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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics

**Migrant Identity Construction. A Case Study of Latin American Immigrants  
living in London**

by

Francisco Daniel Morales Hernandez.

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 2019.



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

**ABSTRACT**

Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**MIGRANT IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION. A CASE STUDY OF LATIN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS  
LIVING IN LONDON.**

Francisco Daniel Morales Hernandez

This thesis aims to examine and shed light on three main phenomena. One is the study of language and identity construction through language via a comparative analysis of the discourses of sixteen Latin American immigrants of six different nationalities living in London. I analyse how the participants self-present in relation to the figure of the immigrant and how they categorise themselves and other Latin Americans when they describe their work and social experiences in the various social domains in which they have interacted in London. A second aim is the study of language ideologies in which ideologies of English as the means to socioeconomic mobility and inclusion in a receiving society as well as monoglot and standard ideologies, among others are under scrutiny.

In the analysis of the participants' self-presentations, categorisations and language ideologies, I take into account material and symbolic aspects of social class and ideologies of neoliberalism whose conceptualisations have been lacking in sociolinguistic studies. They offer us insights into how the participants construct and make sense of their social relations and a better understanding of their identities, realities and social alignments as well as a window into social processes of exclusion among Latin Americans. The discourse analysis that I undertake through a sociocognitive approach within Critical Discourse Studies aims to reveal the inner social layers that constitute the Latin American community and that might affect or hierarchically organise their social relations and interactions within the Latin American community.

A third aim is to examine Latin Americans' linguistic repertoire. I employ the analytical term bivalency to account for the participants' linguistic practices illustrative of their migration trajectories and the language contact zones in which they live and work. Examining how they use language in context can help us understand how they name their socioeconomic realities and experiences at the same time that it brings about the diversity of a group of people who have been lumped together as one single community.

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## Academic Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

I, Francisco Daniel Morales Hernandez declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Migrant Identity Construction. A case study of Latin American immigrants living in London

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Parts of this work have been published before submission as:

Morales, D. (2018) "si me quedo aquí toda la noche seguiré hablando español". Ideologías lingüísticas en inmigrantes latinoamericanos en Londres. In Gugenberger, E. and Mar-Molinero, C. (cords.), *Revista Internacional de Lingüística Iberoamericana*. Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana Vervuert, 31, pp. 99-122.

Signed: .....

Date: .....



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# Introduction

This introductory section includes an overview of the thesis that is followed by a personal biography of the researcher. It aims to both provide the reader with a wide picture of what this study covers and a description of my social and academic experiences that to a large extent have influenced my decisions to undertake this research study.

## Overview of the thesis

This thesis comprises 8 chapters. Chapter 1 is made up of three interrelated sections in which I include the rationale and the aims of this study as well as its research questions. This initial organisation of this study allows me to set the theoretical framework that informs it and that I will include in chapter 2. Here I also provide the reader with a discussion of the discipline in which I locate it and thus talk about subjects such as sociolinguistics, the relationship between language and society informed by a Critical Discourse Studies perspective in which language is intentional and regarded as a social practice, and I also discuss the relationship between language and identity that I will treat as contextual, attributive and relational. Additionally I will also include discussions of language ideologies, social class and neoliberalism. These are also interrelated sections which are constituted by various themes on which I will elaborate in their corresponding sections in order to guide the reader through them.

In chapter 3, I firstly provide a discussion of the model of migration such as transnationalism that informs a subsequent description of Latin American immigration to the UK, which will be followed by the concept of community. As to Latin American migration to the UK, I will refer to historical and political issues among other factors that I will specify in the introduction to such chapter to understand the presence and diversity of Latin American immigrants in London. It must be noted that in this research study I will use the terms Latin American, Latin Americans and Latin American migrants to refer to the geographic origin of these people and my participants. Additionally, the term Latino is also used in this study but I include it in my analyses as a way of reporting what my participants are saying when they describe their experiences and not as an ethnic category that carries connotations of identity politics on which I do not focus (see Oboler, 1995). This description will be followed by a discussion of the concept of community as the population under study has come to be known and with which they associate. This chapter will help us begin to set the stage for a closer contextualisation of this study.

Chapter 4 introduces the methodology chosen for the design of this study. In it, I provide a description of what doing my fieldwork involved and the process of participant recruitment. Other methodological processes such as the type of interview, data selection and how they are analysed are discussed in this chapter.

In chapters 5-7, I offer detailed individual analyses of the research participants and in which I attempt to answer the research questions posed in chapter 1. Chapter 5 includes the discourses of five participants from four different Latin American nationalities, three of whom are female and two are male. Here through comparative analyses, I consider how the participants' different socioeconomic background and connections influence their experiences, views of and social alignments with the phenomenon of immigration. In chapter 6, I continue with comparative analyses of 7 Latin American immigrants from 4 different nationalities and look at how they describe and make sense of their social and work experiences with other Latin Americans. In chapter 7, I analyse the emergence and (re) production of language ideologies and, in an interrelated subsection, I examine their language repertoire that challenges structuralist notions of language. In each of these chapters, I include biographical information of the research participants in order to offer a better contextualisation and understanding of their experiences and accounts that will be under study.

Finally, chapter 8 comprises 5 sections. In this chapter, I offer concluding comments and reflections about the usefulness of the theoretical framework and main concepts employed in this thesis. I will also include my concluding comments about social class and the complex emergence of various ideologies in the participants' accounts, and I will refer to the significance of this study, which also has limitations that I will acknowledge. I conclude this study by pointing to suggestions for future research in the context of Latin American immigration to the UK.

## **Brief personal biography**

I was born and grew up in a small town in the state of Queretaro, Mexico. In 2002, I enrolled in the state's public university where I studied and obtained a BA in Modern Languages-English. Subjects such as Linguistics, Epistemology, Philology, Literary and Translation studies were core modules, which I combined with three years of Italian language studies and one year of Latin in a seminary. As an undergraduate student I was sponsored to travel to South Africa and was there for three months, and this first experience abroad, more than any other, has been most socially and linguistically indelible. I was often reminded to speak with the 'right' accent so people did not label me as uneducated.

After graduating in 2007 and for three years, I taught English in the same public university where I had studied. During those years and as an attempt to improve my economic situation, I applied to MA programmes in sociolinguistics in the UK unsuccessfully. My interest was language and identity even though I had a still narrower understanding of it. Funding was not enough for these programmes but in 2010, I obtained a Fulbright scholarship to teach Spanish and Latin American Literature in the USA. I worked in a multicultural public high school in Washington DC, and for one school year I came to teach and interact with many migrant students from Mexico and Central America, many of whom were refugees and were living with their relatives.

I returned to Mexico and taught English in the same public university where I obtained my B.A. However, I became aware of how the social dynamics in Queretaro had changed. Former close friends said I had become “*gringo*” since they said I behaved like one. They never said why or how a “*gringo*” behaves but said it with animosity as though I had committed an act of betrayal. In addition, other friends had left for the USA where they had connections that they had developed through friends from other “*barrios*” that knew how to cross the border and had jobs awaiting them. Furthermore, migrants from Central America and southern Mexico on their way to USA were arriving in my hometown after travelling on a freight train that is now known as “*la bestia*” and that runs through it. They were on the streets or on public buses begging for change or food to eat while saying “*ayúdame hermano, soy catracho*” at the same time that they held out what seemed to be a Honduran lempira note to prove their nationality. Not long after, locals from other neighbourhoods dressed up and attempted to ‘speak like migrants’ while ‘begging’ for change.

In 2012, I came to Southampton to do an MA in Transnational Studies through a scholarship from the Mexican government. I wrote a thesis that concentrated on the identity construction of two Mexican immigrants in London and began to delve into the interface between language and identity as well as migration studies. I went back to Mexico in 2013 and for one year I taught sociolinguistics and English to BA in Modern Language students in a public university. Many of those students had grown up and had been schooled in the USA and were in Queretaro after their parents had been deported or had decided to return to Mexico. They always spoke in English with me as they said they did not speak Spanish well, or because, as they said, they did not want to be judged by others for code-switching. Queretaro was still a transit place for many Central American migrants who begged for change or food. Some have settled down there although they did not want to be noticed due to their undocumented status and conflicting attitudes from locals towards them. Some of my friends were still in the USA and said they were doing well despite

having to hide or fearing being deported. Certainly, a place like the one in which I grew up finds itself in the larger historical processes of globalisation, migration, socioeconomic inequality and marginalisation, and thus I have embarked on this PhD journey, motivated by the complexities of my social and linguistic experiences.

# Chapter 1      Rationale and Aims of the Study

## 1.1      Introduction

After having provided a brief description of my social and academic trajectory in the introduction to this study and how it has motivated me to conduct this research project, this chapter now concentrates on three main aspects that I also mentioned above. First I will talk about the rationale of the study in which as a way of locating it in larger migration phenomena, I will initially refer to how people's mobility has contributed to the change of social texture and to important distinctions that must be borne in mind when discussing cross-border trajectories. I will then draw the reader's attention to the demographic presence of Latin American immigrants in the United Kingdom and how their presence has been termed in order to contextualise the emergence of this study. Subsequently I will talk about the nature of this study, which pertains to the little attention that the presence of Latin American immigrants in the United Kingdom has received from sociolinguists and the study of language ideologies, social class as well as the ideology of neoliberalism in this population. I will then talk about the need in sociolinguistics to respond to globalisation phenomena and how other researchers have encouraged sociolinguists to incorporate other concepts that help us understand social and economic inequalities within migrant groups.

The second section describes the aims and objectives of the study in which I will first refer to previous sociolinguistic studies of Latin Americans in London as a way of framing this current research study within them. I will then move on to the aims of this thesis in order to establish the contributions it intends to make in the study of Latin American immigration to London. I will also include the research questions that guide this study and with which this chapter will conclude.

## 1.2      Rationale of the Study

The world in which we currently live is a more immediately visible cultural mosaic that has been foregrounded by people's high mobility and border-crossing trajectories from one country to another (Blommaert, 2010). People's mobility in this stage of globalization has contributed to what Brown (2007, p. 152) has called "the social change of localities themselves" and concomitantly to new social expectations in receiving societies. Thereby people constantly create new contexts and live situations in which they interact and negotiate new social spaces, which are not necessarily horizontal but also vertical and in which all sorts of socially, politically, culturally significant distinctions transpire (Blommaert, 2010, p. 5). It is important to note that cross-border

trajectories neither happen through the same channel nor are they carried out for the same reasons or with the same economic means. These have an impact on immigrants' material realities, status and living conditions and we should also remember that migration may be experienced differently by different groups of people "over time and space due to various processes of global structural inequalities" (Samers, 2010, p. 52). In addition, neoliberal economic models have also had an impact on local populations and have triggered emigration at the same time that they have contributed to the creation of more desirable and self-disciplined skilled workers in both sending and receiving societies (Munck, 2012; Urciuoli and LaDousa, 2013). In this light, the social texture of "local" environments has not only changed but it can evidence "re-stratification processes in a worldwide scale" (Bauman, 1998, p. 70).

People move locally, nationally and internationally and a good example of this intercontinental movement of people is that of the relatively recent migration movement originated in Latin America to the UK. The presence of Latin American immigrants in this context has recently increased in numbers over the past decade as according to recent demographic data that there are around 250,000 people from Latin America of whom 145, 000 people lived in London (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016). The size of this population in London has been referred to as a community, which is a notion that seems to prevail as a reality sense-making strategy for many Latin Americans (see Block, 2006, p. 168; Marquez Reiter and Patiño-Santos, 2017) and that has been importantly mobilised to obtain political representation as an ethnic group in London (CLAUK, 2015). However, research on this population is still incipient (Block 2006; 2008; Marquez Reiter and Patiño-Santos, 2017; McIlwaine, 2011, Patiño-Santos and Marquez Reiter, 2018) and it deserves attention for a number of reasons. Their presence exhibits migration patterns, channels and status which are multidirectional and varied since it has been documented that while many have emigrated from Latin American countries, many others have lived in other European countries before arriving in the UK, which has been reflected in their dual nationalities (McIlwaine, 2016). In addition to this, while many have emigrated due to economic motivations, many others are in search of professional development (ibid). This is also linked to different levels of language proficiency and knowledge, which has been reported to have both a stratifying effect as many experience declassing (see McIlwaine, 2015; Marquez-Reiter and Martin Rojo, 2015) and show that many others move to the UK for the economic and academic progress English can offer (McIlwaine, 2015). Furthermore, their heterogeneous national composition as well as the undocumented migration status in which many find themselves intimate that there might be sociocultural forces and socioeconomic differences that question the notion of a uniform community within the same group of people.



In light of the above, the nature of this study, on the one hand, stems from two interrelated needs. One is the need to examine the inter-relationships of a cultural group that has remained largely understudied by sociolinguists. That is, the social identity construction of Latin American immigrants is a process that demands attention as they bring with them a manifold array of interests and leave their localities with cultural and economic resources specific of their social trajectories. The social identities that reflect and constitute who people are might reveal how they associate with or disassociate themselves from other Latin American people in the various social spaces in which they have interacted. The second is the need to study the little explored production of language ideologies in this population at two interrelated levels. At one level, English, as stated above, figures as both an incentive and obstacle for many Latin Americans in London but their perceptions and knowledge about the language and how they may influence their social relations and realities have been little explored from an in-depth emic perspective. At a second level, given that human mobility also involves the mobility of sociolinguistic resources, Latin Americans' linguistic practices that may reveal a language repertoire indexical of their migration trajectories as well as their social experiences in a host society have also been little examined. Both needs are interrelated in the sense that their identities, social relations, interests and realities are reflective of differentiated social class positions, which do not disappear once they have relocated their lives to a new society. This is not impregnable from a neoliberal economic model and ideology in which their lives, relations and jobs are also situated. Both social class and neoliberalism have also been understudied in the Latin American community from a sociolinguistic lens, and this study has also identified them as necessary to examine due to the stratified and unequal social realities and relations that we witness in our societies.

On the other hand, this study also arises from the need to respond to current globalization phenomena by widening the scope of sociolinguistics to examine immigrants' narrative to explore ways of linking these narratives to larger social identities (Georgeakopoulou, 2011). Sociolinguistics in the current stage of globalisation has begun to pay attention to people's narratives in order to explore the shifting social conditions in which individuals live, particularly the social processes of which immigrants are part as they could be explored and understood through the analysis of language in context. The study of language in context, nonetheless, should not lose sight of other factors that I have mentioned above. The study of social class in recent sociolinguistic and migration studies has been insufficient as they have tended to focus on language and ethnicity among other cultural aspects of migrants' lives which are also located in class-divided societies (see Wu and Liu, 2014; Block, 2017). Furthermore, researchers in sociolinguistics have also made the case for the study of neoliberalism (see Allan and McElhini, 2017; Shin and Park, 2016; Holborow, 2015), which has penetrated many domains of life and

people's subjectivities, and its examination becomes pertinent due to the structural inequalities that it may obscure. Thus, this study also emerges from the need to address such a conceptual lack in sociolinguistic studies by concentrating on the context of Latin American immigration to the UK, and it aims to make a contribution to which I will refer in the next section.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives.**

As noted in the last section, the movement of people to other countries have contributed to the change of social texture and interactions in receiving societies where there are restratification processes. Part of this human mobility is the presence of Latin American immigrants in the UK. Their migration trajectories and channels, on which I will elaborate in chapter 3.4, also demonstrate the complex and varied motivations for which they have relocated their lives; however, sociolinguists have paid little attention to such a diverse population that also exhibits, as we will see in the chapter analyses of this study, stratification and exclusion processes in their new society. In this light, this section now concentrates on and aims to describe the objectives of this study.

