' own definitions of their families as including extended family and kin (see Chant 2003, 162 for a useful discussion of these terms). These definitions were outlined through the family diagram activity conducted with each of the household participants (adults and young people). Accordingly, their sense of family included those left behind in the countries of origin (or residing in third countries) and was reproduced through everyday activities that nurtured transnational emotional and symbolic ties. The young participants were embedded in these emotional and symbolic fields and, although their level of activity within them varied enormously from case to case, they shared their family values and symbolic imaginaries.

Theoretical understandings of the transnational family have highlighted its relational nature; bringing to the fore the salience of "relativizing" activities, that is the ways in which family members nurture or curtail relationships to different relatives or kin (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14 see also chapter 2). As such "relativizing" refers to how familyhood may be achieved across-borders, by recreating the feelings and obligations which are necessary in order to maintain a sense of unity and collectivity. An additional

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<sup>31</sup> Not used in the sense of traditional and patriarchal definitions of the family but to indicate the two generation family nucleus (e.g. single parent household) in contrast to extended notions of the family.

important dimension of the type of relationships which characterize transnational families refers to their connections with wider social networks. Bryceson & Vuorela (2002, 19) have described this type of extra-familial relational work as “frontiering” or “frontier networking”. These authors identify four types of networking activity according to their localization: “the original home area” with which migrants keep strong attachments; “the current residential neighbourhood/work area” where they choose with whom to interact from the host society and/or fellow migrants – these local networks are the first point of support through which vital information about their everyday lives is obtained; “the transnational realm of residential and cultural choice” a relativist approach to the combination of their residential and home cultures, which they often share with fellow migrants; and “the transnational realm of moral institutional identification” in which migrants combine home culture and values with current locations in order to create a strategy for shared economic and social enterprises (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 19-24).

Migrant populations which live in conditions of socio-cultural invisibility (e.g. without community groups or close fellow migrants), as it is the case of Latin Americans in the north, may see their possibilities to ‘frontier’ constrained by their contextual circumstances; displacing the focus of their cultural maintenance and transmission efforts to ‘relativized’ relationships within the transnational familial sphere. This chapter focuses on the ‘frontiering’ and ‘relativizing’ activities of the participant households and the ways in which they negotiated relationships and connections against a background of socio-cultural invisibility. In the first part, I consider the constraints to ‘frontiering’ that they foregrounded, including the intra-household and extra-household factors which, in their view, undermined efforts of intergenerational cultural transmission. Then I move to discuss how they displaced their efforts to the ‘relativized’ sphere of the family. I suggest that they did so in order to reproduce senses of familyhood and intergenerational relationships. By maintaining emotional and symbolic transnational bonds, the participants nurture potential venues through which the second generation may be able to actualize their knowledge and experience of their cultural heritage in the future.

## 6.2. Socio-cultural invisibility and the constraints to intergenerational cultural transmission

The low numbers of fellow immigrants in the places where they live and the sparsity of shared community spaces affect how the participant households conceive their possibilities of “frontier networking” with other Latin Americans in their localities (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 19). Despite the diversity of migration routes and life paths which had brought these participants to settle in the north of the country (e.g. marriage to British national with family bonds in the region, study or professional opportunities, dispersal by NASS); generally, they presented their experiences of residing in this area in positive terms. Often they emphasized that ‘the north’ was quieter and people were friendlier than in other regions, or considered that their places of residence were ‘safer’ and ‘more affordable’ than London. However, when referring to issues related to the intergenerational transmission of the Spanish language and other homeland social and cultural values, they stressed the practical constraints posed by being a small minority.

It could be argued that the circumstances of socio-cultural invisibility in which these families live are at the other end of the spectrum from what has been described by scholars as “institutional completeness” (e.g. Kivisto 2003; Levitt 2002 following Breton 1964). That is, the establishment by immigrant or ethnic communities of “such a diverse array of institutions that it is possible for members to satisfy most of their needs within the community itself [including transnationally]” without having to resort to external services and networks (Levitt 2002, 134). Furthermore, Gowricharn (2009, 1626) argues that the fluid reproduction of such infrastructures leads to the “ethnification” of communities; that is, neighbourhoods or local spaces which develop an institutionalized form and a distinctive cultural identity. As it stands, the Latin American population in the north live in conditions of *institutional un-completeness*, which cannot support the migrants’ efforts to transmit their cultural identity to their children.

However, as Appadurai (1990, 1996) has pointed out, in the context of globalization, efforts of cultural reproduction even within the intimate realm of the family, take place within conditions of “cultural flux” and “deterritorialization as family members pool and negotiate their mutual understandings and aspirations in sometimes fractured spatial arrangements” (Appadurai 1996, 44). Therefore, it is not my intention to suggest that

there are clear and distinctive cultures between which these households negotiate their day-to-day lives but to explore what the participants (adults and young people) perceived as everyday constraints to the successful transmission or acquisition of the language, values and traditions that they considered part of their actual or inherited cultural identity. Furthermore, these values were not defined in essentialist terms by the adult participants but as emotional frameworks rooted in their own upbringings, which they had used and adapted when undertaking their own parenthood roles. Therefore, this first part of the chapter focuses on the issues that the participants discussed in relation to what they perceived were constraints to performing intergenerational and collective cultural transmission in the circumstances in which they live. However, as I will show, these issues included both subjective and contextual elements.

### 6.2.1. Intra-household constraints

Adult informants emphasized how their limited local “frontier networks” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 19) with other Latin Americans became a barrier difficult to overcome, confining their efforts to transmit language, traditions, customs, histories and social conventions to the private sphere of the household and family (nuclear and extended). Furthermore, in these circumstances, cultural transmission became an additional task to be fulfilled in addition to other everyday obligations and was often neglected under the pressures of daily routines and activities.

Mother Susana (40s, Colombian) and son Duncan (12, Colombian-Scottish) from household 1 exemplified this difficulty. During their group interview, there was a lengthy discussion about how, in front of everyday life pressures, Susana had not been able to sustain the effort to teach Spanish to her children and reproduce her own customs, history and popular culture at home. She explained that it was a task that had to be purposely and consciously performed as she did not have easy access to spaces where the children could be exposed to their heritage.

SUSANA. It becomes another exercise, an *added job* to the daily routines and then for me... maybe because we are, again a minority, if we were more people, then there would be restaurants, groups, we wouldn't have the problem of abandoning our food or our music, but being...

DUNCAN. No, the music not!

SUSANA. No, we don't lose the music, no, we listen to music (laughs). But yes, this is, it is not very practical to be a minority, minority.

She exemplified these difficulties through her attempts to help Duncan maintain and develop his knowledge of Spanish. As I mentioned in chapter 4, Susana used to be a very active member of a Latin American women's group in her city. This group had weekly meetings every Saturday with activities through which the children could practice Spanish and play together while adults socialized. However, due to the lack of collaboration in organizing and running the group, eventually they had to become more formalized language classes. For Duncan, who was eight at the time, Spanish lessons meant 'another school', 'another obligation' and he lost interest in them. In addition, all the other activities in which Duncan was involved also took place on a Saturday morning, so eventually, Susana decided to opt out of the language classes and privilege Duncan's choice for his swimming lessons.

DUNCAN. I don't know, I think those classes were another school, weren't they?

SUSANA. They became classes. Before they were, they were a meeting on Saturday mornings, with nice things, to go for activities, to have a biscuit and a cup of tea but that space finished because we didn't work for it, because [my friend] and I were tired of working the whole thing, and other people didn't put any effort in, then they became classes for them [the children] to continue with the language, but then the ethos changed, it became another, another obligation and no, no, (...) I've got enough with my work [laughs] I don't want to continue during the weekends.

Duncan explained that he had not been very fluent in the language until he and his mother spent a year living in Spain with one of Susana's sisters, a few months before they participated in the project. After this experience, he had become a fluent speaker (despite having to resort to English on occasions) and all of his interviews and activities were conducted in Spanish. Despite his new language skills, Duncan emphasized that he did not miss having friends with similar backgrounds or language competence, which his mother attributed to his lack of connection with his heritage while he was growing up.

INTERVIEWER. Would you like to have the chance to go to places where you could meet other Latin Americans or people who had a similar [background]?

DUNCAN. I don't know, I, I don't think it's very important to make other Latin American friends, I think English, Spanish... whatever, if they are or are not, it's not important for me.

INTERVIEWER. Don't you miss it?

DUNCAN. No.

SUSANA. No, because there hasn't been that constant bond.

Duncan's and Susana's accounts of balancing cultural and linguistic maintenance with everyday life activities and obligations echoes findings from scholarship considering the experiences of incorporation of other immigrant families in Western societies (e.g. Booth et al. 1997; Shaw 2007; Silverstein and Chen 1999). For example, Mabry et al. (2007, 92) highlight the tensions which may arise in the intergenerational relationships of families which have migrated from family oriented cultures to more individualistic societies such as the UK or the US (see also Fuligni et al. 1999). In the present case, Latin American adult participants emphasized the importance of reproducing the family culture and values with which they had been brought up when undertaking their own parenting roles. However, as I explore below, they also displayed ambivalent attitudes regarding the need (or not) to 'enforce' the Spanish language and foster senses of a distinctive cultural identity amongst their children. Their accounts provided insights into how they had adapted some of their family values (e.g. respect) while allowing their children freedom to develop their own sense of self and attachment to their heritages.

In addition to the lack of opportunities to socialize with other Latin Americans and the arduousness of actively maintaining traditions at home, adult participants also reported a life cycle effect which eroded their need to re-create their culture for their children. In participant household 2, mother Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian) and Mia (18, daughter Hispano/Colombian-Chilean), explained this difficulty. Martina had also been very active in a Latin American women's group (see chapter 4). For many years, she was also in charge of a 'community magazine' and very involved in organizing activities for the Latin American population in the city where she lives. Despite her mother's history of involvement in the community when she was growing up, Mia did not feel very connected to other Latin Americans in her city and reflected on the fact that her involvement and interaction with people with a similar cultural background had really diminished over the years.

*MIA. Erm, I couldn't say 'cos I mean when we were younger, when I was younger, like when I was like when I was in primary school, I think I was a*

*lot more in touch with it, there were, we went to more events, I think we were more like involved and we talked about it more, we just saw people more regularly but as time's gone by then that's diminished a little, erm I wouldn't... I'm not sure exactly why I think... I don't know. (...)*

MARTINA. No, I believe that this has more to do with me than with Mia.

INTERVIEWER. With you...?

MARTINA. As a person I was the one to need it more and... and more when I first arrived, I think it was very important to think that one was transmitting to the children what one was, part of one's identity and the language and all those things, so yes, it was very important to, I don't know, to affirm or enrich all that which one was passing onto the children, but that was it, we did good then (laughs), the work was done...

Martina felt that as she had become more settled in England and Mia had become older, her need to recreate her culture and engage with other Latin Americans had diminished. She felt that the efforts she made to transmit the Spanish language and other socialization practices to her daughter when she was younger had been sufficient. In addition, the problems she encountered during her involvement with the Latin American women's group played a strong role on her withdrawing from these activities. From her perspective, Mia recounted how as she grew up she 'became more English' by socializing with English friends but also how this meant the strengthening of her family relationships as she wanted to be more involved with her relatives.

*MIA. Yeah in some ways, when, as well as I got older I got more English 'cos I did spend less time with my family and more time with my friends so er I suppose that would mean that ended up fitting in, settled a little more in a way but I also like [the] feeling with my family got stronger 'cos I got more interested in it, I wanted to be more involved in it so... a little bit of both...*

This life cycle effect was also related to what some of the adult participants felt was a consequence of their process of 'integration' into their host societies. For example, in household 7, mother Marta (40s, Chilean) explained that apart from keeping strong transnational relationships with her extended family, she had not told her son much about Chile, its history and traditions. She related this to her efforts to 'integrate' and also to her personal professional fulfilment, which provided a venue for her to keep in touch with her culture and language and reduced her need to do so at home.

MARTA. Well, because I think that at the end of the day I have tried to integrate so well to the community, integrate socially at work, that I have left it [telling her son about Chile's history and traditions]. As I enjoy my job so much, I forget about it. I think that if I weren't so happy with my job then maybe I would have more connections with my country, and I would pass them on to my son, because it would always be on my mind that it is the best, but the truth is I do not do it. I won't lie to you, I don't have [that need].

These accounts regarding the diminishment of the emotional need to reproduce language, customs and social activities on an everyday basis were often found amongst those adult Latin American participants who were long-term residents. Some transnational research has highlighted that greater social and political incorporation in the society of settlement tends to reduce the intensity of transnational activity amongst migrants and their descendants (e.g. Rumbaut 2002; Waldinger 2008). In fact, some adult participants reported that their increased familiarity with their host society and the development of local social networks had made them feel more settled and content. Although nearly all of them still maintained routine and intense contact with their extended families and relatives, only a few were engaged in broader political or transnational activities.

In addition, many parents displayed an ambivalent acceptance of the fact that their children were not developing a deep knowledge of their inherited language and culture. That is, despite strongly valuing their origins, homelands and traditions, parents explained that their offspring were growing up in England (and in some of the cases were 'half British') so it was normal for them not to feel as attached to their ancestral homes as they themselves did. This attitude translated as a lack of enforcement of Spanish and a relaxed approach to the transfer of cultural traditions (helped by the 'sameness' elements that they identified between their homelands and host land, i.e. Christian culture). In general, the aim was to provide their children with the minimal tools (understanding of Spanish and family culture and connections) necessary for them to actualize their knowledge and bonds in the future if they chose to do so.

This attitude can be understood in relation to sociological theories about the new age of modernity in Western societies, in which increased uncertainties and the erosion of class and other group identities has given way to individualized lifestyles with new risks and opportunities (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001; 2007; Giddens 1991). As I mentioned in chapter 5, participant adults stressed the need to provide a 'good' education for their

children which could entitle them to more prosperous lives. These narratives were reinforced by arguments regarding the need to be prepared for the future, to be flexible and to acquire a wide range of skills in order to be successful in life; which also foregrounded their intentions to allow their children freedom to develop their own life paths and senses of self. These accounts echo notions of 'choice biographies' which have been developed in the sociology of youth in order to conceptualize 'biographies' which have become more 'un-traditional', instead being open to 'choice' and individual self-definition (e.g. Bois-Reymond 1998; Nico 2010). However, it is important to note that the notion of 'choice biography', which has been understood to be based on Beck's far-reaching 'individualization' theories (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001), has also been criticized for giving too much prominence to agency and minimizing the enduring effects of structural inequality in limiting young people's life choices (e.g. Brannen and Nilsen 2002, 2005; Evans 2002). In addition, a more recent analysis has also suggested that the concept is, in fact, a misinterpretation of Beck's theories (Woodman 2009). In spite of these debates, the adult participants' accounts displayed an awareness of the need to be flexible in order to face life uncertainties and the wish to provide their children with the opportunities and personal freedom to construct their own lives and senses of identity (cf. Mas Giral and Bailey 2010).

These complex points were illustrated by the accounts that the participants gave in relation to their attempts to teach Spanish to their children. For practical reasons, single parent households and Latino-British ones reported struggling with the maintenance of the language to a greater extent than the mono-cultural two-parent households, because in the former ones Spanish could not be used as the household's preferred choice. Most parents considered the command of the language essential for their children to be able to communicate with the extended family and feel connected to the homeland – the doorway to the rest of the culture. In some cases, however, adults felt that it was enough for their offspring to understand the language but not necessarily speak it with fluency, as they would be able to develop their knowledge as they grew older. Karla (30s, Mexican - household 8) explained that although she experienced difficulties in maintaining Spanish as the language of communication with her children (she would speak in Spanish to them but they would reply in English), she felt that there was an intrinsic link between their knowledge of Spanish and their ability to claim a Mexican identity in the future.

KARLA. Yes, because... at the end of the day they are half Mexican, and they have to... they have to know where they come from, they have to... it is part of their tradition, you have to know that, that feeling of knowing where you come from, of... you know? So, I don't know, I feel it is important for them as people, and I also feel that it will help them greatly when they grow up, in their *search*, if there is something that they do not like, they can say 'you know what, I prefer not to be English, I'm going to be Mexican' or vice versa [laughs] I hope is not vice versa [continues laughing].

In fact, among many of the adult participants there was an open attitude in relation to respecting that their children will have personal choice and freedom to decide whether their cultural inheritance is meaningful to them and whether they want to develop and maintain their knowledge of it. Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9) summarized this position when I asked him whether it was important for him that his children engaged with their cultural inheritance.

JUAN. No, to tell you the truth, no, to be honest, yes I would like it but not... I prefer to leave them to decide, it is like, for example I speak to them in Spanish, yes?, but I prefer them to do it because they want to do it, not that they feel forced to do it. It would be easy to force them but no [laughs], it is better in the long term... (...) I don't want them to accept it because they have to, I want them to accept it and in the long term, and if they want to preserve it and pass it on to their children because they want to, then it would be more in the long term. (...)

In addition to these accounts, the participants also discussed how the lack of opportunities to "frontier network" (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 19) with fellow migrants locally undermined possibilities to reproduce collective forms of Latin Americanism or national heritages outside of the household. I focus on these types of constraints next.

### **6.2.2. Extra-household constraints**

As I mentioned in chapter 4, geographers have foregrounded the ways in which shared or communal spaces can nurture and reinforce the expression of identities (Ehrkamp 2005, 349; Nagar 1997a; 1997b). Latin American adult participants considered that the lack of socio-cultural groups and spaces in their places of residence jeopardized any efforts to pass on their own perspectives of the world to their children and to re-create collective cultural experiences.

The difficulty to provide the second generation with a 'Latin American' perspective of the world, was strongly illustrated by participant household 5: father Ernesto (50s, Chilean), son Genaro (18, American-Chilean) and daughter Carolina (15, American-Chilean). Ernesto has always been very involved with other Chileans and Latin Americans in the city where he lives. He regularly attends meals which are organized by Latin Americans and he is keen to encourage his children to join him. He hopes that by participating in these events, they will come into contact with the culture and the political history that are an important part of their heritage, something that otherwise they will not be able to learn about or connect with.

*ERNESTO. We go to see Latinos, you know, we have lunch together, he [his youngest son] plays with the other Latino kids, some of the Latino kids tend to speak to him in English and other Latino kids tend to speak to him in Spanish. I think that's great. I'm trying to get her and Genaro to come along as well, not to play with the kids obviously, but to be part of that group. But Genaro has to play football on Saturday mornings, she's got to do shopping or some, something u other, there's always an excuse for not coming along, yeah? That is why I reckon that there isn't so much for her [daughter Carolina] to say about Latinoamérica [Latin America] because I mean I cannot be preaching all the time, blah, blah, blah, otherwise she'll say, colega [mate] I just can't stand it, you know, when I go to my dad's he talks, talks, talks, no? but like they know [laughs].*

The reason Ernesto wants his children to attend these Latin American social events is in order for them to encounter a different perspective on the world. It is not about being 'out and proud of having a Latin American father', as he expressed it, but about escaping what he considers a colonial worldview that goes hand in hand with growing up in the UK. He does not want to 'preach' to his children, he wants them to experience another way of being in the world. So, he thinks that his daughter's lack of knowledge about Latin America relates to the fact that she has not attended these events much. However, due to his separation from his children's mother, he has not been able to maintain Spanish as the language of communication with Genaro and Carolina. The children's lack of language skills has become one of the major obstacles for them to be able to join these events. For example, Carolina feels that not speaking Spanish stops her from being able to access the experience that her father wants her to have. In addition, the lack of young people at these events who share her personal interests, makes it difficult for her to relate to others once she is there.

*CAROLINA. I'm not sure, like when, I went a couple of times, all were trying to speak to me in Spanish, and I was there, I don't speak Spanish, it's so embarrassing that it's just... I don't know, I don't know. (...) There is just older people, and then there is younger people, there's no one like that I can talk to or anything, so it's, I don't know, with [her younger brother] is all right 'cos I can talk to him for a bit but then he gets distracted because he wants to play with his friends, and then I haven't got anyone to talk to really, if there was any kids there about my age maybe...*

In fact, some adult participants who did not have the opportunity to attend social gatherings or had stopped doing so, considered that it was not only the younger generation who were missing out from the lack of interaction with other Latin Americans but also the adults themselves who became disconnected from what was happening in their countries of origin or in Latin America more generally. Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1) expressed this loss eloquently when I asked her about the disadvantages of no longer being in contact with other Latin Americans where she lives:

**SUSANA.** Because you lose, you lose a bit of contact with the language, contact with what is happening in, in the Latin American countries because I do not find out, do I?, I have the view of the news on the radio and television here but I do not have the versions that other people may bring, there are people who travel a lot, who have more chances to travel than the ones we've got as a family; then we are not soaking up what is happening outside of this city. (...)

Susana's account recalls the image that has been used to illustrate transnational social fields, with the comings and goings of migrants and constant flows of information and material objects (e.g. Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). However, her present circumstances make her aware of the disadvantage of not undertaking "frontier networking" (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 19) locally with other Latin Americans on an everyday basis. The information she obtains from the global 'mediascapes' and 'ideoscapes' (Appadurai 1990, 1996) is not as reliable as interacting with other migrants who may bring firsthand lived accounts.

Furthermore, it is not only the political history and wider cultural approach which are difficult to transmit, but also the small everyday things such as ways of socializing and relating to each other. Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8), explained how it was nearly impossible to recreate the spontaneous and relaxed way of socializing which she saw as an essential part of her culture.

KARLA. (...) That spontaneity of let's get together, you bring this and I bring that, and while we cook the children can play, this idea is very difficult [in England], so it becomes very difficult for me. How can you tell your son, your children that this is your culture? Because this is your culture, part the cooking, part the sitting all around the table to eat, part of, all this is your culture. It is not only about history, it is very difficult to pass all this on in a place where it is not the custom.

In general, all participants felt that it was not possible to re-create popular festivities or celebrations without the co-presence of fellow immigrants with whom to share these experiences. This lack of engagement was also related to the discourses of sameness that were deployed regarding the religious celebrations of the Christian calendar. As I discussed in chapter 5, many of them felt that there were not significant differences between these traditions in their own countries and those in the UK.

In addition, the accounts presented by the adult Latin American participants also stressed the role of educational institutions and schools as spaces in which their children were being acculturated according to the social conventions, history and values of British society (cf. Brint 2006; Fielding 2000; Rivlin and Wolfe 1985). For instance, Mauricio (30s, Mexican, household 6) brought to the fore the impossibility of counteracting this place-based socialization. The educational cultural referents that his daughter was growing up with were the British ones and the parents could not provide her with an equal exposure to Mexican history, traditions and popular culture. However, he thought that family values were so fundamental to his own and his wife's way of life (both Mexicans) that these values were transferred to their daughter by default.

MAURICIO. (...) Obviously there are things that you cannot do because, well for the same cultural environment, also in the school, it becomes more complex due to what the culture of the country is, you try to talk about it somehow but they won't have it as much in their blood as if they were there and, it is normal because they haven't got the constant reinforcement from the school, over there in the school, every day you've got history, festivities, Mexican heroes and important dates, because they do it and it happens... Everything that the school day to day brings in, here they haven't got it, so those are the difficult things, you know, those cultural aspects, but family values, that's so intrinsic that I do believe we are passing it onto her [their daughter].

In the face of the lack of opportunities to meet with other Latin Americans in the cities where they live, which jeopardizes collective efforts of cultural transmission, most adult participants emphasized the importance of instilling their family culture in their children. Creating a sense of familyhood based on values of closeness, care and respect, and maintaining the family bonds with their relatives in the countries of origin became the essential ways in which these households approached cultural transmission. Therefore, the adult participants “relativized” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14) their transnational ties in order to respond not only to their own familial obligations and emotional needs, but also to nurture intergenerational relationships with, and for, their children. In other words, family relationships and transnational emotional and symbolic attachments became the central stage in which cultural transmission was enacted and where hopes for future possibilities of cultural discovery were set.

### **6.3. Constructing familyhood**

Despite the diversity of migration stories, socio-cultural backgrounds and present circumstances in England, most of the participant parents emphasized the importance of transmitting to their children the family values with which they had been brought up. These values were mainly described in terms of closeness between parents and children, caring bonds, intergenerational respect and their intertwined meanings. These values, in turn, provided a view of the family as the ultimate support network, a support network which included the extended family and its consequential transnational bonds.

#### **6.3.1. Reproducing the emotional culture of the family**

In “The emotional geography of work and family life”, Hochschild (1996, 20 drawing on Giddens 1976) suggests that we imagine the social structures of “workplace” and “family” as dynamic and mutable, characteristics that are also applied to their intrinsic “emotional cultures”. By “emotional culture”, she understands the “set of rituals, beliefs about feelings and rules governing feeling which induce emotional focus, and even a sense of the ‘sacred’” and argues that “families have a more or less *sacred core* of private rituals and shared meanings” (Hochschild 1996, 20 italics in the original).

In the present and following sub-sections, I argue that the participant households and their families engaged in the reproduction of their “emotional cultures” (Hochschild 1996, 20)

through the intergenerational and transnational transmission of values which, they considered, defined their sense of familyhood. For the participant households, intergenerational intimacy, respect in terms of caring for each other's wellbeing and the view of kin as ultimate support network were perceived as core values which could guarantee the continuity of the family and its cultural patrimony. Most of the adult participants emphasized the importance of transmitting these values to their children and provided elaborate accounts of their meanings. These understandings, however, need to be contextualized in relation to wider social narratives surrounding notions of 'the family' in Latin America (cf. Chant 2003; Jelin 1991). It has been suggested that, in general, Latin American societies are characterized by collectivistic orientations which privilege the interests of the group in front of the individual (Fuligni et al. 1999, 1030; Triandis 1995). As Fuligni et al. (1999, 1030) have stressed, within these types of orientations, families and kin are normally placed centre stage and family members are expected to support each other and work for the common well-being of the group.

However, and in accord with Hochschild's (1996, 20) suggestion that families and their "emotional culture[s]" are "fluid" structures, the Latin American adult participants' accounts also portrayed the transformation of some of these values through their exposure to the host society, global influences and their own life experiences. As I will discuss below, an example of this transformation was found in the concept of *respect*, which, in many instances, had moved away from the traditional understanding of parental/elderly authority towards a form of family and social obligation.

The first of these family values, closeness, was perceived in terms of sharing everyday experiences and activities and mainly by having open and trusting intergenerational communication. For both adult and young participants, closeness was a way of "doing intimacy" (Valentine 2008b, 2101), of working to achieve and nurture unity and emotional propinquity. Charles and Kerr (1988, 17) have highlighted the role of food practices as ways of supporting and recreating "a coherent ideology of the family throughout the social structure". Amongst the participants (both adults and young people), 'talking' was presented as an everyday act, which normally happens around the table at meal times, one of the routines that cement the feeling of closeness and care for each other. Duncan (12, Colombian-Scottish – household 1), summarized these practices:

DUNCAN. Well, it is our time to talk. Well, after eating, I don't know, we don't do so many things together, go by and talk but when we are eating it is... *speaking time*.

Furthermore, participant household 7 highlighted the importance of food as both physical and emotional nurture by choosing it as their biographical object. Marta (40s, Chilean), Martin (50s British), Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean) and Saiko (19, Chilean, Marta's niece) felt very strongly about the role that food and its familial and social significance had for all of them, even though in different ways.

Marta (40s, mother, Chilean) emphasized the differences she encountered in relation to food when she first arrived in the UK after marrying her British partner Martin, and how important it had been for her to keep her own way of cooking and eating. For Marta, spending time preparing elaborate meals was one of the main ways in which she fulfilled her nurturing and caring role as a partner and mother. The relationship between food and mothering has received ample attention from scholars researching gender and family roles (e.g. DeVault 1991; Gregory 1999; Murcott 1983; Trebilcot 1983). DeVault (1991), for example, stresses the dual role that 'feeding the family' can acquire for women as both performing and actively reproducing gender identity. For Marta, food and cooking were at the basis of what it meant for her to take care of her family. This care has to be understood both in the physical sense – providing a varied, fresh and nutritious diet for the whole family and making sure that her son ate properly – and in the emotional sense – recreating everyday moments of closeness with conversations during meal times. Saiko (19, Chilean), Marta's niece, who was born and grew up in Chile, supported her aunt's views on the importance of food and of sitting around the table to share time together. However, Marta's attitude towards food and its attached social rituals contrasted with that of her husband, something that their son Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean) related to their 'different' cultures. In fact, and as can be seen in the following excerpt, the gendered dynamics of the family came to the fore not only through Marta's 'nurturing' role but also through Martin's (50s, British) refusal to perform tasks that he believed were a mother's responsibility.

*MARTA. I think [food] is important because, I like to just sit around the table and eat, because it would then, when I don't do it, Ben doesn't eat because I leave the dad in charge, Martin can you feed Ben?, and when I*

*come back and say have you fed Ben?, well, he had a yogurt, he has had a biscuit and then...*

*BEN. I don't mind that.*

*MARTA. Yeah, I know you don't mind that, but for a mum it is important to sit because...*

*BEN. That's a difference between cultures though.*

*MARTA. Yeah, but if we sit around the table he has no chance to say no, because he eats, but unfortunately because I work, in the night, in the evening, I come home, and he's not been eating and it really makes me sad because I don't think that Martin...*

*MARTIN. And then she takes it out on me.*

*MARTA. Yeah, because you should sit with him.*

*MARTIN. Why?*

*MARTA. Because it is important.*

*MARTIN. It's a mother's role.*

*MARTA. That's not right...*

*MARTIN. Of course it is.*

*MARTA. No, because I think the food is important and it's a social and also is part of, when all the family we are coming together and I ask you, Ben how was the school day, Martin how was your day, and we talk. Even if...*

*MARTIN. No, we end up arguing.*

*BEN. Yeah. (Collective laughter)*

*MARTA. That probably is true... but we talk.*

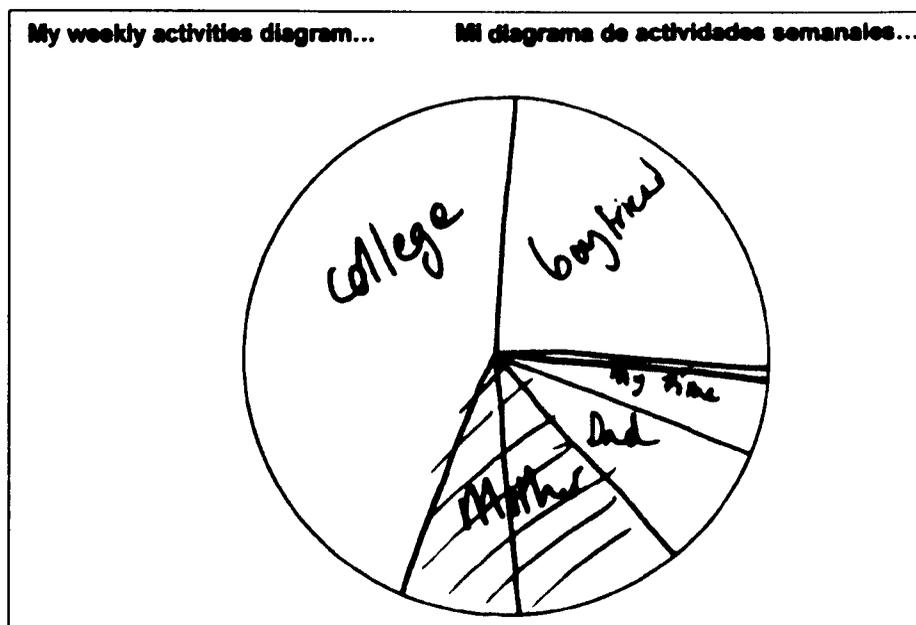
Despite the traditionally gendered attitudes of both parents, it is important to note that Marta refused to agree with Martin's opinion that 'feeding' their son properly and sitting down to eat with him was purely a 'mother's role'. For Marta, reproducing the social sense of the family (closeness and care) should also be Martin's responsibility. As Mennell et al. (1992) have suggested, group commensality can be understood as a way in which 'insiders' are defined and confirmed as socially similar, that is, a way of re-creating closeness and commonality. In addition, it is also a way of socializing children and reinforcing the performance of different family roles (Gregory 1999). In fact, Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean) expressed a wish to transmit these experiences if he ever had a family of his own.