The current research project seeks to contribute to existing investigation on Latin Americans in London that was initially undertaken by David Block's (2006; 2008) work and Cathy McIlwaine's (2007; 2011) works. On the one hand, Block's study (2006) documented two case studies of Colombian citizens and one of a Cuban citizen living in London. Block's study highlights these three participants' different channels of migration and how they have an effect on who they are in London, and it sheds light on the often-erroneous assumption of a uniform ethnic identification of a culturally diverse group whose social cohesion as an ingroup becomes questionable. On the other hand, McIlwaine's (2007) quantitative-oriented work examined how Latin Americans survived in London and the main problems they face as a group. Her participants were migrants who had been in London for more than ten years. McIlwaine's 2011 work also documents Latin American migration to Europe with a specific focus on the UK, and it explores "the conceptual relevance of transnationalism, diaspora and integration among Latin Americans in the European context" (McIlwaine, 2011, p. 2). Other studies such as the one conducted by Marquez Reiter and Martin Rojo (2015) have also shed light on the relationship between language and social mobility in Latin American communities in London and Madrid. In the context of London, their study shows situations of discrimination as well as marginalisation in which the legal and the linguistic intersect with their participants' socioeconomic realities. That is, the London participants are located at the lower ends of the labour ladder due to their inability to speak English and an irregular migration status (*ibid*).

Other studies that focus on the growing population of Latin American origin are Kellsall's study (2015) and that of Marquez Reiter and Patiño Santos (2017). The former study casts light on language ideologies produced by the author's participants. The interviewees express ideologies of parallel monolingualism and language purism, and the author reports that kids of Latin American parents are discouraged to mix Spanish and English given that mixing is perceived as harmful and detrimental to the correct use of both languages (Kellsall, 2015, p.145). Although mixing is reported to happen (2015, p. 146) no instances of it are shown. In the latter study, Marquez Reiter and Patiño Santos (2017) explore the migratory experiences and perceptions of community in two Spanish-speaking Latin American retailers based in the area to which the title refers, which is an area where there is a shopping mall that faces a regeneration project. Their study participants are retailers who own businesses outside the shopping mall and thus they will neither be displaced nor affected by the regeneration project that they deemed inevitable and part of the economic progress of the area. The authors show that their participants distance from the circumstances of those who face displacement and losing their jobs and thus they produce a discourse of winners vs losers (2017, p. 33-34). Their study sheds light on a lack of solidarity between Latin Americans in London.

More recently there have been two valuable research studies in the place mentioned above and that has increasingly become iconic of Latin Americans in London. The first one is by Paffey (in press) who looks at the linguistic landscape of the Elephant and Castle shopping mall and ethnographically captures the Spanish signage outside businesses such as hairdresser's and paper-made notices in window shops, etc., in which the symbolic and instrumental value of the language is made evident. It is symbolic in the sense that it attracts and targets specific customers and instrumental since the language allows Spanish-speaking Latin Americans to meet both their job-related and essential needs such as buying food (ibid). Furthermore, the study notes on the complexities of language contact in London. His study documents the mixing of both languages in hand-written signs in which Paffey points to a population's linguistic repertoire that destabilises notions of clearly demarcated and separate languages. The second study is by Patiño Santos and Marquez-Reiter (2018). The authors examine notions of banal interculturalism with Latin American immigrants who exhibit their (cultural) knowledge about what characterises their co-ethnics as well as their practices. Their study casts light on how their two participants justify their often negative views about them and thus contributes to the understanding of intergroup relations.

In light of the above the originality and future direction of this research that intends to contribute to the above-mentioned studies aim to examine and shed light on three main phenomena. One is the study of language and identity construction through language via a comparative and close

analysis of the discourses of sixteen Latin American immigrants of six different nationalities living in London. The discourse analysis aims to reveal the inner social layers that constitute the Latin American community and that might affect or hierarchically organise their social relations and interactions in the various domains they have inhabited. I do this by looking at how the participants self-present and categorise other Latin Americans and themselves. In chapter 5, we will see how the participants self-present in relation to the figure of the migrant and how some distance from it while others directly associate with it. In chapter 6, I will analyse how Latin Americans categorise other Latin Americans and themselves when they describe their work and social experiences in the various social domains in which they have interacted in London.

A second aim interrelated to the first one is the study of language ideologies. I will examine ideologies of English as the means to socioeconomic mobility and inclusion in a receiving society as well as monoglot and standard ideologies, authenticity, accent, among others that in chapter 2.5 I will specify and theorise. The analysis of language ideologies aims to offer us insights into how Latin Americans construct and make sense of their social relations, interactions and realities within and without the Latin American community at the same time that it will allow us to shed light on its socioeconomic structure and differences. In this context, the analyses will also take into account material and symbolic aspects of social class as well as ideologies of neoliberalism whose conceptualisations will offer us a richer analysis and better understanding of the participants' identities, realities, social alignments and relations as well as a window into social processes of exclusion among Latin Americans. A caveat, nonetheless, is in order. Although I will draw on conceptualisations and interpretations of neoliberalism in my analyses, these are not used in every one of them. This is explained, as we will see in the analysis chapters, by the specific migration trajectory and social and economic reality in which the participants' discourses are contextualised.

Additionally, this study also aims to examine a little researched phenomenon in the population under study. It will examine Latin Americans' linguistic repertoire, which exhibits linguistic practices illustrative of their migration trajectories and the language contact zones in which they live and work. This analysis aims to challenge ideologies of language as a discrete entity, an idea that in a context of mobility is very difficult to sustain. Furthermore, examining how the participants use language in context can help us understand how they name their socioeconomic realities and experiences at the same time that it brings about the diversity of a group of people who have been lumped together as one single community but whose presence, which has been acknowledged (see McIlwaine, 2015; Marquez-Reiter and Patiño Santos, 2017), is dispersed across different London boroughs that this study has also tried to explore. Thus, it is necessary to problematise and scrutinise the inner composition, social identification and diversity of what has

been termed the Latin American community in order to understand what constitutes their social relations and realities.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

In order to accomplish the aims laid out above, the current study sets out to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Latin American immigrants in London self-present in the social spaces that they have inhabited in a receiving society?
2. What insights into the social interactions of Latin Americans in London can we gain by looking at the social values and ideologies emergent in their discourses?
3. To what extent can the emergent language ideologies enable us to gain insight into the constitution of Latin American immigrants' social relations and experiences when such ideologies intersect with social capital and class?
4. To what extent can the situated linguistic practices that the participants deploy allow us to challenge ideologies of language?

The questions above will allow us to understand the language-mediated social experiences and interactions of the participants as well as bring to the fore their social identities who as members of a larger social group negotiate and pursue their interests in a receiving society. These are the questions that I will attempt to answer by putting forward arguments informed by key concepts on which I will touch in the next chapter.



## **Chapter 2      Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts**

### **2.1      Introduction**

After having presented the rationale and aims of this study as well as posing the research questions that guide this research project, this chapter concentrates on the main theoretical framework and concepts that inform the study. The first section of this chapter will concentrate on sociolinguistics and how it is shifting its focus due to globalisation-related processes. In such section, the effect of cross-border trajectories are touched upon as they demand that sociolinguistics interprets events both locally and translocally. Subsequently it will refer to the superdiverse contemporary make up of societies, which will help us understand the context of mobility in which this study is situated and that questions the view of larger categories such as nationality or ethnicity among others. Here I will also mention notions of social class and neoliberalism but I will elaborate on them in section 2.6 and 2.7 respectively due to their complexity that deserves to be discussed in more detail later on. Finally this section refers to how the study of narrative has been fallen back upon by sociolinguistics to respond to globalisation and shed light on the implications of migration-related phenomena. This section aims to frame the current study within sociolinguistics to which it seeks to contribute as a discipline that is shifting its traditional focus on a fixed speech community to examine sociolinguistic phenomena such as social identity construction, experiential narratives of displacement and relocation, and how they relate to one another within other social practices (Blommaert, 2010; Georgeakopoulou, 2011).

The second section in this chapter will concentrate on how the relationship between language and society is viewed in this study and what disciplines inform such an interpretation. This will be followed by a section that will focus on the relationship between language and identity that will help us establish how identity is explored and understood for the purposes of this study. Subsequently I will offer a discussion of language ideologies, social class and neoliberalism. These are relevant concepts that inform the analyses that we will see in chapters 5, 6 and 7 and whose, as stated above, constitutive themes I describe and elaborate on in its corresponding sections.

### **2.2      Sociolinguistics in the current Phase of Globalisation**

Given the rapid social changes that are occurring in these times of globalisation, the structure of society and the way it is constructed should be worth noting. There is clear evidence that present day societies are part of both unifying and differentiating social organisation patterns as the

traditional ways of social grouping and interaction have been reconfigured by processes of globalisation. The latter in turn “has also been denounced for its disruptive, de-authenticating and hegemonic effects” (Slembrouck, 2011, p. 154). This justifies the view that, as Coupland (2003, p. 466) has put it, in order to account for local phenomena, it is necessary to attend to a range of society-related factors upon which various globalisation processes have made an imprint. This means that sociolinguistics has found itself in need of a shift and rethink itself as a discipline of mobile resources given that it is insufficient to concentrate on local events that were its focus previously and which are no longer immune to global influences (see Blommaert, 2010). In this vein, although there might have been some disagreements as to the development of a sociolinguistics of globalisation, sociolinguists and scholars across the social sciences and humanities are encouraged to engage with globalisation processes (see Coupland 2010, p. 12). Such a call should not be overlooked in order to not lose sight of their effects on the phenomena in which we are interested and one of which is people’s mobility.

People’s cross-border trajectories, new communication technologies, among other social issues have posed new challenges to sociolinguistics (Wodak et al, 2011, p. 3) as our human-created societies have exhibited salient complex interrelationships and disparities. For instance, the flow of people such as the Latin American people into the UK and into new societies is multidirectional and it evokes inequalities across the globe (Blommaert, 2003). This latter observation leads us to reflect upon and question general assumptions about what is meant by the national, ethnic, regional or cultural characteristics of particular groups of people (Blommaert, 2010) and casts light on factors such as immigration statuses, locality, economic mobility, social class, etc. (Creese and Blackledge, 2012, p. 552). Therefore, to study sociolinguistic phenomena such as social identity formation processes, *inter alia*, in a context of mobility it has become necessary to put forward a new approach. This should be one through which the interpretation of local events also takes into account the translocal and is framed in terms of flows and movements (see Blommaert, 2003, p. 612; Blommaert, 2010).

In light of the above, the settings in which we find ourselves involve human interaction that highlights multiculturalism and complexity in less discrete and fixed loci. Vertovec (2007) reminds us of the “diversification of diversity” of populations in receiving societies, in particular Great Britain, and he employs the term “superdiversity”. Although it is not without its critics (see Pavlenko, 2019), superdiversity still has analytical purchase given that it not only points to people’s various ethnicities and countries of origin but to “a variety of significant variables that affect where, how, and with whom people live” (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1). A case in point is the presence of the Latin American community in London. As stated in chapter 1, their heterogeneous national composition among other variables such as social class are evocative of manifold



decisions and needs to relocate their lives. Furthermore, their presence and practices cannot be separated from neoliberal ideologies as well as political and economic processes that characterise late modernity (Blommaert, 2005; Coupland, 2003). Their superdiverse composition and that of other communities and people with whom they may cohabit a social space encourage us to think of relational social processes that may constitute people's realities; with whom they associate, how they interact and why, and how migration transforms their linguistic practices, ideologies and identities (see Marquez Reiter and Martin Rojo, 2015). In this context, the complexity of present-day societies requires a strategy that allows us to capture social events in context.

In recent times the study of narrative and identities has increased in sociolinguistics (Georgakopoulou 2011, p. 403); however, it must be said that essentially its study is not new at all. Labov and Waletzky's (1967) work on oral narratives as part of a sociolinguistic project that concentrated on vernacular language variation is regarded as an influential approach to narrative structure and one of the initial studies to focus on personal narratives (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). Labov was interested in capturing spontaneous vernacular speech forms and, in order to diminish the artificial effects of recording and get participants engaged in a conversation with the researcher, he asked his participants whether they have been in danger of dying, a prompt that allowed him to capture narratives of past personal experience. It must be stated that a defining feature of Labov's model is its concentration on the inner *structure* (my emphasis) of the narrative itself" (Labov, 1967, p. 473), in which he identified six basic narrative components: abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, coda and evaluation (Labov 1972, 1997). Nonetheless, as some authors have argued, his model has been criticised for a lack of attention to the sociocultural context of narrative production, for "seeing narrative as a detached, autonomous and self-contained unit with clearly identifiable parts", and by its treatment of stories as monologic in which no attention to the co-construction of the story between teller and audience is paid (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012, p. 35). Despite these criticisms, his work continues to be valuable in the sense that it has had an extensive use for varied aims by researchers in a very wide range of disciplines, and thus, to some extent has informed the conceptual work on which narrative analysis is based (Bruner 1991; Holmes 1997; De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012).

As I suggested above, new theorisations and methods in the study of narrative have also emerged and have been signalled by a paradigmatic shift. The narrative turn that began to gain prominence in various disciplines such as sociology and anthropology in the 1980s was an important turning point in the understanding of social events. It arose as a response against positivist, quantitative-oriented studies in which how people make sense of their social experiences was ignored and also against ethnographic approaches that treated participants merely as a vehicle to get information

(see De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012; Narajan and George 2001). The narrative turn put an emphasis on and takes into account individuals' every day experiences, the content of what they say, how they express it and the sociocultural context where they produce language (ibid). Thus, the narrative turn is characterised by its experience-centred approach that is also interpretative, subjective and particularistic that seeks to bring to the fore individuals' voices to be heard (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012; Andrews et al 2008). Furthermore, the narrative turn has also meant the use of narrative for the analysis of people's experiences such as those of migration that we will see in this study or health-related issues that has been used for diagnostic purposes. For instance, in the latter context, Kalitzkus and Matthiessen (2009) and Greenhalgh and Hurwits (1998) underscore the relevance of narrative in medicine. They state that in a patient-centred approach narrative helps them learn about the reality of life or death of a person as it enables the physician to learn how, why and in what way the patient is ill, and it thus offers a meaning, context and perspective for the person's predicament (ibid).

It must be added that the narrative turn is not a shift that stands for one specific and single approach to narrative. Rather, there are varied approaches that have also led to what some authors have also termed the "new" narrative turn (Georgakopoulou 2011) in which we find the conceptualisation of small stories (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008; Georgakopoulou 2006; Bamberg, 2006) and big stories (Freeman 2006). The former consist of:

a gamut of under- represented and "a-typical" narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell. (Georgakopoulou 2006:130).

This approach both has originated as a critique to rigid canonical models of narratives in which a narrative is defined on the basis of vital constituents of "narrativity" and is characterised by its treatment of ongoing, immediate and often unreflective stories since they are told as the events unfold (Georgakopoulou 2015. p. 259-262 inverted commas in original). The latter, big stories, refer to narratives that are "often derived from interviews, clinical encounters, and other such interrogative venues, that entail a significant measure of reflection on either an event or experience, a significant portion of a life, or the whole of it" (Freeman 2006: 132). It is within big stories that this study is initially situated given that it allows it to distance from a proclivity to view narrative structurally and aesthetically in order to focus on a more human-centred aspect of it that is relevant in migration trajectories such as retrospection. Freeman (2015, p. 27) states "narratives always and necessarily entail looking backward, from some present moment, and seeing in the movement of events episodes that are part of some larger whole". That is, narrative is interwoven in the fabric of human experience, in this case the migration experience, since it

involves a retrospective element that allows individuals to reflect and make sense of past experiences in the here and now (ibid). Furthermore, Freeman goes on to stress, the retrospective dimension of narrative is important because it both embraces the historical nature of people's reality and serves as a pathway into dimensions of meaning (2015, p. 28). This is consonant with what other researchers state and that allows us to better grasp what the study of narrative involves for the analytical purposes of this study: "narrative roots itself in the lived, felt experience of human agents in an ongoing way with their cohorts and surrounding environment" (Herman 2009, p.21). In this vein, an additional characteristic comes to the fore, which is the cultural situatedness of human lives and narrative production. This feature, as criticised in the Labovian perspective, should not be ignored and we should thus take it as an invitation through which we as researchers become sympathetic and "better attuned to cultural context" in order to capture and understand how "it has been woven into the fabric of both living and telling" (Freeman 2015, p. 29). In the context of Latin American migration, such an invitation is hard to turn down since the participants' stories do not occur in a sociocultural vacuum.