*BEN. Yeah because it's my heritage, and (...) you want to pass down your heritage, because it's part of, you know, what you are part of, so you want people to know about food so I think that's why it's important, you know the food, so.*

In general, there was a perception amongst the Latin American adult participants (and some of the young people) that these social and family activities around food are not as

common in Britain. This perception is not supported by findings of family research in the UK which has highlighted that cooking proper meals, sitting together and sharing meal times whilst talking about the day's events is often held as an ideal by many British households (e.g. Gregory 1999). However, these views may be influenced by certain popular discourses around obesity, food and class in Britain, which pathologize working-class parents for not providing their children with healthy eating habits, not cooking proper meals and not performing care properly (e.g. Hollows and Jones 2010).

Participants (adults and young people) also explained that 'closeness' needs to be 'worked for' on an everyday basis, and time must be invested in nurturing intergenerational relationships. Mia (18, Hispano/Colombian-Chilean, household 2) used her weekly activities diagram (see figure 6-1) to emphasize how she makes an effort to share her time with the people who are emotionally more significant to her.



**Figure 6-1** Mia's (18, Hispano/Colombian-Chilean, household 2) weekly activities diagram

Mia stressed that, for her, it was important to nurture her relationships with her mother and her father by spending time with them and doing everyday things together. She feels very close to her mother and described how she 'invests time' in maintaining this level of intimacy with her.

*MIA. (...) I see my mum the most out of anybody I think, even though I don't spend as much time with her as I use to erm like our relationship is really important and I want to, like I think it's important to keep seeing her*

*frequently, yeah. (...) We like to eat together, we usually have a really good meal together and I help her, I just do a lot of the normal stuff, I just help with the house work or we go out to do some shopping but we like to just y'know sometimes go to the cinema or we'll go for a walk or something, and just talk and spend some time together, talk about what's going on in our lives and things and erm I don't really like, I don't like it when that stops happening and I know that my mum doesn't like it that much either (...).*

As Mia described, an essential aspect of this closeness is its intergenerational continuity. As I have mentioned, the adult participants all expressed a wish to reproduce these values, the meaning of which includes recreating them across generations. In this sense, Mia manifested her wish to replicate the same type of relationship that she has with her parents if she becomes a mother herself.

*MIA. (...) I think my relationship with my parents is different to my English friends, sometimes, like I'm really close to them and I feel I can talk to them in, not in the same way but on a similar, on a similar level I suppose as I can with my friends.*

*INT. Uhum and it's that something that if you ever have a family yourself, it's something that you think...?*

*MIA. Yeah, I think it's important to be able to confide in your parents, to be able to trust them and talk to them and feel like you can get along with them, whereas... I don't know, in England kids sometimes sort of push them away a little or... and I think I understand why they do it but maybe that's not always the best thing, yeah.*

As Chant (2003, 167) has noted, although it is not possible to generalize around notions of the "typical 'Latin American family'" (due to the multiplicity of differential factors in terms of geographical location, time, class, ethnicity, 'race', etc.), it is still possible to consider some common features, which may help contextualize the participants' accounts. Some of these features include the influence that the Catholic Church has had in legitimating specific gender and family roles in the region; salience of extended kin relations; gendered and patriarchal family structures and authoritarianism in intra-family relations (Scott 1994, 75-6 cited in Chant 2003, 167). Central to the power hierarchies within the family is the concept of *respect*, according to which children (including adult children) are expected to recognize and abide by the authority of their parents and grandparents (Falicov 1996; Fuligni et al. 1999, 1031).

Most of the Latin American adult participants reflected on this notion of respect, but in many instances their accounts moved away from the purely traditional understanding of observing parents' authority. Although most participant adults expected their children to obey them, many also considered that this concept could be stripped from the sense of distance that authority traditionally placed between parents and their offspring. They were, instead, understandings based on notions of the moral obligation to care for each other (looking after each other's wellbeing) and to behave towards others in the same way in which one would like to be treated (a more social sense of respect). Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1) summarized this as follows:

SUSANA. I think it is, it is *family-centred*, it is to think of the family, it is to think about respect, it is to think about what concerns us closely and I think I wasn't taught this in those terms but I was brought up on the premise that if I respect my neighbour, my neighbour is going to respect me, that if I contribute to society, society is going to respond accordingly. Then I think that's it, I don't know, I don't, in this sense I see it very different, they are very selfish on the way children are brought up here, not all the families but some families; then this means cultural limits and limits of social behaviour, we value a lot what we've got, maybe because it has taken us so much effort to have it, and I don't think people do the same analysis.

In fact, what brings all these values together is a view of the family as the ultimate support network. There was the feeling among adult participants that 'their culture' is more family centred than what they understand as common practice in the UK. These perceptions are in line with findings from other research with Latin American and Latino populations which highlight the sense of loyalty and dedication that often unites Latin American individuals to their families (Chilman 1993; Fuligni et al. 1999, 1031). It is, in an idealised sense, an absolute approach to familyhood, the view that if everything else fails, 'the family' will always support and care for its members. In their individual interviews, Ernesto (50s, Chilean) and Genaro (18, American-Chilean), household 5, illustrated the primary position of family relationships in their life and the type of emotional obligations that this entails.

ERNESTO. (...) There are other people who do not want anything to do with their families, but I cannot put them all in the same, I cannot generalize and say that here the value of the family is less valued than ours, but in general one thinks that they do not give a lot of importance to the family, we are like fanatical about the family, you know, imagine like

the Italians who kill for their families, with the Cosa Nostra [laughs] you say something about the relative of an Italian, and the Italian may cut your throat, you don't touch my family! This is, this is what I try to put in Genaro's head, well not to become a gangster [laughs] but that family is the main thing, the main thing.

(...)

*INTERVIEWER. Why do you think family is important? (...)*

*GENARO. 'Cause they're like [the] kinda [of] people that will like stick up for you and, you know, stick their neck out. Whereas friends will do that to a point 'cause you've not got that kind of connection there, you know, they won't go as far as much as your family probably would.*

The sense of familyhood and of family obligation also includes those left behind, so keeping extended relationships with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, is considered essential to develop a sense of belonging to the kin. Susana (40s, Colombian - household 1) emphasized these relational aspects in her interview.

*SUSANA. (...) It is about having people, and those ties, that it is not only them [her children] that exist, and that there is the emotional responsibility of belonging to a bigger group; we cannot do it because of our circumstances but we try in some kind of way to keep in touch with Colombia and keep in touch with the family of their father, it is one of the uncles that makes more of an effort or the one that provides more opportunities to meet up and we always take them; we always watch out for uncle C and uncle C always watches out for us... and also because of custom, I think I was brought up, I was brought up and taught that I belong to a family group.*

Overall, the imagined family and its emotional genealogy find continuity through the transnational social space of the family and regardless of the act of migration. The values of care, unity, respect and kin support are at the heart of the sense of familyhood of the participant households (cf. Hochschild 1996). These values are also recreated transnationally through the emotional and symbolic bonds that unite adults and children living in England with their extended families in the homelands and third countries.

### **6.3.2. Emotional transnational attachments**

It is important to note that “[e]motional and moral support is the foundation of most family relations including transnational ones, partly because it is clear that other types of support – financial, practical, personal and accommodation – also contribute to emotional

and moral support” (Baldassar 2007, 391). In other words, emotional motivations can be considered to be at the basis of all kinds of transnational attachments and activities. However, I am focusing here on the accounts that the participant households provided regarding the specific maintenance and reproduction of emotional bonds and obligations with their extended families in their homelands or living in third countries. Therefore, the section discusses the means through which the participants “relativized” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14) their emotional ties with their extended family members and kin, including communication routines and the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in everyday material activities.

Research on transnational families has highlighted the importance of communication routines as a way of keeping emotional presence and providing care when parenting and maintaining partnerships from afar (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Parreñas 2005; Pribilsky 2004; Schmalzbauer 2004). This scholarship has brought to the fore the significance of repetition and continuity in communication rituals to reproduce familyhood. In the same way, communication routines for the participants in this project provided a sense of ‘togetherness’ with the extended family, a constant and frequent reassurance of their caring bonds and the basis for the reproduction of a feeling of unity across the different generations. These processes of “stay[ing] in touch” is what Baldassar (2008, 253) has termed “virtual co-presence”, that is the ways in which family members re-create “physical presence, touch and contact” with their relatives by using a variety of communication and transport technologies.

In participant household 8, mother Karla (30s, Mexican) and Anglo-Mexican sons William (10) and Tomas (9) provided an account of the importance of the constant communication with her extended family in Mexico. Karla is routinely ‘in touch’ with her mother and has also established the custom of calling her father every Sunday, something she sometimes does via Skype and using the web camera with her children (Baldassar 2007, 394 refers to this type of regular communication as “routine caring”).

**KARLA.** I think I talk to her every day [her mother]. Yes, well depending on... there are weeks when I feel sad or I miss them, but I talk to her every day. Yes, via Skype, yes. (...) I talk to her more now than when I was in Mexico. (...) With my dad we talk once a week, I think. (...) Oh well, we have a camera, and on Sunday we try to see each other through the

camera, but really I don't use the camera that much, it is the children that speak the most when that happens, every Sunday.

Special dates such as birthdays or festivities also help to mark the rhythm of the communication routine in many of the participant cases. Messi (11, Honduran – household 3) provided a clear example of the endurance of family obligations; of the “[r]itual caring [which] involves marking special events like birthdays and anniversaries and makes up much of what di Leonardo defines as kinwork” (Baldassar 2007, 394). Young Messi emphasized the constancy of his extended family in showing care in these special occasions and by doing so ‘being with them’ despite the distance.

MESSI. (...) Now because of the distance with Honduras, it means that my uncles and my grandmothers every birthday and every occasion, they have always sent us presents and for Christmas, and yesterday, when it was my mother's birthday, everybody called her, no one forgot, and the same for my birthdays and my brother's birthdays. They have always been, they have always been with us, always.

Gowricharn (2009, 1622) has highlighted how the second generation is growing up with the technological possibilities and the knowledge to recreate transnational communities in an unprecedented form. As I explore below, most of the adult participants emphasized how the development of communication tools through ICT and their greater affordability had had substantial impacts on the means, frequency and nature of their family contact. Furthermore, the audiovisual and interactive possibilities of communication and socialization tools such as e-mail, Skype, MSN Messenger, Facebook, Picassa, X-box and others had facilitated further the integration of the everyday lives of different members of the family despite their physical distance (see Baldassar 2007; Wilding 2006 for similar accounts).

Participant household 10, which included mother Louise (30s, Chilean), step-father Paco (40s, Chilean) and son Jake (14, Chilean) who had migrated to the UK temporarily, considered the possibility of continuing to feel part of a family unit on an everyday basis despite being in different parts of the world. The immediacy and closeness of the virtual space helps fulfil the feeling of not leaving a place behind despite the geographical distance. The three of them used Skype and they believed that this had allowed them to hold what they described as two lives, their everyday reality in the UK and the lives they left behind in Chile. For this household, Skype acted as a virtual door which they left ajar

so anyone 'passing by' on Skype could contact them. For example, Paco (40s, Chilean) was in touch with his parents and brothers often but probably more so after they had found a way in which his mother could call them in the UK with Skype as if she were making a local call in Chile.

PACO. (...) Eh lately, eh lately we are more in touch because my mother, my mother cannot learn to use the computer, no, my mother is not going to sit down to learn how to use Skype, but there is a new service, because we found out, well it is not new but we have just found out, that you can pay for a monthly subscription here and you have a local number in [their city] in Chile, then we pay a monthly subscription of about £5 or £7, then now my mother picks up the phone in her home and calls this local number in [city in Chile]... and it rings here. (...) Then my mother feels closer because she does not have to wait for my brother to switch on the computer to be able to talk to us or wait for me to call and ask to talk to her, no, now she can pick up the phone and call, that is much more accessible to her.

Indirectly, Paco points towards the importance of taking into account that not all participants had the same opportunity to use internet based communication with their relatives, whether it was because their families did not have access to computers and the internet, or did not know how to use them. A clear example of this arose in participant case 9, which included mother Frances (30s, British), father Juan (30s, Bolivian) and daughter Sally (9, Anglo-Bolivian). Juan's mother and sister were living in the United States undocumented so they were not able to come to visit them in the UK; in addition, Juan's mother was not computer literate. Juan's other relatives in Bolivia also had limited access to internet technologies so it was not as easy to maintain frequent communication. In contrast and as Sally explained, Juan's mother provided care from afar through telephone calls and by sending gifts to her grandchildren - a kind of 'grand-mothering from afar' echoing research on transnational mothering (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997; Schmalzbauer 2004).

*INTERVIEWER. And what do, what do you normally talk about [with grandmother]?*

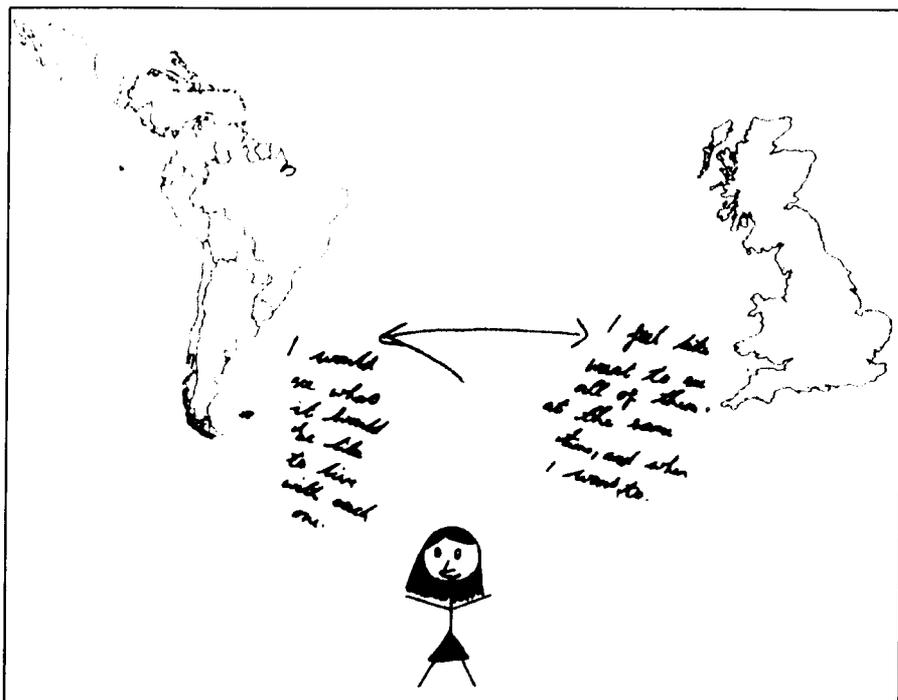
*SALLY. The... how we are, how we're doing and what we've done lately. And Abuelita [Grandma] sends us clothes. Um she sends us clothes and um normally we like them [chuckles] um and she asks what else do you need? Like, 'do you have much of these? Or do you have much of those? Or*

*would you like some new, these or those?’ And she buys them for us, if we want them.*

Sally explained that she would like to be able to use Skype to communicate with her family in Bolivia, as it would allow her to see them and talk to them at the same time. For her it would be important to realize how they had changed. In this way, Sally highlighted the importance of experiencing “virtual co-presence” (Baldassar 2008, 252) with as many senses as possible, ‘seeing’ as well ‘as talking’ would provide a richer, more lived experience for her.

*SALLY. (...) I’d like to see them because I don’t know how much they, they’ve changed and how much they are changing, and I would like to see them and talk to them at the same time.*

During the maps activity (see figure 6-2), she reiterated this wish of feeling closer and being able to spend more time with all her relatives, experiencing “physical co-presence” (Baldassar 2008, 252). Sally wrote on the maps: “I feel like [I] want to see all of them at the same time, and when I want to” and “I would see what it would be like to live with each one”.



**Figure 6-2 Sally's (9, Anglo-Bolivian) maps activity**

However, the dynamics of reproducing both “virtual” and “physical co-presence” (Baldassar 2008, 252) are not free of conflicts and negative sentiments. The expectations

of some family members that their relatives in the UK will make use of these ICT means to communicate more often and more 'fully' increases the emotional pressure to fulfil obligations of care. Ernesto (50s, Chilean – household 5) recalled how his relatives in Chile often asked his cousin in London to 'remind' him to call or e-mail when he had not been 'in touch' for a while. Ernesto resented this type of pressure which he regarded as a form of family surveillance and emotional blackmail.

Furthermore, negative sentiments could also arise in the case of personal visits. Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7) explained that with the intention to provide her Chilean nieces and nephews with the opportunity to learn English, she had issued an open invitation to all of them to come to spend time in the UK. This was the reason why Saiko (19, Chilean) was residing in the household when I met them, as she was undertaking English studies paid for by her aunt. By bringing relatives to spend time with them, Marta also aimed to re-establish full relationships with her extended family while providing her son Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean) with the opportunity to become more engaged with his cousins and his heritage. In spite of Marta's efforts, the relationship between Ben and Saiko was not easy. They fought often and Ben resented what he considered his mother's continued protection of Saiko. They both spoke at length about their differences during the individual interviews and I could observe the tension between the two whilst spending time with the family. For example, when I asked Saiko about her experience of living with her aunt's family, she highlighted the difficulties she had had with her cousin Ben.

SAIKO. I've been very comfortable with my aunt, I find that we speak a lot, but with my cousin the relationship is horrible, because he is too jealous, he gets jealous when I'm with my aunt and things like that, when she buys me something, he wants the same, and then he gives me a dirty look and all that. (...) So that makes me feel bad sometimes but I don't show it, because I say 'no, I don't care', but well sometimes yes, it does make me feel bad.

Although recreating familyhood transnationally could be fraught with tensions and required managing emotions (see also Ryan 2008), many of the participant households emphasized their willingness to experience everyday material activities with the extended family. Despite their unequal chances to engage with ICT, there were clear examples of how these tools and the virtual spaces they provided had transformed the experience of living away from their kin and their possibilities of transnational cultural transmission. For

example, the “virtual co-presence” (Baldassar 2008, 252) provided by tools such as Skype was considered more ‘experiential’ thanks to its immediacy and the possibilities of sensory interaction which it provides.

In this case, it is interesting to consider participant household 6: father Mauricio (30s, Mexican), mother Ma José (30s, Mexican) and daughter Constanza (8, Mexican). Everyday connections with the extended family in Mexico were a fundamental part of how the household conducted their daily routines. Shared spaces and moments were recreated with the help of the technological possibilities that Skype provided, by getting involved in daily activities such as sharing time while eating, chatting and playing. It was not surprising that the family decided to choose their laptop and the social world it recreated through their internet connection as a biographical object important to all the members of the family. They even joked about having ‘adopted’ the internet as part of their family life. Ma José and Constanza explained the extent of this engagement:

Ma JOSÉ. With this [Skype] for example you talk and it is like you were having a conversation, sometimes we leave it [connected], for example if I’m talking to one of my sisters, we leave the call open and is like if you were in the same house, somewhere around, it’s exactly like that, and then it is, she was alone the other day and she was eating and we were at home playing with the Wii and we said to her, well you eat and we play, and because you are seeing each other, well you aren’t there side by side but it makes you feel like if you were in the same space and then, well it is a door to be in touch, because in this way we can see her. Constanza plays hide and seek through the [computer] (laughs), we put Skype on and then we have there hide and seek, so she counts...

CONSTANZA. ... and with my cousin, and then one of us counts on a corner, and then mum says no or yes, and I hide and she counts and then you tell her here or there, and she helps me, yes, no, no, she is not there, she is upstairs but not on top of the bed.

In fact, Constanza reproduced this sense of ‘proximity’ in her family diagram (see figure 6-3 on the next page) by representing individually all the people who were emotionally important for her. She omitted my request to write the names of the countries/places where all the people she was talking about were. For her, all the people she included in the diagram were in the same emotional space so geographical markers did not seem important.

These emotional attachments were expressed in different ways by the young participants. Svašek (2008, 218) suggests that we think of emotions “as processes in which individuals experience, shape and interpret the world around them, anticipate future action and shape their subjectivities”. In his view, such a definition allows us to consider that “emotional encounters are not only shaped by direct social interaction, but also by memories, imagination, expectations and aspirations” (Svašek 2008, 218). In fact, symbolic and idealized images of the family and/or the inherited homeland were often used to convey emotional attachments by the participants; these images could also be regarded as providing “co-presence by proxy”, that is a kind of presence re-created by objects or people which materialize the person or place being missed (Baldassar 2008, 252). The next section explores these symbolic attachments.

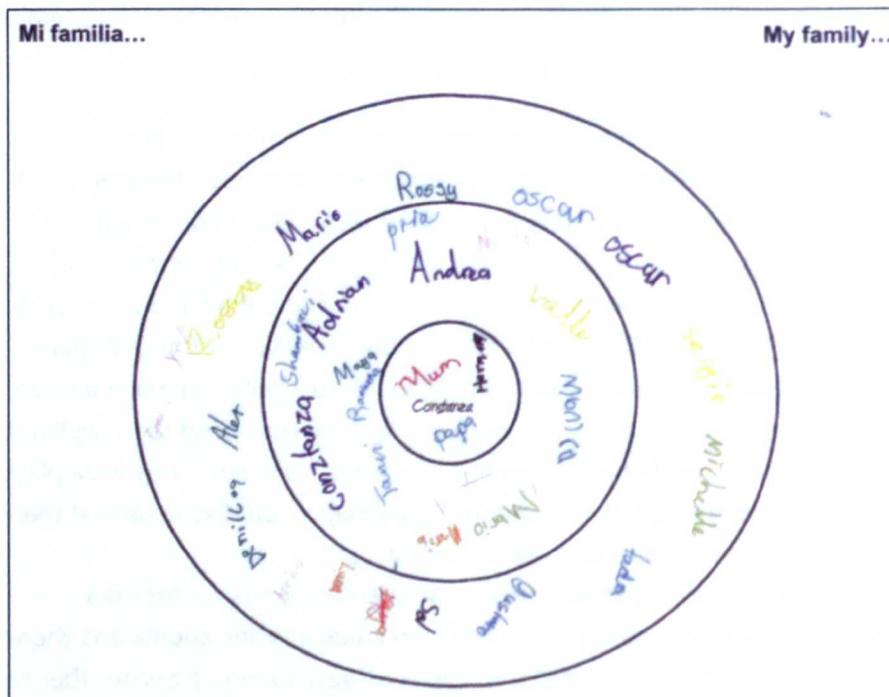
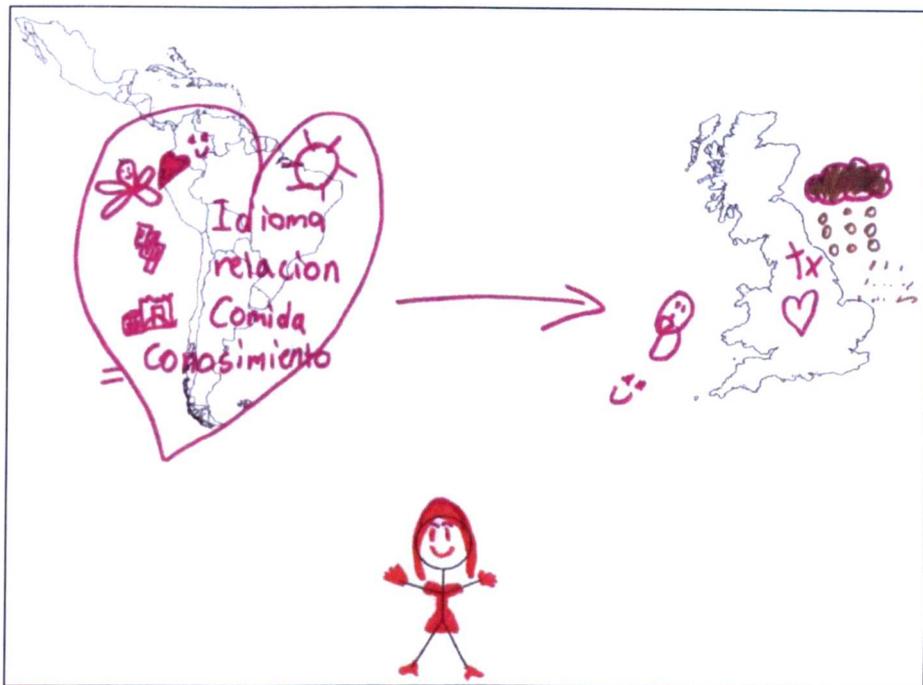


Figure 6-3 Constanza's (8, Mexican – household 6) family diagram

### 6.3.3. Symbolic transnational attachments

This section considers the salience of transnational attachments which occur at the symbolic level, “at the level of imagination, shared memory” (Le Espiritu and Tran 2002, 369) By using two of the households as illustrative examples, I explore the role that collective imaginaries and mementos play in securing potential belongings to the family and to the inherited real or imagined homeland.

The members of participant household 4, father Pablo (30s, Ecuadorian), mother Paula (30s, Ecuadorian) and daughter Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian) arrived to the UK as asylum seekers and had only recently been given leave to remain in the country (after years of waiting). Elizabeth was the only young participant who had had the experience of living in London where the Latin American population is larger and more visible (e.g. shops, restaurants, support groups, etc). During the maps activity, when I asked whether she ever described herself as Latin American, she explained that she liked everything Latin American, 'because all are Latinos'. She illustrated this by drawing a huge heart over the Latin American map and writing on it all the things she thought they had in common (see figure 6-4).



**Figure 6-4 Elizabeth's (15, Ecuadorian – household 4 maps activity  
Text translation: language, relationship, food and knowledge**

ELIZABETH: I like [draws a heart on the map] everything Latin American, because all are Latinos, all speak Spanish in different ways, and I don't think any of them should think that they are better than the others because they speak Spanish the same.

When talking about the common traits that united Latin Americans, Elizabeth listed the language, the way they relate to each other, food and 'knowledge'; with this last term, as she explained, she meant 'self-awareness', a 'less-person centred perspective'. For her, this understanding of the Latino collective identity acted as a powerful cultural referent,

which she described with positive descriptors which emphasized friendliness, understanding and respect. This collective imaginary provided her with an emotional homeland which transcended the extended family bonds which had been weakened due to the family's asylum seeking history.

In addition, household 3 formed by Julia (40s, Honduran), Juanjo (40s, Hispano-Honduran), Jaime (19, Honduran) and Messi (11, Honduran), highlighted the importance of remembering one's roots and origins through their selection of biographical object for the group interview. They chose a miniature Honduran flag (see figure 6-5) that they had had since they left Honduras to migrate to Spain and that they had brought with them when moving to Britain. It was a present to the whole family by the maternal grandmother (Julia's mother) and it was an object that they all referred to in the personal interviews as well as in this group one. They thought that the flag was important because it symbolized the place where they all had been born; therefore it meant something special and reminded them of their homeland and family. Jaime stressed that it was especially significant because it had been given to them by his maternal grandmother, who did not want them to forget where their roots and origins were.



**Figure 6-5 Honduran miniature flag (Household 3)**

The whole household agreed that these mementos (e.g. the flag, photographs, etc.) were important reminders of the memories they had of Honduras and their family. These objects provided all of them with forms of "co-presence by proxy", tangible objects which acted as "abstractions of an imagined presence" (Baldassar 2008, 252; see also Rose 2003; 2004 in relation to the emotional spaces and 'closeness' created by family photographs).

JULIA. (...) Well yes, obviously, the fact of remembering the country, and then you recall familial things, things that one left there, and all that, don't we? Then maybe we focus in this more than in many other mementos that we have... such as photographs, things like that and so, the fact of having this memento then it makes us cherish the good things we lived there, don't we? The good times, and all that, and mainly because of the fact that she gave it to us, don't you think?

JAIME. Definitively...

JULIA. To tell us not to forget our roots ever, because when time goes by, mainly for them who are younger, so that they don't forget, in Messi's case he has nearly forgotten it, he came when he was very young, but Jaime no... Jaime remembers.

Julia's mother had siblings living in the US and she had experienced firsthand her nieces and nephews' disconnection from their cultural heritage so she felt it was important to reiterate to Julia and Juanjo that they should make sure that their children remembered where they were from and where their family was so they could keep their identity.

JULIA. Even she use to tell me that I should never stop instilling this in them, that they had to know where they were from and where their family was and everything else, so they could have their own identity, because they may reach a point later in life in which they don't know what their identity is, at that age when they have been in different places, they may lose the sense of what their identity really is.

Cultural transmission relied on the children being able to recreate and maintain their bonds to their family and by extension their homeland. In this sense, memories were kept alive by material mementos which reiterated these memories on an everyday basis, symbolizing the bonds to the family and the homeland. In fact, they kept the little flag on top of the fridge in the kitchen because it was the most used object in the house; there it was easily seen every day, reinforcing its cultural reproductive role.

These emotional and symbolic practices are the main ways in which the participant households reproduced their bonds to the extended family and their real or inherited homelands; that is, the ways in which they 'relativized' their emotional family ties (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). As I have discussed, the young participants shared the code of family values and symbolic imaginaries that in greater or lesser extend could provide them with transnational frames of reference in which to underpin present or future senses of belonging and which I will explore in chapter 7.

## 6.4. Conclusion

Current theorizations of transnational families have foregrounded their relational nature and described their networking activities through the concepts of “relativizing” and “frontiering” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14 and 19). In this chapter, I have used the case of the participant Latin American families in order to discuss how these networking activities may be negotiated within conditions of socio-cultural invisibility. I have argued that the scarce availability of immediate ‘community’ spaces and affinitive networks constrained the participant households’ possibilities to “frontier network” locally with fellow migrants (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 19). This situation contributed to the participant parents displacing (and somehow delaying) their efforts to transmit their cultural heritage intergenerationally to the “relativized” sphere of nuclear and extended family relationships (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14).

The adult participants recalled several practical constraints which had a detrimental effect on their efforts to transmit their language and other traditions to their offspring. These constraints included everyday pressures and obligations but also, in the case of long-term residents, a life cycle effect related to their greater sense of social integration in their host society. This sense of ‘being settled’ sometimes diminished the adult participants’ need to recreate their homeland culture on a daily basis. In addition, the intra-household constraints identified by the participants were aggravated by the conditions they faced in their immediate locales, which did not provide opportunities for the young participants to be exposed to collective forms of *Latin Americanism* or national cultures. Therefore, their cultural transmission tasks within the domestic sphere could not be recreated collectively through immediate lived experiences and group identifications.

However, participant parents also displayed an ambivalent acceptance towards the fact that their children were not developing a deep knowledge of their inherited language and culture at the present. In fact, the young participants showed different degrees of connection to their cultural heritage and the need to recreate it in their local everyday lives; instead they revealed how they took their own decisions regarding their lifestyle choices (e.g. not attending Spanish language classes, not joining Latin American gatherings). Generally, parents felt that providing their offspring with minimal tools such as understanding Spanish and, most of all developing family connections, would be

sufficient for the young people to actualize their knowledge and attachments to their cultural heritage in the future (if they chose to do so). The dynamics within these families foregrounds wider social processes of individualization in Western societies (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2007; Giddens 1991). Processes which are evidenced by an increased recognition amongst the participant adults that the best course of action in order to face life changing circumstances is to provide their children with as many educational and social resources as possible. In this sense, cultural heritage is considered an important resource that the second generation can potentially use when constructing their life paths and senses of self (Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010).

Consequently, the Latin American adult participants emphasized the importance of transmitting their family culture to their children; that is “relativizing” their family bonds in order to materialize “the family as an imagined community” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14) and provide the second generation with opportunities to develop transnational emotional attachments, benefit from kin support and potentially actualize their cultural heritage through these bonds. I suggested that in order to undertake and perform these tasks of emotional “relativizing” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14), participant households and their families engaged in the reproduction of their “emotional cultures” (Hochschild 1996, 20) intergenerationally and transnationally.

The participant households used technological tools and material objects to reproduce customary intergenerational emotional attachments to their kin. These attachments were recreated through communication routines and activities which integrated the lives of different family members across space. Alternatively, material mementos were used to reiterate these bonds on an everyday basis, symbolising the family belonging and the inherited homeland. In these ways, family relationships and transnational emotional and symbolic attachments became the central stage on which acts of cultural transmission could be enacted and where hopes for future possibilities of cultural discovery were set. Despite the crucial role that these family bonds play on the cultural transmission efforts of the participants, there were also examples of tensions and emotional pressures in these kin relationships. These accounts illuminate the type of negative sentiments and conflicts which also characterize the transnational family domain (cf. Nesteruk and Marks 2009; Ryan 2008) and point towards the complex dynamics which may affect gender roles and ideologies in family migration situations (e.g. McIlwaine 2008, 2010).

The case of these Latin American households and their emotional and symbolic transnational attachments foregrounds the potential use of “relativizing” practices not only to maintain family ties and meet emotional needs and obligations, but also to compensate for the lack of “frontiering” opportunities in the localities in which they live (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14 and 19). However, undertaking such ‘emotional reproductive’ tasks transnationally involves a considerable degree of effort and relies on individuals engaging in repetitive and routine tasks of communication which can mimic day-to-day interactions and engagements. For many of the adult participants, securing these constant connections between their kin and their children was a way of reproducing their own notions of familyhood but also guaranteeing possibilities of cultural transmission for their children. In fact, transnational attachments, in addition to lived experiences and local attachments, did figure in the frames of reference of the young participants when referring to their senses of identity and belonging. The next chapter focuses on the narratives of belonging of both adult and young participants.

## 7. Invisible belongings

### 7.1. Introduction

In order to develop deeper understandings of the experiences of settlement and integration of migrants and ethnic minorities in their host societies, scholars have increasingly adopted migrants/ethnic minorities-centred perspectives which can illuminate how they perceive and make sense of their multiply scaled and simultaneous senses of affiliation and belonging (e.g. Ehrkamp 2006; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Phillips et al. 2007; Valentine et al. 2009; Waite and Cook 2010 in press). As I discussed in chapter 2, a growing body of research has provided insights into both belonging as personal sentiments of feeling in place, being at home, and its related political dimension (politics of belonging), that is being recognized (or not) as being in place by others and wider social groups and formal structures (see Antonsich 2010; Mee and Wright 2009 for recent reviews). Furthermore, studies which draw on Probyn's (1996) influential conceptualization of belonging as both 'being in place' and 'longing to be in place' have foregrounded that belonging needs to be considered as a "process (*becoming*) rather than a status (*being*)" (Antonsich 2010, 652 italics in the original). As Antonsich (2010, 652) has highlighted, this approach has provided avenues to explore belonging as a socially constructed category open to notions of performativity (e.g. Bell 1999; Savage et al. 2004; Skrbiš et al. 2007) as well as belonging as transcending forms of socio-territorial attachment and consisting of plural and multiple expressions (e.g. Ehrkamp 2005; Pratt and Yeoh 2003).

In this last analytical chapter, I aim to engage with this scholarship by exploring how the participants (adults and young people) narrated and constructed notions of belonging in relation to their multiply scaled everyday practices and social spaces. My approach follows Anthias' (2006, 21) understanding of belonging as including not only acts of identification (formal or informal) but also as stemming from how someone feels in relation to the social world they inhabit and their experiences of inclusion and exclusion. As she explains: "Belonging is not only about membership, rights and duties (as in the case of citizenship), or merely about forms of identification with groups, or with other people. It is also about the social places constructed by such identifications and memberships, and the ways in which social place has resonances with stability of the self, or with feelings of being part of

a larger whole and with the emotional and social bonds that are related to such places” (Anthias 2006, 21). I argue that by paying attention to the everyday emotional ways in which participants made sense of their memberships and affiliations, it is possible to develop a more nuanced understanding of the diversity of ordinary ways in which migrants and ethnic minorities bond to their societies of settlement. Restricting our approaches to full-scale expressions of collective identifications and group articulations of belonging would lead us to disregard the micro-expressions of individual attachment and emotional compromises that are involved in these processes. Equally, ignoring the intersection between personal senses of belonging and their social dimensions would restrict our understanding of how power structures constrain or facilitate individuals’ possibilities to belong (Antonsich 2010).

In what follows, I explore the diversity of accounts that the participants presented in relation to their senses of attachment to place/s, identifications and belonging and try to pay particular attention to whether and how these notions relate to the issues of invisibility that characterize the Latin American population in the North. It is important to note, however, that the Spanish *equivalent* of belonging or to belong, ‘*pertenecer*’, is not a concept/term used with ease in everyday parlance. I do not mean to imply that the concept does not exist or is not employed, but I believe that it is adopted more readily in academic and formal language. Interestingly, Antonisch (2010, 646) has also highlighted this semantic complexity and difficulty in the case of French and Italian; which seems to indicate that for these languages it sounds more natural to express sentiments of belonging in everyday speech (such in ‘I belong here’) as notions of feeling at home, being part of or from a place (see also Sidaway et al. 2004 for related translation issues). Therefore, in analyzing the participants’ accounts collected in Spanish I had to take into account the multiple ways in which participants expressed notions of attachment, membership or comfort in relation to place/s, locations and everyday situations.

I have organized the chapter in two parts. The first one focuses on the processes of adaptation and homing of the participants (adults and young people) and the second on their narratives around identifications and collective articulations of belonging. Within this

sections, migrant adults' and young second generation participants' accounts<sup>32</sup> are presented mostly in separated form. This is due to the fact that their different life experiences (having migrated versus having been born and/or grown up in the UK) impacted considerably on the ways in which they perceived themselves in relation to their society of residence. This division also aims to stress the contrasts and continuities which can be found between the accounts and experiences of the different generations.

## **7.2. Processes of adaptation and homing**

When approaching the belonging accounts that the participants presented, I was especially interested in understanding how they saw themselves in connection to the places where they live (including the wider notion of the host country), their everyday embodied experiences and their cultural background (including the Latin American construct and the countries of origin). In this first part of the chapter, I explore the narratives that adults and young people constructed around processes of achieving familiarity with their society of residence and notions of being or feeling at home in the places where they live. Therefore, I approach their accounts as processes of "everyday belonging" (Fenster 2005, 243) and of experiencing life in a specific locale (although understood as fluid and connected to multiple scales). For migrant participants these processes involved negotiation and emotional compromises whilst for the second generation young people they were their 'default' everyday world.

### **7.2.1. Migrant participants' adaptation and everyday social locations**

When discussing the invisibility strategies that the participants deployed in order to pursue sameness in their present localities, migrant adults emphasized the efforts they had made in order to 'fit in' or to adapt themselves to their new social environments (see chapter 5). Adaptation was seen as a process which required time and conscious negotiation in order to learn the dominant social norms and conventions of their society of settlement. Participants described this process as implying personal efforts to adjust and to accommodate their sense of selves to their new environments. These accounts echo

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<sup>32</sup> With the expression 'immigrant or migrant participants' I refer to the Latin American adults who participated in the project. I use this expression to differentiate them from the 'second generation young participants', who had been born in the UK or born abroad but who had spent most of their lives in this country.

psychological studies of migrants' acculturation processes which foreground the ways in which newcomers learn new behaviours and may un-learn those which are no longer of use in their host lands (and the psychological conflicts which can arise from these processes, see for example Berry 1992; 1997).

The emotional implications of these processes were perceived differently among participants. As I discussed in chapter 5, middle-class adults were more likely to express them as enriching experiences (e.g. gaining knowledge and expertise in other cultures and as a successful outcome of their settlements) than working-class participants, who felt that, to some extent, the process of adaptation eroded their homeland cultural values. However, the emotional dimension of these processes also found expression in how the participants narrated their senses of "everyday belonging" (Fenster 2005, 243). Fenster (2005, 243 drawing on De Certeau 1984) defines this type of belonging "as a sentiment, which is built up and grows out of everyday life activities"; accordingly, "[b]elonging and attachment are built (...) on the base of accumulated knowledge, memory, and intimate corporal [everyday] experiences"; sentiments that, therefore, are multifarious and change over time. To a great extent, the processes of adaptation described by the participants involved developing these sentiments of connection, learning to know the places where they had settled, acquiring the legal residential status, establishing social networks and constructing a life in their new places.

Adult migrant participants described how as they experienced their lives in the UK and time passed, they became more attached to their host society, acquiring attitudes and ways of behaving in relation to those that they saw in their surroundings. For example, Mauricio (30s, Mexican – household 6), who at the time of participation was deciding with his family whether to settle in the UK for a longer period, was of the opinion that, if he were to stay, he would adopt local ways of doing things and conducting himself. Adopting these attitudes and behaviours is, therefore, another way of "making [everyday] sameness" (Nagel 2009, 401) and 'blending in'.

**MAURICIO.** (...) If I was to stay I think it would be the same, so I don't think I would lose my Mexican identity, I don't think I would become English, definitively not. I don't think so, but I would adopt other types of attitudes, yes, different to the ones I would have normally acquired by being Mexican, so for example when I drive I have turned to the English style, so they move the wheel like this and they check the rear view

mirrors and they stop. When I go to Mexico and drive in this way, they ask me why I drive like this. (...)

However, as it can be gathered by Mauricio's comments, this did not mean that he would lose his *Mexican identity*. As I will discuss in the second part of the chapter, essentialized notions of origin identities allowed participants to engage in processes of adaptation without feeling that they were denying *their roots* and past attachments. Furthermore, migrant participants who had been living in the country for longer periods explained how they had internalized these everyday behaviours and ways of being, to the extent that they had become part of who they were, part of their memories and therefore their attachments or "everyday belongings" (Fenster 2005, 243). Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8) explored this sentiment in the following extract.

KARLA. (...) Besides I don't know if one day we go, if we were to return to Mexico, I would miss a lot of things from England, then, I believe that it is something that it is going to be with me for the rest of my life, that I'm going to... there is going to be something in my heart that will never be completely [in place], and that's something that will have to be like that because we are two nationalities together, and I'm living here and little by little you become a bit more English, you absorb the culture and little by little you give up things from your own culture that were, well, that were from the day to day. (...)

Acquired attachments to the host land, however, were not expressed in terms of feeling complete belonging or identification but through emphasizing states of embodied lived experience, gratitude, contentment, comfort or no regrets in their present lives in the UK. Although this diversity of verbal articulations could be related to the language issues which I highlighted in the introduction of the chapter in relation to expressing 'belonging' in Spanish; I believe that these sentiments are meaningful because they provide a more nuanced picture of ways in which migrants *bond* to the places where they have settled. For instance, Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2) emphasized the gratitude that she felt towards her host land because of the work and life opportunities she had had in the UK, and how this sentiment also expressed itself through her growing attachment to the place which had been her home for the last twenty years.

INTERVIEWER. And now, after all this time of living here, would you define yourself somehow as British or not at all?

MARTINA. From Yorkshire! [laughs]. Erm, yes I feel a bit from this area, like the north of England [laughs]. It is simply that when the plane lands I feel like if I'm returning home, then there has to be something there. And anyway, the landscape gradually seeps into one's soul and the people are really, there are lots of excellent people, and I have been able to work, and I have been able to progress and I have been able to provide for my daughter, so in the end I am grateful because, I must be grateful, and the country little by little seeps into your soul.

For these participants, attachments to their settlement society are rooted in the consideration that their lives are taking place *here*, where they have found opportunities to develop their professional careers, live safely, earn a living, provide for their families and secure more prosperous futures for their children. The salience of the *here and now* was also highlighted by Nagel and Staeheli's (2008a, 427) British Arab participants who understood "the requirement to integrate (...) [as] stem[ming] from the simple fact that, regardless of their transnational affinities and linkages, Britain is where they live, work, go to school, and raise their families". Some of Latin American migrant participants in my project expressed a need to prioritize their *local* lives in front of transnational affiliations, as Britain was the stage in which their present lives were taking place. Juanjo (40s, Hispano-Honduran – household 3) and Pablo (30s, Ecuadorian – household 4), who had struggled during their settlements in the UK and were still encountering financial and social difficulties, both highlighted their decisions to foreground the *here and now* despite not forgetting (and keeping in touch with) their countries of origin.

JUANJO. (...) For the time being I have Honduras aside... so to one side, because for the time being I'm living here, I'm doing my life here, and this is what it is... it's not that [Honduras] doesn't matter to me, but the main thing is here at the moment. Because pitifully and I wouldn't want to have to say this, but the truth is that Honduras cannot give me what Britain is giving to me. Then I owe my day to day, momentary, to Britain. (...)

PABLO. (...) On a personal level it does not affect me much [what is happening in Ecuador] because, I mean it interests me as Ecuadorian, but I mean being here it does not affect me at all, see? (...) There are people who get very angry, they insult each other, then why am I going to get involved if I'm in another country? You are interested in the here, in how the situation is here. (...)

These accounts show the emotional implications of negotiating sameness or integrating in the host society. These participants' strategies of adaptation are not simply *actions to fit in*

but they also imply emotional compromises. That is, sentiments of personal or familial need, achievement or fulfilment provide the basis for a compromise between letting go of past values and acquiring new ones. Ernesto (50s, Chilean – household 5) provided an example of this process of accommodation while reflecting on his own life and those of his Latin American acquaintances in the UK.

*ERNESTO. I mean I don't know, life is, the kind of life that we've been given us Latin Americans, I think it's quite good actually because we had the time to study here, to work, to live, and we've lost a lot of our values as well and we found new values, so at the same time it's... I'm quite, I'm not, I have no regrets of how we came over here.*

As I explored in chapters 4 and 5, for many Latin American adult participants their socio-cultural invisibility is a signifier of their successful integration in the UK (based on notions of cultural and social closeness to British mainstream) and a defence against enforced racialization processes. From this basis, sameness, attachment and consequent “everyday belongings” (Fenster 2005, 243) are negotiated through finding social spaces of belonging in their host society (e.g. through religious affiliation, professional status, common life course stage, etc.). Integration was understood as becoming a full member of the settlement society, therefore not being classified primarily through the ethnic or migrant lens. As Anthias (2006, 21-22) has noted: “Belonging is about experiences of being part of the social fabric and should not be thought of in exclusively ethnic terms. (...) It is important to relate the notion of belonging, therefore, to the different locations and contexts from which belongings are imagined and narrated, in terms of a range of social positions and social divisions/identities such as gender, class, stage in the life cycle and so on.” In the following paragraphs, I consider some of ‘locations’ and ‘contexts’ which figured saliently in many of the participants’ belonging narratives.

For instance, one of the most common locations discussed was related to the sense of shared Christian culture with the host land and specifically to its Catholic expressions. For example, when Paula (30s, Ecuadorian – household 4) and her family were dispersed to one of the cities in the north by NASS, they proceeded to utilize their Catholic support networks to help them settle and look for a Catholic School for their children. This allowed them to maintain their Catholic religious outlook and culture. In addition, these religious support networks were the ones to help them find familiar spaces in their new city.

PAULA. The Church helped me a lot when I came here [city in the north], because we use to go to a church in London and the priest knew us because we baptized all the children there and he knew us and we told him about our situation, that we had to come up here, and he said well, best wishes and everything, and when we got here, he had called a nun and told me to count on the nuns here. I mean they sent someone to help me, and there were two Chileans that spoke Spanish and were missionaries of the Catholic church... and there was also, we call her nun, a missionary from Ireland (...) and she showed us [the city] and the Chileans also came with clothes, with clothes for my children and... so they came to visit us, to talk to us so we don't feel sad here (...) sad and helpless, there is no one [referring to other Latin Americans], those were the people that made us feel good and showed us the place... (...)

In addition, professional spaces and careers were important sites of personal self-definition for some of the middle-class immigrant participants; for instance, Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7) described herself in terms of her profession (which kept her connected to her mother tongue and culture) and the related social world in which she now felt comfortable, where she felt her life belonged.

MARTA. Well I always, because I like my career a lot, my profession, I say (...) I'm a teacher of Spanish (...) and after that I talk about my country, "but I'm from Chile, and so on, and I lived in [city of the north of Spain]..." (...) I'm very, very involved in my work, for me my work is nearly as important as my family. And my family obviously, but my work yes, I like my work very much, and because of my work I'm in touch with a lot of people, because I work in adult education and I also work in *Community Centres*, then I know a lot of people. I, now, here in England, well in this area I feel more comfortable than in Chile; when I go to Chile is, I go visiting, I enjoy the sun because I always go in the summer, the beaches and the food. And then I come here and my life is here. (...)

Life course stage, parenting roles and their obligations also figured as social locations that were meaningful for many of the participants. For example, having children meant prioritizing their everyday needs, and therefore participating in spaces and establishing support networks locally, which often worked independently from potential needs to find fellow immigrants or people with whom to share language and customs. In this sense, Ma José (30s, Mexican – household 6) explained how her role as a parent had connected her to places and people important for her daughters and therefore, these places and people had become part of her own life.

Ma JOSÉ. (...) Because when you have children you're very busy and part of your life is for them to grow up, be educated, be fed and nothing else, and then you start creating these other networks with, with... those other worlds that a single person without children doesn't have (...) then in Constanza's school I have taken courses, I have helped with things, and it is part of my life, well and then I've never been so unoccupied as to feel that I had spare time and that, for example, I could use it to find people from Mexico.

However, participants also provided examples of how their ability to enact or claim certain identifications had been constricted by the politics of belonging of their host society (cf. Yuval-Davis 2006). The following example, provided by Louise (30s, Chilean – household 10) during the course of undertaking and discussing her family diagram (see figure 7-1), illustrates how her own perception as a white person had been disallowed by the 'racial order' into which she had incorporated when settling in the UK. This disallowance had led her to re-imagine herself as non-white and to establish trans-ethnic affiliations with people from other minority backgrounds.

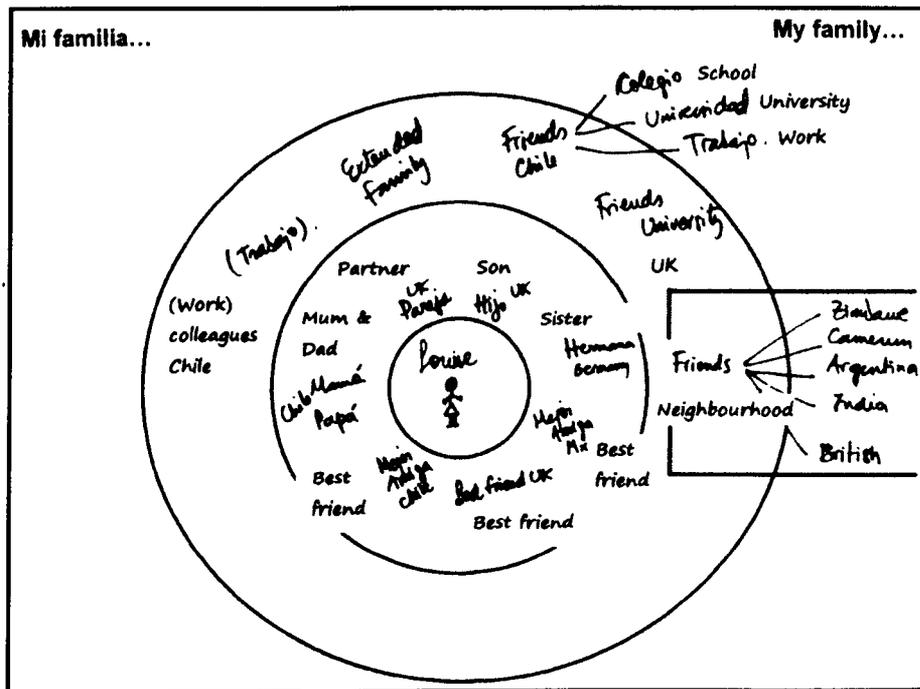


Figure 7-1 Louise's (30s, Chilean – household 10) family diagram anonymized and translated

LOUISE. Hmm, those are the friends from the neighbourhood [see red square in figure 7-1]. Basically it's emotional support see? We get together to have a chat, have a cup of tea, have some laughs. Erm I don't know,

when we get together the ones who are not white [laughs] we get together to talk about the whites [laughs]. It's funny. Well, this category I've also recreated it here because before coming here, I didn't imagine myself not being white, because in my country I'm white [laughs] but when I'm here I'm not white, then I'm immediately part of the non-white forum. (...)

Another example of the constraints imposed by their social context came from Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1). Despite having developed sentiments of belonging to her settlement society, being able to *blend in* and feel attached to her neighbours, Susana explained having a lasting sense of non-belonging in certain aspects of her life. This seemed to be an internalized feeling of not fitting in (being othered) produced by the constant social reminder of being a foreigner, of not *being the same*.

SUSANA. (...) You always have a certain level of disagreement or *discomfort* because one does not fit in society's expectations; you are always looked at as an stranger, as a foreigner. I would say that this affects the way I fill in a job application, affects the way I see... just now I'm trying to change jobs and there, on my subconscious there is this, that I do not fit because I do not have the experience or I do not belong to this group. I think that affects me, I have been thinking about it lately because I'm trying to change jobs and I see that there are things with which I feel alien, when I'm trying to fill in the application, it is a conflict.

Overall, the process of adaptation which the participants reported was eased by finding spaces or locations of belonging (i.e. Catholic spaces, professional standpoints) from which to develop multiply situated senses of self. Their range of spaces or locations of belonging, however, was constrained by the politics of belonging of their host society (i.e. being racialized or othered). Next I proceed to explore the accounts that the young second generation participants presented in relation to their senses of feeling at home and consider how notions of lived ethnic and cultural diversity underpinned their narratives of local belonging.

### **7.2.2. Young narratives of belonging in diversity**

In the conversations that developed around the maps activity, young participants often explained feeling at home in Britain, which was defined in terms of having been born in the country, being familiar with the place where they live and having local knowledge. It is a notion which echoes Ahmed's description of home as "the familiar place, the place that

is comfortable and comforting” (1999a, p. 330). It can also be seen an expression of Fenster’s (2005, 243) “everyday belongings” by which participants encapsulated their experiential knowledge of the places where they had resided most or all of their young lives. Genaro (18, American-Chilean – household 5) provided an example of the meaning of this familiarity and comfort.

*GENARO. And I guess just the fact that I’m here and it was where I was born that makes it, means so much more to me ‘cause I know my way around and stuff. I know where places are and I know how things work because I’ve grown up here and uh I’ve just got used to it I suppose. (...) So, you know, like the surroundings I know where I’m going and I’m not lost or I’m not confused about anything that I should know about. But yeah so it’s, it is kind of like a home to me, in a way. I suppose by default really. [chuckles]*

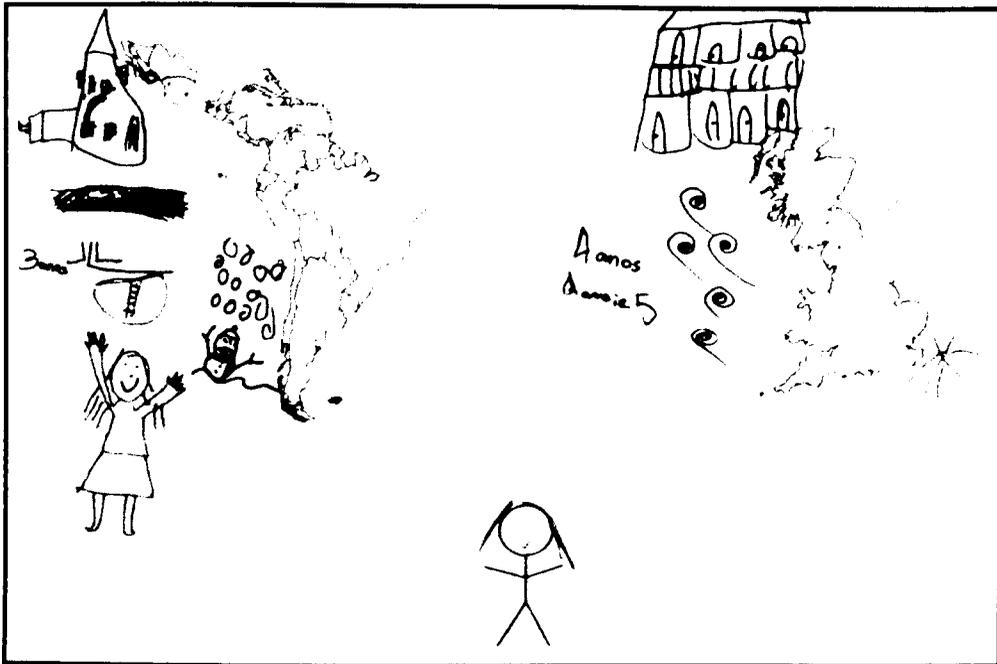
However, among the participants these ideas were diverse, and in some cases, imaginaries of home included both their society of settlement and their birth or inherited homeland (mainly through their family bonds). Some participants provided examples of an understanding of home as an “spatial imaginary: a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places, extend across spaces and scales, and connect places” (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 2). For instance, during her maps activity, Constanza (8, Mexican – household 6) displayed a rich imaginary of home which included all the cities, activities, environments and people that figured in her life. In contrast to other participants, Constanza did not choose to talk about one place but directly tried to locate both the city where she lives now and the cities in Mexico where she has family. She announced feeling happy in both places and proceeded to draw the things she preferred in each side of the globe (e.g. outdoors swimming pool in Mexico, snow and fireworks in the UK). She also explained that she wished she could have all those things at the same time and symbolically drew snow and a snowman in Mexico (see figure 7-2 on the next page).

INTERVIEWER. And why are you happy? [In relation to the drawing of herself in the UK side in which she is smiling]

CONSTANZA. Because I have my friends, but I’m also happy, I’m happy in both sides...

INTERVIEWER. In Mexico too, I see. And why are you happy in Mexico, when you go to Mexico?

CONSTANZA. Because I have my... my [female] cousins, my [male] cousins, uncles, aunts...



**Figure 7-2 Constanza's (8, Mexican – household 6) maps activity**

Constanza told me about all the things and people who made her happy, based in her everyday experiences and also her lived memories, building a picture of comfort and connection to all the places that, so far, were part of her life. Constanza's notion of home and its spatial fusion needs to be understood in terms of the intense day-to-day transnational communication that her family maintains with relatives back in Mexico (see chapter 6). Through these practices she continues to have a considerable level of everyday interaction with her aunts and cousins in Mexico with whom she chats and plays online. As I will discuss later, not all the second generation participants had the same level of lived connection with their own or their parents' homelands, but spatial imaginaries and landscapes played an important role in all their accounts of their senses of self.

Independently of the multi-dimensional understandings of home that the second generation participants presented, the localities where they lived and in which they conducted their ordinary everyday lives were consistently seen as places of comfort. As I discussed in chapter 5, they felt they belonged with their friends on the basis of their everyday shared activities and preferences. Young participants tended to prioritize this local level of lived experience in their belonging accounts both in relation to their

friendship networks but also in relation to the multicultural or multi-ethnic urban environments in which they live. On the basis of these everyday experiences, they displayed understandings of being part of the multicultural diversity which they consider defines Britain. This perception is in line with what has been described by scholars as “multiculturalism as a lived experience” in contrast to its more ideological denotations (Malik 2002, n.p.). It can also be understood as an expression of “everyday multiculturalism”, that is “an *everyday practice* and lived experience of diversity in specific situations and spaces of encounter” (Wise and Velayutham 2009, 3 italics in the original). However, as Morrell (2008, 8) has noted, this “lived experience” is not the same for every inhabitant of the UK, as those living in urban areas are more likely to interact with diverse ethnic and cultural groups. In fact, this was the case for most of the project participants, as they reside in metropolitan areas which are multi-ethnic.

The ways in which the young participants understood and negotiated these everyday experiences of multiculturalism is intrinsically related to how they perceived and constructed sameness in their day-to-day lives (see chapter 5). Sameness amongst friends and peers was a kind of ‘taken for granted’ which was maintained through the strategic silencing of any potential differences which could disrupt it. Furthermore, some participants explained separating their *English space* from their familial cultural heritage, which was circumscribed to the domestic and familial (local and transnational) sphere. In addition, those participants who had been questioned about their ethnicity due to their marked embodiments, proactively sought difference – by establishing relationships with young people from other minority backgrounds - as a way of negotiating sameness. These strategic behaviours, which were not exclusive and could be displayed in different situations, illustrated that participants were aware of social systems of differentiation and worked to make sense of their personhood in relation to them. As Anthias noted in relation to the belonging accounts elaborated by the young Greek Cypriots in her project, narratives are “produced in relation to socially available and hegemonic discourses and practices” (2002b, 511). In this sense, the young participants in this project used public discourses of multiculturalism to enact inclusive notions of diversity which could provide a space of belonging for themselves and their diverse friends (cf. Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010).

An illustration of this enactment of inclusive diversity came from Genaro (18, American-Chilean – household 5). For him, his multiple heritages mean that he can belong in a diverse environment but, at the same time, his unusual cultural background gives him a unique distinction. He seems to be referring to the fact that he does not feel and is not made to feel out of place and yet he can use his *difference* strategically to set himself apart from the majority groups in the UK.