In addition to the above, an approach to narrative that also concerns us and that is located within a biographical paradigm is that of the life story. It is biographical in the sense that the individual narrator is both the source of data and the target of analysis (De Fina 2015). A life story, as one of its main proponents argue, "consists of all the stories and associated discourse units, such as explanations and chronicles, and the connections between them" (Linde 1983, p. 21). Such a definition, nonetheless, still begs clarification since a life story "is not simply a collection of stories, explanations, and so on, instead it involves all the relations among them (Linde 1983, p. 25). In other words, a life story is a narrative device that connects seemingly discrete, digressive accounts into a coherent whole within which an individual's life trajectory evolves (ibid; Abrams 2016). Treating narrative this way within the context of this study can help us understand the flows of people into new societies and how people attribute meaning to their new social realities. Additionally paying attention to people's stories has become instrumental for our understanding and questioning of the stratifying mechanism that characterise present-day societies. People traverse spaces and places in which there are norms, expectations, rules and conventions and thus their trajectories involve processes of localisation, delocalisation, relocalisations of resources (Blommaert 2010, p. 80) as well as declassing and reclassing processes. I will say more about these two last processes in chapter 3.2. In this light, the study of people's narratives within sociolinguistics goes beyond the confine of its structure since it can enable us to cast light on various domains of social life in which migrants live and how they experience them as they interact with others and attempt to both make sense of their reality and integrate into a new society.

Sociolinguistics resiliently continues to explore new ways of explaining current society-related phenomena affected by globalisation processes. The latter have created the need for a “critical science of language” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 3), and it has been stressed that the effects of globalisation processes pose theoretical challenges to present-day analysis and understanding of the development of language repertoires and use as well as language change (ibid). It is evident that there has been a reorientation of focus as Slembrouck (2011, p. 155) has argued that “central to sociolinguistic enquiry here are questions of the representations of (trans) locality, as spatialized and as inserted in time, and struggled over realities of person, place, group, object, etc.” In this light, sociolinguistics finds itself in a position from which it can unveil how language echoes the difficulties and challenges of people in a globalizing world (Blommaert, 2010, p. 198). Therefore it could be argued that the communicative value of language centres individuals in their contextualised social realities; discursive events through which sociolinguistics intends to disclose the stratifying mechanisms that characterize present day human-created societies.

### **2.3 Language, Society and Critical Discourse Studies**

In the last section, I discussed a number of interrelated phenomena that have exerted an influence on how sociolinguistics approaches its objects of study. Cross-border trajectories, different migration status, etc., have brought about and have highlighted the superdiverse composition of contemporary societies, and it has become necessary to approach and interpret the events in which sociolinguists are interested translocally. I also referred to the study of narratives as a way in which sociolinguistics has attempted to capture and account for how people make sense of their lives in a new society, an approach that allows us to examine language in context.

As noted in chapter 1 section 1.3, this study focuses on Latin American immigrants’ discourse and it is necessary to state what I mean by this. This section, thus, will concentrate on the relation between language and society viewed from a Critical Discourse Studies lens (CDS) and it aims to provide a description of how this study approaches the relationship between language and society that will help us understand the social spaces and events of which the participants talk.

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry that integrates different approaches to the study of language and society issues. It is mainly formed by a discourse historical approach (DHA), a dialectical-relational approach, a sociocognitive approach (Wodak, 2016; Fairclough, 2016; van Dijk, 2016), on which this study will draw and I will elaborate in chapter 4.5, among other approaches. Although the methods that constitute CDS vary in how they approach and examine language and society issues, studies in CDS are generally

characterised by common research interests. These include the deconstruction of ideologies and power through the systematic examination of semiotic data such as written, visual or spoken data, the critical investigation of social inequality expressed and legitimised by language use (Woolard and Meyer, 2016, p. 4-12), the understanding and resistance of social inequality (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). By 'critical', what is meant is not taking things for granted and it thus involves challenging reductionism in order to make opaque structures of power and ideologies manifest (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001); that is, being critical implies being sceptical about and taking on a dissenting attitude towards common sense views (van Dijk, 2013). Taking on a critical stance towards, for instance, the widespread use of the adjective and noun 'illegal' in the context of both immigration and this study enables me to both challenge commonly accepted views of immigration and bring to the fore relevant socio-politically distinctions that matter for and affect the realities of my participants who we will see in chapter 5.

As noted above, language use for the aims of this study is viewed from a CDS perspective. This decision rests upon the notion that language use "involves an interest in the ways social members categorise others and themselves" (Van Dijk, 1997a in Ainsworth and Hardy, 2004, p. 236) as well as "exploring patterns in and across the statements and identifying the social consequences of different discursive representations of reality" (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 21). Furthermore, it must be added that categorisation is not unidirectional; as Ainsworth and Hardy (2004, p. 238) have noted "practical categorisations are brought into being with practical effects for those targeted by such discourses as well as those involved in their construction". Within this interpretation, categorisation also involves the dialectic construction of social identities in the sense that language users by stating or categorising who the other is, are also suggesting who they are not. Such an understanding of discourse becomes instrumental for this study since, as we will see in chapters 5 and 6, it will help us inform the analysis of the participants' contextualised language use in order to understand how they self-present and categorise other Latin Americans and (dis)associate themselves from other members that constitute the Latin American community.

Language use, in light of the above, involves different ways of speaking. These ways of speaking in this study are treated as synonymous with discourses in that the latter, as Fairclough (1993, p. 138) has noted, refer to a particular discourse such as a "feminist discourse, a Marxist discourse, an environmentalist discourse, a neoliberal discourse" (cited in Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 67). What characterises each of these discourses and distinguishes one from the other is the particular, partial social interest they pursue as well as the values they seek to promote; that is, while a Marxist discourse is often associated with collectivism and egalitarianism, a neoliberal discourse seeks to promote contrasting values such as that of individualism (Heywood, 2003). This

interpretation of discourse is central in exploring my participants' ways of speaking given that it can enable us to gain insight into their different views and interests that constitute the Latin American community, particularly the neoliberal discourse that some of them use to make sense of their relations and that carries values that I will address in subsequent chapters.

Discourse in this study is also seen as a social practice that is not merely a reflection of social life. Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 258) have drawn our attention to the two-way relationship between discourse and social life within this frame of interpretation by stating that "describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them but it also shapes them". This means that discourse is socially constitutive and socially conditioned and that it has the capacity to transform or sustain social life within particular social domains. Furthermore, it must be added that discourse as social practice also transcends the local situation in which it is produced. Fairclough (2013, p. 30), for instance, refers to the interconnectedness of social activity by pointing to "the networking together of different social practices across different domains or fields of social life (the economy, education, family life) and across different scales of social life (global, regional, national, local)". This interpretation is best captured in the discursive construction of migration in which its representation from a political domain through various channels such as the media has been badly depicted and which has generated social attitudes of antagonism and distancing not only in a political terrain but in the everyday life of social actors that are part of this study. In this light, discourse can be interpreted as a multidimensional social practice that permeates social experience.

It is also important to note that the production of discourse in the context of this study is to be regarded as deliberate and non-neutral. In relation to this, Van Dijk (1997, p. 8) and Wodak (1999, p. 8) state that discourse is "mostly intentional, controlled, a purposeful human activity", a form of action. Indeed it is mostly intentional since there are certain parts of discourse, on which I will elaborate in chapter 4.5, which are under a speaker's control and that must be examined in relation to the social context of its production as well as its functions (van Dijk, 2001, p. 99; van Dijk, 1997). Within this logic, once those parts of discourse under analysis have been identified, discourse is not neutral given that it is selective and has a consequential effect on how we relate to one another and our social environment. Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 258) have pointed to the effects of discursive practices, which can be ideological in that "they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic and cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people" (cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2016, p. 6). In other words, discourse may be

associated with processes of inclusion and exclusion that through particular discourse units language users can accomplish.

However, the consequentiality of discourse also hinges upon other non-linguistic factors. Bourdieu (1997; 2003) has noted that the power of language is not strictly an inherent characteristic of it but it is associated with the social position or status of the speaker as well as the situation or, as stated above, context in which the communicative event occurs. This will be clearly seen in chapter 7 where two of the participants' experiences depict discursive processes of exclusion and discrimination in state-sanctioned spaces. Therefore, the social conditions under which discourse is produced are fundamental for our exegesis of the research participants' statements. They forefront the social events in which the research participants partake as members of a community embedded in a larger socioeconomic, political and cultural context. In other words, by looking at language use through a CDS lens and its relationship with different social structures we can establish links between "the micro-social" and "the macro-social frames of analysis of any sociolinguistic phenomenon" (Silverstein, 2013, p. 193). Language use is neither divorced from the social environment nor separated from the historical and political conditions in which it is produced; as stated above, they are in a dialogical relation. In this manner, a CDS-informed view of language as a deliberate social practice that forms society also helps us contextualise the research participants' accounts in the present migratory movements to a cosmopolitan city such as London and thus examine the identities that their discursive moves disclose.

## **2.4 Language and Identity**

In the last section, I concentrated on the interface between language and society, which is informed by a CDS perspective. This regards language use as a social practice that involves ways of speaking and that is intentional, deliberate and it has the capacity to both reflect and constitute society, and it is thus in a dialogical relationship with different social domains at various scales. In this context, I incorporated interrelated concepts such as heteroglossia, intertextuality and interdiscursivity that allows us thus to capture the circularity of discourse better. Additionally I also stated that language from such a CDS perspective is consequential as the way language users from a social position could also generate processes of discrimination and exclusion. The specific social conditions in which language is produced are crucial for our understanding of people's realities and identities.

In this section, I will now concentrate on the relationship between language and identity. It is important to note that here I will use the term language as in language use and not language as

Spanish or English. The aim of this section is to describe how this study interprets identity as well as draws our attention to how we can understand the various language-mediated spatial contexts that the participants of this study cohabit.

Identity is often an elusive and fleeting concept whose examination involves analytical complexities due to its plurality of definitions, interpretations and manifestations. Outfit, music, sexual or professional identity (Blommaert, 2005) illustrate some instances of complex identities. It may also refer to the political construct of national identities such as Colombian, Mexican, Ecuadorian, Bolivian or other nationalities, and it can even refer to a larger category such as Latinos. These are indeed important interpretations of identity as they are meaningful for the people who associate with these views of identity as they may provide grounding for an individual's day to day experience (May 2001, p. 39) as well as they can be important for political representation in the context of Latin American immigration to the UK. We will see this in chapter 3.2. However, they are alluded to as all-encompassing, stable identities and important distinctions must be drawn in order to distinguish one individual from another (De Fina, 2011). This is pertinent in order to avoid essentialist identity attributions that might engender stereotypical representations of an allegedly recognizable ethos as well as see how identity matters in Latin Americans' lives and relations. In this vein, how is identity to be explored and revealed?

Language is in this study key to the exploration and understanding of identity since it acts as the vehicle through which my participants' identities emerge. As Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p. 588) have stated in relation to this conceptualisation "identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices and therefore as fundamentally a social and cultural phenomenon". This argument is better understood by considering that people employ language in their day-to-day experience in various social domains in which they use socially and culturally meaningful words and statements, which express values and describe ways of representing, being and acting in the world. This notion that identity does not precede language is also consistent with what other scholars have argued in terms of spoken language. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) consider utterances an act of identity; that is, through the use of language, all individuals perform an act of identity and reveal their sense of who they are. This view, as stated by Block (2006, p. 36), is simultaneously multidimensional in the sense that different dimensions of identity such as ethnicity, nationality, gender, social class, etc., arise from people's utterances without a clear-cut separation. In this study, Marcia from Brazil says she is not an immigrant anymore and that she has integrated into her society. Her words index a way of (not) being in society but also point to other non-linguistic elements implied in the process of integration such as socioeconomic resources, notions of social class and its relationship with identity that in section 2.6 I will explore in more depth.



It must be added that the complex emergence of identity through language is also related to a type of social action in situ. As I stated in section 2.3, language use is regarded as a social practice in context through which we reflect and construct our own individual experiences and social environment. In this light, the language and identity link is inseparable from the social domains in which we interact since the language choices we make are context-bound. Thus, the variability and diversity of context-based language use intimates that we cannot have one single identity rather context-dependent identities. In this sense we are a number of interpretations in language, we are manifold subjects (Barker and Galasinski, 2001). Such a view is further supported by stressing that “identity is a discursive construct which continually shifts in the local contexts in which social actors enter” (Meinhoff and Galasinski, 2005, p. 7). The case of David in this study is illustrative of this contextual nature of the relationship between language and identity. In chapter 5 he talks about his experience as an illegal immigrant unaware of his rights and depicting different ways of acting while in chapter 6 he describes his work experiences as a diligent individual involved in labour rights movements. The words and utterances produced by a language user are evocative of important situational personae who are historically co-constructed in relation to specific social groups and events.

In light of the above, identities are never independent but always attain social significance in relation to and interaction with other available identity positions and other social agents (Bucholtz and Hall, 2009, p. 23). In other words, a great deal of what happens in identity construction is also a dialogical process and it must be recognised by others in order for it to occur (Blommaert, 2005, p. 205). Thus, identity construction is founded upon the multiplicity of our identities and roles we take on in relation to who it is we are with, where we are (Joseph, 2004, p. 8) and who and what we allude to. In a similar vein, it can be stated that identities are not predictably aligned to one single identifiable entity, they are unstable and through the linguistic references to which people turn, we learn of the associative or dissociative constructions of the other to whom individuals might show adherence. In chapters 6 and 7, for instance, we will see how the participants use particular language choices through which they align themselves to a certain type of Latin Americans before they distance themselves from other Latin Americans who they regard as uneducated, dishonest or ignorant. Consequently in Edwards’ words (2009, p. 23) “the simultaneous possession of many different social roles and masks is uncontroversial, identities are certainly in flux, allegiances vary both diachronically and synchronically”. That is, the variable ways in which we use language reveal our personal and social identities in situ as it is an undeniable fact that language is intertwined with various domains of our social, political, cultural contexts where we find ourselves (Cheshire, 2002). The situational and relational discursive

construction of identity hinges on the socioculturally and temporally diverse realisation of a number of our everyday experiences.

The current context of this study is one of mobility, complexity, mixture and language contact explained by various geographical and social spaces that the participants' have traversed and have inhabited, and they have made an imprint on their language repertoires. These are here understood as "records of mobility: of movement of people, language resources, social arenas, technologies of learning, and learning environments" (Blommaert and Backus, 2011). This means that the discursive features that a speaker deploys in a communicative event are indexical of a person's life trajectory as they move across and interact in a physical and social space that also involves the conditions in which language resources are acquired; were they formal or informal? (ibid; Blackledge and Creese, 2017). When one of the participants, for instance, uses a word such as *suceso* to mean *éxito* in Spanish, what can we learn from that person's migration and social experience? What does that word choice point to? Words, as stated at the beginning of this section, reveal a person's identity and thus employed invite us to think of Latin Americans' diverse and differentiated social trajectories.