*GENARO. (...) it's everywhere you go you find people from different places and I mean it's a very multicultural place, England, so. I don't know maybe it's, I fit in in one way, you know, 'cause I'm different. But I'm different so I stand out from the rest in, it's, it's sort of confusing in a way. It depends how you look at it.*

In addition, acknowledging and recognizing their cultural inheritance on a more informal basis, was one way in which the participants negotiated “everyday belongings” (Fenster 2005, 243). In a sense, they used the same strategic behaviours with which they negotiated sameness. That is, by aligning their *differences* with the diversity of people in the places they inhabit and making *visible* their cultural background strategically (‘coming out’ as Latin Americans), young participants, acquire membership to the diverse societies they inhabit. Furthermore, the *rarity* of being of Latin American descent in the north of England provides an added value to their visibility strategies through perceptions of being unique and special.

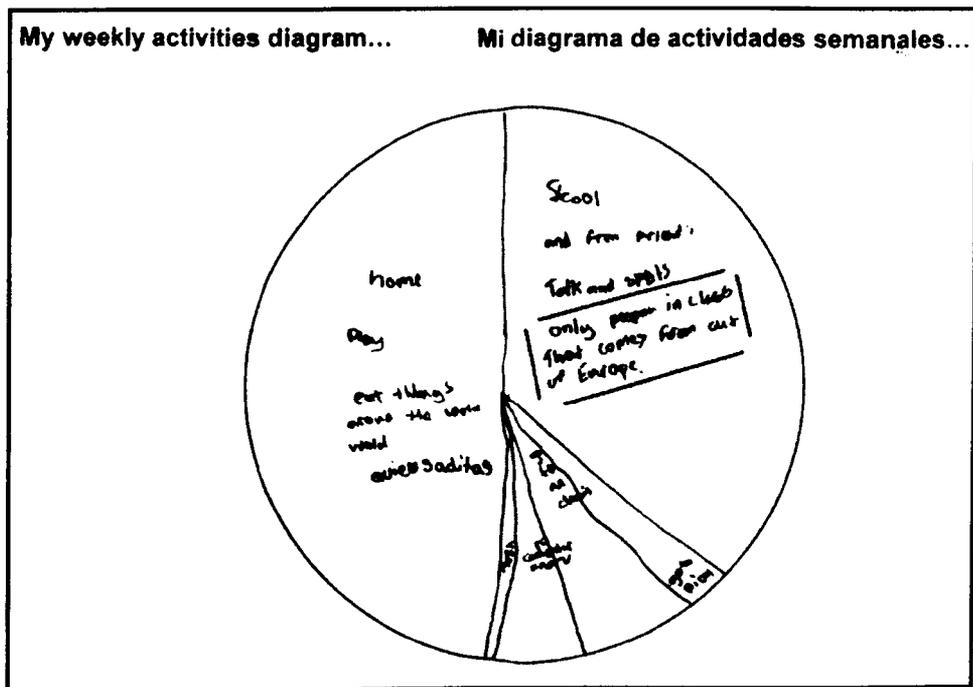
An example of this sense of uniqueness came from Duncan (12, Colombian-Scottish, household 1). He valued the exceptionality of having roots in a faraway and largely unknown place, which he felt gave him an aura of *exoticism and mystery*.

*DUNCAN. I don't know, I like being Latin American because I'm like, like exotic [laughs] and it has that meaning, that I'm from Latin America, nearly no one knows where it is and I like that. No, I don't know why but in that way it seems good to me.*

Duncan was not the only young participant to foreground the potential of using notions of ‘being exotic’ in order to differentiate himself from peers and friends. As I discussed in chapter 5, one of the stereotypes about Latin America which operates in Britain is based on ideas of an ‘exotic land’ which acquired currency through the travel writing of the 19th century (see Pratt 1992). These types of narratives can also be understood in terms of Said’s (2003 [1978]) ‘Orientalism’ and the processes by which Orient was exoticized and

romanticized in Western imagination (and consequently othered). Despite the highly racialized, gendered and sexualized forms that govern wider social narratives of exoticism (e.g. Ali 2005), some of the young people of Latin American descent (mainly in teenager ages) seem to be appropriating this stereotypical construct to capitalize on notions of being out of the ordinary and fascinating. These ideas are probably being reinforced by perceptions of the *fashionable image of Latinos* which circulate through “mediascapes” and “ideoscapes” (Appadurai 1990, 9) and which, as I discussed in chapter 4, are being also appropriated by some of the young participants.

However, amongst younger participants, this type of narrative was more limited to ideas of ‘uniqueness’ due to the rarity of their background in the places where they live. William (10, Anglo-Mexican, household 8) used the weekly diagram activity to highlight his pride of being the only pupil who had cultural heritage further afield than Europe. He really cherished the idea of being the only one in the class “who came from outside of Europe” and he decided to represent this uniqueness by writing it on the diagram (see red rectangle in figure 7-3).



**Figure 7-3 William's (10, Anglo-Mexican, household 8) weekly activities diagram**

Once more, these dynamics foreground the complexity of the marked/unmarked spectrum that characterizes the embodied lives of these young participants. In many cases, their

whiteness or 'unidentified ethnicity' and accent-less English protects them from *othering* experiences in their everyday interactions. From this basis, they can use their cultural background strategically and selectively (Bailey et al. 2002, 136 for an account of "strategic visibility"), maintaining it as invisible or using visibility to affirm their *difference* and negotiate forms of belonging in diversity (Mas Giralt 2011).

In contrast to their parents, the young participants negotiated forms of local belonging not just by using their everyday social locations and friendships but also by engaging with the regime of multicultural recognition which operates in their society of residence. However, they claimed membership to the multi-ethnic locales in which they live by appealing to their Latin American (or specific national) heritage; a cultural heritage that, as I will explore in the second part of the chapter, was narrated in variegated terms and could take the form of potentially delayed belongings to their inherited homelands.

### **7.3. Cultural heritages and belonging**

This part of the chapter explores the senses of belonging that the participants expressed in relation to their cultural heritage, families and roots, memories and past experiences. I argue that, generally, adult participants presented senses of belonging to the place of origin through essentialized notions of national identities. These essentialized notions allowed them to acknowledge the transformations introduced by present experiences and "everyday belongings" (Fenster 2005, 243) in a way which did not undermine their senses of affiliation and obligation to their families and roots. However, the lack of opportunities to recreate locally the temporalities of their societies of origin and to perform collectively these identities, in some cases resulted on a sentiment of erosion of their everyday attachments to the homelands. Alternatively, other migrants displayed fluid understandings of places and times in order to counteract senses of dislocation (cf. Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010), therefore resorting to more *liquid* approaches to belonging (Bauman 2000; Lee 2010). In the second section, I turn my attention to the narratives that the second generation participants presented in relation to their own collective or group identifications. I pay special attention to the ways in which they expressed their attachments to their real or inherited homelands through "emotional landscapes" (Christou and King 2010, 638) and argue that these emotional and symbolic transnational

bonds can be understood as forms of potential delayed belongings to these ancestral homes.

### 7.3.1. Migrants' cultural and national senses of belonging

In relation to formal expressions of group or collective belonging, all the adult immigrant participants continued to describe their national identity in terms of their country of origin or, mainly in the cases where they had acquired British citizenship, as hyphenated combinations of origin and host land. As I have mentioned, essentialized notions of national identities were often displayed in narratives of adaptation to the settlement society to avoid any potential misunderstanding regarding their continued recognition of their roots and their emotional attachments to the family and places left behind.

In this sense, it was a type of personal 'strategic essentialism' used not for the purpose of collective action but in order to defuse potential charges of denying or betraying their origins (e.g. Noble 2009; Spivak 1990). These essentialized identities were constructed on notions of having been born, having grown up and having lived most of their formative lives in their countries of origin. Additionally, familial bonds (sometimes articulated as *blood ties or roots*) also figured prominently in these accounts. Furthermore, this 'strategic essentialism' was used to confirm their lasting affiliation to their countries of origin despite having acquired other nationalities (e.g. British or Spanish) which they often used officially, either for legal official purposes or in order to avoid being questioned about their 'status' in the UK. For example, Juanjo (40s, Hispano-Honduran – household 3), who as we saw in the last section had left 'Honduras aside' for the time being, presented his Honduran national identity in very emphatic way:

JUANJO. I am Honduran, I am Honduran, I will be Honduran until the day I die. I was born in Honduras, I grew up in Honduras, I have made most of my life in Honduras and... well, definitively yes, I feel Honduran. Yes...

Despite that he now holds Spanish nationality (to which he was entitled through his father) and uses it for his day-to-day life in England, he explained that this was for practical reasons and that emotionally he felt Honduran. Similarly, Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1) resorted to the same type of narrative when explaining how she defined her national identity after having lived in the north of the country for more than twenty years and having acquired British nationality (she holds dual nationality Colombian and British).

SUSANA. (...) Generally I always say, I always say I'm Colombian see? For practical matters, if people ask me my nationality I always say I'm British, it becomes a practicality, something domestic, to avoid the *red tape* [laughs] and to avoid those questions in which we do not fit in the box of the questionnaire. Then it has become a tool. (...) Then I consider myself both, but obviously more Colombian than British because, because yes, because I am, because I grew up there, because I have the blood and because at some point I always say that blood calls, then there is that tendency there, I would always go more for that side [Colombian side].

It is important to emphasize that this strategic use of nationalities was not only employed to navigate the legal framework of the country but also to avoid having 'their right to be present' questioned by society at large. In fact, having a 'British passport' (or a European one which provided similar entitlements) was considered by some of the participants a necessary element to be able to lead full and equal lives in their host society. A 'formal recognition' which was important for both adults and children when considering their 'political right to belong'. These accounts are in line with other research which has highlighted that rights to stay and work in a place often underpin claims to (political) belonging (e.g. Ervine 2008) and that legal entitlements are essential in producing the sense of security necessary in order to develop a sense of belonging to the host society (e.g. Alexander 2007; Sporton and Valentine 2007). For example, Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian, born in Ecuador – household 4) who was the only young participant who did not have British or another European nationality (her family had only recently been given ILR), connected her ability to feel belonging in Britain with holding a British passport.

ELIZABETH. [The British Passport would mean] that we can leave, that we can be in peace, that we can, we can feel like everybody else, equal to other people. They feel comfortable here, then I would also feel comfortable because I have a British Passport and I can do anything I want.

The family diagrams and interviews that I undertook with the participants often illustrated the continued importance of the bonds with the family members left behind or living in third countries. In addition, many of their accounts were connected to memories of experiences and places where immigrant participants had grown up and/or lived significant parts of their lives. Fenster (2005, 248) suggests that "[m]emory in fact creates and consists of a sense of belonging". Memory, in this sense, includes short and long term dimensions with the latter "consist[ing] of an accumulation of little events from the past,

our childhood experiences, our personal readings and reflections on specific spaces, which are associated with significant events in our personal history. Such memories build up a sense of belonging to those places where these events took place" (Fenster 2005, 248). A great deal of the participants' narratives included this dimension of memories past as being an intrinsic part of their sense of self, as for instance this description provided by Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7) when she was talking about her efforts to *keep in touch* with events in her native Chile.

MARTA. (...) I think, more than anything it is because it makes me feel that, although I live here comfortably, I don't complain, well there is something of me that it is there... or that makes me feel that I belong to [Chile], that I'm not always, because I wasn't born here, and it reminds me of my times when I was young and Pinochet was in power, and the demonstrations, and throwing stones in the street, because I have that, I have it very present too (...).

However, the effectiveness of memories (and transnational bonds) to nurture senses of "everyday belonging" (Fenster 2005, 243) to the places left behind sometimes proved insufficient to counteract the temporary or permanent sense of dislocation of some adult participants. In fact, many of them described their migration stories in temporary terms, that is they had never made the conscious definitive decision to settle permanently in the UK but life events and obligations (e.g. relationships, children, work) had brought them to do so. Therefore, some were left with a vague sense of "permanent temporariness" (Bailey et al. 2002, 139), not because of the constraints of their legal status in the UK but because of an emotional necessity of not considering their dislocation as permanent. Despite this temporariness, the passing of historical time had transformed the places of their memories while they were not there to witness the changes (cf. Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010). Nostalgia for these places of memory cannot be resolved and may become a source of emotional pain because of the impossibility of returning to them. As Rubenstein (2001, 4 quoted in Blunt and Dowling 2006, 213) has noted: "[e]ven if one is able to return to the literal edifice where s/he grew up, one can never truly return to the original home of childhood, since it exists mostly as a place in the imagination." Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1) provided an example of the vulnerabilities which may arise from this temporal trap when narrating her attempt to return to Colombia and settle there with her family.

SUSANA. (...) But no, I was not able to stay in Colombia, it did cause me a lot of emotional problems, and political and social [problems] as well within myself, because I had left the country in '85 and I had one image, I went back in '96-97 and nothing made sense, nothing, everything was out of place, everything is out of, of... and I can't see the logic to it, I can't see it and neither can I imagine having my children there, in that society, in peace. I could not be at peace when letting them go out at night, to go to the park, to take a ride on their bikes because I couldn't imagine it, I couldn't imagine it, I couldn't imagine these practical things. I don't know if I was exaggerating a bit or what, but no, I could not imagine it.

In this sense, the invisibility of Latin Americans and scarcity of cultural groups in the north of England come to the fore as a limitation to the opportunities that the immigrants have to reproduce the temporal rhythms of their societies of origin in the places where they live. In his study of the times of migration, Cwerner (2001) explores several temporal dimensions which characterize the lives and experiences of migrants. One of these dimensions is what he calls "asynchronous times" (Cwerner 2001, 22) which refers to the time differentials (in relation to time zones but also calendar events) between the migrants' societies of origin and settlement. Transnational communications, he continues, have allowed contemporary immigrants to be able to "extend the temporality of the nation to their communities abroad" in a fashion not possible before (Cwerner 2001, 22). A way of keeping with homeland temporalities is using information and communication technologies to maintain regular and often interactive communication with those left behind and being informed in real time about events happening in their societies of origin (as I discussed in chapter 6, these practices are part of many of the participants' lives). An additional "strategy of resynchronisation" relies on local migrant organizations and groups, which by bringing together fellow immigrants may be able to "insert their own highlights into the calendar of the host society" (Cwerner 2001, 22). As I have explored in the former chapters, Latin Americans in the north of England have very limited opportunities to develop this type of collective celebratory practices, a situation that I would argue does play a role on their sporadic sense of ordinary disconnection to the places they left behind.

In addition, the scarcity of opportunities of interaction among northern Latin Americans can also be understood as a limitation for migrants and their children to undertake "collective performances of belonging" (Fortier 2000, 6). Fortier has suggested that "[c]onceiving identity as performative means that identities are not reducible to what is

visible, to what is seen on the body, but, rather, that they are constructed by the ‘very “expressions” that are said to be [their] results’” (Butler 1990, 45 quoted in Fortier 2000, 6). Despite Latin American migrants engaging to greater or lesser extent with notions of ethnicity or panethnicity once in Western countries (see chapter 4); so far and in the case of the north of England, there have not been the conditions (number of people and political will) to *appropriate* and *construct* collective understandings of this identity. In addition, the small numerical size of specific national groups has also undermined collective expressions of belonging relying on particular national imaginaries. Although northern Latin Americans recognize that they are united by cultural commonalities, there are no clear or *unified* expressions of what these commonalities may be. Instead, the macro-identity Latin American (and even the panethnicity *Latinos*) is used sporadically and strategically by some migrants to claim certain political positions or negotiate their cultural location in front of the *Western gaze*.

Overall, the impossibility to combine the space-time dimensions of places of origin and settlement and continue to nurture senses of “everyday belonging” (Fenster 2005, 243) in both, left some of the adult immigrant participants feeling that, culturally, they did not belong anywhere (e.g. Fangen 2007; Levitt 2002; Waite and Cook 2010 in press). It was a state of a permanent liminality which eroded the ability of the participants to feel full membership either in their places of residence or in the ones they had left behind (cf. Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010). Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8) provided an example of this type of sentiment.

KARLA. (...) I feel like I am not from anywhere, as I’m not from here because I don’t feel English, and I’m not from there because I don’t feel Mexican, then I’m somewhere in between, where I don’t like to be, I would prefer or... well I would prefer to be Mexican more than English [laughs] and maybe this is one of the reasons why, although I’m happy here in England, here with my children, I’m happy bringing them up... it is not something I would have chosen, I never wanted to come to live in England for the rest of my life and now as things stand in Mexico there is no possibility of going back (...).

Although many participants expressed ambivalent sentiments in front of the prospect of having local Latin American (or nationality based) cultural groups and associations (related to how they perceived being classified as a minority ethnic group); some did feel their

collective *invisibility* as an impediment to their local sense of belonging. In this sense, those households which had settled more recently or found themselves in more precarious situations (financially or due to their recent asylum seeking background) experienced the lack of the presence of fellow immigrants and informal shared spaces more intensely. This was the case of the members of household 4 – see Pablo (30s, Ecuadorian) and Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian) below- who had lived for a few years in London before being dispersed to the north. Despite having received their leave to remain status and having decided not to return to London (which the parents considered less safe for their children and a more expensive place in which to live), the memories of a sense of *Latin American presence* in the capital figured strongly in the shortcomings which they saw in their current place of residence.

INTERVIEWER. And do you feel well settled here in the local community?

PABLO. Erm, I don't like it much really because, I mean... we like it, we like it, the town and the whole city, all but, it's only that we feel a bit... like... alone, because of the fact that there isn't that same, that, Latin warmth, that...

INTERVIEWER. Would you like to have, I don't know, centres or places where to go... cultural groups?

PABLO. No, more than anything, more than anything, it's... Latin food, in London there is lots of food, a lot of people that... a lot of Latin restaurants and all, Colombians, Bolivians and all those. And also I have a cousin who makes meals and sells them, then she was close to where we used to live and at the weekends we went to eat there and that was it...

INTERVIEWER. And you cannot do that here...

PABLO. Indeed, it is a contrast, and there, they sell Latin things in London that other Latinos bring, but here there is nothing like that...

(...)

ELIZABETH. If there were Latinos here, that would be it, because it would be the same as being in London because here you would be like, you know Indian [sic Asian] people, they must be very happy because they are here with their families, their *grandmothers*, their *grandfathers*, their cousins, and they go everywhere, they already know, they already have relatives here, it already is... everything good.

This household's position foregrounds the salience that local 'places of belonging' can acquire as spaces for migrants to 'perform' collective understandings of their cultural identities as well as to recognize their presence in the social landscapes of their host society (e.g. Ehrkamp 2005; Fortier 2000; Gowricharn 2009). However, this lack of *local*

*ethnified sense of community* did not play a role in many other participant households' accounts, as they had always resided (or had chosen to live) in localities with extremely sparse fellow national or Latin American networks. In contrast, some participants expressed much more relativistic attitudes towards their senses of belonging and made use of "fluid spatial and temporal imaginaries" to negotiate their circuits of identification and avoid sentiments of emotional dislocation (Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010, 392). Lee (2010, 174 drawing on Bauman 2000) re-formulates the concept of belonging and suggests that in conditions of "liquidity" people are "increasingly opened to more connections and changes to those connections". The increased unreliability of social structures and institutions (including 'the family') and the intensified individualization of social life, to great extent, have rendered notions of stable bonds and identifications obsolete or unsustainable (Bauman 2000). In front of these conditions of "liquidity" and of their own physical dislocation, some of the adult participants had adopted liquid forms of belonging as an emotional defence strategy which afforded them a greater degree of personal freedom and flexibility. Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2) summarized this approach as follows:

*MARTINA. Well, what can I say? Say... that I never intended to have a family here, ever, ever and always the plan was to go back with [ex-husband] to Latin America, and so this didn't happen and sort of... so, this is like, nothing is very fixed, for me or in life and I think maybe I look back and I think "that's perfectly all right" and there is no problem at all with that [laughs], but I guess erm it's not normal, I guess, I guess it's not what everybody thinks about it, but it sort of makes me happy that I'm not so, that I feel a bit more free than other people maybe, I'm less attached to things somewhat, and I think that there is a bit of sense of freedom in that and I like my brother that he says, he studied, he wanted to be an astronomer so he did study the stars for some time and he, he says that as long as he looks at the stars he knows where he is, so it's, it's something like that, it's just we found ways of relating to the place where we are and to feeling part of it and not losing the dimension of where we come from (...) and that's it.*

In this case, a relativistic approach to senses of belonging had been reproduced intergenerationally, and Martina's daughter, Mia (18, Hispano-Colombian-Chilean – household 2), also displayed 'fluid' notions of territorial attachment.

*MIA. (...) I don't have... like, a lot of my friends have like, all their family lives in the same place so there is like a really strong sense of home and family and like a place of belonging, but I don't think I have that so much... and erm that's positive as well as negative... and maybe, I don't know, I probably seem a bit, I might feel a bit insecure if the people sort of start leaving and don't have so much to go back to, but at the same time I can always go back to the people and that's really the important part, it's not the place, it just feels like it is, so... yeah...*

In summary, the lack of opportunities (and sometimes will) to socialize with fellow Latin Americans in their localities affected the ability of participants to construct (appropriate and perform) notions of *Latin Americanism*. In the case of those who had previously experienced life in more *ethnified* surroundings, the lack of a Latin American “imagined community” (Anderson 2006) in their places of residence jeopardized their ability to feel part of their localities. However, other participants adopted flexible approaches to their senses of belonging both to the places they had left behind and those of their settlement, finding ways to relate to their society of settlement without losing connection with their places of origin and their memories past (cf. Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010). In the next section, I proceed to focus on the attachments that the second generation young participants narrated. I pay particular attention to the ways in which transnational symbolic and emotional bonds provided them with potential future avenues to actualize their knowledge of and claims to their cultural heritage.

### **7.3.2. Potential delayed belongings to the inherited homelands**

Among the young participants in the project there were diverse levels of connection and disconnection with ideas of a Latin American collective identity or the ‘Latino’ panethnic category (see chapter 4). In this sense, the lack of local spaces of encounter seemed to play an important role in the limited opportunities that many of them had to engage with and construct or perform collective notions of *Latin Americanism*. Despite these constraints, all participants expressed feeling connected to their own or their parents’ homeland to different extents. This connection was generally based on the transnational bonds to the extended family, which in different degrees and levels of participation, are part of the everyday lives of all the members of the participant households (see chapter 6). Formally, some participants illustrated these connections by describing their national identities in hyphenated form or by giving an explanation of their cultural heritages when

asked about it. Explaining their backgrounds or acknowledging them formally was considered to be a form of public recognition of their roots and family bonds. For instance, Mia (18, Chilean-Hispano-Colombian, household 2) emphasized how she acknowledged all of her heritages when asked:

*MIA. I always tell them the whole story, erm I always tell them my mum is half Spanish, half Colombian, my dad is from Chile but I was born in England. Erm because I don't know, I feel like I do feel connected to all those different cultures and I can't, I couldn't just say that I'm English really 'cos I don't feel like I am, so that's what I say. [laughs]*

However, participants also spoke of providing different accounts depending on where they were asked, for what reason and/or by whom. Similarly to their parents, they showed complex understandings of the practicalities of 'claiming' or 'using' a specific national identity; an example of this came from Messi (11, Honduran – household 3) who, in the UK, only identified himself as Spanish. He felt that, having lived in Spain, having acquired Spanish nationality and bearing paternal family roots in the country, all provided the basis for this self-identification. In turn, using this identity was considered an advantage not only because of the European freedom of movement, but also because of the popularity of Spain among his peers in the UK (in contrast to the less well known Honduras).

*MESSI. (...) My documents don't say I am from Honduras anymore, I've only got my birth certificate but the rest is from Spain, my identification card, my Passport, everything says Spain, it doesn't say anything about... from Honduras I don't have a Passport or anything else (...).*

In addition, attachments to the inherited homelands were often presented in symbolic and emotional ways. Not having had many chances to discover and experience these homelands firsthand meant that, in many cases, participants did not feel they knew them well enough to feel strong identifications. For instance, Sally (9, Anglo-Bolivian – household 9) explained that she would like to learn more about Bolivia in order to develop a more meaningful attachment to the country.

*SALLY. I feel mostly English. I don't, I just, I don't feel that much close to Bolivia, but I do feel like I'm connected to Bolivia in some way (...)*

*INTERVIEWER. And uh, could you describe to me in which way, what do you think?*

*SALLY. Um I just, I feel more, I feel connected to Bolivia, as in relatives there but I don't really go there much 'cause I've only been there three*

*times. Um but I've lived in England all my, all of my life and so... (...) I just don't feel that close to Bol-, Bolivia as much as England 'cause I don't really know Bolivia well. Apart from facts from reading that book or just looking them up online and ask Mum and Dad so I would like to get know about that more so I can feel more tied to it.*

In fact, the ways in which second generation young participants talked about their inherited homelands can be better understood through the lens of the “emotional landscapes” (Christou and King 2010, 638) which figured in their accounts about their own or their parents’ places of origin. Most young participants had not had many opportunities to visit and experience their parents’ homelands and when they had done so, it had generally been on extended holidays. Therefore, many of their accounts about these places were related to family encounters, play, leisure and adventure. Accordingly, there was a certain level of idealization in the ways in which participants narrated the “emotional landscapes” (Christou and King 2010, 638) of their inherited homelands, landscapes which fused the physical experiences of the environments with their sentiments of encountering their relatives.

During the maps activity, many of the participants proceeded to draw and talk about their lived experiences in the places represented but mainly in relation to the relatives they had there. For example, Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean – household 7) elaborated a narrative rich in images. For him, Chile, the place/family that he favours emotionally was portrayed with outdoor images, sunshine and green grass, evoking the same kinds of feelings of warmth that he attached to his Chilean relatives. They were also portraits of naturalness and by extension of cleanliness and freshness. However, these images contrasted strongly with those he used to describe England and, in particular, the place where he lives. When asked about England, Ben talked about his neighbourhood, explaining that it was ‘not very nice, full of drug users, a dirty street’. Ben’s narrative evokes Sibley’s (1995) psychoanalytical account of how ‘dirt’ has functioned as a signifier of imperfection and inferiority and a mechanism of ‘othering’ by which a subject distances him/herself from others who are portrayed negatively. The ‘spatial other’ from which Ben was disassociating himself was his local surroundings and his distant family in Britain. The naturalness and freshness of Chile contrasted with this perception of dirtiness and decay in his neighbourhood, but also the warmth of the Chilean family stood in opposition to the distance and lack of emotion of his relatives in England.

*BEN. The erm naturalness because it's right natural in Chile, the food is more natural, the erm... the like the parks and stuff it's just a lot more natural and fresher. (...) I don't know because where I live [in the UK] it's not the best area, I mean there's drug addicts over there, there's gangs and loads of drugs round here and it's just, I would probably just say a dirty street.*

*(...)*

*BEN. Well, the family here [Chile] is a lot closer than the family here [England] because they're more...spec... you know... they feel more related to me than those. (...) 'Cos this family [Chilean] actually cares, because the family here [England], they don't really care about us 'cos they live on their own separate thing.*

Another example of the fusion of an idealized landscape and the emotions of being able to be with the extended family came from Tomas (9, Anglo-Mexican – household 8). Tomas presented an account of Mexico which was also rich in references to the activities he could undertake when he went there on holidays with his family. The sun, the beach, the weather, so different to his ordinary environment dictated his connection with the place from which part of his family comes from. However, this experiential approach was mainly mediated by the bonds that he feels for his family (see figure 7-4).



*TOMAS. Well, when I see the beach it kind of represents Mexico because I don't normally see it in England so I'm in Mexico. The lovely sun, hot, when I see the sun really shining, when I see my cousins it feels like Mexico a lot.*

*INTERVIEWER. So is a bit your family?*

*TOMAS. Yeah.*

**Figure 7-4 Extract from maps activity with Tomas (9, Anglo-Mexican – household 8)**

In fact, both Tomas and his brother William (10, Anglo-Mexican – household 8) explained that they would feel completely content in England if they could bring all of their family over here.

Amongst the young participants, the emotional and symbolic transnational bonds which they maintain with their relatives in the inherited homelands were recalled as possible future avenues through which to re-establish fuller connections to their family and cultural background. Furthermore, the claims to the Latin American heritage which they used to negotiate present forms of belonging in diversity in the places where they live were often legitimated through these strategies of potential delayed belongings to their parents' homelands. For instance, Ben (12, Anglo-Chilean – household 7), who we encountered above, imagines a future when he will go to Chile to spend a few months; this is something he has planned with his mother all his life. In the same way that his cousins have come to stay in England to learn English; he is going to go to Chile, be close to the family, use the language, learn about its history and culture; in short, acquire more tools to belong.

*INTERVIEWER. (...) What do you think you would find in Chile maybe? (...)*  
*BEN. A sense of warmth, because the family would be a lot closer and [pause] it feels like a happier place. (...) I...I'd like to see... erm... the... cultural things, more food, and actually more culture, I'd like to see more of the political history as well because I know there's been lots of political, erm, events that's been in Chile and things. And I'd like to also know about the, erm, I'd like to know... the, erm, what's happened, because I know Chile has had wars with Argentina, and things like that and I just want to know more.*

I am suggesting the notion of potential delayed belongings to summarize the ways in which many young participants' presented future plans to experience their inherited or birth homelands. These imagined future experiences would provide them with possibilities to reproduce fully their familial bonds as well as to acquire the knowledge (i.e. language and cultural expertise) to support their claims to their cultural heritage. Acquiring this knowledge was necessary in order to be able to support their identity claims when 'coming out verbally' as Latin Americans (or national identity) and facing situations of potential disallowance (cf. Samuels 2003; Vasquez 2010). For instance, Samuels (2003, 245) recalls the type of suspicions that people with non-visible disabilities or who do not embody stereotypical images of specific identities (i.e. femme lesbians, unmarked racial or ethnic

identifications) may face when voicing their senses of selfhood. The young participants in the project reported similar types of encounters, which had made them aware of the dynamics of identity politics and the need to navigate them. An illustrative example of a potential delayed belonging came from Carolina (15, American-Chilean). She was one of the participants who described being questioned about her background because of her physical appearance (see chapter 5), which had impacted on the way she presented herself.

*CAROLINA. I say I'm from England or and if they say, cause they say, 'Oh well you look like you've got something in ya, like uh', I just say I'm half-Latino and half-American. 'Cause most people don't, well they do know what Chile is, where Chile is. But some people don't, so I just say Latin America.*

Like other young participants, Carolina considered that her rare cultural background in Britain provided her with a kind of exotic capital (cf. Bordieu 1977). As I discussed earlier, notions of exoticism were being appropriated by these young participants in order to foreground what they considered a symbolic asset of rarity and mystery which could provide them with an identity distinction versus their peers (cf. Ali 2005). However, she also explained that she is not very connected with her family back in Chile nor is she very familiar with the traditions, popular culture or the history of the country. Nonetheless, she wants to return to Chile (she only has visited once) to establish deeper relationships with her family and experience the country. This desire is based on the wish to be able to tell people about it, therefore consolidate her *exotic capital* with proper knowledge. So far, she has felt embarrassed when asked as she has not been able to support her claims to her Latin American background with the knowledge about it.

*CAROLINA. (...) I'd like to go back though [to Chile].*

*INTERVIEWER. (...) What would you like to do if you went back? (...)*

*CAROLINA. Probably get to know people there and get to learn more about Chile. And get to know my family. And the food and stuff. [chuckles]*

*INTERVIEWER. Why do you think it would be important for you to do that?*

*CAROLINA. Um just to like, just to tell people. Like my Spanish class, this Chilean guy came in and I don't know anything about Chile, so that embarrassed me. But yeah, I'd like to know more about it.*

In fact, these forms of potential delayed belongings can also be understood as an a-synchronized "strategic visibility" (Bailey et al. 2002:136), by which young participants may

be able to actualize their claims to their family heritage by developing senses of belonging in the future, when they can experience firsthand their inherited homelands.

#### 7.4. Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the ways in which participants narrated and constructed notions of belonging in relation to their multiply scaled everyday practices and locations. I conclude by considering its main findings and reflecting on the issues of invisibility which affect their experiences.

For migrants, integrating or assimilating into their host society – understood in terms of relational ways of “making sameness” (Nagel 2009, 403) – involves not only practical negotiations and strategic efforts to *blend in*, but also a range of emotional compromises. Paying attention to this emotional side of the incorporation experience can help illuminate how migrants develop ordinary attachments to their host society; attachments which may not be expressed in terms of ethnic or national belonging. As Ehrkamp (2005, 348) has emphasized: “[c]onceptualizing migrants’ identities as constantly negotiated in relation to multiple societies and places enables us to think beyond dichotomies and mutually exclusive notions of local and transnational ties, and to recognise immigrants as agents who are able to forge their belonging and multiple attachments.” Furthermore, and as Anthias (2002b) has suggested, we need to broaden this understanding to include not only the multiple places but also the diversity of social locations and contexts that figure in any person’s life without prioritizing one category of identity or belonging.

Adult participants foregrounded their adaptation processes in order to make sense of the forms in which they had built and developed “everyday belongings” (Fenster 2005, 243) in their society of settlement. Adapting, they elaborated, entailed acquiring host attitudes, values and behaviours which could help them accommodate to their new society and negotiate membership within it. In turn, by internalizing these attitudes and behaviours and familiarizing themselves with their local spaces, participants reported becoming gradually attached to their adopted home. However, these emotional bonds were not expressed in terms of feeling complete belonging or identification but through emphasizing embodied sentiments of contentment, gratitude and comfort. These sentiments were underpinned by notions of considering Britain as the stage where their

lives were enfolding and the need to engage with and integrate into this stage and its multiple dimensions.

Furthermore, these processes of negotiating sameness were not simply strategies to fit in but involved emotional compromises. These compromises reflected the trade-off between *losing* some values and acquiring new ones which could help them achieve full social membership. In turn, processes of adaptation were assisted by finding 'familiar' contexts or social locations which included Catholic networks, professional roles or life course related contexts (i.e. children's schools). However, there were also examples of how the dominant politics of belonging of their host society constricted their ability to enact or claim certain identifications, including experiences of being enforced a non-white racial identity or othered by not completely fulfilling *mainstream* social expectations.

Young participants also displayed senses of "everyday belonging" (Fenster 2005, 243) through the familiarity of the places in which they live, their friendships and feelings of 'being at home'. Their notions of home included diverse understandings and could be expressed as an imagined reality which fused multiple spatial scales (cf. Blunt and Dowling 2006). However, in contrast to their parents, they also related their day-to-day senses of belonging to their multicultural and multi-ethnic urban spaces of residence. By aligning their *differences* with the diversity of people in the places they inhabit and making visible their cultural capital strategically or using their marked embodiments; the participants negotiated forms of belonging to their localities (Mas Giralt 2011). That is, by appealing to public discourses of Britain as a multicultural or multi-ethnic society, they could use their cultural heritages to grant them membership to this diversity.

In addition, the rarity of these cultural heritages in the UK added value to their 'visibility strategies' through perceptions of being unique and special (see Bailey et al. 2002 regarding "strategic visibility"). Despite the highly gendered, racialized and sexualized connotations which have been attached to notions of 'exoticism' (e.g. Ali 2005; Chant and Craske 2003; Said 2003 [1978]); teenage participants had appropriated discourses of the 'exotic' to foreground the symbolic asset (or *exotic capital*) that their rare cultural background granted them (cf. Bourdieu 1977). This *exotic capital* provided them with an identity distinction vis-à-vis their peers. I suggested that these discourses of exoticism may

have also been reinforced by global media images of *fashionable Latinos/as* emanating from the US, which the participants also reproduced.

Although the concept of multiculturalism has been highly contested in relation to its diverse meanings and its perceived failure as a set of policies in the UK (e.g. Morrell 2008); these participants conceived multiculturalism as a lived experience (e.g. Malik 2002; Wise and Velayutham 2009) due to residing in urban settings with highly diverse populations. This lived experience provided them, and their diverse friends, with an inclusive frame of reference from which to narrate their belongings. However, the question remains as to what an extent this 'lived multiculturalism' provides the basis for, in Valentine's (2008a, 325) words "meaningful contact", that is "contact that actually changes values and translates beyond the specifics of the individual moment into a more general positive respect for – rather than merely tolerance of – others". Reflecting on the young participants' accounts, I think that there are grounds for both optimistic and pessimistic assumptions. In the positive side, I would include the fact that many of the participants declared having friends from other ethnic backgrounds and that one of their strategies to negotiate sameness was to establish social networks based on common understandings of inclusive diversity. However, the fact that the participants also reported invisibility and silencing strategies aimed to *hide* any differences (see chapter 5) which could potentially destabilize the principle of sameness with which their everyday friendship worlds functioned, demands that I approach any definitive conclusions with caution.

Regarding notions of collective or group identifications, many adult and young participants reported using British or other European national identities in order to navigate both the legal framework and the politics of belonging of their country of residence. These strategic identifications also included deeper senses of affiliation with ideas of Britishness, mainly in the case of the second generation participants or adults who had lived in the country for some time. Additionally, there was consensus amongst participants regarding the significance of legal status in enabling the development of meaningful senses of belonging (cf. Alexander 2007; Ervine 2008).

Nonetheless, it is in relation to homeland or cultural collective identifications that the invisibility of Latin Americans in the north of England came to the fore. I consider that the impacts of this invisibility can be summarized in two ways. The first one relies on temporal

dimensions and relates to the lack of possibilities that migrants and their descendants had to reproduce locally the temporal rhythms of their societies of origin (e.g. by inserting cultural highlights of their countries of origin in the 'British' calendar). The second area of impact has a spatial dimension and involves the scarcity of cultural groups or of Latin Americans in the localities in which the participants live. This shortage of shared spaces worked in detriment of the opportunities that the participants had to appropriate, negotiate and perform collective notions of *Latin Americanism* (or specific national identities). The effects of these temporal and spatial dimensions of invisibility found different manifestations in the accounts provided by all participants.

Adult migrants resorted to forms of 'strategic essentialism' (Spivak 1990) to ratify their continued attachments and affiliations to the places and kin that they had left behind. It could be argued that in front of the lack of opportunities to undertake "collective performances of belonging" (Fortier 2000, 6), participants adopted this strategic essentialized identifications as an individual way to perform (and confirm) expressions of their national or cultural identity. However, the impossibility to combine the space-time dimensions of their origin and settlement societies and nurture senses of "everyday belonging" (Fenster 2005, 243) in both, left some of the adult participants in a state of permanent liminality which undermined their ability to feel *full* belonging either in their origin or settlement society. For other participants (both adult and young people) not being able to recognize themselves in the public landscape of their localities (i.e. no presence Latin American businesses and spaces) impeded the development of deeper senses of belonging. In contrast, some adopted flexible attitudes which made use of liquid forms of belonging to negotiate circuits of identification and avoid sentiments of emotional dislocation (cf. Lee 2010; Mas Giralt and Bailey 2010).

In addition, second generation participants legitimated their claims to their cultural heritage by constructing narratives of potential delayed belongings to their parents' homelands. Their transnational emotional bonds (expressed through "emotional landscapes", Christou and King 2010, 638) were recalled as potential future avenues through which to establish fuller connections to their extended family and cultural background. I have suggested the expression *potential delayed belongings* to describe the temporal strategies that the young participants displayed in reference to engaging fully with their inherited homeland. The everyday socio-cultural invisibility that they experience

translates into a need to adjourn the time when they will be able to live and legitimize this heritage firsthand – a potentially delayed “visibility strategy” (Bailey et al. 2002). In response to possible experiences of disallowance when ‘coming out verbally’ as Latin Americans, acquiring the tools to belong is also necessary in order to be able to support their claims to their cultural heritage with the knowledge and expertise about it.

Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004, 1011) in their conceptualization of the simultaneous nature of transnational existence (that is, living in a way which integrates every day activities, routines and actors in more than one location) suggest that we think of the “migrant experience as a kind of gauge which, while anchored, pivots between a new land and a transnational incorporation. Movement and attachment is not linear or sequential but capable of rotating back and forth and changing direction over time”. In this thesis, I have explored the simultaneous frames of reference that played a role in the circuits of identification of both Latin American adults and young participants. However, in the same way that Louie (2006, 389) indicated in her study of second-generation Chinese and Dominicans in the US, in the present project I used a cross-sectional approach which does not allow for a full exploration of the ways in which the strategies and affiliations presented may develop through the life course of the participants, particularly in relation to the young participants’ potential delayed belongings to their inherited homelands.

## 8. Conclusions

### 8.1. Introduction

Latino, Hispano or American?

Julisa: Latinos do not exist, what do exist are Peruvians, Mexicans, Hondurans, I am proudly from...

Anylosi: What are you saying silly thing? (...) I don't want to start another argument but...

Julisa: Hey, let me speak girl! Latinos were the ones from the Roman Empire and now their descendants in Italy, France, Spain, Portugal. You cannot call [Latinos] the descendants of the Aztecs or the Incas.

Furthermore, your 'Latinos' are the 'Hispanics' in the States.

Anylosi: Latino refers to the culture and not the 'race', I think. See how all in Latin America... - Julisa raises her eyebrows and looks questioningly at her – I mean South America...

Julisa: And Central America?

Anylosi: Well... see, all of us in the Latin American continent are of different colours and combinations, there are whites, blacks, indigenous, mixed race, of all forms, flavours and...

Julisa: Latin continent? You're crazy! Talking about flavours, I'm raspberry! – both laugh loudly. (...)

Extracted and translated from: "*La Oreja de Alberto [Alberto's ear]*" (Hola Leeds January 2009, 16)

This extract is part of a humorous piece published in the magazine *Hola Norte* (Hola Leeds January 2009). This magazine is distributed across several cities in the north of England and published irregularly by a not-for-profit group called Hola Leeds, which aims to promote Spanish and Latin American culture in this region. I have reproduced this 'conversation' (between two Latin American women in Manchester which the author supposedly 'overheard') because I consider it encapsulates some of the ideas which have been at the centre of this thesis. This dialogue conveys the constructed, contested and fluid nature of the collective identity terms which people from Central and South American countries encounter and negotiate in their ordinary lives. In the context of the north of England, these 'identity' debates have become entangled with the (visual) ethno-cultural system of minority recognition which operates in the UK, giving place to the complex dynamics which characterize the incorporation experiences of immigrant Latin Americans and their descendants in this area of the country.

In this thesis, I have used multi-method case studies with Latin American families in the Yorkshire and Greater Manchester region in order to analyze the ways in which this scopic regime of ethno-cultural sameness and difference impacts on their everyday embodied experiences. The sparsity and dispersion of the Latin American population in the north of country, their diversity of migration and socio-demographic backgrounds and their range of marked and unmarked embodiments have provided a pertinent set of characteristics to explore in-depth their everyday accounts of incorporation and associated politics of visibility and invisibility (cf. Nagel and Staeheli 2008b). I have also paid attention to the dynamics which define simultaneous processes of incorporation (cf. Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004), that is the multiply scaled (i.e. familial, local, transnational) practices and affiliations of both migrants and second generation participants and concomitant senses of belonging. In this concluding chapter, I summarize the main findings of the thesis and reflect on how they contribute to existing theoretical, empirical and methodological scholarship and policy debates. In doing so, I also highlight potential directions for future research.

## **8.2. Migration, invisibility and belonging: main findings**

In order to situate the discussion of the contributions of this thesis, I start by outlining its main empirical findings in terms of invisibility and *official gazes*, the limits of invisibility, transnational familyhood and cultural transmission, and invisible expressions of belonging. In the remainder of the chapter, I reflect on the implications of these findings in relation to the literature and debates I reviewed in chapter 2 and also consider other contributions of the thesis and research project as a whole.

### **8.2.1. Invisibility and official gazes**

In chapter 4, I focused on the factors that help to explain the socio-cultural invisibility which characterizes the Latin American population in the UK and more specifically in the north of England. As such, this part of the thesis considered the ways in which this official invisibility is co-produced and sustained by the lack of attention that governmental and public gazes pay to this heterogeneous and relatively recent immigrant population. I highlighted two state gazes which are involved in the production of this invisibility. One relies on the failure of official statistical classifications in the UK to include a pertinent

ethnic category for Latin Americans (Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007). The other relates to the Latin American sending states and their lack of transnational governmental engagement with their 'diasporic' nationals in the UK. This translates into a vacuum of institutional representation of the migrants' countries and cultures in the public sphere of their host society and a failure to support the 'diaspora/s' to construct 'extra-territorial communities' or build 'frontier' networks (cf. Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; De Haas 2006). In addition, I argued that the participants' complex relationships with collective identity terms such as Latin American and Latino also played a role in co-producing the socio-cultural invisibility of the population. Migrants from this region encounter directly these identity constructs once outside of their countries of origin and when facing the *Western gaze*. It is often through these constructs that they have to negotiate their positionality in their host societies. This is the case in the UK, where migrants are *encouraged* to mobilize and organize politically around notions of ethnicity (Però 2007). However, the shift from a focus on 'race' to ethnicity and culture introduced by multicultural policies has perpetuated a notion of "ethnic absolutism" which reifies cultural difference in essentialist terms and as a fixed property of social groups (Fortier 2000, 24; Gilroy 1993, 24). Consequentially, the system of ethno-cultural recognition, which characterizes the present British framework of incorporation, *forces* migrants to define themselves in terms of 'absolute ethnic differences' in order to be recognized as part of the political community (indirectly reproducing colonial hierarchies).

The preferred definition of the term Latin American amongst participants in this project congealed around the notion of a geographical origin group sharing some cultural commonalities, but which could embrace a multiplicity of ethnic identifications. This definition is in line with continental notions of commonality and intellectual and popular currents which underpin senses of collective identity within Latin America (e.g. Larrain 2000). These notions rely on fluid cultural parameters and explain the greater comfort of participants to embrace *soft panethnic* affiliations. Although some migrants in the UK are using the Latin American/Latino collective identities strategically and with political purposes (e.g. Però 2007); so far, the small-scale cultural/commercial initiatives in the north do not entail plans for 'visibility' in ethnic terms. I argued that these accounts revealed a fraught relationship between these migrants and the system of ethno-cultural recognition which operates in their host society. For these participants, undergoing such

processes of recognition could lead to the enforced racialization and ethnification of the population and the acquisition of the 'wrong type of visibility'. The complexity of these concerns came to the fore through the accounts of the embodied experiences of visibility and invisibility of adult and young participants, which is the focus of the next section.

### 8.2.2. The limits of invisibility

In her work with Italian migrants and their descendants in London, Fortier (2000, 23) highlights that, for this population, *invisibility* can be considered as the result of their integration and acceptance within the British social fabric instead of the outcome of processes of marginalization and silencing. These possibilities for 'absorption' of Italians into the national collective relied on their 'whiteness' and 'Europeanness' (see Juul 2011 for the similar case of Yugoslavs/Serbs in Denmark). In chapter 5, I showed that Latin Americans' contested 'European heritage' and diverse marked and unmarked embodiments foreground instead the limits of narratives of sameness within the British framework of incorporation.

Adult participants in this study (and a few young people who had migrated more recently) constructed sameness by emphasizing the commonalities which they shared with the perceived British mainstream (or between British and Latin American partners). This dynamic, however, led to the reproduction of dominant values and prejudices of the majority population (and to some extent of colonial constructs such as Christianity and 'whiteness' as symbolizing privileged status). Nonetheless, the participants' (adults and young people) accounts bear testimony to the ways in which physical and aural traits dictated the limits of their ability to reproduce mainstream sameness, bringing to the fore the resilience of the hierarchies of power which underlie systems of ethno-cultural differentiation. The 'unidentifiable visibility (or audibility)' of members of this population leads them to be either misidentified as Asian (or Muslim) or categorized as a generic other (when in public spaces or in general social interactions).

In response to these experiences of enforced racialization, participants displayed strategic uses of both invisibility and visibility (cf. Nagel and Staeheli 2008b). Individual 'passing' was achieved by taking advantage of the blurred visibility of "flexible ethnicity" (Vasquez 2010, 51) and remaining silent in order not to reveal their accents when speaking in English (mainly amongst immigrant adults) or not talking about their cultural heritage in the case

of young participants. Additionally, some adult informants revealed a more far-reaching 'collective passing' which aimed to manage their group identity in order to avoid visibility and to minimize the risk of being made the object of collective negative stereotyping. I argued that these accounts can also be understood as a manifestation of the view that 'ethnic minority' status implies subordination and outsidership, undermining possibilities of being considered a full member of the mainstream community (cf. Fortier 2003). This view, nonetheless, was predominantly found amongst participant adults with more affluent standards of living and histories of long-term settlement, who often also displayed narratives of cosmopolitanism (i.e. incorporation in British society as cultural enrichment). It is important to note that the participants' class positionality was also a fluid category. For instance, there were cases in which migrants were working in unskilled and low-paid jobs in the UK despite holding middle-class status in their societies of origin; consequently, their views and attitudes reflected these 'mixed' statuses.

In addition, second generation young participants (who had been born or had spent most of their lives in the UK) provided more subversive and affirmative examples of using visibility strategically. Those with marked embodiments provided examples of "passing by default" (Samuels 2003, 240) within the *marked spectrum*, aligning themselves with young people from other (and more numerous) marked minority ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, all young participants (independently of their marked or unmarked embodiments) reported 'coming out' verbally and selectively in order to counteract the *invisibilization dynamics* which affect Latin Americans in the UK. I argued that these strategies signal a greater degree of comfort amongst the second generation when engaging with ideas of visibility and a more active role in re-defining notions of sameness which deviate from dominant mainstream ideas (i.e. whiteness) and veer towards principles of diversity (Mas Giralt 2011).

Overall, conditions of socio-cultural invisibility affected the extent to which both Latin American adults and young people could reproduce forms of *Latin Americanism* locally. This dynamic highlighted the salience of the transnational stage to secure intergenerational cultural transmission, to which I turn next.

### 8.2.3. Transnational familyhood and cultural transmission

In chapter 6, I examined the ways in which the lack of opportunities of participant households to 'frontier network' displaced their efforts to reproduce and transmit language and culture to the 'relativized' dimension of (extended) family relationships (cf. Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14 and 19). Two of the 'frontier' spheres (extra-familial networking) which Bryceson and Vuorela (2002, 19) identify are located in the "residential/work area" of transnational families (where they choose with whom to interact from the host society or fellow migrants) and "the realm of residential and cultural choice" (combinations of residential and home cultures which are often shared with fellow migrants). In the case of Latin Americans in the north of England, these two spheres of networking activity are affected by the scarcity of possibilities to establish local and translocal networks with fellow migrants and the lack of shared spaces to reproduce and perform forms of *Latin Americanism* (or specific national cultures). These constraints are also entangled with the reluctance of part of the population to engage in activities which could lead to 'too much' visibility. In addition, the sameness of a shared Christian culture between origin and receiving societies also plays a role in the participants' perceptions of not needing to reproduce certain traditions.

In practical terms, 'being a small minority' constrained the ability of adult Latin American participants to transmit their language and other customs to their offspring. Overall they highlighted that efforts to practise Spanish and undertake other activities of cultural transmission within the domestic family domain were neglected under the pressures of daily obligations and the effects of long-term settlement. In addition, extra-household factors (i.e. shortage of cultural groups or shared spaces) also impacted on the opportunities that parents had to expose their children to collective enactments of their popular culture, language and other traditions locally. However, many Latin American adult participants also displayed an ambivalent acceptance of the fact that their children were not developing a deep knowledge of their inherited language and culture. I argued that these attitudes could also be understood in terms of theories of 'individualization' and 'choice biographies' (e.g. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001; Bois-Reymond 1998; Giddens 1991; Nico 2010). Overall, participant parents foregrounded the need to give their children freedom to develop their own life paths and senses of identity; a flexibility which was necessary in order for them to be prepared for life's demands and uncertainties. In this

sense, homeland cultural heritage was considered as an important resource that the second generation could potentially employ when constructing their senses of self and life paths in the future (cf. Mas Giral and Bailey 2010).

The way to guarantee that the young generation would have access to their cultural heritage (and related kin support) was by providing them with the family culture and intergenerational/transnational bonds necessary. Consequently, Latin American adult participants 'relativized' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14) their transnational ties in order to respond not only to their own familial obligations and emotional needs, but also to nurture intergenerational relationships with, and for, their children. I showed that this 'relativizing' was undertaken through the reproduction of the families' fluid "emotional cultures" (Hochschild 1996, 20) intergenerationally and transnationally. Emotional and symbolic transnational attachments were recreated with the use of communication routines and material mementos (i.e. flags, photographs, imaginaries, etc.) which integrated the lives of the different family members across time and space. It is important to note, however, that there were also examples of tensions and emotional ambiguities in the (transnational) family relationships of the participants, which might impact on the reliability of these kin attachments and their potential to guarantee intergenerational cultural transmission. In spite of this, I argued that these transnational connections became the central stage on which hopes for the second generation to rediscover their inherited culture were set. In fact, these transnational attachments already figured in the young participants' articulations of their multiply scaled senses of identity and belonging; a last set of findings on which I focus next.

#### **8.2.4. Invisible expressions of belonging**

In order to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of settlement and integration among the participants (adults and young people), in chapter 7 I explored their accounts of belonging and identification. I argued that by paying attention to the everyday emotional ways in which the participants made sense of their memberships and affiliations, it was possible to develop more nuanced insights into the diversity of ordinary forms in which migrants and their descendants *bond* to their societies of settlement (i.e. developing sentiments of contentment, comfort or gratitude).

In the case of the adult migrant participants, integrating or assimilating in their host society involved not only the practical negotiations of “making sameness” (Nagel 2009, 403) but also a range of emotional compromises. Adult participants recalled that adapting involved a *trade-off* between losing some values and acquiring new ones which could help them achieve social membership. These processes of adaptation, in turn, were helped by finding ‘familiar’ contexts and social locations from which to develop multiply situated senses of self, including Catholic networks, professional roles or lifecourse related contexts (i.e. children’s schools). These accounts also uncovered the ways in which the politics of belonging of the host society constricted migrants’ ability to enact or claim certain identifications (e.g. whiteness). In a comparable way, young participants displayed senses of “everyday belonging” (Fenster 2005, 243) through sentiments of familiarity, friendships and feelings of *being at home*. In contrast to their parents, however, they also related their day-to-day senses of membership to the multicultural urban spaces in which they reside. Parallel to the ways in which they negotiated sameness, young second generation participants aligned their *differences* with the diversity of people in their surroundings: making visible their cultural capital strategically (or using their marked embodiments) provided forms of belonging to these culturally and ethnically diverse localities (Mas Giralt 2011).

However, it was in relation to homeland or cultural collective identifications that the impacts of the invisibility of Latin Americans in the north of England came to the fore. I argued that these impacts had both temporal and spatial dimensions. Temporally, conditions of socio-cultural invisibility worked to the detriment of possibilities for migrants and their descendants to reproduce locally the temporal rhythms of their societies of origin (cf. Cwerner 2001). Spatially, the scarcity of cultural groups reduced their opportunities to appropriate, negotiate and perform collective notions of *Latin Americanism* or particular national identities (cf. Fortier 2000). Furthermore, the generalized sparse presence of fellow migrants and Latin American commercial or public ventures (lack of ethnified spaces, e.g. Gowricharn 2009) hindered the ability of some participants to recognize themselves in the landscape of their localities of residence.

In response to these circumstances, I showed that Latin American adults adopted forms of individual ‘strategic essentialism’ not for the purpose of collective action but in order to ratify their continued attachments to (and recognition of) the places and kin they had left

behind (cf. Spivak 1990). In addition, young second generation participants legitimated their claims to their cultural heritages by displaying narratives of *potential delayed belonging* to their parents' homelands. Acquiring tools to belong to these heritages was necessary in order to be able to counteract potential situations of disallowance when 'coming out verbally' as Latin Americans (cf. Samuels 2003). Overall, transnational emotional and symbolic bonds to the extended family and inherited homelands found expression through notions of "emotional landscapes" (Christou and King 2010, 638) which fused their sentiments for (origin) places and extended kin. I argued that these bonds were recalled by the young participants as the potential avenues through which they may be able to establish fuller connections to family and cultural backgrounds in the future. Thus, I suggested the expression *potential delayed belonging* to describe these temporal strategies.

### **8.3. Theoretical and empirical contributions**

This section examines how these findings contribute to wider theoretical and empirical knowledge in geography and cognate disciplines. The main topics I consider relate to:

- Literature on migrant incorporation (in connection to the ethno-cultural visual and aural *limits* of negotiating *mainstream* sameness)
- Emotional geographies of belonging (in relation to adults and young people)
- Family geographies (extended transnational familyhood)

In the following subsections, I focus on my contributions to these areas of scholarship in turn.

#### **8.3.1. Migrant incorporation and the scopic/aural limits of sameness**

One of my main aims in this thesis was to explore how the dominant ethno-cultural ways of seeing and categorizing difference (which underlie the British incorporation context) affects the everyday experiences of a group of adult immigrants and their young descendants who are characterized by a range of marked and unmarked embodiments. Furthermore, I attempted to consider how issues of visibility and invisibility might be experienced differently by the two generations. My work coheres with Nagel's (2009, 401 *italics in the original*) proposal that to approach assimilation as a "relational process of *making sameness*" provides a fruitful point of access into the embodied dynamics of

everyday incorporation. Furthermore, as Nagel (2009, 404) elaborates, this approach allows consideration of the ways in which migrant and minority ethnic individuals enact sameness and may resist the assimilation parameters of majority groups (see chapter 2).

The findings of this thesis strongly indicate that analyzing migrants' and ethnic minority individuals' experiences of incorporation from such standpoint also illuminates the constraints and limits they face when trying to negotiate and perform *mainstream* identities. In the case of Latin Americans in the north of England, these limitations exposed the resilience of systems of ethno-cultural ('racial') differentiation and power hierarchies which undermine newcomers' efforts to achieve equality and full membership in their host society. The empirical data I discussed in chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate how these constraints to 'making sameness' find expression both in terms of structural/political systems and at the level of embodied experiences.

Despite aiming to provide minority ethnic groups with material equality and protection from discrimination (e.g. Grillo 1998), the British ethno-cultural system of recognition has also perpetuated a system of visual differentiation which is difficult to transcend (e.g. Nagel and Staeheli 2008b). By connoting that 'cultural differences' are inalterable and have pseudo-biological underpinnings (Fortier 2000, 24), this system places 'ethnic minorities' in an 'Other' position which excludes them from the symbolic mainstream national narrative. This symbolic discrimination (which has very material impacts) was exemplified by the reluctance of some adult Latin American participants to be 'identified' as an 'ethnic minority', as they considered that this process of recognition implied exclusion from *mainstream* status and exposure to enforced othering and racialization.

In contrast, findings related to the second generation participants showed how the terms of this system of (perpetual) ethnic/cultural differentiation may be contested. Although these young people presented accounts of the ways in which they complied with the terms of assimilation set by the majority population (i.e. silencing differences), they also engaged in 'politics of visibility' aimed at redefining 'sameness' not in terms of homogeneity (i.e. whiteness) but on the basis of commonality in cultural/ethnic diversity. Their strategies highlight one of the positive aspects of the adoption of multicultural policies in Britain. These policies, as I discussed in chapter 2, introduced ethnicity into the visual "representational landscape" of the nation (Hesse 2000, 9-10) and have provided

minority ethnic individuals with an official narrative of diversity which can be utilized to negotiate discursively membership to the 'imagined national community' (Anderson 1991). However, as significant as official national narratives of diversity are, the findings of this study suggest that they have not altered significantly the symbolic terms of sameness established by the majority group. It is at the embodied level of social interaction that the perpetuation of the mainstream system of ethno-cultural ('racial') differentiation materializes.

The everyday experiences of the participants in this project demonstrate how migrants' and minority ethnic bodies (and related marked visual and aural characteristics) make them vulnerable to othering practices which, ultimately, exclude them from the imagined national community (*generic out of place*). Therefore, these findings cohere with Antonsich's (2010, 650) observation that, even if a migrant is willing to assimilate, there are always dimensions such as place of birth or embodied traits, which prevent full sameness and expose this person to discourses and practices of socio-spatial exclusion. In addition, the 'othering' experiences of the participants once they had been identified as non-European or Latin American reveal the pervasiveness of systems of differentiation; systems which are also gendered and classed. Intersectional expressions of othering were found in the gendered stereotype of the 'hot Latina' and the participants' experiences of discrimination, when education qualifications and professional experience from their countries of origin were not considered equal to British standards.

Furthermore, the findings of chapter 5 regarding the invisibility strategies of the participants, suggest that "perform[ing] assimilation" (Nagel 2009, 404) in majority terms leaves migrants with little space for manoeuvre and often leads to the reproduction of hegemonic ideas of sameness (e.g. whiteness, Christianity), class hierarchies and dominant prejudices. This situation exposes what I would call the 'fallacy of assimilation', that is the impossibility for newcomers to negotiate and enact sameness in embodied terms as long as *visual regimes* of differentiation are not further deconstructed and challenged. The findings of this project show that the scopic and aural regime of ethno-cultural ('racial') differentiation continues to have a critical impact on the extent to (and the ways in) which immigrants and their descendants can become part of British society. Furthermore, the experiences of *generic othering* of the participants indicate that some visible and audible traits (i.e. marked embodiment not 'easily recognized', foreign accents when speaking in

English) have come to be *read* as signifiers of a 'generic foreigner' who, therefore is subject to mainstream prejudices against immigrants. Thus, 'racist ways of seeing' are being reproduced not just on the basis of constructed 'racial' or ethnic traits but also through cultural signifiers or aural differences which mark immigrants as 'out of place' (cf. Sibley 1995). This dynamic is of particular concern at a time in which, amidst the economic down-turn, anti-immigrant sentiments in Britain are on the rise (Lowles 26 February 2011).

### **8.3.1.1. Future research directions**

In order to develop better understandings of the dynamics which hinder immigrants' and their descendants' incorporation to host societies, there is a need to pay more attention to how hierarchies of power and (racist) ways of seeing are being reproduced under the banner of (pseudo-biological) 'ethnic and cultural differences' and prejudices against immigrants. Only by exposing and undermining these dominant *ways of seeing and categorizing difference* will it be possible to transform discourses of *mainstream sameness* and base them on notions of commonality in diversity which are symbolically inclusive. Multiculturalism's alleged socially divisive force does not lie in its principles of cultural/ethnic recognition but on the State's failure to address 'racial' and other inequalities which perpetuate and reconstruct systems of differentiation. This has important implications for policy agendas which are underpinned by principles of 'community or social cohesion' rooted in hegemonic notions of sameness (which I will consider in the policy section).