The notion of identity and its portrayal by an individual viewed from an essentialist standpoint is an argument difficult to sustain. The language and identity nexus is part of a social practice that must be conceived of as dynamic rather than stable; that is, identity is "always open to change; multifaceted in complex, contradictory ways; tied to social practice and interaction as a flexible and contextually contingent resource" (Miller, 2000, p. 70). The various social domains that act dialogically with people's language use unveil the multi-layered, multidimensional phenomenon of identity given that individuals turn to various discourses in a socially conditioned situation (Pietikainen and Dufva, 2006).

## 2.5 Language Ideologies

As I noted in the last section, the relationship between language and identity is indissoluble and at the same time it is dynamic and context-bound. I also stated that language is the means through which people's various identities emerge and that the latter are certainly not separate from their social contexts. Furthermore, I also argued that identity is a dialectical process because who we are also hinges upon who we are with. Identity in this light is also attributive since it must be recognized by other social actors in specific social spaces, social domains in which the construction of identities is also reflective of the production of ideologies.

In this section, I now focus on language ideologies. First I will refer to scholars who began to draw our attention to perceptions and notions about language in order to begin to contextualise the

relevance of the study of language ideologies. Subsequently I will offer a definition of them and will refer to their social origins as well as wider socio-political factors that are also involved in their reproduction for the purposes of this study. In other words, this discussion aims to underscore the argument that language ideologies neither originate nor are merely located in people's minds. The next part of this section will move on to specific language ideologies and thus will concentrate on the one-nation-one-language ideology in which I will provide historical instances that reveal its ideological character, which is associated with ideologies of linguistic assimilation with important social implications that will be subsequently discussed. I will then talk about ideologies of accent and authenticity, which will be followed by a discussion of the ideology of English as a 'superior' language. These ideologies are important to analyse given that, as we will see in chapter 6 and 7, my participants produce them not only as metalinguistic descriptions but as a way of valuing their identities and constructing their social relations, which exhibit processes of exclusion and inequality among Latin Americans and with other people in state-sanctioned spaces where they locate their narrated experiences. Finally, I will conclude this section by discussing the ideology of language as a discrete system that increasingly becomes questionable due to complex human migration trajectories such as those of my participants. Their language practices do not coincide with descriptions of language as a bounded, impregnable system and in order to account for them, I will thus draw on the term "bivalency" (Woolard, 1999). I have chosen this term over "code-switching" or "code-mixing" since the latter suggests a clear distinction between two separate languages, which, as I will state and show in chapter 7, is not a clearly evident practice that my participants perform. Thus I argue that bivalency lends itself to capturing the fluidity of language without clear delimitations that nonetheless structuralist approaches to language unsuccessfully intend to sustain.

Research about language ideologies has been growing over the past decades, particularly from scholars working within Linguistic Anthropology. The work of Woolard (1998), Kroskrity (2004), Gal (1989) and Silverstein (1979; 1992) paved the way to critical observations about ideas, beliefs or attitudes about language and language use in various contexts. Their examination has also led researchers to explore and understand how individuals build their inclusion or exclusion in social groups in situations of language contact (Barat et al, 2013), and in an age of high mobility as well as for the purpose of this research project, their study becomes highly relevant as people along with their linguistic, economic and education capital move into and interact in new societies. The latter are conceived of as spaces where they may find other intersecting notions such as class or ideologies of neoliberalism, both of which I will address in the following sections, and interests that may be either contextually divergent or convergent. Language ideologies in the context of

globalisation and migration are multifarious and dynamic since they permeate the social experience of the individual. However, what are they?

The definitions and interpretations of language ideologies are diverse, which responds to the complex and context-based events in which they occur. However, two interrelated definitions lend themselves for the analytical purposes of this study. Woolard (1998, p.3) states that “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world are what we mean by language ideology”. In this line of thought, she later on states that language ideologies are “socially, politically and morally loaded cultural assumptions about the way language works in social life and about the role of particular linguistic forms in a given society (Woolard, 2016, p. 7). These interpretations interrelate in that they point to the social and political roots and basis of language ideologies and are thus instrumental in that they enable us to come away from what at first glance seems a cognitive domain as their main origin and terrain. This is an important caveat in our initial understanding of language ideologies that also adds clarity to it since, as other researchers have noted, although ideologies pertain to mental phenomena, beliefs or ideas, they cannot be merely located within a realm of ideas about language or be reduced to individual responses to language (Woolard, 1998, p. 5; Milani and Johnson, 2010; Paffey 2012).

The above still requires that we delve into what factors influence the production of language ideologies and that we consider a wider sociocultural spatial frame in which they may emerge. Various researchers have observed and have agreed that language ideologies, as suggested above, have a social origin and that they respond to the experience of a particular social position (see Woolard et al, 1998; Errington, 1998; Gal 1998; Irvine, 1998; Silverstein 1998). Kroskity has pertinently underscored this by arguing, “language ideologies are profitably conceived as multiple because of the multiplicity of meaningful social divisions” (2000, p. 12). His argument draws attention to the complexity of social structures in which education, gender, ethnicity, social class, generation, religion, etc., should not be ignored as factors that have an effect on how reality is viewed and experienced as they may evidence a situated and partial character of conceptions and uses of language (Errington, 2001). In this light, it can be argued that language ideologies apply to everyone and are grounded in the speaker’s sociocultural experiences from which therefore attitudes and beliefs about the value, the purity or superiority of a language originate (Kroskity 2004; Silverstein 1992). In addition, our analyses and debates to understand language ideologies should not be reduced to language users’ textual representations of their experiences. Indeed ideology is discovered in linguistic practice, in metalinguistic discourse, in explicit talk about language (Woolard et al, 1998) but language ideological debates, Blommaert states:

They develop against a wider socio-political and historical horizon of relationships of power, forms of discrimination, social engineering, nation building and so forth. Their outcome always has connections with these issues as well: the outcome of a debate directly or indirectly involves forms of conflict and inequality among groups of speakers: restrictions on the use of certain languages/varieties, the loss of social opportunities when these restrictions are not observed by speakers, the negative stigmatization of certain languages/varieties, associative labels attached to languages/varieties. Language ideological debates are part of more general socio-political processes. (Blommaert 1999: 2).

His statement leads us to both remember and think of fundamental and interrelated aspects in the examination of language ideologies. By referring to conflict and inequality, it reminds us that their study is not merely about language but it concomitantly involves the scrutiny of historically situated events in which the exercise of power is sought (Woolard 1998). In addition to this, by pointing to nation building processes, Blommaert's argument also indexes political phenomena and institutions on which societies have been founded and which have played a major role in the promotion and dissemination of particular interests and ideas about the world, society and also language. In this vein, language ideologies are multiple, varied and may be encountered in various social domains and scales that constitute our social space and interaction and, thus, they must be identified in the social context in which they are reproduced.

One of these ideologies is that of the one-nation-one-language concept that has both a political and linguistic dimension at interrelated levels. Such ideology holds that one single language is the glue that holds a nation together and an identity marker that fosters national unity (Piller and Cho 2015). However, instances that evidence the political and partial interest of particular groups intending to mobilise one language and marginalising others for the sake of the nation can be found by looking at history and the mechanisms used by those in power. For instance, in the context of the French revolution, Billig (1995) and Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) note how the French language was spoken by a minority and used as an administrative vehicle of what later on will be the State. They go on to argue that the declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen benefited neither Bretons nor Occitans due to the imposition of French as the language of instruction in the schools of France, which resulted in the reduction of linguistic diversity in the arbitrary and ideological process of nation-building (ibid). Similar instances are encountered in the UK where Welsh was officially banned in schools and their speakers punished for using their native language (see Sallaband, 2011). Also, more recently, the English only movement in the US also provides instances of the one nation-one language ideology. Its advocates argue that English is a common bond that has allowed Americans from various backgrounds to overcome differences and that language diversity leads to language conflict and political separatism (Crawford, 2000, p.

6, see also Baran, 2017). At the core of these historical and political events we find what Blommaert (1999, p. 427) has termed the dogma of homogeneity, which promotes the idea that “monolingualism is the norm or the desired ideal for society” and that, nonetheless, contradicts the factual presence of multilingualism in the overwhelming majority of societies including the UK, USA, etc.

It must also be added that the one nation-one-language ideology is also associated with ideologies of linguistic assimilation. This promotes the idea that linguistic diversity is a danger for social cohesion or an obstacle for individuals to integrate in a host society (Martin Rojo, 2002), that bilingualism hinders academic progress by creating confusion (see Heller, 2018) or that multilingualism creates a babel-like social environment that is not conducive to communication. This is problematic given that, as we will see in the participants’ accounts in chapter 7, this ideology suggests exclusion and inequalities in various social domains and it also carries overtones of moral judgement. In other words, those who speak a language other than that of the state-sanctioned institutions may be regarded as people who deviate from the norms and do not do the right thing, and at times face antagonistic attitudes that are nationalistic (Billig, 1995). This ideological representation of a monolingual nation is inconsistent with their current linguistic constitution and it may become manifest at institutional level or individual level, which reminds us that ideologies of language could apply to everyone and it draws attention to an ideology that is also closely related to identity.

Accent is the way of pronouncing words as well as a property of all individuals that indexes people’s identity (Anderson and Trudgill, 1992). Nonetheless, we often hear statements such as “I have no accent”, “my accent is neutral”, or, as we will see in chapter 7, “people have a hard accent” that imply a social evaluation of ways of speaking that are often categorised as proper or improper and ideologically constructed for particular interests. Lippi Green (2012), for instance, has referred to the standard language ideology, which is the belief that there is one single correct form of accent and that promotes a variant of the white-upper middle class in the USA. In a similar vein in the UK, researchers such as Carter (1999) and Milroy and Milroy (1998) refer to Received Pronunciation also described as RP, Oxford English, the Queen’s English or BBC English (Milroy, 2001), which is also an ideological construct of the upper classes since it has been found that only 3% of the population speak in this way (ibid). In other words, what is regarded as the standard accent is based on a class interest that uses the linguistic as proxy in the pursuit of social prestige and power, and that often delegitimises other variants. In this vein, Bourdieu mentions that a nonstandard accent, either class-based, regional, or foreign, “might be perceived as a particularistic trait that disqualifies the speaker in public deliberations” (Woolard, 2016, p. 29). His statement is also pertinent in a context of mobility in which both speakers of a variant of a

particular language or second language speakers' accents may be ideologically labelled as inadequate or equated with deficient cognitive abilities or sounding inauthentic (Gal, 2006).

Ideologies of authenticity are also present in society and they are often found in perceptions of a speech variety and language teaching. In terms of a speech variety, Woolard describes authenticity as something that "must be perceived as deeply rooted in a social and geographical territory in order to have value. To be considered authentic in this ideological frame, a speech variety must be very much "from somewhere" in speakers' consciousness, and thus its meaning is constituted as profoundly local" (2016, p. 22). This means that, as we will see in the context of this research in chapter 6 and 7 respectively, to speak English one must sound like being from the UK or to speak Spanish with a Spanish accent one must be from Spain. Within this frame, having the authentic accent or speech variety provides its speaker with value and credibility and may create social conditions in which "to profit from linguistic authenticity, one must sound like that kind of person who is valued as natural and authentic" (Woolard, 2016, p. 23). Linked to this idea of authenticity is the ideology of the native speaker in language teaching. This is the belief that native speaker teachers are the authentic linguistic model whose speaking is to be emulated or are the models of correctness (Kubota, 2009 in Creese et al, 2014, p. 938). It is also related to a territory-based idea of authenticity in the sense that it is often associated with notions of citizenship and belonging to a nation state as well as ideas of language as a fixed system with a homogenous speech community (Doer, 2009 in *ibid*). These beliefs, however, should be carefully and contextually examined as they may either promote or instantiate discourses of deficit, illegitimacy, exclusion and dominance (Piller, 2001; Jenkins, 2009). It has been documented that when applying for either teaching or non-teaching jobs native English speakers have been given preference over non-native speakers, which have material and discriminatory effects on people's social realities (see Holliday, 2013; Doan, 2016).

People's realities are also located within a context of globalisation in which economic conditions of competition have been created and have influenced beliefs about language usefulness. English, for instance, has been, on the one hand, constructed as the language for socioeconomic mobility and progress (Penycook, 2007). On the other hand, it is often perceived as a language intrinsically superior to others and better equipped for the technological demands of our times (Milroy and Milroy, 2005). As to the belief of socioeconomic mobility, it reflects an ideology of marketization in which English is constructed as a desirable skill for employment, academic and economic success, and its learning is often presented as a rational decision that the individual must make (Duchene et al, 2013; Miller, 2014). Its ideological nature, nevertheless, emerges in the power asymmetries and inequalities evident in present-day mobile societies in which other resources such as economic, cultural, social capital, having the "right" accent as well as other forms of

cultural dispositions may have a stratifying effect (Garrido and Codó, 2017, p. 33). In addition to this, the alleged rational decision to learn it exhibits a common sense view that interacts with a discourse of neoliberalism in the sense that the individual is held responsible for their own success or failure in a global market or receiving society (Miller, 2012). To explore this in more depth, I will say more about neoliberalism in section 2.6. As to the alleged intrinsic superiority of English over other languages, it could be described as exhibiting what has been called social Darwinism (Mocek 1999 in Moreno Cabrera 2008, p. 19). This biological metaphor is often used to explain that languages are born, develop and die in order to justify a belief that some languages are more naturally fit to survive, progress and thus triumph over others as a natural, unquestionable result and not as a consequence of economic or political factors or inequality (Moreno Cabrera, 2008). In chapter 7, we will see how this ideological representation of language is produced by one of the participants who characterises English as a naturally better equipped language than Spanish and suggests that English is superior to other languages in domains such as education and technology. Her view will also enable us to gain insight into how such ideology may influence the selection of social relations and how they are constructed as investments in a globalised city.

London as a global city must be conceived of as a space where flows of people and information come into contact and interact as they traverse symbolic and physical boundaries. This mobility, along with present day online interaction, has contributed to the destabilization and blurriness of linguistic boundaries as well as clear-cut cultural distinctions of what is local or global, of what is national (Blommaert, 2010; Levitt, 2004; Cooke and Simpson, 2012). At the same time, people's mobility, as stated in the previous section, has challenged long-held Saussurean and Chomskyan views of language as discrete entities and systems that overlook language in context, and such mobility has motivated researchers to view language as practices and repertoires in contact zones (Pratt, 1992). Analytical terms such as heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981), translanguaging (Garcia and Wei, 2014), crossing (Rampton, 1995), etc., have been coined to account for the phenomena that researchers observe in present-day urban interaction and highlight hybridity as the norm (Blommaert, 2010). Here I will draw on Woolard's term bivalency to describe and attempt to account for the linguistic practices of Latin American immigrants. Bivalency is defined here as "the use by a bilingual of words or segments that could "belong" equally, descriptively and even prescriptively, to both codes" (Woolard, 1999, p. 7; 2006). For instance, words such as *bullying* and *manager* are employed by the participants in chapter 7 as part of their repertoire in Spanish but as an English reader may see, each of these words could also "belong" to English. The analytical purchase of bivalency, as stated above, may help us gain insight into ideologies of language as discrete, impregnable systems that should not be "contaminated", and it will enable



us to shed light on the participants' migration, social trajectories and identities as well as understand the socioeconomic structure in which they are as they relate and name their experiences.

The study of language ideologies does not merely involve the study of beliefs about language or metalinguistic descriptions. This idea should not be interpreted as an underestimation of their study but rather as reminder of their complexity given that their examination, as stated above, also entails the scrutiny of power relations in which individuals interact with other social actors across different domains and scales in social life. These, due to the different processes of globalisation and migration, are increasingly complex and unequal and can be conceived of as sites where social actors associate with or dissociate from others whose (non) linguistic resources, expectations and aspirations may or may not coincide or reflect the interest they pursue.

## **2.6 Social Class**

In the last section, I offered a discussion of a number of language ideologies. These are conceptualised as ideas that articulate notions about language and language use with specific cultural, political and social formations. Also I stated that language ideologies are multiple and varied and are (re)produced in various social domains and scales in which people interact. Language ideologies apply to everyone and their study is not limited to the examination of language but allows us to gain insight into various power relations and interest that social actors seek.

In light of the above, I now develop the notion of social class. In order to do so, this section will firstly draw attention to why studies of class have declined and then refer to why the concept of class is important in this study. Then I will move on to my initial understanding of class, as having an economic element, although not necessarily the only class marker. This will be subsequently linked to an interpretation of class from a Bourdieusian perspective. His interpretation of other class markers such as cultural and social capital as well as habitus and field will allow us to consider and conceptualise class not only as economic but also as culturally constructed. I will then move on to how these materially and culturally-based interpretation and examination of class have been taken by sociolinguists in the context of migration and how they can offer us a window into how class influences both how migrants experience the realities they narrate as well as how they talk about them. Finally, I will discuss how class can also be conceptualised as part of an individual's identity by stating that it is both relational and that involves considering other dimensions of identity such as race, ethnicity and gender. Here I will refer to intersectionality and will draw the reader's attention to the studies in which it conceptually originated before I offer a

definition of it that will help us treat the above-mentioned identity traits as non-discrete but intertwined. It must be said that these theorisations are neither intended to be exhaustive nor free from conceptual criticisms. However, they can still lend themselves as an epistemology for the interpretation and understanding of various social class markers and differentiations that arise in my participants' discourses.

It has been argued that there has been a decline in the study of class in various disciplines in the past three decades. Woodward (2004, pp. 96-97) for instance draws our attention to what has been given as an explanation of such a decline, and refers to two interconnected factors in the context of Britain, such as economic changes and the rise of identity politics. As to the former, the working class identification in mining and the manufacturing industry that was reflected in membership to trade unions was undermined in the 1970s and 1980s by mass unemployment and the shift to service industries (*ibid*). In other words, class was understood as collective work-based groups that began to be diluted into individual-based work patterns as happened in the Thatcher era (Steger, 2010). As to the rise of identity politics, the prominence of gender and ethnicity issues also contributed to the marginalisation of class as an object of study and it was further obscured by media-led campaigns that promoted individualistic consumerism (Woodward, 2004). In addition to this, other authors noted that increased attention to morality, ecology and human rights was paid by right- and left-wing parties and argued that class had become an insufficient construct to account for the social and political issues in the western world although they conceded that class may still have importance in the non-western world (Pakulsky and Waters, 1996). Nonetheless, class theoretically and socially remains important in both western and non-western societies due to the complex economic and social effects brought about by globalisation processes and where there is evidence of increasing disparity (see Munck, 2012; Elbert and Perez, 2018). Its study enables us to gain insight into social groupings and alignments between and within groups in which the material may interact with the symbolic, although its examination also involves challenges of interpretation.

Researchers seeking to find a definition of what class is in our contemporary societies have returned to Marx's work as the foundational explanation of it. This task has required a number of interpretations of what class may mean since various scholars have agreed that Marx throughout his work did not provide a clear definition of it (Giddens, 1973; Calvert, 1982; Block, 2014; 2018). It is even argued that there is no consensus about how to define it (Wright, 2005). Nonetheless, a useful way of beginning to understand it is by referring to what social scientists call objective class markers. This means that class is interpreted in relation to people's income and wealth that explains their material standards of living and (lack of) property (Wright, 2003; Elbert and Perez, 2018). It is a notion that indexes the economic conditions in which people live and in which

gradational terms such as upper class, upper middle class, middle class etc. are commonly used for locating people in a social structure (ibid). It must be added that such a notion of class is not without its critics who argue that it merely concentrates on monetary aspects of social life and that classifies people into discrete categories (see Eidlin, 2014; Wright, 2003). However, I argue that class, as a measure of wealth or lack of it, could still be an analytical tool that helps us explain people's living conditions and relations. This argument is intended neither to suggest a clear-cut dichotomy between the wealthy and the poor nor intimate a reductionist interpretation of the relationship between the haves and the have-nots since class divisions and relations are complex and dynamic. It is rather an intent to begin to explore inequality and social distancing, and this study partially and initially draws on such interpretation as in a context of migration, economic resources and (lack of) access to them, as I will mention below, significantly matter in both migration routes and the lived experiences and relationships between Latin Americans in London. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that economic capital is not the sole prism through which we can interpret and attempt to understand class.

Class apart from being conceptualised as materially based, it is also inflected through what Bourdieu (1986) called capital, habitus and field, and I will elaborate on the two last ones below. As to the first concept, capital is initially understood as economic capital in terms of material property and wealth, but it can be complemented by other symbolic interpretations of it to explain class distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984). Capital can also present itself in two interrelated and additional forms such as cultural and social capitals. Cultural capital is symbolically articulated in the *embodied* state; the *objectified* state and in the *institutionalised* state. (Bourdieu, 1986, p.17). That is, it is embodied as it becomes manifest "in the form of long lasting dispositions of the mind and body". This is what Bourdieu called habitus and on which I will elaborate below. Furthermore, it is objectified in the form of "cultural goods" such as books, dictionaries, ornaments, clothing, etc. These are possessions that indicate good or poor taste. Additionally, cultural capital is institutionalised in the sense that it becomes objectified through academic qualifications (ibid). These stand for the skills, credentials, degrees that state institutions could sanction and that an individual and society recognise as legitimate knowledge. Nonetheless, as stated above, these states of cultural capital are not independent of economic capital since in order to achieve the accumulation of the former, a prolonged process of acquisition is necessary in which an investment of time is needed, i.e., "time free from economic necessity" as "the precondition for its initial accumulation" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 19).

Cultural capital also interrelates to social capital. This can be defined as the "aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" or "to membership in a

group” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 21). That is, it stands for connections and belonging to various groups in society. Its acquisition is dependent upon the economic and cultural capital that an individual possesses or accumulates and that is recognised by others in different social domains (ibid). For instance, a person being from an economically privileged background is usually more likely to make it further in education than a person from an economically deprived one, and thus may have developed the connections and network that could enable them to acquire good jobs and a higher social position. For my participants, as we will begin to see in chapter 5, social capital is also central for how they integrate themselves and how they face economic, language and even legal challenges in a new society. In this sense, different forms of capital intertwine and their interrelationship becomes more complex in a set of dispositions situated within particular domains.

As stated above, an interpretation of class from a Bourdieusian perspective also involves an analysis of habitus as well as field. Habitus is defined as “both a system of schemes of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practices. And, in both of these dimensions, its operation expresses the social position in which it was elaborated” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 19). This means that habitus is a socialised subjectivity in the sense that one’s social trajectory or origins influence perceptual and behavioural dispositions (Edgerton and Roberts, 2014, p. 198); “different conditions of existence produce a different habitus” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 170). The latter argument does not mean that the concept of habitus does not recognise human agency or that individuals can be inserted into ready-made class identities. Bourdieu reminds us that habitus “is endlessly transformed, either in a direction that reinforces it, when embodied structures of expectation encounter structures of objective chances in harmony with these expectations, or in a direction that transforms it” (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 116). This means that habitus is interpreted as a set of dispositions that both generate and classify a range of social practices that are reflective of and situated in the material conditions of the existence of an individual. One of these generative and classifiable practices is associated with the embodied manifestation of habitus. That is, it may express itself through body language such as “a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech” (Bourdieu, 1977a, p. 87). Such expressions may also involve matters of etiquette, dress, deportment, dialect, vocabulary (Goffman 1951), and may constitute symbols of class membership as they are charged with social meaning and recognition that are valued in a particular field.

The latter is also relevant for our understanding of habitus as context-based. Field may be conceived of as domains of social life such as the field of education, politics, the media, and art, which are interrelated to one another and to larger socioeconomic forces (Grenfell, 2011). For

instance, the field of education is associated with larger economic forces in the sense that school curricula and degree programmes are designed to meet economic interest. At the same time, a field is dynamic and interest-laden due to its agents' pursuit of positions of power and distinction, positions of the dominant or the dominated that are conditioned by mainly an agent's economic and cultural capital that is set against that of other agents within the same field (ibid; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Within this logic, field is a "locus of competitive struggle" (Bourdieu, 1975, p.19), a site in which individuals, as we will see in chapter 7 where two immigrant mothers enter state-sanctioned sites, may have the ability or inability to mobilise their capital due to the historical conditions in which it was acquired and that needs to be contextualised in the study of language and society as well as migration.

Class is, as stated above, a complex phenomenon whose interpretation hinges upon the society in which it is studied and upon the discipline that intends to account for it. Sociolinguistics, for instance, has paid attention to the relationship between language and class from different perspectives such as the variationist perspective (Labov, 1966; Trudgill, 1974) and from an ethnographic approach in educational settings (Rampton, 2006; 2010). Indeed, Rampton (2010, p. 1) made a case for "the resuscitation of class" as the construct began to be obscured by a strong focus on ethnicity, gender and generation in sociolinguistics. In the context of migration, Block (2014; 2017; 2018), who to a great extent draws on Marxist and Bourdieusian interpretations of class to examine language and identity issues, proposes an integrationist approach that he calls a *constellation of interrelated dimensions* of class, dimensions to which this study also resorts to situate and account for its participants' discourses. He refers to a general category he calls material life conditions that include a dimension of "relations of individuals and collectives to the means of productions", that is, "the circumstances of the provision of labour power to those who own and control the means of production" (2018:92). This is a Marxist view of the exploitation-based relations of classes in the sense that there is a propertied class and a property class in which the former benefits from and appropriates the product of the latter's labour. A second category is entitled economic resources, which comprise the dimension of "property" that could stand for "land, housing, electronic goods and other material goods as well as income and accumulated wealth" (ibid). Furthermore, another category consists of sociocultural resources such as "occupation, education, technological knowhow, social contacts and networking" comprise a second dimension of class (ibid). Additionally, behaviour as a third category refers to "how one moves one's body, the clothes one wears, the way one speaks" and it is regarded as a symbolic class dimension, which is also linked to socio-political life conditions and spatial conditions (ibid). While the former, life conditions, pertains to a "type of neighbourhood", whether it is a working class, middle class neighbourhood or an area to be gentrified, the latter

refers to a “type of dwelling” such as “trailer, house (detached/semidetached), flat (studio, small, large) etc.” (ibid). These are relevant concepts to bear in mind since, as I will state in chapter 3 and we will see in chapters 5, 6 and 7, many Latin Americans and some of my participants live in very different conditions, some may live in small rooms with four more people.

However, the above understanding of class is not without criticisms. Block, as the author of this model of class, has been accused of compartmentalising it as though it is meant to “*represent class*” (2018, p. 91 italics in original). In response to this criticism, Block argues that the model is intended to be a heuristic and flexible one and thus not represent class as something fixed but as something that is constantly revised and that it can be reordered and reorganised as societies themselves change; it is, as he states, a model that helps him and could help us think about class (ibid). I would also add that the dimensions described above allow us to reflect upon and take into account the various resources with which migrants relocate their lives, the migration routes they travel and how they have an impact on their quality of life. Furthermore, they can help us understand why immigrants live where they live, who they live and work with as well as the social relationships they form and how they make sense of these realities in these contexts. In other words, they allow us to connect the socioeconomic conditions about which and from which Latin American immigrants speak to other symbolic class markers that emerge in their discourses. These are value-laden ways of speaking indexical of how class in its different dimensions is invoked and mobilised directly and indirectly through the participants’ self-presentations and categorisations of others and themselves. In chapter 5, for instance, we will see how one of the participants with an M.A from Brazil talks about her experience of migration. Her economic and sociocultural resources as well as her connections and living conditions influence how she self-presents and distances from the figure of the migrant. Her socioeconomic reality differs, as we will see in chapter 7, from that of a Peruvian participant who although holds a B.A has pressing economic needs and lives in a flat with four more people and discursively self-disqualifies socially. Both experiences illustrate how the material intersects with the symbolic at the same time that evidence both horizontal and vertical trajectories that also intertwine with ideologies of neoliberalism. In addition to this, such domains also offer us a richer analysis on and better understanding of the relationship between class and identity.

Identity, as stated in section 2.3 above, is understood as emergent in context-based language use and is relational and attributive. That is, the question about “who” we are hinges upon the relation to and interaction with other social actors (Joseph, 2004). Class may also be conceived of as relational given that one’s identity may become manifest through social actors’ symbolic and material resources such as the ones mentioned above that others might recognise and thus sanction as belonging or not to a particular social group when entering a social space or

interaction. Class involves a sense of place where we tend to both associate with “people like us” (Bottero, 2004, p. 995) and where there may be a “fellow feeling, a sharing of beliefs... ways of looking at society” that mirror and seem to be congruent with our worldview (Calvert 1982, p. 207). The latter notion, nonetheless, entails a distinction not merely of who we are but of who we are not; that is, class as relational also invokes us vs them social practices through which individuals “draw boundaries of differentiation from them” (Savage, 2000, p. 102). Within this logic, understanding class as relational and part of one’s identity will also help us shed light on the social distance that some of the participants of this study discursively draw to delineate the social groups with whom they (dis) associate within the Latin American community.

In addition to the above, an important conceptual construct that can further enable us to capture the complex relation between social class and identity is intersectionality. Its conceptual use originally emerged in critical feminist and anti-racist thought through the work of Kimberle Crenshaw (1989, 1991). Her ideas mainly in Black feminism aimed to “denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women's employment experiences” (Crenshaw 1991, p. 1244) and began to draw attention to and challenge what she called “the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis (Crenshaw 1989, p.139). Such treatment is problematic since isolating and treating these categories separately, Crenshaw argued (1989; p 140), is both failing to recognise the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated and erasing them in the conceptualisation and remediation of race and sex discrimination by limiting the analysis to the experiences of privileged members of the group. That is, Black women’s experiences cannot be subsumed into either “women’s experience” or “the Black experience” and thus important distinctions must be drawn since they go through double-discrimination on the basis of race and on the basis of sex (Crenshaw, 1991; 1989, p. 149). Below, I will contextualise the relevance of this significant distinction. In this sense, Crenshaw’s framework questions essentialist assumptions of the concept of woman that, as some authors have also stressed, was dominated by White Eurocentric knowledge in that the experience of women was that of White women and thus veiled Black women’s identity and marginalised their voices and experiences in feminist struggles (Bhopal and Preston 2011, p. 2), which also to some extent attempted to address relevant social class differences (hooks, 1990; Corona and Block, 2014).

Intersectionality, as class, identity and other concepts, is difficult to define due to the varied contexts in which it is employed to account for the phenomena on which it intends to shed light. Intersectionality, nevertheless, is here understood as a “framework to understand the ways in which multiple identity axes such as class, sexual orientation, race and gender intersect and influence the well being of individuals” (McCall 2005; Corus and Saatcioglu 2015, p. 415). In other

words, this understanding of intersectionality helps address essentialist interpretations of identity that may treat seemingly discrete identity categories such as the ones mentioned above as unrelated, and it therefore responds to the need to concentrate on the multiplicities of identity, their interactivity and thus acknowledge that social experience cannot be taken in isolation (Bhopal and Preston 2011). In the context of this research study, the deconstruction of identity categories in relation to social class is significant to account for the social identities and migration experiences of the participants. As it will be noted in chapters 5 and 7, the participants' phenotypical characteristics, on which I will elaborate below, are influential on both the sociolinguistic experiences they narrate and how they self-present. For instance, as noted above, Karla who is a white middle-class, M.A. educated immigrant woman from Latin America does not go through the same experiences as Sonia who is a Black high-school educated female immigrant also from Latin America; while the former describes a story of a comfortable life style, the latter, as she narrates, is the subject of discrimination practices. Their narratives exhibit how social positions intersect with race and stress the need to recognise important distinctions to look beyond "fixed" identity categories such as gender.