Therefore, it is imperative to continue focusing attention on the complexity of the visibility/invisibility spectrum (e.g. Colic-Peisker 2005; Nagel and Staeheli 2008b; O'Connor 2010; Van Riemsdijk 2010) and how this mediates the embodied everyday lives and integration experiences of marked/unmarked minorities, both adults and young people. For instance, it will be necessary to gauge whether the situation of Latin Americans and their children in the UK changes as their numbers increase, they become more visible and start to organize politically. There is also a need for more research to build up our understanding of the experiences of young people of Latin American origin growing up in the UK; studies which can take into account the contrasting and changing circumstances which characterize the social environments of Latin Americans living in different parts of

the country. For example, the account of the second generation in London collected by McIlwaine et al. (2011) shows that, potentially, the situation in the capital is very different. Constraints on migrants' and minority ethnic individuals' abilities to negotiate sameness and membership also, however, have clear implications for questions of belonging and their emotional geographies, aspects to which I turn in the next section.

### **8.3.2. Emotional geographies of belonging**

One of the recurrent themes throughout this thesis has been the salience of an emotional perspective in order to develop deeper understandings of processes of migration, settlement and incorporation (e.g. Collins 2009; Dunn 2010). As I discussed in chapter 2, the 'emotional turn' in geography has provided important insights into the relationships between people, places and spaces and has attested the importance of developing knowledge which takes into account how the human and social world is lived through emotions (e.g. Anderson and Smith 2001; Davidson et al. 2005; Davidson and Milligan 2004). However, as Antonsich (2010, 654 note 2) has pointed out, "although the literature on emotional geographies significantly contributes to exposing, elucidating and engaging the role of emotions in re-producing socio-spatial relations, it does not seem to have so far expressly addressed belonging, both in its meanings and performativity". That is, scholars have developed significant research into the interrelated individual senses of belonging ('place-belongingness') and its social/political sense (politics of belonging) (see Mee and Wright 2009; Yuval-Davis 2006 for overviews) but have paid less attention to the specific and varied emotions which may constitute sentiments of belonging.

Factors rooted in individuals' autobiographies (personal experiences, memories), relationships (family, friendships, etc.), culture (language, religion, food preparation and consumption), economic backgrounds (financial self-sufficiency), legal status (citizenship and work entitlements) and length of settlement, have been considered to play a role in people's ability to develop attachments to places and feelings of 'being at home' (Antonsich 2010, 647). Nonetheless, these accounts often do not analyze the particular emotions that these attachments to (and feelings of) being in place entail (see Parr et al. 2005; Urry 2005 for associated perspectives) or how they are nurtured or hindered by wider politics of belonging. The findings of this thesis in relation to the senses of identity and belonging of the participants (chapter 7) strongly indicate that there are important

insights to be gained by paying further attention to the emotional geographies of belonging (cf. Anthias 2006; Ho 2009; Waite and Cook 2010 in press; Yuval-Davis 2006). For example, the expressions of contentment, gratitude, comfort and compromise of the adult participants provided a window into the ordinary emotional ways in which migrants bond to their society of settlement (and which may not be expressed in terms of absolute belonging). Additionally, they also highlighted how material and symbolic exclusions (i.e. enforced racialization or othering) undermine the possibilities of developing these sentiments and, therefore, jeopardize the potential for deeper senses of affiliation.

These accounts also point towards the need to acknowledge that simultaneous incorporation (combining local and translocal lives, Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) is a process which involves a great range of emotions related, for example, to dislocation, separation, mobility, emplacement and adaptation (cf. Svašek 2010). Developing more nuanced understandings of these diverse emotions can provide insights into how migrants and their descendants combine emotional attachments and affiliations to places of origin and settlement which are fluid, complex and yet not necessarily incompatible. This emotional approach would complement accounts which consider more material expressions of this simultaneity of experience (e.g. Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Morawska 2003; Nagel and Staeheli 2008a).

In addition, young participants' belonging accounts also contributed to understandings of emotional transnationalism through ideas of "emotional landscapes" (Christou and King 2010, 638) and 'potential delayed belongings'. Christou and King (2010, 638) adopt the expression "emotional landscapes" to signify the imagined environments evoked by their participant second generation Greek-German adult returnees to Greece. These landscapes "involved the location of kin, family land, villages and islands of ancestral origin, and a broader but often idealised and mythologised connection to Greece and its way of life" (Christou and King 2010, 638). They situate this concept within the 'cultural turn' in geography which, since the 1970s and with the influence of post-modernism, has developed symbolic conceptualizations of landscape (Christou and King 2010, 640). This approach has been influential in elaborating notions of 'diasporic landscape', that is the 'other landscape' or 'elsewhere' which figures saliently in constructions of diasporic identities (Basu 2007, vii cited in Christou and King 2010, 640).

For the young participants of Latin American descent in this project, their 'emotional landscapes' fused the sentiments that they had for their extended transnational family with idealized physical sceneries and surroundings of their inherited countries of origin. As meaningful as these attachments were as forms of emotional or symbolic transnationalism, they did not yet constitute places of belonging, only the potential to become such. It was on the basis of these idealized attachments that I argued that the young participants displayed *potential delayed belonging* to their inherited homelands. Independently of whether these participants act on these transnational attachments and develop stronger and more material connections to kin and homelands in the future, these emotions play an important role in how they articulate their senses of self in the present both in relation to their local and translocal spaces. It could be argued that the sentiments expressed by the young participants in this project help illuminate the emotional motivations that may lead second generation individuals to eventually undertake 'return' migration to, or increase their involvement with, their inherited homelands.

These findings illustrate both the rich empirical knowledge which the emotional geographies of children can provide (cf. Horton and Kraftl 2006; Horton et al. 2008) and also the importance of developing more transnational research which focuses on the young children of migrants and their perspectives (not solely on young adults, e.g. Le Espiritu and Tran 2002; Wolf 2002). As I pointed out in chapter 2, so far, transnational studies have mainly centred on the experiences of adult migrants and second generations (e.g. Haller and Landolt 2005; Lee 2007; Zevallos 2008), neglecting the important insights to be gained by recognizing the young as research subjects in their own right and by adopting intergenerational approaches. Furthermore, young people's perspectives can help to expand our understanding of family geographies, including their transnational dimensions. I consider this point next.

### **8.3.3. (Transnational) family geographies**

Another theme which has figured saliently in this thesis has been the geography of the family, especially its transnational manifestations. Focusing on the case of a sparse migrant population has brought more sharply into focus the fluid and intersected dynamics of the 'frontiering' and 'relativizing' practices of transnational families (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). A focus on the family unit (adults and young people) and not the free-floating

individual also helps to develop more nuanced insights into the motivations of adult migrants to maintain transnational relationships and reproduce senses of familyhood and family belonging (cf. O'Connor 2010; Skrbiš 2008).

The findings I discussed in chapter 6 exemplified the way in which adult migrants may mobilize their 'relativizing' (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002, 14) practices in order to reproduce transnationally *traditional* intergenerational bonds between their children and family and kin in countries of origin or third countries (cf. Nesteruk and Marks 2009). These intergenerational and extended (uncles, aunts, cousins, etc.) relationships also played a crucial role in the ways in which adult participants approached tasks of cultural transmission. However, young participants provided accounts of their own understandings of the "emotional cultures" (Hochschild 1996, 20) of their families, supplying examples of how they reproduced ideas of closeness between parents and children or the value of family as an ultimate support network. In other instances, they displayed their own ideas about engaging (or not) in events and practices which their parents would like them to participate in (e.g. not attending 'Latino' lunches, embracing positively the visit of cousins). These findings show the dynamics that may transform standard family roles as the young generation combines traditionally oriented (but fluid) family values with wider individualistic social currents. It remains important to keep developing transnational studies which focus on immigrant populations who live in conditions of sparsity which can elucidate further how these conditions impact on their processes of cultural transmission or 'blending'.

Furthermore, as I pointed out in chapter 2, research which has aimed at recognizing children and young people as social agents in their own right has tended to consider them outside of the realm of the family (e.g. Brannen and O'Brien 1996; Holt 2011). This emphasis is understandable as scholars have been trying to compensate for former approaches which positioned them as passive members of the familial unit. Nonetheless, as Scott (2007, 122) has suggested, "[c]hildren are agents, but agency is not individual, it is relational. Children's actions and choices are codependent on the lives of others, particularly their family members". The relationality of agency is crucial when considering the frames of reference available to young people when developing their senses of identity and belonging. Thus, I argued that considering the immediate context of the family could help to illuminate the role that intergenerational and transnational family

bonds play in the senses of self of children of immigrant descent (cf. Levitt and Waters 2002). The findings I discussed in the former section highlight the salience that emotional and symbolic intergenerational transnational attachments may acquire for the second generation growing up. Furthermore, they point towards the need to pay more attention to the multi-dimensionality of children's agency, including its emotional and imaginative manifestations (cf. Hemming 2007).

My research approach also illustrates the potential of undertaking family research which recognizes adults and young people as equal participants and adopts multiple qualitative methods which can access the diverse and relational dimensions of family life. I consider these methodological implications next.

#### **8.4. Methodological contributions**

The methodology I adopted for the research project on which this thesis is based, illustrates the fruitfulness of using multiple methods when researching in depth the cases of families or households. I adopted a diversity of qualitative research tools (text and visually based) which aimed to capture the multi-dimensional character of the embodied experiences of family life (cf. Gabb 2010). The use of person-centred methods (i.e. graphic elicitation techniques) facilitated access to the emotional layers of experience and abstract sentiments and values of *both* adult and young participants. While scholars have highlighted the difficulties of developing research methods which can capture 'the emotional' and the required epistemological considerations involved in representing such knowledge (e.g. Anderson and Smith 2001; Davidson et al. 2005), my approach reinforces the usefulness of combining text and visually based methods in capturing this emotional dimension and the richness of data that results.

Researchers working with children are starting to explore the potential of using methods such as 'emotion maps' or 'mapping emotions' activities in order to access non-verbal layers of experience (e.g. Den Besten 2010). Surprisingly, however, research with families which makes use of similar tools has, so far, been developed mainly by sociologists (e.g. Finch and Mason 2000; Gabb 2010). The graphic elicitation methods (e.g. family diagrams, maps activity) and biographical objects which I used also proved to be valuable approaches to capturing the (transnational) emotional geographies of both individual participants and families (see chapter 3 for strengths and shortcomings of each method). Although

geographers have been amongst those leading research with children and young people by fostering a rich scholarship with a spatial perspective and methodological innovations (Holloway and Valentine 2000; Horton and Kraftl 2006; Matthews 2003; Skelton 2009), there is a need to employ the same kind of effort in expanding geographies of children *within* families.

Developing methodologies which can provide access to multi-dimensional and dynamic family lives, while acknowledging all members as equal research participants, also involves being sensitive to (and reflexive about) issues of translinguistic and transcultural research (e.g. Birbili 2000; Temple and Young 2004). The experience of the present research project strongly supports the need to recognize participants as active linguistic and communicative agents when conducting translinguistic qualitative research. It is in collaboration with participants (adults and young people) that the researcher/interpreter can develop better understandings of the cultural and social meanings carried by the language used in the research encounter.

### **8.5. Policy implications**

This thesis has some important policy implications both in terms of understandings of migrant incorporation and in relation to issues of interest to the research partner, the Refugee Council. The case of Latin American families in the north of England has provided a deeper insight into the everyday dynamics of incorporation of a group of migrants and their descendants and the *limits* of narratives of sameness and related exclusionary effects. As I discussed in chapter 2, developing critical understandings of these person-centred dynamics of commonality and difference is crucial in the contemporary political climate, within which multicultural policies are being superseded by 'social cohesion' agendas and in which the economic downturn has increased socio-economic pressures on increasingly ethnically diverse Western societies.

Due to last year's change of government in the UK, which has brought into power a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition (Allen et al. 12 May 2010; BBC 12 May 2010), the policy landscape of the country is still in a state of transition. However, there have already been signs that a 'social cohesion' agenda will be part of the new Government's policies. For instance, in one of his first speeches as Prime Minister, David Cameron (5 February 2011) renewed the attack on state multiculturalism as a driver for segregation in

British society; a segregation which, in his view, has led to problems of youth radicalization and extremism. It is worth pointing out that the Prime Minister was widely criticized for singling out in his speech young Muslim men as the culprits of extremism on a day on which the far-right group, the English Defence League, demonstrated in Luton (BBC 6 February 2011). Nevertheless, the solution to problems of segregation and radicalization, according to David Cameron, lies in developing a stronger sense of common (national) identity: "It's that identity, that feeling of belonging in our countries, that I believe is the key to achieving true cohesion" (Cameron 5 February 2011, n.p.).

My findings strongly suggest that as long as systems of differentiation and prejudice undermine migrants' and minority ethnic individuals' efforts to negotiate everyday parity in their receiving society, it will be extremely difficult to achieve 'true cohesion'. Immigrants, ethnic minorities and vulnerable sectors of the 'majority' population need to be granted both material and symbolic equality; otherwise, it will not be possible to construct a 'common national identity' which is inclusive. One of the practical steps to be taken towards a cohesive society, which the Prime Minister mentioned in his speech, is ensuring that immigrants can speak English and that "people are educated in the elements of a common culture and curriculum" (Cameron 5 February 2011, n.p.). Questions remain regarding how the 'elements' of this 'common culture' will be set and how 'sameness' will be defined.

The findings of my research indicate that politicians and policy makers would benefit from adopting understandings of belonging which do not purely rely on absolute declarations of identity or national affiliation. Immigrants and ethnic minorities can bond to and respect their host society in a myriad of ways. The accounts presented in this thesis suggest that the major barrier to articulating homing sentiments as expressions of national or local belonging reside in the symbolic exclusions (and material consequences) that migrants and their descendants experience during their embodied everyday interactions in their society of settlement.

Furthermore, *who is seen and how they are seen* by the state gaze also impacts on how minority ethnic groups can negotiate their place in Britain. This is especially important in the case of Latin Americans who have arrived as asylum seekers and those migrants who are living in more deprived circumstances. Research conducted in London has highlighted

the marginalization and exploitation problems that affect important sectors of the Latin American community (e.g. Carlisle 2006; McIlwaine 2007); there is currently little information available regarding how similar sectors of the population settled outside of the capital are faring. For example, there is a pressing need to conduct more research with Latin American migrants in Manchester and Liverpool. In these cities there are indications that the population has grown considerably in the last few years, and stakeholders and informants in my project believed that a significant number of them may be undertaking very low-paid jobs.

The findings of this study suggest that the lack of support for cultural groups in the northern region has greater negative effects for those migrants and their descendants who are in these more vulnerable situations. The extreme *invisibility* of Latin American asylum seekers in this area of the country also finds expression through the lack of awareness amongst many refugee community and support groups of the presence of people from this collective amongst their potential service users. For instance, during the recruitment process and when contacting support groups and services, I often had to engage in long explanations of the reason for my call, as in many instances the people I spoke to did not know that there were still small numbers of Latin Americans arriving as asylum seekers.

Overall, the experiences of the participant family who had been dispersed to the north by NASS (National Asylum Support Service) and given ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain) only recently, and the views of non-household stakeholders and other informants, suggest that the 'invisibility' of this group manifests materially on two fronts.

Firstly, these families and individuals face practical difficulties in accessing services (i.e. lack of information in Spanish, scarcity of opportunities to learn English) and when trying to establish social networks in their localities (e.g. lack of language skills greatly jeopardizes intercultural relationships, rare opportunities to establish relationships with fellow Latin Americans in similar situations). These findings echo some of the criticisms that have been addressed at the dispersal policy of asylum seekers which was introduced in response to the UK's *Asylum and Immigration Act 1999* (Griffiths et al. 2005, 27). These criticisms have highlighted that forcing applicants and their dependants to settle in areas in which they do not have social networks or community groups may deprive them of informal support systems that often play a crucial role in integration processes (e.g. Atfield

et al. 2007; Griffiths et al. 2005). For refugee or asylum seeking Latin American families who have been dispersed to the north of England, this lack of local social infrastructure comes to the fore.

Secondly, many informants and stakeholders highlighted that the feelings of 'isolation' of refugee and asylum seeking Latin American families in some northern towns especially affected the wellbeing of their children. This was exemplified by the participant family who had been given ILR. During the months I spent conducting fieldwork with them, it became clear that the children spent most of their out of school hours in the house and were not engaged in non-educational recreational activities outside of the domestic sphere. These children could benefit greatly from initiatives such as the SMILE project of the Refugee Council, which aims to promote and support the educational and recreational needs of refugee children by providing mentors and befriending volunteers who can help them access activities and services in their localities (Walker 2011).

Overall, the case of Latin American families in the north of England has provided some important insights into the needs of minority asylum seeking and refugee populations who do not have easy access to co-ethnic support networks in the places where they reside. The findings of the project, therefore, provide the basis for a set of recommendations to support the efforts of the Refugee Council and of community and support groups working with Latin Americans or other minority populations. These recommendations include:

1. The Refugee Council should:

- Foment awareness amongst groups working to support refugees and amongst staff at local induction centres in the northern regions (and other areas outside of London) that there may be Latin Americans and other minority populations amongst those using their services.
- Support community development work undertaken by local groups which aims at building intercultural relationships amongst asylum seekers and refugees.
- Continue to campaign for the increase of provision of English classes (ESOL) for all asylum seekers and refugees.
- Continue to promote the development of mentoring and befriending services for refugees and asylum seekers which could respond more

effectively to the needs of minority asylum seeking children and young refugees.

2. Northern local authorities (with the support of the UK Border Agency) should:
  - Promote the development of transcultural activities in which diverse refugee or asylum seeking populations could support each other and socialize in English.
  - Support individuals and families from minority asylum seeking or refugee populations in maintaining contact with support groups in London (or elsewhere) which can provide specialized services in their language (e.g. legal advice, information services). This could be achieved by collecting the contact details of these organizations and identifying volunteers who may have alternative language skills (minority languages).
  
3. Latin American community and support groups in London should:
  - Actively fundraise in order to diversify their services and support those outside of the capital. This could be started by developing working ties with the small scale Latin American initiatives which exist in the northern cities, establishing a directory of support services and joining efforts to fundraise.
  
4. Latin American groups and small-scale initiatives in the north of the country should:
  - Develop collaborative, cross-regional ties, actively fundraise and identify volunteers who could gradually help to deliver support services outside of the capital.

## **8.6. Final comment**

Understanding processes of incorporation requires paying more attention to the everyday embodied dimensions of these processes. It is at the level of day-to-day interaction that the micro-expressions of commonality and difference amongst social actors (adults and young people) are negotiated and constantly reconstructed. It is at this level that inclusions and exclusions are lived. It is at this level that equality must be achieved in order

to pursue any agenda of 'social cohesion'. Integration, most of all, is about ways of relating to people and places. Government policies should aim at providing the conditions in which more migrants can echo Martina's words (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2): we found ways of relating to the place where we are and to feeling part of it and not losing the dimension of where we come from (...) and that's it.

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## APPENDIX A: Interview schedule - Adult participants (English version)

- To start with: please could you tell me the story of your migration to the UK?  
Or: please could you tell me the story of how you met your partner and settled in the north of England?

*Once the participants have finished their story:*

- Could you tell me about the impacts that migrating has had on your family (nuclear and extended)?  
*Probing: How the process affected you personally and how it affected your family, did you take the decision on your own or with your partner/family? What were the reasons for your decision? Why the UK? What were the problems you had to face? How was the migration process and what happened when you arrived here? The story of what has happened until the present moment.*
- Could you describe the Latin American population in the city where you are living at the present? Would you describe it as a 'community'? Are you engaged in activities with other Latin Americans? Would you describe yourself as Latin American & why?
- Present circumstances:
  - Familial organization at the present time, reasons for this organization.  
Do you think that it is possible to sustain long distance family relationships? Why? How?
  - Current support networks: friends living in the UK, other people from your country of origin, other Latin Americans, church, social or cultural activities. Do you think there's solidarity amongst the Latin Americans living in your area?
  - "Integration" into the local society where you live: public services use, children benefits, etc.; relationships with neighbours, work mates, other parents in your children's school, etc.
  - Any problems: discrimination or racism (is it directed specifically against Latin Americans? How have you been affected?), accommodation, work, language, children's education, relationships with your children or relationships with relatives in your country of origin or other countries.

- Things that you like or dislike about this country, what do you miss the most?  
Do you feel at home where you live?
- Do you preserve your culture at home? Do you celebrate any Latin American festivities or those of your country of origin (national day, local patrons, etc.)? What type of food do you cook? In what language do you speak at home? Why?
- What values do you think you are transferring to your children? Are these values related to the way you were brought up? Is there anything that you would consider to be “English/British” or different in the way your children are growing up?
- How do you describe your national identity now? Would you like to go back to your country of origin? (Explore the reasons) What do you tell your children about your country of origin? And about Latin America or being Latin American?
- Transnational activities:
  - Family in country of origin or in other countries: remittances (money or other type of presents/goods, frequency, relationship with the recipients, reciprocity, how they use this help: everyday life, education, accommodation, etc.)
  - Political activism (membership or contribution to political parties, NGOs, other activist voluntary organizations, etc.). Are you a member of any campaigning or voluntary organization?
  - Social networks in country of origin or in other countries: apart from the extended family, people from the same town, religious organizations or churches, etc.
  - How often do you visit your country of origin? What are the reasons for these visits?
  - Do you keep in touch with what is happening in your country of origin? (News, relatives, friends, etc.)
  - Do you think there are things that your own Consulate could be doing for people like you and your children living outside of London?

## **APPENDIX B: Instructions for diagram activities and interview schedules - Young participants (English versions)**

### **Family diagram: instructions and topics for discussion**

I would like you to tell me about your family. To do so we will be using this diagram that I'll hope you'll find fun to work with. I would like you to imagine that you are in this middle circle: do you want to write your "research name" in it? You can also draw yourself if you prefer.

Ok, now we're going to fill in the rest of the circles. I want you to think of the people who are closest to you, and put them in these circles next to you, according to how important you think they are. Those more important will be closer to you and those less so, further away. They can be members of your family or people that to you feel they are like family or very important friends. Please could you write their relationship to you e.g. uncle, aunt, etc., instead of their names and where they are, for example UK, etc.

For each person, find out:

- Who are they? Where are they?
- Why are they important?
- What does the respondent do with them?
- How much time do they spend together?
- If not in the same household, when does the respondent see them? How does she/he communicate with them? How often?
- Who do you miss the most?
- How do they help their parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.?
- What do you do with your brothers/sisters?
- What do you do with your parents?
- What do you do with your grandparents?
- What activities do you do as "a family"?

**Maps diagram: instructions and topics for discussion**

I would like you to tell me what you think about England and about your country of origin and Latin America. To do so we'll be using this diagram (maps and figure). Can you recognize these maps? I would like you to imagine that this figure is you, so it would be "you in (country of origin)/Latin America" and "you in England". Which one would you like to start with?

***ENGLAND (city, region or area where they live)***

→ Could you identify an image, object or idea that you think represents or defines this country for you? We will write it down or draw a kind of representation of it.

→ (If no response) What do you like the most about England? And the least? Is there anything you would like to add to these drawings?

Topics to cover:

- Why do you like this the most?
- Why do you think this represents England?
- Is there something that you do not like about England? Why?
- When people ask you where you are from, what do you say?
- Do you like living here? Why?
- Do you feel at home here? Why?

***COUNTRY OF ORIGIN/LATIN AMERICA (cities or specific places?)***

→ Could you identify an image, object or idea that you think represents or defines this country for you? We will write it down or draw a kind of representation of it. Is there anything you would add to these drawings?

→ (If no response) Could you tell me/draw the thing you like and/or dislike the most about your country of origin? Or the thing that most reminds you of your country of origin.

→ What can you tell me about Latin America? Do you ever describe yourself as Latin American? When? Why? Do you ever talk with your parents/family/friends about Latin America? If you talk to other Latin Americans, what are the things that you share?

Topics to cover:

- Why do you like this the most? Why do you think it represents your country of origin? Is it a common thing with other Latin American countries?
- How many times have you been in your country of origin? (if ever) Do you go back very often? What do you do when you go there? Where do you stay?
- If they have lived there, what do you remember about your country of origin?
- Who tells you stories about your country of origin? What kind of stories?
- How do you feel when you go back? Do you like it? Would you like to live there?
- When you are in your country of origin and someone asks you where you are from, what do you say?
- Do you have friends from country of origin/Latin America?

### *THIRD COUNTRY*

Topics to discuss if there is a third country involved:

- How long did they live there? (if they ever did)
- Who lives there?
- Do you have friends in that country?
- Do you visit often?
- How do you feel when you go there?
- Would you like to go back to live there? Would you like to live there?
- Do you feel at home there?

### **Weekly activities diagram: instructions and topics for discussion**

I would like you to use this circle to tell me about the activities in which you are involved during a normal week (including the weekend). One idea would be to divide this circle into different sections; each section will represent one of the things you do during a normal week (Monday to Sunday on a school week), so it can include things like school, homework, housework, sports, clubs, playing, “hanging out” with friends, etc. However, if you prefer to do it in any other way, that is also OK.

I would like you to think about how much time you spend in each activity. To the ones that take a lot of your time, we’ll give them a bigger piece of the circle and those which don’t take so much time will get a smaller section. We’ll also write /draw on each section to know which activity it is.

Probes/topics for the completion of the diagram:

- Can you start by telling me what you normally do on week day? And on a weekend day (Sat or Sun)?
- In school, what do you like the best? What do you like the least?
- Who do you play/hang out with when at school? Are those your friends? Could you tell me a bit about your friends?
- What about the teachers, do you like them?
- What else do you do at school? Do you go to any after school activities or clubs? Do you like them? Do you have friends there?
- Do you do any sport? How many times a week?
- Do you play with any friends after school? Where? Every day?
- Do you go out with friends? At the weekend or also during the week? What do you normally do?
- Do you help at home? What do you do?
- Do you go shopping with your mum/dad/siblings? Do you go on your own? How do you help?
- Do you spent any time at home playing on the computer or reading or watching TV? With whom?
- Do you undertake any activities related to your Latin American background? E.g. language.

- What type of food do you normally eat at home? Who cooks?

Topics to discuss:

- Do you have a best friend or a group of best friends? Are they friends from school or have you met them in other activities, neighbourhood group, etc.?
- What do you do together? Do you practice any sport? Play music? Etc.
- How do you normally keep in touch with them? Do you use the mobile phone? Do you use Facebook? Do you use Skype? With whom? How?
- Do you have any friends in your country of origin (or third country)? How do you communicate with them? How often?
- Do you have any Latin American friends? What language do you normally speak with your friends? And with your parents? And your siblings?
- Do you have any friends whose parents were not born in England? Do you have any friends whose families are all from England?
- Do you ever talk to your friends about your “Latin American heritage”? What do you tell them?
- Could you describe your home to me? Do you think that someone who comes to visit can see anything related to your country or origin or Latin America in it? And what about your bedroom, would you say that you have any Latin American elements in it? What do these elements mean to you?

## **APPENDIX C: Group interview with biographical object – Interview schedule (English version)**

**Instructions:** Please could you bring to the interview an object (decoration, photograph, document or book, piece of clothing, ornament, etc.) which is important to all of you as members of the family? The idea is to have an object which is meaningful for all of you. We will talk about what it is, its story and the reasons why it is important for you all.

- What's the object?
- Story of the object: how was it created, acquired, etc.?
- Why did they choose it? What are their thoughts and feelings about the object?
- What does it mean to all of them? (Try to get all their voices, are they contrasting views?)
- What do they think the object can tell about them as a family? (How's it related to their sense of "familyhood"? Any values attached to it?)
- Is it related to the story of their family (re. Latin America, their country of origin or dual background)?
- Where do they keep it? (Depending on what it is, is it displayed somewhere? Why?)
- Are the children going to keep it? Why?
- Are they going to pass it on? Why?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the object or of your experiences of living in the north of England?

## APPENDIX D: Original Spanish quotations

### CHAPTER 3

#### *Section 3.3.1.2 Young people's methods*

##### **Jake (14, Chilean – household 10)**

JAKE. Um, nunca he sido un Rembrandt... quiero dejarlo, no, no, yo creo que no tiene nada.

#### *Section 3.4.2. Positionality*

##### **Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9)**

JUAN. El latinoamericano bueno, a mí me define desde México para el sur, bueno lo define más que todo la lengua española, pero no España, lo siento (ríe).

##### **Juanjo (40s, Hispano-Honduran – household 3)**

JUANJO. (...) Pues, definitivamente que sí, yo me siento hondureño. Sí...

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Es importante...?

JUANJO. Contrario a ti... ¿eh? Porque tú te sientes catalana, no española...

ENTREVISTADORA. [Ríe] Es muy complejo... [Sigue riendo].

### CHAPTER 4

#### *Section 4.2.2. Sending States related invisibility*

##### **Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8)**

KARLA. (...) Yo sé que en Londres, porque me dijo, hay tienen, hay varias cosas que son organizadas por la embajada pero todo es en Londres, todo, todo es en Londres y se conoce muy bien la gente que está ahí la gente que trabaja, se llegan a conocer por una cosa y por la otra porque sí, entonces organizan cosas entre ellos mismos, y por lo tanto no hay la necesidad de que haya algo oficialmente organizado, y si hubiera algo oficialmente organizado, es mucho trabajo para alguien que... ¿sabes?

##### **Louise (30s, Chilean – household 10)**

LOUISE. (...) El sistema de consulado en Chile es muy malo porque, o sea, no es que es muy malo, está centralizado en Londres, entonces todo lo que tú necesites tienes que ir a Londres, lo que es una fortuna, por eso te gastas plata a ir a Londres, y porque, no, como son varias horas. (...) Lo otro es que no tienen idea que estamos acá [ríen] ¿no? así como por primera vez me presenté, 'oh, oh qué bueno saber que está aquí, que existe', más o menos, '¿por qué no me llena esta hojita, por favor?' (...) Lo único que hicieron fue

pedirme el email para ponerme en una lista de emails que eso se supone es para unas actividades del consulado chileno pero nunca recibí nada, ningún mail del consulado [ríe].

**Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2)**

MARTINA. Sí, pues el estereotipo está ahí [de Colombia como país de narcotráfico y violencia], está ahí, no hay nada que contradiga el estereotipo, absolutamente nada, pero yo creo que más que eso, a mí [lo que] me afecta es el vacío, porque es como si no existiera, es como si no existiera y, o como si fuéramos completamente, perteneciéramos completamente a Estados Unidos. Entonces ‘nosotros [Reino Unido] no nos metemos con Colombia porque eso es problema de Estados Unidos’. Y yo creo que eso es lo que es más asustador de todo, es la falta, que es a nivel institucional, a nivel..., porque hay gente que está tratando de promover pero es, es, yo creo que es a alto nivel que no se quiere tener contacto con Colombia. (...) Es parte de la campaña de desinformación, el Consulado hace parte de esa campaña de desinformación.

**Mauricio (30s, Mexican – household 6)**

MAURICIO. (...) A lo mejor algunas, tratar de juntar a la gente en alguna celebración nacional de México, este tratar de hacer algo, no solamente en Londres sino hacerlo en varios lugares, a lo mejor, yo creo que eso es lo que haría que la gente se, se mire un poquito más, y se conociera, porque a lo mejor la gente ni siquiera sabe que existe.

**Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9)**

JUAN. (...) Hace unos años atrás sí me gustaba que me mandaran e-mails de la embajada, porque tenía unas, tenían muchas cosas interculturales que intenté llevarle a ella [su hija], que hacían exposiciones culturales de Bolivia y de Perú, porque lo juntaban a veces Perú y de Bolivia y tenían vestimentas, explicando culturas, tribus y todo eso pero ya no lo hacen, entonces ahí se va perdiendo.

**Section 4.3.1. Contested conceptualizations of the Latin American collective identity**

**Susana (40s, Colombia – household 1)**

SUSANA. Es que yo creo que no se puede hablar de Latinoamérica como un grupo, y yo creo que ahí es dónde está el mal entendido. Nosotros somos varias culturas en una *landmass* y tenemos cosas en común pero tenemos cosas muy, muy, muy diferentes. Entonces los intereses que puedan venir de los suramericanos, de Chile, de la Argentina, de pronto como que no encuentran con los de Centroamérica o Colombia o Venezuela, porque no hay como ese entendimiento, yo creo que ni siquiera si estuviéramos en Latinoamérica mismo entenderíamos cuáles son las necesidades como continente. (...) Es un sitio muy grande, porque somos minorías, somos como muchas minorías en un solo sitio sin una identidad o como un *column* que es común, yo creo que es eso.

**Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7)**

MARTA. (...) Desgraciadamente en Latinoamérica, el problema que tenemos es que cada uno es como una isla, y peleamos siempre entre nosotros, y no tenemos una identidad definida. La identidad nos la han dado desde afuera. Aquí nos llaman los latinoamericanos, pero nosotros, como latinoamericanos, sabemos perfectamente cuando habla un colombiano, cuando es un ecuatoriano, un peruano, un boliviano, un argentino, un chileno. (...) Pero yo creo que nos pasamos como el perro y el gato. (...) Entonces, esa identidad latinoamericana yo creo que no existe. Es una opinión personal, pero existe sí, el chileno siempre quiere ser chileno, se siente el mejor, el argentino es el mejor, el peruano es el mejor. (...) Y pues así, no creo que haya una de identidad.

**Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10)**

PACO. (...) El tema de las clasificaciones me ha sido a mi mucho más evidente en la vida cotidiana estando acá que estando en Chile, porque cuando lleno esta hoja, cuando, si llenas postulaciones [que preguntan] de qué raza, el color de tu piel, cosas así, qué grupo étnico, esas preguntas para mí son más evidentes acá, porque no están en los documentos que uso en Chile, no están, el sistema de identidad me, y porque no es mi color de piel, y porque no es mi idioma, y porque no es mi gente, el tema de la identidad me es cotidiano acá. (...) Y eso me ha hecho sentirme parte más clara de Chile o de Latinoamérica, como los referentes, es por, estando allá no, estando allá como que sentirme chileno o latinoamericano no era una cosa como importante, no estaba en mi vida diaria. (...)

**Jaime (19, Honduran – household 3)**

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Crees que hay alguna cosa que sea en común con todos los países latinoamericanos...? O que tu digas es una cosa bastante que se puede compartir ¿no? Que si has conocido a otros latinoamericanos de otros países...

JAIME. Sí, sí, solo el hecho de decir que eres latino, solo con eso basta, da igual de qué país exacto eres, con tal de que seas latino es como... ¡vale!

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Hay una cosa compartida? ¿Un sentimiento?

JAIME. Claro, sí, la verdad que sí.

**Section 4.3.2. Local manifestations of the Latin American collectivity****Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2)**

MARTINA. (...) Había diferentes significados porque para unos se significaba gente con raíces indígenas, por ejemplo, era muy importante para ellas, y solamente gente con raíces, o primordialmente Latinoamérica era de raíz indígena, para mí que soy colombiana, la parte indígena no era importante, lo que era importante eran otras cosas, era la cultura, era la historia, era la política, era incluso hasta la religión pero no era la parte racial digamos. Y para otra gente el concepto de Latinoamérica era incluso más amplio y por ejemplo no les importaba que entrara dentro el estereotipo del, de cómo los

norteamericanos ven a los latinoamericanos, y entonces para ellos cualquier persona, asumen que cualquier persona es latinoamericana si es latinoamericana, entonces se... y, mejor dicho era gente que rechazaba mucho el, el estereotipo de latino que (...) existe en Latinoamérica, en en Estados Unidos. Y entonces [el grupo al que pertenecía] buscaba que la identidad se mantuviera, una identidad más, como menos comercializada y menos... mediatizada, pero pues había diferentes personas que veían lo latinoamericano de diferente manera. (...)

**Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. (...) Se necesita una, como unas bases muy claras, uno establece en mutualidad en qué tipo de solidaridad porque nuestra cultura como que no, aquí, no sé si en Londres pero aquí en [su ciudad], no somos, no somos organizados y de pronto si lo fuésemos yo creo que disfrutaríamos más. Lo sé porque yo trabajé mucho a la comunidad, [mi mejor amiga] fue la otra persona que trabajo muchísimo y cuando establecimos un ritmo de trabajo, un ritmo de actividades culturales, sociales, se notaba, se notaba el beneficio, se notaba que nos atraía estar juntos bajo un mismo techo, que teníamos cosas en común pero hay que trabajarlo y uno se cansa de trabajar para otros... y entonces sí, yo creo que hace falta pero no lo somos, no tenemos la red establecida.

**Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2)**

MARTINA. Llegó un momento que quise que el Council reconociera a los latinoamericanos como una minoría, y creo que para que se reconociera como una minoría lo único que tenían que hacer era decir que eran una minoría y nunca lo hicieron. Entonces yo creo que eso es, yo creo que... lo que no tenemos es porque no lo hemos pedido (...) yo creo que de pronto no nos consideramos una minoría porque mejor dicho es que, es que venimos de todos los países entonces yo creo que ese es un factor que afecta, porque en [otra ciudad del norte de Inglaterra], yo estuve viviendo en [esta otra ciudad] (...) Y la diferencia era que en [esta otra ciudad] había homogeneidad política, que aquí no la había, y había homogeneidad en el sentido de dónde venía la gente que aquí no la había, entonces realmente éramos una red de apoyo pero no nos sentíamos minoría porque cada uno en si mismo era una minoría dentro de la minoría, entonces... entonces yo creo que funcionábamos bien como, como... pues nos llamábamos comunidad latinoamericana y funcionábamos como tal pero no como minoría, yo creo que ni nos veíamos ni... (...) ni nos sentíamos tal vez.

**Evangelical Pastor (Colombian – stakeholder)**

PASTOR. (...) Si, sería bueno el hecho de poderse reunir en comunidad, no es fácil, todos somos diferentes, todos actuamos diferentes, es una cuestión de respetarnos los unos con los otros y mirar como trabajamos juntos, pero si se necesita gente que motive eso, gente que, gente que pueda crear ese tipo de unidad.

**Ecuadorian household 4 – Elizabeth (15), Paula (30s) and Pablo (30s)**

ELIZABETH. (...) Hay una gente... que ha visto que es mejor, estar así solos, no, no se necesita a la gente, que estás mejor a veces estar ahí solo con la familia que con los otros.

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Y qué razones creéis que tienen para pensar eso?

PAULA. Muchas personas será por la situación que se encuentran ¿no? sin papeles, hay gente que tampoco les gusta, o sea hablar de la vida de ellos, no les gusta.

PABLO. Y de depende de dónde vengán y los problemas que hayan pasado también.

**Ernesto (50s, Chilean – household 5)**

ERNESTO. (...) porque digamos ya estamos establecidos, ya cada uno tenemos nuestros deberes, nuestro trabajo, nuestra familia, entonces como que ya dejamos a un lado tanta dedicación, que ya conseguimos lo que queríamos, pero no, no nos olvidamos que todavía eso existe, que la necesidad de hacer alto existe; ahora los chilenos como refugiados no llegan, des de que se paró la entrada de chilenos refugiados, bueno chilenos refugiados ya no hay ¿no? entonces sería como que dejamos un poco atrás, un poco de lado todas estas actividades, no, demostrándose... pero ahora, por ejemplo, los refugiados, refugiados latinos ¿no? hay muy pocos, que están llegando ahora me refiero, que están llegando ahora, durante, qué sé yo, diez años atrás, llegaban de, todavía llegaban de... qué sé yo de Bolivia, de Uruguay, de qué sé yo, pero, ya, ya, como que ya ha recaído la cantidad ¿no? ahora llegan turistas, o llegan refugiados económicos ¿no? que no tienen mucho dinero allá y se vienen acá porque aquí les pueden dar más, entonces ya, ya no es la política tanto, el tema político. Pero siempre he estado en contacto con toda la gente, como ahora, gente que vive acá, los hay de El Salvador, de Nicaragua, de Méjico, y... algunos han venido por cosas de política, otros han venido porque se han casado con gente inglesa, entonces hay diferentes, diferentes, diferentes... ¿cómo te diría yo? ... acercamientos entre los latinos ¿no?

**Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8)**

KARLA. (...) Y cuando tienes hijos, siento que, yo por lo que veo a mi hermana, yo creo que cuando estás soltera hay varias cosas, si te quieres involucrar, hay, porque tienes más tiempo, pero cuando tienes familia, y más cuando tu esposo es inglés que no es necesariamente tenga la misma necesidad que tú tienes, es más fácil, hacer, unirte o sea aquí, al grupo de ingleses y adaptarte que hacer el esfuerzo, porque tienes que ser tú la que lo organices o tú que hagas todo el esfuerzo. (...) Siento que si hubiera... es como los irlandeses, yo conozco a muchos irlandeses, tienen el centro irlandés, y claro hay clases ahí, pueden ir a tomar clases ahí, pueden ir a tomar algo ahí, o sea hay, hay un lugar, un lugar físico, de reunión, un lugar donde hay posters de lo que hacen uno y el otro, aquí está una ayuda, aquí está lo otra. (...)

**Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10)**

PACO. Que, hay, que hay, el sentimiento es que hay gente, que más que te podría facilitar la vida como apoyo emocional, como parte de la red, como alegría de poder compartir, hay un grupo de personas que pueden ser fuente de problemas, como, tienen problemas acá y te podrían involucrar en esos problemas o te pueden pedir un favor, pueden demandar cosas de ti, o pueden necesitar cosas de ti. Entonces como que, yo ya tengo problemas en mi inmigración, tengo que velar que mi familia esté protegida y esté tranquila, y no, no, no deseo hacer nada que podría potencialmente contribuir a que sufran o verse involucrado en problemas. (...) No asocio directamente eh compartir problemas por la experiencia de venir del mismo país, de la misma cultura, el mismo idioma con que nos vamos a apoyar inmediatamente. (...) He conocido varios colombianos [en su ciudad], pero cuando hablo con ellos yo ocupo distinciones como de clase nada más, y o académicas, de estudio, entonces ahí hay gente (...) hay gente muy joven sin educación, inmigrante, de clase trabajadora o sea no veo ahí una red de apoyo emocional, más bien veo una fuente de problemas.

**CHAPTER 5*****Section 5.2. Narratives of sameness: invisibility as a signifier of integration*****Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. (...) No sé si es la cuestión socio-económica o socio-política pero aquí en Europa hay esa facilidad de cualquier persona puede tener acceso a lo que quiera y lo puede hacer, si tiene la capacidad de trabajarlo, sin tener que físicamente pagar... pareciese que allí en Latinoamérica para poder subir de escalafón hay que poner dinero, no *skills* o destrezas o cosas de esas, creo que es eso lo que más me duele y es una pena. Pero en este momento no sabría decirte cual es la situación de los jóvenes en Colombia o en Venezuela o en Perú, yo no sabría, yo no sé qué piensan, pero mi generación toda aspiraba a estudiar en los Estados Unidos, a venirse a Alemania, a estudiar en Europa, a estudiar en Inglaterra, toda de la generación mía, de los tres colegios dónde yo estuve, todos los padres aspiraban a que los hijos salieran del país... y obviamente, en algún momento yo copie eso porque no hubo nadie en la familia que me decía, *think!* Tienes que estar educada en otro sitio, yo luche por mi educación.

**Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9)**

JUAN. (...) Tienes familia y quieres la mayor seguridad que puedas para ellos y el país está patas arriba. Porque yo vi, cuando estaba allá, entonces no, no. No, yo le dije, le decía a ella [su mujer]: ¿te acuerdas cuando te dije que nos vengamos por un año? ¡Olvidalo! (ríen). Nah, es tú quieres la seguridad que tú puedes darle a tus hijos, y saber que están libres pero seguros, y allá no están. Entonces, no, no conviene.

### **Section 5.2.1. Invisibility as sameness**

#### **Frances (30s, British married to Bolivian partner – household 9)**

FRANCES. Creo que se mezclan más con la población. (...) Pero no sé, tal vez por los números, tal vez porque no hay cosas, puntos culturales que tienen que observar los *Councils* y todo, porque obviamente con los paquistanos siempre hay cuestiones de mezquitas, de observar las vacaciones todo eso, pero los latinos como son católicos igual que los, bueno cristianos, igual que ninguno de los británicos (ríe) pero es la cultura del país, ¿no? Es lo mismo. (...) Entonces no creo que hay consideraciones especiales que hay que hacer y por eso no va a haber presión. Entonces se ponen invisibles porque no se hacen escuchar. Pero supongo que... no sé, muchos latinos se casan con ingleses también, entonces ya las familias se ponen ingleses. (...) Muchos latinos se ven blancos, se ven como nosotros como se dice, ¿no? Que... quieren trabajar como los demás, o sea no tienen nada que los hace distintos, menos la lengua. Y tal vez porque se ven, tal vez porque la gente los ven como asiáticos, no se ven, no sé... porque no hay una identidad compartida que necesariamente la gente reconozca. (...)

#### **Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8)**

KARLA. (...) Cuando llegue aquí no encontré un grupo de latinoamericanos, como estaba aquí en este pueblito, todo estaba en [ciudad cercana] y empecé a ir, empezamos a ir a la iglesia otra vez, y ahí encontré algo que no era tanto de ir a la iglesia, pero algo de mi cultura, que así es como, mis papas me educaron yendo a misa y todo eso y entonces las conocí [unas amigas] por eso. Y entonces tenemos también erm... yo creo que hablamos de cosas espirituales también, eso, de cosas espirituales y es muy extraño porque he encontrado muchas cosas similares de cómo me educaron a mí a como las educaron a ellas. Entonces, aunque no sean latinoamericanas, tenemos cosas en común, de nuestro pasado, de cómo nos trataron nuestros padres, lo que queremos de nuestros hijos, lo que queremos, cosa así... (...)

#### **Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9)**

JUAN. (...) Los anglicanos tienen casi las mismas fiestas que los católicos de todas maneras, entonces no es tan... no hay tanta diferencia, a lo mejor sí un poco de fechas pero de ahí nada más, de ahí casi todo igual. (...) Pero la verdad que no, creo que no me importa mucho la religión si sabes que estás con Cristo, sabes que eres cató... no hay una cosa católico, o anglicano o adventista, entonces crees que hay un Cristo, y estás bien, no... (...) entonces tú les puedes dar una educación cristiana y está bien.

#### **Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10)**

PACO. Me siento como en casa (ríen), opera de la misma manera. (...) Y asociado a la clase social hay educación, lenguaje, residencia, color de piel, color de ojos, la apariencia física, temas de los cuales se puede hablar, programas de televisión, música, un conjunto de

cosas culturales que están asociadas a un estilo de vida, y a una forma de clase social y eso es lo mismo, es exactamente lo mismo. (...)

### **Section 5.3.1. Encountering 'otherness'**

#### **Frances (30s, British – household 9)**

FRANCES. Pero Juan dijo, Juan ha tenido... Hay los ignorantes que pasan borrachos por el centro de la ciudad en la noche y le dicen "vuelve a Paquistán" [ríe]. Entonces si ha tenido puntos. Ha habido varias cosas que han pasado, sí, pero no los niños.

#### **Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian – household 4)**

ELIZABETH. (...) A veces me confunden a mí con ser paquistana porque aquí no hay latinos... [ríen]. (...) Porque aquí no hay latinos. (...) No, no saben nada. Piensan que los latinos son como gente aburrida... eso no es así. No... o sea los ingleses son aburridos y no, no, no vienen mucho a la casa mía porque no saben cómo son los españoles, no saben que tradición hay, o sea, se piensan cosas, no saben cómo es la vida latina, no saben, nosotros somos respetables y muy divertidos.

#### **Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. (...) Yo creo que es un poco más en el Reino Unido, de la falta de conocimiento, porque yo tuve la experiencia en España de ser latinoamericana, y los españoles son racistas, y te lo dicen así a frente, ¡raca! Y quedas así uff, preciso por ser Colombiano, por ser latino te lo dicen y taquete, aquí es *mellow*, es no... y hay mucha ignorancia, entonces no se sabe, es *foreign*, entonces ya puede ser uno... yo paso por persona del Pakistán, de la China, de Asia... yo nunca paso primero por Colombiana, nunca, nunca. (...) Creo que eso se pierde bastante, pero es que tampoco creo que Latinoamérica tiene un estereotipo, entonces se les complica a ellos muchísimo el tratar de encontrar cuál es el estereotipo de latinoamericano. De pronto pueden pensar en el ecuatoriano o el peruano pero a grandes rasgos la ignorancia es tal, que no tienen ni la mínima idea de por dónde ponerlo.

#### **Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7)**

MARTA. (...) Bueno, vamos a ver... un poco, es como un poco divertido, porque el ser latino... en el ambiente de pareja como que te encasillan y además los compañeros de Martin es como que le echan bromas porque está casado con una latina. Porque yo soy una 'hot lady'. [Medio ríen] Y eso en parte pues me fastidia en principio... porque tu vas a las fiesta es como ala, la mujer de Martin, pues exótica y tiene que llegar así con... pero es que eso esperan ¿eh? en eso pues lo tienes que, por una parte, si yo no tuviera educación o cultura pues me sentiría mal pero me da risa en el fondo. Pero tampoco me hace mucha gracia, no te creas. (...) Y te dan comida picante, o te ponen música así, pues un poco *Dirty Dance*, y un poco menos que esperan a que tú empieces ahí... [ríen]. A mí me gusta bailar, ¿eh? Pero no... no sé, como lo que esperan de uno. Eso sí, te digo que me ha pasado, sobre todo con Martin. Y Martin está feliz, porque a él le encanta que sus compañeros sepan que

está casado con una latina. [Ríen]. Un poco menos que una latina caliente, dicen *the hot lady*, se me cae así [ríen].

**Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10)**

PACO. (...) O sea la diferencia está en qué ser inmigrante acá es un tema (...) y hay un conjunto de percepciones, forma de tratar, conversaciones, te puedes integrar a muchos aspectos de tu vida, pero hay un rótulo que no tienes que compartir, que es serio. (...) Los inmigrantes es una gran categoría, yo estoy seguro de que entro en la categoría de los 'Paki', como una categoría inmigrante muy amplia. Tengo un amigo, para mí un colega ¿no? tengo un colega en el trabajo que cuando venían los inmigrantes, los italianos a trabajar a una empresa, y a causa de ello ahí había mucho problema, ocupaba la palabra 'Paki' para referirse a ese conjunto de personas, es decir en ese sentido 'Paki', es, o sea para mí los italianos no son 'Paki', pero el concepto de 'Paki' que él tiene es inmigrante no inglés, podría decir. (...)

**Karla (30s, Mexican – household 7)**

KARLA. Erm... inculta, erm... sí, yo creo que más como inculta, y como que me estaba aprovechando de la situación y que... de venir a Inglaterra, así como que, como ese sentimiento que tienen mucho los ingleses de ¿por qué vienen a mi país? Sentía que, sentía que me estaban viendo como una relación forzada para poder venir a Inglaterra, porque ¡qué fabuloso país Inglaterra! [ríen]. (...)

**Ma José (30s, Mexican – household 6)**

MA JOSÉ. Una cosa así de todo el brazo además, y le decía yo, reacciona muy exagerado, puedo haber sido un zancudo, "en este país los sancudos, a lo mejor en otros, el clima, o sea las condiciones..." (...) fue una situación como de, "no sabes tú, que ese animal aquí no existe". Y decía yo bueno pues, ella puede creer eso. Y luego dice: es que también tiene que ver el tono de piel, y Constanza ya todo le picaba, como quiera, está más transparente la criatura, o sea (ríe)... No porque lo diga yo ya, ella así es, comparada con [su hija pequeña], por ejemplo Constanza es mucho más blanca (...) y me dice: "si pero es que la tez más morena" y tú, bueno, (ríe), yo le entiendo, ella es morena, o sea... (...) Así, entonces esa vez yo lo escuché y, pero vaya, te causa esa cuestión de decir, Dios mío, aquí Constanza es morena, y le dije yo, bueno es verdad, no es sajona, eso es evidente, pero no le tiene que ser conflictivo ¿no? para mí fue más bien una, un afirmar que esa persona en particular tiene un problema, de no ver que eso ¿no? que le hiciera reacción un sancudo era independiente de la raza (...).

**Section 5.3.2.1 Strategic invisibilities**

**Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. (...) Erm, la cultura, yo creo que la cultura está ahí, en algún momento yo pienso que he adquirido bastante valores británicos para funcionar, para estar aquí pero que

también son cosas que uno va, que yo agradezco tenerlas porque me ha permitido hacer el enlace entre culturas y no me refiero solamente a la británica, me ha permitido hacer un enlace con las culturas con las que yo tengo que estar en contacto, por trabajo, por vida social, por intereses políticos o por intereses personales esto me permite, ha sido una herramienta que me permite tener esa permeabilidad. (...) Creo que uno tiene que hacer el esfuerzo, yo creo que es el que llega el que hace un esfuerzo extraterrestre para... eso, eso tal vez sería un pero ¿no? El que nos toca trabajarlo mucho, a mí me ha tocado trabajarlo mucho para mantener unas amistades con los nativos, nativos y son gente máxima pero cuesta llegar a conocerlos, es muy fácil rendirse.

#### **Ecuadorian household 4 – Paula (30s) and Pablo (30s)**

PAULA. Aquí han cambiado en... ya a muchas fiestas que me ido, ya es, se sientan, solo a conversar, a conversar, a conversar, a conversar, a conversar, y no es como en el país de uno, que se pone música, se baila, se come, se pasa bien, pero aquí es solo conversa, y conversa, y conversa y conversa, y sola se pasan conversando de todo.

PABLO. No hay ambiente...

PAULA. No hay ambiente, o sea conversan y no...

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Pero tú crees que latinos que están viviendo aquí también adoptan esa...?

PAULA. Sí, han cambiado a ser de esa manera. O sea, bailar ya no les interesa. Solo les interesa ver la televisión, ver videos o estar conversando, es una reunión como las de aquí. (...) Eso he notado un cambio aquí, acá, en Londres en cambio, es diferente...

ENTREVISTADORA. (...) ¿Por qué crees que es diferente en Londres?

PAULA. Umm porque hay más gente de nuestro país, de nuestra cultura mismo, en cambio aquí uno se va fiestas y se ve otros, diferentes.

#### **Louise (30s, Chilean – household 10)**

LOUISE. (...) Entonces o uno es tu color, así como primera instancia, aún así yo puedo pasar un poquito camuflada a veces, de que bueno uno nunca sabe, los colores, está todo mezclado, pero ya abrir la boca, ya inmediatamente eh te identifican.

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Qué es el acento y que no es...?

LOUISE. Claro, claro el acento. A veces paso, trato de pasar un poquito, no hablar, si me siento como un poco intimidada, o siento que no estoy en confianza no hablo, para... pasar.

#### **Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9)**

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Y por qué razones crees que [los latinoamericanos del norte intentan pasar desapercibidos]?

JUAN. Es porque no quieren que sea una invasión directamente, como ha pasado en Londres o en Manchester, que ha pasado en Manchester también.

ENTREVISTADORA. Vale, no, no tengo...

JUAN. ¿No sabías? Había mucha gente que... de latinos que llegaron y dijeron, oh bueno Londres está, no hay mucho trabajo porque esto y lo otro, ¿Cuál es la otra ciudad más grande? Manchester, se fueron a Manchester y fue casi lo mismo que Londres. Pero estás por... bueno, en [ciudad de Yorkshire] hay una comunidad latina también, pero muy callada, ¿por qué? Porque lo prefieren tener ahí porque es más tranquilo, porque si no, llegarían todos, y la verdad es que hubo una temporada que estuvieron llegando muchos aquí, solamente ecuatorianos y empezaron a dar muy mala imagen de los latinos.

ENTREVISTADORA. Vale ¿Qué pasó?

JUAN. Bueno, tomaban, tomaban tal, lo que hacen los latinos en Londres, beber pero cuando beben se emborrachan como bestias, y dicen, 'que yo soy latino y qué me importa esto' y la gente aquí no es así, incluso los ingleses mismos no les gusta una prepotencia, les gusta que la gente normal, no les gusta ser intimidados ni intimidar, nada de eso, entonces empezaron a dejar, los mismos latinos, estos ecuatorianos los empezó a excluir, ni los hablaban, entonces se fueron, se fueron, si no me equivoco se fueron a [una ciudad de Midlands], ¿por qué? porque los empezaron a excluir. Y yo creo que por eso lo mejor, o sea lo tratan de mantener más callado, prefieren que vengan familias y que vengan, o que vengan estudiantes pero no, no gente que no sabe trabajar. Yo creo que por eso lo tratan de mantener más calmado.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### ***Section 6.2.1. Intra-household constraints***

#### **Household 1 – Susana (40s, Colombian) & Duncan (12 Scottish-Colombian)**

SUSANA. Se vuelve otro ejercicio y otro *added job* a la rutinas cotidianas y entonces para mí me... tal vez porque somos, de nuevo la minoría, si fuésemos un poco más personas, entonces ya estando restaurantes, entonces ya estando grupos, ya no tendríamos el problema de abandonar la comida o la música, pero eso de ser...

DUNCAN. La música, jeso no!

SUSANA. No, la música no la perdemos, no, oímos música (*ríe*). Pero si, es esa, no es muy práctico ser minoría minoría.

#### **Household 1 – Susana (40s, Colombian) & Duncan (12 Scottish-Colombian)**

DUNCAN. No sé, yo creo que esas clases eran otro colegio ¿no?

SUSANA. Es que se volvieron clases. Antes era una, era un encuentro de un sábado por la mañana, de cosas ricas, de ir a hacer actividades, de ir a tomar una galleta y de ir a tomar una taza de té pero ese espacio se acabó porque no le trabajamos porque [mi amiga] y yo estamos cansadas de trabajarle a la historia, y las otras personas no ponen un esfuerzo, entonces se volvieron clases para que ellos continuaran con la lengua, pero entonces cambio el *ethos*, cambió, entonces ya se vuelve otro... Otra obligación y no, no, (...) tengo suficiente con mi trabajo [*ríen*] para seguir el fin de semana también.

**Household 1 – Susana (40s, Colombian) & Duncan (12 Scottish-Colombian)**

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Te gustaría tener la oportunidad de, de ir a sitios dónde pudieras conocer a otros latinoamericanos o personas que tuvieran... como tú?

DUNCAN. No sé, yo, a mi no me parece muy importante hacer otros amigos que son latinoamericanos, creo que ingleses, españoles... que sean, si son o no son, no me importa.

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿No lo echas de menos?

DUNCAN. No.

SUSANA. No, no porque no ha habido ese vínculo constante.

**Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2)**

MARTINA. No, yo creo que tiene que ver más, menos con Mia y más conmigo...

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Contigo...?

MARTINA. Y de pronto yo era más necesitada como persona y... y más recién llegada y creo que si era muy importante pensar que uno le estaba transmitiendo a los niños lo que, lo que uno era, parte de la identidad de uno y el lenguaje y todas estas cosas, entonces sí era muy importante no sé si afirmar o enriquecer eso que uno le estaba transmitiendo a los niños, pero ya, ya hicimos bien (ríe) el trabajo ya se hizo ya...

**Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7)**

MARTA. Pues porque creo que en el fondo yo he intentado integrarme tan bien en la comunidad, integrarme socialmente en el trabajo, que lo he dejado [contarle a su hijo sobre la historia y las tradiciones de Chile]. Porque como lo disfruto tanto, pues se me va. Yo creo que si no fuera tan feliz en mi trabajo pues igual tendría más conexiones con mi país, y pasarle a mi hijo, porque tendría siempre en mente que eso es lo mejor, pero la verdad es que no. No te voy a mentir, pues no lo tengo.

**Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8)**

KARLA. Sí, porque... al final ellos son la mitad mejicanos, y tienen que... tienen que conocer de donde vienen, tienen que... es parte de tú tradición, tienes que saber ese, ese sentimiento de saber de dónde vienes, de... ¿sabes? O sea, no sé, siento que es importante para ellos como personas, y además siento que también les va a dar una ayuda muy grande cuando crezcan en... *search*, si hay algo que no les gusta pueden decir, 'sabes qué prefiero no ser inglés, voy a ser mexicano' o viceversa [ríe] Espero que no sea la viceversa [sigue riendo].

**Juan (30s, Bolivian – household 9)**

JUAN. No, la verdad que no, para ser sincero, me gustaría sí pero no... prefiero dejarlos a ellos que decidan, es como por ejemplo yo les hablo en español ¿no? pero prefiero que ellos lo hagan porque quieren hacerlo, no que estén forzados a hacerlo, que sería fácil forzarlos pero no [ríe], no sería mejor a largo plazo... (...) No quiero que lo acepten porque

tienen que aceptarlo, quiero que lo acepten y que sea a largo plazo, y si quieren prolongarlo lo van a pasar a sus hijos porque quieren, entonces sería más a largo plazo. (...)

### **Section 6.2.2. Extra-household constraints**

#### **Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. Porque se pierde, se pierde un poco el contacto de la lengua, el contacto de lo que está pasando en, en los países latinoamericanos porque yo no me entero, ¿no? tengo la visión de lo que me dan las noticias del radio y la televisión de aquí pero no tengo las versiones que otras personas pueden traer, hay personas que viajan muchísimo, tienen mucha más oportunidad de viajar que las que tenemos nosotros como familia; entonces no nos estamos empapando de lo que está sucediendo fuera de esta ciudad. (...)

#### **Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8)**

KARLA. (...) No hay esa espontaneidad de vamos a juntarnos, tú traes eso yo traigo lo otro, y mientras nosotros cocinamos, los niños pueden jugar, esa idea es muy difícil, y entonces se me hace difícil. Como puedes explicarle a tu hijo, a tus hijos lo que es tu cultura, porque eso es tu cultura, parte de la cocina, parte de sentarte a comer, parte de, eso es tu cultura. No solamente es tipo la historia, y es muy difícil como pasar todo eso, en un lugar donde no se acostumbra.