Gender has been traditionally associated with notions that concentrate on the female and male-female dichotomies in which physiological characteristics define who people are. Such a notion entails a biological determinism that has often been used, and in many cases it still is, as a justification for the assignation of gendered work roles and social positions that have affected women, and a number of approaches to gender have attempted to shed light on this issue. For instance, Bucholtz (2014, p. 31) refers to three approaches such as liberal feminism, cultural feminism and radical feminism. Each of them, also known as the deficit, difference and dominance approaches, concentrates on the downplaying of gender difference to attain gender equality, women's ways of thinking, acting and speaking as distinctive qualities and the prominence of women's practices over men's respectively (ibid). She states that these approaches are "difference" approaches that do not treat women's experiences as unique but rather as universally shared and thus overlook important distinctions among women" (ibid inverted commas in original). Their analytical purchase, nonetheless, is still valuable to examine issues of inequality.

However, gender is here understood in the sense that it applies to all human beings and it transcends the usual dichotomy mentioned above; in other words:

Gender is a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time. An open coalition then, will affirm identities that are alternately instituted and relinquished according to the purposes at hand; it will be an open



assemblage that permits of multiple convergences and divergences without obedience to a normative telos of definitional closure (Butler 2002, p. 22).

Butler's view of gender challenges essentialist views of it at the same time that it defies ideas such as having a stable identity by pointing to its openness and fluidity that in turn rejects the notion of clear boundaries. In addition, Butler (1990) states that gender is performative in that it comes into being through repeated discursive enactments of cultural norms (Bucholtz, 2014, p.37). Performativity, a term borrowed from Austin (1962), refers to a performative speech act in the sense that language use creates a new social reality by carrying out the act it names (Bucholtz 2014). By drawing on it, Butler's argument both stresses that gender is an act rather than a permanent attribute and brings to centre stage its discursive element that has influenced other researchers.

An approach to gender that has been influenced by Butler's views is poststructuralist feminism. This views gender as socially constructed and thus asks questions such as "why gender differences are being constructed that way"? instead of asking "what are the gender differences?" (McElhinny 2003, p.24). What characterises this poststructuralist stance is that it offers a more dynamic approach to gender that avoids seeking already pre-determined gender categories at the same time that it holds that gender is something that one continually does; gender as activity, gender as performance, gender as accomplishment (McElhinny 2003, pp. 27; 2014). Furthermore, gender is the result of social practices such as language use. This resonates with what I stated in chapter 2.4, identity does not precede language but it emerges through language, and it is encoded in linguistic and symbolic representations, normative concepts and social identities (McElhinny and Mills 2007). For instance, Cameron (2014) notes how gender is discursively done and ascribed as well as it points to important differences within what is conceived of as a monolithic category. She gives the example of the fishwife, which is a term ascribed to women who did low-status work such as cleaning and selling fish and which currently people may use to label them as uncouth, unrefined and coarse-mannered (2014, p. 284). Through that label, she goes on to state that the social identity of women is not only constructed as vituperative but associated with a working-class group regarded as "unfeminine" due to the way their language is evaluated and contrasted with higher-social status attitudes of refinement and politeness; behaviours and attitudes of desirable femininity based on a norm that is Western, White and middle class (Cameron 2014, p. 285 inverted commas in original). In this light, her analysis enables us to keep in sight identity categories that we have seen above and that intersect with gender; that is, people's social class, race, on which I will elaborate below, and ethnicity that may be made salient in the contexts and situations where they may find themselves (see Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992).

Discussions about race, as in gender, often touch upon biologically based interpretations that attempt to provide allegedly objective categories that fixedly define who and what people are. Such views that also carry essentialist notions of individuals' physical and cognitive attributes have been contested, rejected and proven to be inaccurate by a number of specialists from various disciplines and agree that pure races do not exist (Marger 1997; Edles 2004). A view of race that this work advocates and on which many agree is that it is a social construct that has resulted from events and processes rooted in European colonisation, which also evidences the ideological character of it (Gilroy 2000, MacMaster 2001, Wade 2010). Race is not a natural phenomenon but a notion and construct that people develop in pursuit of particular interests.

However, it must be noted that race as a social construct still deserves a great deal of attention and we should not dismiss it as being encapsulated in a terrain of ideas. The construct of race indeed matters because:

“if people discriminate on the basis of their ideas of race, this is a social reality of paramount importance. Equally, people may lay claim to a racial identity that represents for them central aspects of their person – indeed in the US, racial identity is so politicised that no one is really complete without one (Wade, 2010, p.13).

Wade's statement reminds us of two important aspects in debates about race that also relate to identity. It points to the idea that race is attributive and relational in the sense that racial categories are both externally constructed and form relationships based on arbitrary distinctions. But, what are they based on? Various scholars have argued that common distinctions of race are drawn in terms of physical appearance or, as Bonilla Silva (1999, p. 903) has stated, they are social categorisations that rest on “the language of the phenotype”. Phenotypical features are used to differentiate groups of people from another and they often revolve around ideas of being black, white or coloured at the same time that they evoke questions such as what are you? (Edles 2004). Nevertheless, this argument should be treated cautiously as I do not intend to present it as a biological or an objective basis for racial recognition but rather to refer to how phenotypes may also be socially mobilised to either exclude or include and that they are part of the social perception and experience of race (ibid).

Also another term interrelated to class, gender and race is that of ethnicity. This, it is worth mentioning, also entails complexities in definitions and interpretations and is often conflated with and treated as synonymous with race, and as Pilkington (2003, p. 27) puts it, “the two may empirically overlap with people defined as race becoming over time an ethnic group”. Indeed, clear-cut distinctions are difficult to draw.

Nevertheless, two interpretations of ethnicity on which there seems to be general consensus is that, as in the case of race above, it is also a social construct (see May 2008; Wade 2010), and rests on perceptions and experience of cultural differences. By cultural differences I mean dress, customs, dance, language. In this logic, as Puri (2004, p. 174) states, ethnicity “is a form of collective identity based on shared cultural beliefs and practices, such as language, history, descent, and religion”, and, he goes on to argue, “even though ethnicities often allude to enduring kin-based and blood ties, it is widely recognised that they are cultural, not biological, ties”. This interpretation, on the one hand, allows us to shed light on the intricacies and multiple dimensions of ethnic identity at the same time that it invites us to avoid a primordialist view that may treat it as either biologically determined or fixed. On the other hand, it is not unproblematic in terms of the language element given that not all Latin Americans in this study, who also identify as an ethnic group, speak only Spanish but also Portuguese and English. Thus we should not rush to conclude that ethnicity is a bundle of cultural traits that can be studied and listed to establish differences between other ethnic groups (Barth, 1969; May, 2008). Instead, we should bear in mind that ethnicity also involves a two-way process between an individual’s subjectivity and external agents; that is, “it is the result of a dialectical process involving the individual’s self-identification and outsiders’ ethnic designations - i.e. what *you* think your ethnicity is versus what *they* think your ethnicity is (Nagel 1994, p. 154 italics in original).

In addition to the above, ethnicity is also viewed as instrumental. Although this approach to ethnicity is often associated with negative overtones such as Nazi Germany (see May 2008), this means that ethnicity can also be used by people as a social and political resource in the quest of political ends, that is, “a group organises along ethnic lines in pursuit of collective political ends” (Stack 1986:5). The fact that Latin Americans in London have achieved status as an ethnic group in London demonstrates how powerful symbolic ties are and how they could be employed for their benefit as a collective in political and civic participation in a host society. This should not be interpreted as a view that holds that ethnic groups are internally homogenous since they are indeed heterogenous, rather it should be interpreted as a way of understanding how “a chosen ethnic identity is determined by the individual’s perception of its meaning to different audiences, its salience in different social contexts and its utility in different settings” (Nagel 1994:155).

Class, as stated at the beginning of this section, is a complex construct that may not have one specific definition. One could argue that there are instead interpretations of what it may be and how it may be experienced or enacted, and this hinges upon the varied social spaces that people construct and in which they interact. Furthermore, class, although it is initially associated with an economic basis, interrelates to other symbolic aspects that could be relevant for individuals in the constitution of their social relations. In this sense class is an important identity marker that may

be mobilised materially and culturally in the delineation of ingroups and outgroups at the same time that it intersects with gender, race and ethnicity as social constructs that matter in the socioeconomic realities in which individuals may find themselves and experience.

## 2.7 Neoliberalism

As noted in the previous section, discussions about class involve a number of interpretative challenges due to its complexity and different manifestations. These, as I stated above, are related to people's economic resources or capitals that in turn not only reflect their social trajectory but impact on the migration motivations as well as routes and channels that they may travel and that influence where, how and with whom they live and associate in a receiving society. I also noted that class allows us to examine people's identity, which should also be located within larger socioeconomic and political phenomena such as neoliberalism since its economic logic and ideology also has an effect on their subjectivities.

In this section, I will concentrate on discussing neoliberalism. I will first offer two definitions of the term, which come with a caveat. That is, the decision to draw on the definitions presented below is neither to suggest that I will offer all-encompassing meanings of such a complex phenomenon, nor assume that they stand for the same effects in every single society. It is indeed a varied phenomenon whose effects and consequences hinge upon the structural differences of the societies it penetrates (Peck and Theodore, 2007). In addition, I am aware that the term neoliberalism is hardly used by those who advocate it and who may not call themselves neoliberals (Aalbers, 2013). Still, as Jessop (2013) states, the term lends itself to framing criticism that can guide research and attempt to shed light on the processes that influence the social organisation of life. The definitions provided in this section attempt to identify the intersecting domains in which neoliberalism has become manifest and which will help us delimit it to gain insight into its tenets that are relevant for the social realities and relations of the participants of this study. Subsequently, I will refer to the origins of the term by mentioning the thinkers and the institutions through which they spread their ideas for one main reason, which is the fact that neoliberalism is a historical and deliberate economic project that along with other factors that we will see in chapter 3 is associated with and forced one of the first Latin American migrations to the UK. I will then draw on the ideas of a scholar of neoliberalism, Harvey, to offer a brief contextualisation of the socioeconomic environment that also contributed to the development of neoliberalism as well as its resulting effects on labour rights. These are important to mention as they are also linked to present job conditions and hiring practices such as outsourcing in which many Latin American immigrants work and to which I will then move on.

Towards the end of this section, I will touch upon the figure of the entrepreneur and provide examples where such a figure was referred to and thus underscore the values it sought to mobilise. I will move on to contexts such as that of migration and language learning to exemplify that entrepreneurial values have entered people's subjectivities and which carry negative implications such as a process of exclusion that we will see in chapter 6 and 7. Finally, I will refer to the notion of language as a commodity and as a skill in which people attempt to invest and which is equated with neoliberal ideas of economic mobility. However, socioeconomic constraints and conditions, like those in which some of my participants find themselves, also play a role in the acquisition of such a commodity, which I will discuss before concluding this section.

Neoliberalism is a widespread historical phenomenon whose effect and influence have been felt by societies across the world economically, socially and politically. That is, neoliberalism is an economic doctrine and an ideology that, although it claims to seek to reduce state intervention, is still undergirded by the advocacy of the state. It is an economic doctrine in the sense that it holds that the free market will benefit all "if individual competition is given free reign" (Stiglitz, 2000, p. 74 in Piller, 2015, p. 163). This means that the market is assumed to be self-regulating and should be free from state control and intervention, a *laissez-faire* rationale that prioritises continued economic growth for human progress (Smith, 2007). As an ideology, neoliberalism is characterised by a system of ideas that "valorises autonomy as a state of being and as an ethics of self-interest and personal responsibility" (Wrenn and William Waller, 2017, p. 499). In this context, two distinctive characterisations of neoliberalism arise, one of which is that of competition and another which is the notion of individual responsibility that, as some authors have argued (see Shin and Park, 2016; Bourdieu, 1998) are penetrating and changing various domains of social life. This suggests that neoliberalism is not contained in an economic field but it transcends it and shapes individuals' social organisation and interaction by extrapolating a competition-minded logic that implies that there are winners and losers. In other words, neoliberalism as a doctrine and ideology fosters and praises individual merit and accomplishment while holding out an economic reward. However, it must be added that neoliberalism does not have a life of its own but must be predicated by specific means. Harvey (2005, p. 7) and Munck (2012, p. 70) respectively remind us that "economic models are politically determined" and that "states are not external but central to neoliberalism". Instances that support these arguments are found in Latin America (Munck, 2012; Roberts, 2009), the UK and USA where governments have played a significant role in deregulation, restructuring and cuts in welfare provisions, which have resulted in high levels of inequality (Sapiro, 2010) and that is also closely related to Latin American immigration to the UK. Neoliberalism is palpable in social inequality and it is not a spontaneous economic model but one that should be put in a historical context.

The term neoliberalism dates back to the *Colloque Walter Lippman* in Paris in 1938 when a group of scholars such as Friedrich Hayek, Michael Polanyi and Wilhelm Röpke met and used the term for the first time (Stedman-Jones, 2012). According to Stedman-Jones (2012, p. 18), the purpose of such a meeting and the use of the term was respectively to consider the implications of Walter Lippmann's book, *The Good Society* (1937) and address the concerns of the time; reclaim and defend freedom and individualism as notions that the Nazi party in Germany and Stalinism threatened (Block, 2018). However, the Second World War broke out and the meeting had to be postponed. It was not until 1947 when Friedrich Hayek summoned a group of intellectuals to Switzerland to discuss how liberalism could be defended from the above-mentioned threat and from New Deal liberalism, which involved programmes that supported the unemployed such as the Public Work Projects, as well as from British social democracy (Stedman-Jones 2012). The intellectuals included Ludwig von Mises, Milton Friedman, Karl Popper (Harvey, 2005, p. 19), and academics from the London School of Economics, the University of Manchester, the University of Chicago as well as a group of Austrian exiles in the USA and a group of French intellectuals (Stedman-Jones, 2012). They formed the Mont Pellerin Society (MPS) and it is after this meeting that important concepts with which neoliberalism is associated such as freedom, the individual, laissez faire economics began to emerge (Block, 2018, p. 57). Furthermore, it is also after this, in a 1949 article that Hayek wrote, *The Intellectuals and Socialism*, when we begin to see the neoliberal intention that "individual liberty within the framework of free markets could only be protected by an elite-driven and elite-directed strategy of opinion formation" (Stedman-Jones, 2012, p. 5). However, opinion formation was a phenomenon that took place neither overnight nor in a social vacuum.

To disseminate the idea that free markets work for the benefit of all, it was important to harness and promote it through particular means of information although their impact was not felt equally in the societies that it penetrated. Its popularisation was conducted by the media and politicians as well as business-sponsored think tanks such as the Institute of Economic Affairs in the 1950s, the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in the 1960s (Harvey, 2005; Carroll and Carson, 2006), the Heritage Foundation in 1973 in the USA (Birch and Mykhnenko, 2010). In the UK, The Foundation of the Centre for Policy Studies in 1974 and the Adam Smith Institute in 1976 were important "idea centres" (ibid). Likewise, business schools in universities such as Princeton and Harvard as well as Chicago played a key role in the promotion of neoliberal ideas as they were and are "training grounds" for foreign economists that import their ideas to their local governments such as the Chicago boys in the 1970s (Harvey, 2005). The 1970s was a crucial decade in which neoliberalism was not only spread by institutions but imposed by coercion, for example, after a coup d'état in Chile, which, on the one hand, helps us explain the first immigration of Chilean

exiles to the UK and subsequent emigrations from Ecuador and Colombia that we will see in the next chapter (McIlwaine, 2011). On the other hand, it is also probable that in this 1970s context neoliberalism began to be associated with its negative overtones (Boas and Gans-Morse, 2009). However, as we will see below, certain socioeconomic and political conditions at the time of the emergence of neoliberalism also enabled it to gain momentum.

In the 1968 USA, for instance, there was discontent and resentment against the state for its restrictions on personal behaviours and for its incompetence and failure to address issues such as civil, sexual and reproductive rights (Harvey, 2005, p. 42). In addition to this, the bureaucratic and rigid structures of unions as well as their lack of flexibility were significant factors that also made neoliberal ideas of flexi time arrangements and flexible specialisation influential and attractive for workers (Harvey, 2005, p. 53). In the UK, the population held a similar discontent against the government's management of welfare, which the media criticised and increasingly promoted individualism and freedom in contrast to the ineptitude of the state (Harvey, 2005). However, within this complex combination of socioeconomic and political aspects, scholars in the history of neoliberalism agree that what characterises the US and UK cases are disputes over labour relations and a fight against inflation that led to the enforcement of neoliberal policies (Harvey, 2005; Birch and Mykhnenko, 2010, p. 7; Prasad, 2006). Their result was the reduction of welfare, privatisation of state enterprises, free trade, tax cuts and the undermining of labour unions in both the UK and the US during Thatcher's and Reagan's administrations (Steger, 2010). For instance, Thatcher's consent to the introduction of foreign investment in the steel, shipbuilding and the automobile industry caused union power to disappear and allowed Japanese companies to settle in the UK and hire non-unionised workers (Harvey, 2005). In this light, allowing foreign private capital to manage previous state-run enterprises also begins to point to globally evident business practices that characterise money-motivated policies.

An increasingly noticeable profit-led practice that illustrates a neoliberal logic and that is relevant for the context of the present study is that of outsourcing. This is "an agreement in which one company contracts-out a part of their existing internal activity to another company" (McCarthy and Anagnostou, 2004, p. 63). An instance of this is the hiring of cleaning services by hotels, universities, hospitals through a third party, a scheme under which many Latin American immigrants and some of my participants working in the service sector in London are contracted (McIlwaine, 2015; Woodcock, 2014). The nature of this type of contract, however, carries negative implications for workers. That is, wage and benefit responsibilities are shifted to third parties (Castillo Fernández and Sotelo Valencia, 2013), and jobs that were once stable have under this new scheme become temporary or part-time leading to a dismantling of labour rights and precarious lives (Celis Ospina, 2012). It is also noteworthy that outsourcing is a widespread

business and hiring scheme that has reached Latin America and, as we will see in chapter 3, it has a strong connection with Latin American immigration to the UK in the 1990s. Recently, it has been reported that in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Uruguay 30-40 percent of the formal workforce is outsourced while in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru it constitutes nearly 40-50 percent (Castillo Fernandez and Sotelo Valencia, 2013, p. 22). These neoliberal tactics of hiring, apart from aiming to reduce labour costs, promote so-called job flexibility that works under a principle of efficiency as a way of responding to market-dictated needs, euphemisms that conceal the freedom to hire and fire and that are also combined with a type of vocabulary that influences individuals' ways of behaving.

An instance of such neoliberal vocabulary that is also explicitly and implicitly used by the participants of this study and that helps us understand their identities and relations better is that of 'the entrepreneur', and its meaning as well as the values it promotes could be very well located in the writings of those who support capitalism. Ludwig van Mises, a member of the MPS, for instance, wrote about the role of the entrepreneur and stated that "like every acting man, the entrepreneur is always a speculator. He deals with the uncertain conditions of the future. His success or failure depends on the correctness of his anticipation of uncertain events. If he fails in his understanding of things to come, he is doomed" (von Mises, 1949; 2007, p. 290). As we can gather from this quote, speculation and uncertainty are conditions in which the figure of the entrepreneur works and makes rational decisions; that is, it is associated with a knowing risk-taker, and interestingly failure or success is an outcome for which the entrepreneur is held responsible. It must be said that Van Mises' argument is framed within the context of profit and loss in markets, but it is a logic with a strong focus on the individual that important political leaders have explicitly and implicitly promoted. Holborow (2015, p. 73) notes that the current meaning that the figure of the entrepreneur carries "received its badge of respect in the early days of neoliberalism" when Thatcher and Reagan are respectively referred to as "the entrepreneurs' prime minister" and the president who regarded entrepreneurs as a "special breed". While Reagan in his inaugural speech in 1981 stated that "there are entrepreneurs with faith in themselves and faith in an idea who create new jobs, new wealth and opportunity" (Reagan, 1981) Thatcher produced the often-cited phrase "there is no such thing as society (Ritzer and Dean, 2014, p. 95). The social significance of these phrases lies in the fact that they were produced in a time of high unemployment and precariousness along with arguments and ideas such as "the government is the problem" or people misunderstand that "it's the government's job to cope with it". (Reagan, 1981; Thatcher, 1987). In other words, what they promoted was the ideological construction of an individual who is encouraged to take charge of him/herself and who should bear the economic burden on his/her shoulders. Within this logic, the responsibility to lift



the country out of economic crisis seems to be shifted onto the individual who is thus interpellated to “being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings’ (Foucault, 2008, p. 226). A self-sustaining figure of the entrepreneur constructed on values of individuality that does not depend on the state and that has been extended into other contexts.

The concept of the entrepreneur is also found in the context of migration, for instance in Irish migration stories. Holborow (2015, p. 75) notes that the figure of the entrepreneur is contained in Irish culture in the form of the “rags to riches ideal”. This is a notion that depicts the successful Irish emigrant to the US in pursuit of the American dream that holds the promise of wealth and fame away from rural poverty (ibid); that is, the individual as the architect of one’s own destiny who is able to make it by his own efforts despite his adversities. Additionally, other studies document this idea of the entrepreneur in people’s attitudes towards learning. Ullman (2012) explores how neoliberal discourses of individualism and entrepreneurship characterise the ways in which Mexican immigrants in Arizona talk about themselves as learners of English. Her participants, some of whom were undocumented immigrants, attempted to learn English on their own through a self-taught method called *Inglés Sin Barreras* and in a context in which publicly funded adult language classes disappeared and English only had been passed as the official language of Arizona (Ullman, 2012, p. 461). She notes that her participants exhibited a will, a drive and a sense of personal responsibility to self-fund and educate themselves in English as well as to prepare for economic and political instability (ibid). Their failed attempt to learn English, however, resulted in discourses of personal disqualification or assumed lack of self-management and inability to use the learning materials properly; a type of blame culture that did not question external political factors. In this light, the figure of the neoliberal entrepreneur carries interesting implications, one of which is the idea that “individuals succeed or fail by dint of their own self-discipline, hard work, personality, ambition, and effort (Bansel, 298, p. 298). This idea will also be pursued and better illustrated by the language use of my participants that we will be able to see in more detail in chapter 6 where they describe the personal traits of the individuals with whom they relate as well as the attitudes they devalue. Another implication is that this individual-centred view takes into account neither the economic constraints that people may face nor the inequalities caused by other forces (Holborow, 2015; Ullman, 2012). Furthermore, what Ullman’s study illustrates is another effect of a neoliberal ideology that not only promotes entrepreneurship and self-responsibilisation but language as a desired possession for social inclusion and market-oriented ends.

Language in light of the above has been commodified and thus constructed as an acquirable and desired skill for socioeconomic mobility (Heller et al, 2014) that my participants also seek to

obtain. Although the term commodified has not escaped criticism (see Block 2019), by language being commodified I mean that language has been metaphorically constructed as a tangible capital and, in this light, Duchene and Heller (2012) have drawn attention to the way in which ideas about language are framed in economic terms as a matter of “added-value” and not in “national and political terms as a matter of rights and citizenship”. It is argued that language is treated as a part of a bundle of skills (see Urciouli, 2008) in which people increasingly invest (Duchene and Heller, 2012). In this vein, Song (2010) describes how Korean parents support their children’s early English education. They are part of a trend of Asian families that draw on transnational migration to English-speaking countries so that their children obtain not only overseas educational credentials but acquire English as economic capital in the global market (Song, 2010, p. 23). The study reported that some parents in Korea teach their children English to make their investment as profitable as possible and that others view English as the “*sine qua non* skills” and thus equate English with a better job and education (Song, 2010, p. 31). However, the relationship between language, in this case English, and economic mobility is not straightforward and should be treated sceptically as there may be other factors that may come into play and that other researchers such as Pennycook has also pertinently pointed out:

“English holds out promise of social and economic development to all those who learn it (rather than a language tied to very particular class positions and possibilities of development); and that English is a language of equal opportunity (rather than a language that creates barriers as much as it presents possibilities)” (Pennycook, 2007, p. 101).

His argument very well problematizes and captures the ideological dimension of English learning and as the language of socioeconomic mobility. It points to structural differences, inequalities and obstacles that, as we will see in chapters 6 and 7, both make a difference in how and under what circumstances people may want or need to learn the language to specific ends and that are usually erased in such process. In this light, issues of class arise but also migration trajectories and teaching practices that are consequential on people’s identities and realities. For instance, Warriner (2007) documents the challenges of adult immigrants and refugees enrolled in an English as a Second Language (ESL) programme to prepare for entry-level employment in the USA and become self-sufficient in usually three to six months. Her participants, whose level of literacy and language background are heterogeneous, take grammar-focused classes that are repetitive and frequently take standardised tests whose scores are regarded to be indicators of language proficiency and students are thus deemed ready to take up a job (Warriner, 2007, p. 315). She notes that although the tests seem to provide fair access to the workplace, their ESL classes do not enable adult learners to engage in real life meaningful communication that could be instrumental for them during job search or other needs such as defending their rights with

potential landlords or employees or communicate with their children's teachers (Warriner, 2007, p. 319). Her study demonstrates that some of her participants, who also bought into the promise that English held, ended up with temporary part-time shift jobs in the service sector and although their jobs allowed them to get some income, they did not enable them to obtain the economic stability that they and their families needed (Warriner, 2007, p. 317).

Warriner's study contrasts with the case of the transnational Korean families described above. It exhibits that their socioeconomic background and resources reflect different migration trajectories and status, which are consequential in how their realities may be lived. Nevertheless, these stories illustrate a converging theme: the belief that English will guarantee socioeconomic mobility. Within this logic, the above-mentioned attitudes resonate with what Foucault (1988) and Althusser (1971) called "technology of self" and "interpellation" respectively. The former being a "means for fashioning a subjectivity compatible with dominant practices and beliefs" (Urciouli and Ladousa, 2013, p. 177), and the latter being an "ideology that 'hails' individuals and that transform them into subjects with specific ideological and social positions" (Milani, 2008, p. 181). That is, individuals are urged to acquire a language as a tool, a skill that will prepare them for life and for which they will be economically rewarded after hard work and self-discipline in an allegedly level field of competition to which they enter voluntarily. In chapters 6 and 7, we will see how these attitudes and ideologies come forward in the participants' accounts as they describe their realities and metalinguistic experiences as well as their relations with other Latin Americans.

Neoliberalism is a historical elite-driven economic doctrine and process that has materially transformed the social organisation of life. Privatisation and outsourcing are some of the clear practices and instances that show how people's lives are economically valued and humanely devalued, and governments and institutions such as think tanks and universities have played a significant role in the promotion of such an economic doctrine. Neoliberalism as an ideology has also reconfigured many aspects of the social conception of life and relations, which is evident in an orientation to individualism that inculcates an entrepreneurial spirit through which the individual seeks opportunities and embraces challenges in an environment of job precariousness and uncertainty. In such a context, as Bourdieu put it, "a Darwinian world emerges - it is the struggle of all against all at all levels of the hierarchy, which finds support through everyone clinging to their job and organisation under conditions of insecurity, suffering, and stress" (Bourdieu, 1998). In a competition-driven society, emblems of identity such as language is also reconceptualised as a skill and as a commodity, which can have an exchange value in market economy (Bourdieu, 2003).



## Chapter 3 Latin American Migration

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework and key concepts that inform this study. I have offered a discussion of how sociolinguistics has responded to phenomena associated with globalisation, and I have also stated that language in this study is interpreted as a social practice that is deliberate and context-based. Linked to this is the notion of identity that can be viewed through people's language use also in context. In addition to this, I have also discussed the relevance of the study of language ideologies and social class as concepts that will help this study inform the analyses and arguments that it will put forward. Furthermore, neoliberalism as a deliberate historical economic phenomenon and ideology has also been discussed since it has also had an effect on Latin American migration to the UK. The latter phenomenon is a complex one that I will frame within a particular theory of migration. Transnationalism will thus be introduced and defined, and its analytical purchase to cast light on micro, meso and macro phenomena will also be discussed. Subsequently, I will refer to scholars' criticisms that transnationalism as a theory of migration has received and that have not been overlooked by sociolinguists whose critical views of the processes of migration such as declassing and reclassing will also be discussed. I will then refer to how such criticisms have to some extent been addressed, which continuously motivates us to keep in sight important distinctions that affect people's experiences. Towards the end of this section, I will include and discuss the concept of diaspora. Unlike previous valuable studies that have used the concept of diaspora to refer to the dispersal of Latin Americans in various continents and countries (see Martin-Rojo and Marquez Reiter 2015), I draw on it to refer to and account for cultural practices that I will specify in due course and that the population under study perform in London. Diaspora, it must be acknowledged, is not an unproblematic concept due to its overlap with transnationalism but it still lends itself for a closer inspection of the cultural imaginary that migrants attempt to recreate away from the homeland.

The following section will focus on Latin American migration to the UK and, as a way of reminding the reader, I will firstly refer to the demographic presence of Latin Americans in the UK before I describe its historical origins that can help us locate it within larger political and socioeconomic phenomena. As stated in the overview of the thesis, I use the terms Latin American, Latin Americans and Latin American migrants to refer to the geographic origin of these people and my participants. The term Latino is also used but I include it in my analyses as a way of reporting what my participants are saying not as an ethnic category that carries connotations of identity politics on which I do not focus (see Oboler, 1995).

Secondly, I will draw the reader's attention to the 1990s as a decade in which globally interconnected factors and neoliberal practices that I mentioned in chapter 2 influenced Latin American emigration. Thirdly, I will refer to migration routes such as Spain that recent Latin American migrants have travelled and that both has been a gateway to the UK and has had an impact on their national identities. The latter will bring about their transnational identities that I will touch upon and which will precede a discussion of the profile of Latin American immigrants given that it will allow us to point to their highly diversified background and motivations to be in the UK. Furthermore, I will describe where many Latin Americans live by pointing to London boroughs where they are geographically concentrated and that can also allow us to shed light on their varied socioeconomic background. Then, I will mention the organisations they have formed as well as their role and usefulness for Latin Americans in London. Finally I will conclude this section by stating that Latin American migration is a South to North migration that evidences the global structural inequalities from which many immigrants attempt escape.

As to the section that addresses the concept of community, I will firstly offer a definition of it before I move on to community formation processes through which Latin Americans in London have gone and of which they have actively been part. Here I will refer to two important sites associated with political and economic factors that will help us explain and understand both why Latin Americans are mostly geographically located where they are and how they have come to be regarded as a community. I will then move on to a problematisation of the concept of community due to globalisation-associated processes such as different types of migrations that result in different migration status and contrasting social attitudes among fellow citizens. Such problematisation aims to throw light on existing hierarchies within communities in order to begin to question the assumed homogeneity that the term community may conjure up. It is worth mentioning that this problematisation is not intended to delegitimise people's views and interpretations of what community is for them since it has been evoked and has been mentioned directly by my participants in my conversations with them and observations. It is rather an attempt to understand the internal dynamics that constitute it. Following this argument, this section will then draw attention to social class variability that also makes up the Latin American community inserted in a city such as London. The latter is also a place and a context in which an ideology of neoliberalism also circulates through people's discourses and attitudes, and which this section discusses towards the end of it due to its values and worldviews that are antonymous with those of community.