#### **Mauricio (30s, Mexican – household 6)**

MAURICIO. (...) Obviamente hay cosas que no puedes hacer porque, pues por la misma cultura, se, se, en la escuela también se, es complicado por todo lo que es todavía la cultura del país, pues te la platicas de alguna manera pero no lo van a tener tan, tan en la sangre como si estuvieran allá, y es, pues es natural porque no tienen ese refuerzo constante de la escuela, si en la escuela todos los días tiene historia, ferias, los héroes mexicanos y las fechas importantes, y porque lo hicieron y pasa... Todo, lo que en la escuela te van metiendo poco a poco, aquí no lo tienen, entonces eso son las cosas difíciles ¿no? esas cosas culturales, pero los valores de la familia, eso es tan intrínseco que creo que sí que se lo estamos pasando.

### **Section 6.3.1. Reproducing the emotional culture of the family**

#### **Duncan (12, Colombian-Scottish – household 1)**

DUNCAN. Bueno eso es nuestro tiempo de hablar, no, después de comer, no sé, no hacemos tantas cosas juntos, pasamos y hablamos pero cuando comemos es... *speaking time*.

#### **Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. Yo creo que está, es *family-centred*, es pensar en la familia, es pensar en el respeto, es pensar en lo que nos atañe cercanamente y yo creo que a mí no me lo dijeron

en esas palabras, pero me criaron que si yo respeto a mi vecino, mi vecino me respeta a mí, que si yo colaboro en la sociedad, la sociedad pues va a responder de tal manera. Entonces yo creo que es eso, yo no sé, yo no, en ese sentido lo veo diferente, son muy egoístas, en la manera que crían a los niños aquí, no la mayoría de las familias pero algunas familias sí, entonces eso pues pone topes culturales, para mí culturales y de comportamiento social, entonces eso lo veo yo diferente, nosotros valoramos muchísimo lo que tenemos, tal vez porque nos ha costado mucho trabajo tenerlo, y no creo que las personas hacen el mismo análisis.

**Ernesto (50s, Chilean – household 5)**

ERNESTO. (...) Pero hay otros que no, los otros que no son los que no tienen que, no quieren nada con la familia, pero yo no puedo meter, no puedo generalizar que aquí el valor familiar es menos valioso que el nuestro, pero en general si uno piensa, no le dan mucha importancia a la familia, nosotros como que somos fanáticos de la familia ¿no? imagínate los italianos matan por la familia, con lo de la Cosa Nostra [ríe] tú le dices algo a un familiar de un italiano, el italiano te puede cortar el cuello, que a la familia no me la toca. Eso lo, eso es lo que trato de meterle en la cabeza a Genaro, o sea no que sea gánster [ríen] pero que la familia es lo principal, principal.

**Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. (...) Es el, el tener la gente, que hay esos vínculos, que no son ellos solos los que existen, y que hay una responsabilidad emocional y de, y de pertenecer a un grupo más grande, que no lo podemos hacer es pues, son las circunstancias en las que nos encontramos pero tratamos de alguna forma de mantener contacto con Colombia y el contacto con la familia del padre de ellos que es uno de los tíos que más esfuerzo hace o el que mejor proporciona las oportunidades, y siempre las tomamos ¿no? siempre estamos pendientes de la vida de [nombre del tío] y [nombre del tío] siempre está pendiente de la vida nuestra... También por, por costumbre ¿no? yo creo que erm a mi me, a mi me criaron y me inculcaron que yo pertenezco a un grupo familiar...

**Section 6.3.2. Emotional transnational attachments**

**Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8)**

KARLA. Todos los días hablo con ella yo creo. Si, y dependiendo de... hay semanas que me siento triste o que extraño, pero hablo todos los días. Si, por Skype, si. (...) Este... si, hablo más ahora que estoy aquí que en Méjico. (...) Con mi papa hablamos una vez a la semana, yo creo. (...) Ah bueno, tenemos una cámara, y los domingos tratamos de vernos por la cámara, pero la verdad yo no uso la cámara, los niños son los que hablan más cuando eso pasa, los domingos, si.

**Messi (11, Honduran – household 3)**

MESSI. (...) Ahora porque con la distancia que tenemos de Honduras quiere decir que mis tíos y mis abuelas siempre que ha sido nuestro cumpleaños o siempre que ha sido todo, siempre nos han mandado regalos y todo para Navidad y para ayer, por el cumpleaños de mi madre todo el mundo la llamo, no se olvidaron nadie, y lo mismo con los míos y los de mi hermano. Ellos siempre han sido, siempre han estado con nosotros, siempre.

**Paco (40s, Chilean – household 10)**

PACO. Eh últimamente, últimamente estamos más en contacto porque mi mama, mi mama no aprende la computadora, no, mi mama no se va sentar a aprender Skype, pero a través de, hay un nuevo servicio, porque, que descubrimos, no es nuevo pero nosotros lo acabamos de descubrir, en que pagas una subscripción mensual acá y tienes un número local en [ciudad en Chile], nosotros pagamos una subscripción mensual que son como cinco *pounds* o siete *pounds*, entonces ahora mi mama levanta el teléfono en la casa y llama al número local de [ciudad en Chile]... Y suena acá. (...) Entonces mi mama se siente más cercana porque no tiene que esperar que mi hermano le prenda el computador para hablar o que yo llame y le diga está mi mama para hablar, si no que ahora ella levanta el teléfono y llama, entonces le es mucho más cercano a ella.

**Saiko (19, Chilean – household 7)**

SAIKO. He estado cómoda con mi tía, encuentro que sí que hablamos harto, pero con mi primo me llevo horrible, porque él es demasiado celoso, se pone celoso cuando yo estoy con mi tía o algo así, cuando me compra algo, él quiere lo mismo, y entonces me mira feo y todo eso; (...) entonces eso a veces me deja mal, aunque no lo hago notar porque yo digo no, ya, si no me importa, pero igual sí que a veces me siento mal.

**Household 6 - Ma José (30s, Mexican) & Constanza (8, Mexican)**

Ma JOSÉ. Con eso [Skype] por ejemplo platicas y es como si estuvieras teniendo conversación, a veces la dejamos por ejemplo si estoy hablando con una de mis hermanas, dejamos abierta la llamada como si estuvieras en la casa, alrededor por allí, exacto así es, y entonces es, ella estaba sola el otro día y estaba comiendo y nosotros estábamos en la casa jugando Wii y le decíamos bueno nosotros jugamos y tú comes, y como te estás viendo, claro no estás allí hombro a hombro pero te hace sentir como si estuvieras en el mismo espacio y entonces, vaya es la puerta para seguir en contacto, porque así la vemos. Constanza juega a las escondidas a través de la [computadora] (ríen), nos ponemos el Skype y luego tenemos ahí las escondidas, entonces ella cuenta...

CONSTANZA. ... y con mi prima, y luego una cuenta al rincón, mi, y luego la mamá dice no y sí, y yo me escondo y ella cuenta y luego le cuentas allí o allá, y me ayuda, sí, no, no, no está, está arriba pero no está arriba de la cama.

### ***Section 6.3.1. Symbolic transnational attachments***

#### **Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian – household 4)**

ELIZABETH. A mí me gusta [dibuja un corazón en el mapa] todo lo latinoamericano, porque todos son latinos, todos hablan español diferente, y no creo que ningunos deben de creerse más mejores que los otros porque igual hablan español igualmente.

#### **Household 3 – Julia (40s, Honduran) & Jaime (19, Honduran)**

JULIA. (...) Pero sí, obviamente, el hecho de recordar el país, entonces ya te vienen recuerdos de las cosas familiares, de las cosas que uno dejo allá, y de todo eso ¿verdad? Entonces tal vez por eso que lo enfocamos más en eso que en, que en muchos recuerdos que también tenemos... como fotografías, como cosas y así, pero el hecho de tener ese recuerdo pues nos hace también rezar un poco las cosas buenas que vivimos allá ¿verdad? Los buenos momentos, y todo eso, y sobretodo el hecho que nos lo haya dado ella ¿verdad?

JAIME. Claro...

JULIA. Para decirnos que nunca nos olvidáramos de, de las raíces porque ya cuando a uno le pasa el tiempo, sobre todo por ellos que son más jóvenes, de que no se olvidaran, en el caso de Messi ya casi lo tiene olvidado, el vino muy pequeño, Jaime no... Jaime se acuerda.

#### **Julia (40s, Honduran – household 3)**

JULIA. Incluso que ella me decía que nunca dejara de inculcarles a los muchachos eso, y que supieran de dónde eran y dónde estaba su familia y todo lo demás, para que tuvieran su propia identidad, porque llega un momento en que después no se sabe cuál es su identidad a esa edad cuando se les han dado por varios lugares, se pierde el hecho de cuál es realmente tu identidad.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### ***Section 7.2.1. Migrant participants' adaptation and everyday social locations***

#### **Mauricio (30s, Mexican – household 6)**

MAURICIO. (...) Si me quedara yo creo que sería igual, o sea no creo que perdería yo esa identidad de mexicano, no creo que me volvería yo inglés, definitivamente no, este no lo creo, adoptaría a lo mejor otro tipo de actitudes, sí diferentes a las que normalmente hubiera yo adquirido por ser mexicano, este por ejemplo para manejar me he vuelto al estilo inglés, de mueven así el volante y chequean los espejos y se paran, luego a México y manejo así y me dicen por qué manejas así (...).

#### **Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8)**

KARLA. (...) Además que yo no sé si vaya algún día, aun si regresáramos a Méjico, extrañaría muchísimas cosas de Inglaterra, entonces, yo creo que es algo que va a restar

conmigo el resto de mi vida, que voy a... va a haber algo en mi corazón siempre que no esté completamente, y eso es algo que va a tener que ser porque somos dos nacionalidades juntas, y estoy viviendo aquí y poco a poco te haces un poquito más inglesa, absorbes cosas de la cultura y poco a poco vas dejando cosas de tu cultura que eran, o sea, que eran de día a día. (...)

**Martina (50s, Hispano-Colombian – household 2)**

INTERVIEWER. (...) ¿Y alguna vez ahora, después de tanto tiempo de vivir aquí, tú te definirías de alguna manera británica o de nada?

MARTINA. ¡De Yorkshire! (ríen). Erm, sí yo me siento un poquito como de esta zona, como del norte de Inglaterra (ríe). Es simplemente que cuando el avión aterriza uno siente que está volviendo a la casa de uno, entonces algo tiene que haber de esto. Y de todas maneras como que el paisaje se le va metiendo a uno en el alma y la gente realmente es gente que, cantidad de gente excelente y, y he tenido trabajo, y he podido progresar y he podido mantener a mi hija, total que pues yo estoy agradecida porque, que más tengo que estar agradecida, y se le va metiendo a uno poquito a poquito el país en el alma.

**Juanjo (40s, Hispano-Honduran – household 3)**

JUANJO. (...) De momento tengo a Honduras en la parte... o sea a un lado, porque de momento pues yo estoy viviendo acá, estoy haciendo mi vida acá, y esto es lo que... no es que no me importe, pero lo principal es esto de momento. Porque lastimosamente y no lo quisiera decir, pero es la verdad, en este momento Honduras no me puede dar lo que me está dando Gran Bretaña. Entonces yo le debo el día a día, momentáneo, a la Gran Bretaña. (...)

**Pablo (30s, Ecuadorian – household 4)**

PABLO. (...) O sea en lo personal a mí no me incumbe mucho [lo que pasa en Ecuador] porque, o sea me interesa como Ecuadoriano, pero o sea estando acá no me afecta en nada ¿no? (...) Hay personas que se mueren de ira, se insultan, entonces para que me voy a mediar si estoy en un país diferente...Te interesa aquí, cómo está la situación aquí. (...)

**Paula (30s, Ecuadorian – household 4)**

PAULA. La iglesia me ayudado cuando vine para acá a [ciudad del norte], porque íbamos a una iglesia de Londres, y el padre nos conocía porque les bautizamos a los niños a todos ahí, y, él nos conocía a nosotros y le contamos nuestra situación, que nos tocaba venir para acá, y ahí nos dijo que, bueno que vaya bien, que todo y estuvimos acá y él le había llamado a una monja que por favor que contase con las monjas de acá. O sea que manden a una persona que, que me ayude, y justo hubo unas dos chilenas que hablaban español y eran misioneras de la iglesia católica... Y vino también, nosotros le decimos monja, una misionera de Irlanda, (...) y... ella nos hizo conocer [la ciudad], y las chilenas también venían con ropa, a dejarles para mis hijos ropa y... así, venían a visitarnos, a hablar con nosotros, para que no nos sintamos tristes aquí... (...) tristes y desamparados, no hay nadie

[refiriéndose a otros latinoamericanos], fueron de esas personas que nos hicieron sentir bien, y nos enseñaron aquí... (...)

**Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7)**

MARTA. Pues yo siempre, como me gusta mucho mi carrera, mi profesión y digo soy profesora de castellano (...) y después de eso hablo de mi país, “pero, soy de Chile, y no sé qué, y viví en [ciudad del norte de España]...” (...) Estoy muy, muy metida en el trabajo, mi trabajo es para mí casi tan importante como mi familia. Y mi familia por supuesto, pero el trabajo sí, me gusta muchísimo mi trabajo, y por el trabajo que tengo contacto con mucha gente, porque trabajo con educación de adultos, y trabajo en *Community Centres* también, entonces conozco gente, que yo, ahora, aquí en Inglaterra, bueno en esta área me siento más cómoda que en Chile; cuando voy a Chile, es, voy de visita, y disfruto del sol porque siempre voy en verano, las playas y la comida. Y luego vengo aquí y aquí está mi vida. (...)

**Ma José (30s, Mexican – household 6)**

Ma JOSÉ. (...) Porque cuando tienes niños estas muy ocupado y parte de tu vida es que crezcan, que se eduquen, que se alimenten y nada más, y entonces empiezas a hacer otras redes, con, con... esos otros mundos que una persona soltera sin hijos no tiene (...) entonces en la escuela de Constanza yo he tomado cursos, y he ayudado en cosas, y es parte de mi vida, vaya y entonces nunca he estado desocupada como para sentir que me sobraba tiempo y que ese tiempo lo podía usar buscando gente de México por decir algo.

**Louise (30s, Chilean – household 10)**

LOUISE. Hmm, esos son amigos del barrio. Básicamente es apoyo emocional ¿no? nos juntamos a conversar, a tomar un té, a reír un rato, erm que sé yo, cuando nos juntamos los que no somos blancos [ríe] nos juntamos a hablar de los que son blancos [se ríen], que divertido. Bueno esa categoría también la recreé acá porque antes de llegar acá no, no me imaginaba a mi misma siendo no blanca, porque en mi país soy blanca [ríe] ¿sí? pero cuando estoy acá no soy blanca, entonces inmediatamente tomo parte del foro no blanco. (...)

**Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. (...) Siempre se tiene ese grado de disconformidad o *discomfort* porque uno no encaja en las expectativas de la sociedad, a uno siempre lo miran como la persona ajena, como el extranjero. Y yo diría que eso tiene, afecta la manera en que yo lleno una aplicación de trabajo, afecta la manera en que yo veo... precisamente en este momento si estoy yo muy pendiente de cambiar de trabajo, allá atrás en el subconsciente está sí, pero como que no encajo porque de pronto no tengo esta experiencia o como que no soy de este grupo. Y yo creo que eso a mí me afecta y lo he pensado últimamente por, por, simplemente porque estoy tratando de cambiar de trabajo y veo que hay unas cosas que personalmente yo me siento ajena, de pronto no pero lo hace al llenar la aplicación de trabajo, es un conflicto.

**Section 7.2.2. Young narratives of belonging in diversity**

**Constanza (8, Mexican – household 6)**

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Y por qué estás contenta? [En relación al dibujo de sí misma en el Reino Unido en el cual está sonriendo]

CONSTANZA. Porque tengo a mis amigas, pero también estoy contenta, estoy contenta en los dos lados...

ENTREVISTADORA. En Méjico también, uhum, ¿y por qué estas contenta en Méjico cuando vas a Méjico?

CONSTANZA. Es porque tengo mi... a mis primas, mis primos, tíos, tías...

**Duncan (12, Colombian-Scottish – household 1)**

DUNCAN. No sé, yo, a mí me gusta ser latinoamericano porque soy como, como *exotic* [ríen] y tiene el sentido de eso que soy de Latinoamérica, casi nadie no sabe dónde está y eso me parece bueno. No, no sé por qué pero me parece bueno en ese sentido.

**Section 7.3.1. Migrants' cultural and national senses of belonging**

**Juanjo (40s, Hispano-Honduran – household 3)**

JUANJO. Yo soy hondureño, yo soy hondureño, seré hondureño hasta el día que me muera. Nací en Honduras, me crié en Honduras, he hecho muchísimo de mi vida en Honduras y... pues, definitivamente que sí, yo me siento hondureño. Sí...

**Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. (...) Generalmente siempre se dice, siempre digo soy colombiana ¿no? Por practicalidades [sic], si la gente me pregunta que nacionalidad tiene digo que soy británica, que se vuelve una cosa práctica, doméstica para evadir el *red tape* (ríe) y para evadir de aquellas cuestiones que nunca encajamos en la cajita del formulario. Entonces se ha vuelto una herramienta. (...) Entonces me considero ambas cosas, pero obviamente más colombiana que británica porque, porque sí, porque lo soy, porque crecí allí, porque tengo la sangre y porque en algún momento yo siempre digo que la sangre llama, entonces hay esa tendencia aquí, tiraría yo más para el otro lado.

**Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian – household 3)**

ELIZABETH. [El pasaporte Británico significaría] que ya podemos irnos, ya podemos estar más tranquilos, ya podemos, ya [nos] sentimos como la otra gente, igual a la otra gente. Ellos se sienten ahí bien ¿no? también ya me siento bien porque tengo el pasaporte británico y puedo hacer exactamente lo que quiera.

**Marta (40s, Chilean – household 7)**

MARTA. (...) Yo pienso, más que nada porque me hace sentir de que, aunque vivo aquí a gusto, que no me quejo, pues hay algo de mí que esta allá... o que me hace sentir que yo

pertenezco a, que no estoy siempre, porque yo no nací aquí, y que me recuerda a mis tiempos cuando yo era joven y cuando estaba Pinochet, y las protestas, y de tirar piedras por la calle, que yo eso lo tengo, lo tengo muy vivo también (...).

**Susana (40s, Colombian – household 1)**

SUSANA. (...) Pero no, yo no logré quedarme en Colombia, a mí me causo muchísimos problemas emocionales, y políticos y sociales dentro de mí misma, porque yo había dejado el país en el 85 y tenía una imagen, regreso de nuevo en el 96-97, y nada concuerda, nada, todo está fuera de lugar, todo está fuera de, de... y yo no le veo la lógica, no se la veo y tampoco me imagino yo teniendo a mis hijos en, en esa sociedad tranquilos. Yo no podría tener la tranquilidad de dejarles salir por la noche, de ir al parque, de ir a pasear con la bicicleta porque ya no la veía, no lo veía, esas cosas prácticas yo ya no las veía posibles. No sé si [soy] un poco exagerada o qué pero no, no lo vi posible.

**Karla (30s, Mexican – household 8)**

KARLA. (...) Me siento como que no soy de ningún lado, como que no soy de aquí porque yo no me siento inglesa, ni soy de allá porque no me siento mejicana, entonces estoy en un lugar en medio, en el que no me gusta estar, me gustaría más o... bueno me gustaría más ser mejicana que inglesa (risas) y tal vez esa es una de las razones porque, como mucho que estoy aquí en Inglaterra, estoy contenta, aquí ¿no? con mis hijos, estoy contenta subiendo... no es algo que yo hubiera escogido, nunca quise venirme a vivir el resto de mi vida a Inglaterra y ahora como están las cosas en Méjico no está por ningún lado regresarnos (...).

**Household 4 – Pablo (30s, Ecuadorian) & Elizabeth (15, Ecuadorian)**

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Y sentís que estáis bien asentados aquí en la comunidad local?

PABLO. Erm, no me gusta mucho la verdad porque, o sea me... de gustar nos gusta, el pueblito y toda la ciudad, todo pero, sino que nos sentimos un poco... como así... solos, por el hecho de que no hay el mismo, ese, ese calor latino, ese...

ENTREVISTADORA. ¿Os gustaría que hubiera, no sé, centros o sitios donde ir... grupos culturales?

PABLO. No, más que todo, más que todo, la... porque comida latina, en Londres hay mucha comida, mucha gente que... muchos restaurantes latinos y todo, Colombianos, Bolivianos y todos esos. Tengo una prima también que hace comidas ahí y vende comidas, entonces era cerca de donde vivíamos y el fin de semana nos íbamos a comer allá y ya...

ENTREVISTADORA. Y eso no lo podéis hacer aquí ¿no?

PABLO. Claro, en cambio, y allá venden cosas latinas ¿no? en Londres que traen los latinos, en cambio aquí no hay nada de eso...

(...)

ELIZABETH. (...) Si estuvieran los latinos aquí, ya no, sería lo mismo que estar en Londres porque aunque aquí ya estás como, ya sabes que los indianos [sic], ellos deben de estar

felices porque están ahí con sus familias, sus *grandmothers*, sus *grandfathers*, sus primos, y se van por todos los lados, ya saben, ya tienen familiares aquí, ya es... bueno todo.

***Section 7.3.2. Potential delayed belongings to the inherited homelands***

**Messi (11, Honduran – household 3)**

MESSI. (...) Mi documentación ya no pone que soy de Honduras, yo solo tengo el certificado de nacimiento, pero yo todo lo que tengo es de España, mi DNI, mi pasaporte, todo pone de España, nunca pone nada... en Honduras yo no tengo ni el pasaporte ni nada. (...)

## **APPENDIX E: Project information sheets and consent forms (English versions)**

### **Latin American migrant families in the north of England**

#### **Information sheet (adults)**

##### ***What is the project about?***

This study is a three-year doctoral research project being developed in collaboration with the Refugee Council and being undertaken by Rosa Mas Giralt at School of Geography of the University of Leeds.

The project aims to explore the migration and settlement experiences of Latin Americans and their families living in the north of England, placing special emphasis on the accounts of the children and young people within these families.

##### ***Why Latin Americans?***

Very little is known of the experiences of Latin American migrants who settle in the UK (especially outside of London), or of the ways in which their diverse migration strategies impact on their familial organization, their children's lives and on their possibilities of integration. This project aims to address the potential problems that may arise from their public invisibility as an immigrant population in the UK. Additionally, it also aims to explore the role of the Latin American collective identity in creating a sense of community among migrants from this region who are living in the northern cities.

##### ***What would my family do?***

Helping out with the research would consist of an interview (of at least 1 hour) with each family member separately (as many as possible of the significant family members), including children and/or young people, to talk about their experiences of migrating and living in the UK. With the younger children, drawings and other support materials will be used. The interviews will take place in a venue and at a time convenient to the participants.

***How is the information going to be used?***

All answers will be kept strictly confidential and the participants will be asked to provide a pseudonym to be used in all the written reports produced for the project. The information will be used to write a thesis, academic articles and reports for the Refugee Council.

The data collected will be used to advise the Refugee Council and other support organizations about the difficulties faced by Latin American migrants in the UK (both during the migration process and settlement). The Refugee Council may use the information from suitable cases to further their support and campaigning work to defend the rights of people in need of asylum.

***I would be very grateful if you decide to take part in the research.***

***Questions or concerns about the research can be addressed to: [Contact details]***



## Latin American migrant families in the north of England

### Young people's information sheet



#### *Who am I & what am I doing?*

My name is Rosa and I am carrying out a research project which aims to find out about your and your family's experiences of living in England. I am interested in hearing about your everyday life with your family, in school and your friends, as well as your opinions and feelings about Latin America and about living in England.

#### *Why?*

This project is part of my studies in the School of Geography at the University of Leeds and I will use the information to write a book, articles for academic magazines and to tell charities like the Refugee Council of any problems that Latin American families face when they come to live in the UK, so they can help to solve them in the future. The Refugee Council may also use this information in their policy and campaigning publications.



#### *What would I do?*

To help me with my research, I will ask you to talk to me about your everyday life. This would consist of a taped conversation:

- Firstly, we will talk about your family (we will construct a family diagram) and your ideas and feelings about living in England and what you think of Latin America.
- Then, we will talk about your friends and we will construct a daily activities diagram so I can understand better how many different things you do in one day and which things you like best.

We could have these conversations on the same day, whenever is a good time for you or we could have them on separate days, whatever you prefer.

Nothing you say in the conversations will be passed on to anyone else unless I think you are in any kind of danger. If your comments are written in my final research report, I will change your name so that no one will know it was you who said them. I will ask you to choose a name for yourself that I can use in my writing instead of your real one.



### ***What next?***

I will ask you to read through a sheet of paper with me and write your name at the bottom if you agree to take part in the research. You can ask me questions about the project at any time.

If you decide to take part in these conversations but later on change your mind, then that is OK. There is no obligation, you can stop anytime without having to give me any explanation and you do not have to answer any question that you do not want to. If you decide to stop, this will not cause any problems for yourself or your family at all.

I will ask you for permission to borrow your work for a while to take home and look at. You do not have to let me use your work if you do not want to.

I will also ask for permission to copy your work in case I need to include some pictures in magazines or books about the research.

***I would be very grateful if you decide to take part in the research.***

***Please ask as many questions as you like. Thank you.***

***Adults' informed consent form***  
***Latin American migrant families in the north of England***  
**Conducted by Rosa Mas Giralt**

(University of Leeds in collaboration with the Refugee Council)



***Purpose of Study***

This study is a three-year doctoral research project, funded by ESRC and the School of Geography at the University of Leeds, which is been developed in collaboration with the Refugee Council.

The project aims to explore the migration and settlement experiences of Latin Americans and their families living in the north of England, placing special emphasis on the accounts of the children and young people within these families.

***Procedures***

If you agree to participate in the research, you will take part in an interview with the researcher. The researcher will ask about your experiences of migrating to the UK and how these have affected your family relationships. It will start by the researcher asking about your extended family support network and will continue by enquiring about your personal experiences. You are not obliged to answer questions that you would rather not.

All the interviews will last at least one hour.

Importantly, the researcher needs to engage the collaboration of your children in the project. The participation of the children will consist on interviews as well where the researcher will ask them about their family relationships and friendships, and about their experiences of living in the north of England. With the young ones the researcher will use diagrams and drawings if they prefer. Apart from requesting your consent, the researcher will also ask the children whether they want to participate and they will be able to take their own decision.

The researcher will record all the discussions to help to analyse what has been said. The researcher may also take some notes during the interviews. The information will only be used for the purposes of the research project described above. The interviews will be used to write a thesis, academic articles/papers and reports for the Refugee Council, which will not include personal names or any other details that could identify any of the participants.

***Independence from other services***

Your participation in the discussion is in no way linked to any services or advice you may receive from the Refugee Council or from any other group, organization or institution. There will be no negative or positive effects on any services you may receive. Your participation will also have no effect on your asylum or refugee status, nor on any services you may receive from the government.

***Confidentiality***

Everything you or your children say in the interviews will be strictly confidential. You will remain anonymous, which means your name and personal details will not appear on any records, information, reports or publications that result from this research. This consent form will be stored separately from any other material.

***Withdrawal***

Your participation in the interview is completely voluntary. You are free to stop the interview at any time and to ask for the information recorded up to that point not to be used. If you wish to stop, just say so. You will then not be part of this research.

***Any questions?***

Please ask any questions you may have about this study before you sign this consent form. You are free to ask additional questions at any point.

***Consent***

I agree to participate in an interview, which is part of the *Latin American migrant families in the north of England* research project. I also agree that the researcher asks my child or children whether they would like to participate in the project as well. If they do, I agree that they should take part. I understand I have the right to withdraw myself or my child from the project without any explanation.

I have read and understood the information about the research, as given on this form and the project information sheet. I have had the chance to ask questions and they have been answered satisfactorily. I agree to the way in which my contribution and my children's contributions will be used for the purpose stated above. I agree to the audio recording of the interviews.

Name (optional or first name only):

Signature:

Date:

Researcher name:

Signature:

Date:

**Questions or concerns about the research can be addressed to: [Contact details]**

***Latin American migrant families in the north of England***

***Young people's informed consent form***

Please fill in this sheet to show that you understand what the research is about and how you will be involved in it. I would be very grateful if you decide to take part in the project.

**Please check the following sentences and tick in the box if they are true:**

- I have been told what the project is about and how I will be involved. I have also received an information leaflet about it.
  
- I have had a chance to ask questions about the project and I know that I can ask more questions at any time.
  
- I understand that if I decide to take part in the taped conversations, I may stop it at any time without giving a reason. I know that I do not have to answer questions if I don't want to.
  
- I understand that if I decide to take part in the taped conversations my name will be changed so no one will know it was me who took part in it. I also know that Rosa will not tell anyone what I said unless she feels that I am in any kind of danger.
  
- I know that I will be able to keep any of the diagrams that we create during the talks for the research. Rosa will borrow them and return them to me if I want them back.

**Please decide if you agree with the following things and circle yes or no:**

- 1) Would you like to be considered as one of the young people to take part in a taped conversation? Yes / No
- 2) Are you happy for your diagrams to be borrowed so that Rosa can look at them? Yes / No
- 3) Would you be happy for any of your diagrams to be published in a magazine, booklet, or book? Yes / No

**Name/ signature** ..... **Date** .....

**Researcher's signature** ..... **Date** .....

***Family's informed consent form***  
***Latin American migrant families in the north of England***

**By Rosa Mas Giralt**

***Purpose of Study***

This study is a three-year doctoral research project, funded by ESRC and the School of Geography at the University of Leeds, which is being developed in collaboration with the Refugee Council.

The project aims to explore the migration and settlement experiences of Latin Americans and their families living in the north of England, placing special emphasis on the accounts of the children and young people within these families.

***Procedure***

This is the second stage of the project, if you decide to participate, your family will take part in an interview with the researcher. For this, you will be asked to bring to the interview an object (photograph, document, decoration, piece of clothing, etc.) which is meaningful for all the members of the family who took part on the first stage of the project (individual interviews). During the interview, you will be asked about this object, its story and meaning and the reasons why it has been selected. You are not obliged to answer questions that you would rather not. Everything you or your children say in the interviews will be strictly confidential, you will remain anonymous.

***Independence from other services***

Your participation in the discussion is in no way linked to any services or advice you may receive from the Refugee Council or from any other group, organization or institution. There will be no negative or positive effects on any services you may receive. Your participation will also have no effect on your asylum or refugee status, nor on any services you may receive from the government.

***Consent***

We all agree to participate in a group interview, which is part of the *Latin American migrant families in the north of England* research project.

We have read and understood the information about the research. We have had the chance to ask questions and they have been answered satisfactorily. We agree to the way in which our contributions will be used for the purpose of the project. We agree to the audio recording of the interviews and the photographing of the object (if anonymity of the object can be kept).

Signatures:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

**Questions or concerns about the research can be addressed to: [Contact details]**