### 3.2 Transnationalism

As societies evolve, migration phenomena have concomitantly become more complex and intricate, which has motivated new theorisations that attempt to address them in a more encompassing manner. In this context, transnationalism has emerged as an optic through which people's mobilities can be explained. Transnationalism has been conceptualised by Basch, Glick-Schiller and Blanc (1994, p. 7) as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement". In other words, migrants are viewed as agents that develop social and economic networks across political borders that to a large extent are maintained at the micro and meso levels. At the former level, we find personal relations such as friends and kin that provide migrants with information, knowledge of other countries, help in finding work, and at the latter level, the meso level, we see symbolic ties such kin, ethnic, national, political or religious organisations (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002; Portes 1997; Faist 2010; Castles and Miller 2009). It must be mentioned that transnationalism as a practice is not new since migrants have historically managed to sustain ties with their country of origin (see Hollinger 1995, Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004), It rather emerges as an epistemic strategy that captures the intricate processes and interconnectivity of present day societies (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002). In this respect, transnationalism also captures the development of and use of technology that allows migrants to stay in touch with both sending and host societies at the same time that allows for a reconceptualisation of the relationship between time and space, what other scholars have called time-space compression (Harvey 1989), which have also reconfigured how the migration experience may be lived either physically or virtually. Furthermore, transnationalism allows to account for the dual or multiple forms of nationality or citizenship that challenge notions of assimilation to the receiving country (Jordan and Düvell, 2003). This is the case, for instance, of a number of Mexican immigrants in the US who have dual nationalities and maintain and cultivate both cultural and economic connections with their home countries. In the context of this study, many Latin American immigrants also show these transnational practices but I will detail this in the next section.

Additionally transnationalism offers analytical purchase to shed light on wider and larger phenomena at a macro level. For instance, the idea of transnationalism also "broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (Vertovec 1999, p. 447). In this context, a number of economic and political processes come to the fore; that is, the presence of so called transnational corporations should not be ignored as an important form of transnational practices (ibid) whose deterritorialised presence, as we will see below, has had an effect on and has politically and economically intertwined with Latin American migration to the UK. In addition to this, we should also consider the role of international relations

and States that significantly organise or facilitate the movement of people, large-scale institutional factors (Castles and Miller, 2009). Processes such as interstate relationships, the political economy of the world market, the laws as well as the structures and practices of both sending and receiving states figure at this level, and their role is significant due to how they come to affect and regulate the flows of people (ibid). A clear example of this is the bilateral agreements made between the Spanish government and the Ecuadorian government to which I will return in the next section.

The concept of transnationalism, however, has not escaped criticisms, which are important to discuss before making sweeping generalisation of what characterises contemporary migration. Castles and Miller (2009, p. 32) state that indeed transnationalism is a relevant field of research but the degree to which migrants participate in transnational practices has not been precisely established and, thus, they discourage the use of generalised inflationary terms such as transmigrant given that probably the majority of migrants do not fall into this category. That is, people who emigrate forever are neither necessarily transmigrants nor have access to the same resources or networks that allow them to engage in transnational behaviour (ibid). Their caveat is a reminder of important differences in migrant groups that other scholars have also observed. Samers (2010, p. 115), within the same logic, questions whether migrant practices reflect a sense of “*transnationality*” (emphasis in original) or social categories around gender, multiple ideas of nationhood and social class. The latter is an important distinction that this research study also considers and that has been discussed and has motivated reconceptualisations in other disciplines.

In applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, and as we have seen in chapter 2.6, social class differences, distinctions and issues have not been ignored in the context of transnational migration since they have been empirically observed and have been regarded as influential in how migrants adapt to and live in host societies. Block (2014; 2017) argues that there are class-associated factors such as declassing and reclassing processes of which analysts should not lose sight. Declassing refers to changes in an individual’s life conditions such as the loss of economic power and prestige and status that formerly were a person’s class position” (Block 2017:140), Reclassing “is about the reconfiguration and realignment of class position” in a receiving society caused by changes in an individual’s life conditions (ibid). These processes are experiences encountered in my participants’ migration trajectories in which their movement to a new location has involved a socioeconomically downward trajectory and has involved realignment experiences that have impacted their quality of life and identities. For instance, Linda’s case, which we will see in chapter 6, exhibits an experience of declassing, a downward class movement in the sense that she has a B.A in psychology from her country of origin, Mexico, but upon her arrival her



credentials are erased as she first obtained a job as a hotel maid and later on as a cleaner in London. Keeping in sight the socioeconomic differences and declassing and reclassing processes that migrants face is relevant given that it can allow us to be aware of and understand how transnational their activities might be as well as how they are inserted in structurally differentiated sending and receiving societies (see Levitt 2004).

It must also be added that the above-mentioned issues that the transnational perspective seems to ignore to some extent have been addressed by one of its proponents. Levitt (2004) has argued that transnational connections should not be reduced to a binary link between two local points but rather we should see how they integrate with other horizontal and vertical connections that transcend borders. Indeed, as we will see in chapters 5 and 7, Latin Americans do not always plan their move to the UK motivated and helped by transnational networks given that they do not have access to the same connections to whom they can turn but rather develop them according to their socioeconomic resources once they are in London. Despite the criticisms it has received, a transnational lens still offers a more encompassing view of people's geographical mobility in that it leads us to think of migration as a complex process that reflects the circularity of the phenomenon at various scales rather than as an event that concludes when people relocate their lives.

Discussions of what characterises transnational migration also involve taking into account what has historically informed studies of human mobility such as diaspora. This although originally and commonly associated with the Jews and Armenians and the prospect of no return (Feist, 2010) and whose conceptual and semantic evolution has been received with reluctance (see Tölöyan, 1996) has taken on meanings that are similar to transnationalism and that are significant for this study. Diaspora is currently used to refer to national groups of people living outside their home countries due not only to religion or ethnic conflict but also to economic issues (Feist, 2010; Marini, 2013) and can also be understood as a phenomenon that defines migrant groups that maintain a sense of belonging and culture over long distances (Niewswand, 2011 in Marini, 2013, p. 134). In addition, the current concept of diaspora often encompasses three features: dispersion, homeland orientation and boundary-maintenance (Brubaker, 2005). The first refers to forced or traumatic dispersion or more generally as a type of dispersion in space that crosses national or state borders (ibid). The second refers to symbolic ties to the home country but more specifically to "the orientation to a real or imagined 'homeland' as a source of value, identity and loyalty" (ibid). And finally the third involves the preservation of a distinctive identity vis-a'-vis a receiving society; that is, cultural boundaries can be kept by an intentional resistance to assimilate to the host society (ibid). This does not mean that migrants show reluctance to integrate but it rather intends to stress the point that they cultivate sociocultural practices from their home

country in their new society. This is exemplified by the various Latin American festivals in London that I was able to observe during fieldwork and that brought together migrants from Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Chile, etc., to recreate meaningful cultural symbols such as dance, music, food, and clothing evocative of their homeland. In this respect, diaspora conceptually intersects with transnationalism in that the experience of migration is neither limited to one single geographical space nor is it merely associated with traditional settlement and assimilation in host societies; “[b]oth diaspora and transnationalism deal with homeland ties and the incorporation of persons living ‘abroad’ into the regions of destination” (Faist 2010, p. 20).

### 3.3 Latin American Migration to the UK

Latin American migration to the UK has demographically increased significantly over the last three decades. As stated in chapter 1, in 2013, the presence of approximately 250,000 people from Latin America was recorded of whom 145, 000 people lived in London where they have been called the “Latin American community” (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016). Within these numbers, it is worth mentioning, there is also an estimate of 17, 100 irregular migrants and 17, 182 second generation Latin Americans (McIlwaine, 2015). Their nationality groups are made up by Brazilians (37 %), Colombians (23%), Ecuadorians (8.6%), Peruvians (4%), Venezuelans (4.6), Mexicans (4.5%), Bolivians (3.2 %), Chileans (3.5 %), among other nationality groups (ibid). Their presence in the UK is explained by political and economic instability in their countries of origin. In the 1970s, Chilean refugees escaping Pinochet’s dictatorship, which as we saw in chapter 2.7 was also backed up by neoliberal economic policies, began to arrive in the UK (ibid), and they were followed by people from Uruguay and Argentina who were also fleeing the same political unrest in their home countries respectively (Ramirez, 2015; see Patiño-Santos and Marquez-Reiter 2018). Furthermore, Colombians also began to migrate to the UK through a work permit system whereby they worked in cleaning, domestic service and catering (McIlwaine, 2008). By the 1980s, the work permit was withdrawn but Colombians kept migrating as both economic migrants and asylum seekers attempting to circumvent the armed conflict in their country (Bermudez Torres, 2003), and Latin American migration continued to increase and diversified in the last decade of the last century (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016).

The 1990s is characterised by interrelated political and economic policies that acted as push factors such as the introduction of neoliberal economic reforms. It is reported that as Latin American countries renegotiated their foreign debts via privatisation and labour reforms, they had a negative effect on employment not only in Colombia (Moser and McIlwaine, 2004) but in many Latin American countries that deeply changed their socioeconomic structures and dismantled labour rights (Munck, 2012). It is also argued that although the privatization strategies

enforced in many Latin American countries boosted their local economies initially, the recovery of their local economies was feeble and the structural disparities exacerbated as wages went down dramatically (Garcia Canclini, 2002). In this light, the declining economy after successive trends of economic liberalization, the weakening of the welfare state system, which we also saw in chapter 2.6, as well as unemployment triggered emigration from Latin America to other continents (Castles and Miller, 2009; Padilla and Peixoto, 2007), but it must be added that the above-mentioned phenomena did not happen in a vacuum.

Some additional factors also motivated people to relocate their lives, particularly from Ecuador and Colombia. As to the former, in the same decade, Jokisch (2014) notes that an economic crisis worsened by natural disasters such as floods that had a negative effect in export crops forced between 500.000 and 1 million people from Ecuador out of their country and sent them to the USA, Italy but mostly to Spain where Ecuadorians had previously lived. As to the latter, the still palpable armed conflict along with the impact of the Asian economic crisis on Colombia forced nearly 1.9 million people to emigrate from their countries (Ribando, 2005; Reina and Zuluaga, 2012, p. 5). Although many went to Spain where bilateral labour agreements were made (Padilla and Peixoto, 2007), it has been documented that after such phenomena the United Kingdom also became a receiving society for both nationality groups. McIlwaine (2008, p. 97) notes that “Colombians and Ecuadorians in particular applied for asylum during this period, many of whom were eventually granted permanent residence status through processes of regularization such as the family amnesty exercise in the UK in 2003”. These two main nationalities have recently been joined by others such as Brazilians, Peruvians, Venezuelans and Bolivians who have also travelled alternative migration routes before arriving in the UK (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016).

Researchers have noted that Latin Americans have moved firstly to Spain due to the economic and migration policy-associated advantages that the country has offered and that has been a gateway to the UK. The growing economy of European countries such as Spain’s in 1995 as well as the increasing labour demand in sectors such as construction, tourism and domestic work acted as major pull migration factors for Latin Americans who could help fill such demands in both skilled and non-skilled jobs (Padilla and Peixoto, 2007; McCabe et al, 2009; Mazza and Sohen, 2010; Vicente Torrado, 2005). Furthermore, it is worth noting additional migration policies that favoured the entry of Latin American migrants into Spain before 2003. Latin American citizens did not require a visa but to be passport holders to enter and stay in Spain for up to three months, and after a two-year residence, they could apply for Spanish citizenship, which could guarantee mobility across European countries (see Zapata-Barrero and de Witte, 2006). Such mobility to Europe must also be understood in a context in which former destination countries such as Argentina, mainly for Bolivians and Ecuadorians, and the USA ceased to be attractive immigration

options. The former country was hit by an economic crisis in 1998 (Sveinsson, 2007) while the latter after the events of 11 September in 2001 introduced tighter immigration controls such as the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act and the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act (EBSVERA) (Laque, 2011, p. 32). The above-mentioned factors help us understand and explain the reorientation of migration flows into Europe, particularly to Spain where in 2009 Latin American migrants totalled 2,365, 364 (Vicente Torrado, 2009).

Nevertheless, an important economic phenomenon has also contributed to the demographic growth of Latin Americans in the UK more recently. The economic crisis that hit Spain towards the end of 2008 resulted in high unemployment rates for low and middle-skilled workers and loss of work permits that had a major effect on the foreign-born population (Mazza and Sohnen, 2010; Alba Monteserin et al, 2013). The latter that included Latin Americans was the object of return migration policies. According to Feline (2015, p. 73) and Plewa (2009, p. 16), and as I suggested above, the Spanish government created a voluntary return migration programme directed to documented migrants from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Mexico. Although many fell back upon such programme, a majority decided to stay due to kin or a dual nationality status that has allowed them to move to other European countries such as the UK (Feline, 2015; McIlwaine et al, 2011). In this context, a secondary migration from Bolivians, Peruvians, Colombians and Ecuadorians into the UK has been documented (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016).

Secondary migration to the UK, or onward migration as it has also been termed (Ramos, 2016; Mas Giralt, 2017), has also become key to many LA migrants' national identity. It is not uncommon to find many Ecuadorians, Colombians and Peruvians with EU passports after having lived in Spain and having escaped from the economic crisis. Furthermore, Brazilians also hold EU passports after having lived and worked in either Italy or Portugal (see McIlwaine, 2011; Marquez Reiter and Martin Rojo, 2015), or, as we will see in chapter five, they also have dual citizenship due to European ancestry. In this sense, their dual citizenship challenges assumptions of clear-cut national distinctions that at the same time cast light onto the imprint made by migration trajectories and highlights what De Haas (2010, p. 248) calls double national loyalties; 22% of the Latin Americans living in London hold a EU passport while 31% has British citizenship (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016). Additionally, their arrival in the UK draws attention to the networks they may have developed over decades and that instantiate practices that cross national borders.

Latin American migrants' transnational practices have been instrumental for their incorporation in London, and exhibit that the place of origin and people's common interests largely organise their mobility patterns and influence their migration choices. According to McIlwaine et al (2011), the

most important reason why Latin Americans choose to move to London as a new receiving society is explained by the existence of connections, family and friends who already live in the city. Such connections, in turn, provide newly arrived immigrants with accommodation and many times, they help them secure a job with future employers, which over decades has contributed to the continued growth of the Latin American community (ibid). However, the latter argument should come with a caveat. Other researchers note that after the 2008 economic crisis in Spain Latin American migrants to the UK did not plan their migration but it was rather reactive in order to assuage the economic pressures in Spain (see Mas Giralt, 2017; Ramos, 2017, p. 5).

Another aspect to take into account is Latin Americans' academic profiles and their arrival in the UK as the latter exemplify vertical migration trajectories. LA migrants to the UK are mostly well educated with university degrees, technical institute education, which many of them obtained before leaving their country of origin (Wright, 2011; James, 2005; McIlwaine, 2011). Nevertheless, as it has been observed not only in the UK but in other European countries (see Saenz and Salazar, 2009), the job market available to LA migrants involves socioeconomic stratifying patterns such as declassing, reclassing and deskilling in a host society (Yepez del Castillo, 2007; see Block 2017). Half of the 85% of LA migrants in employment in the UK work in the service sector such as cleaning and hospitality, and their low ability to speak English has presented them with obstacles to improve their life conditions (Block 2006; Marquez Reiter and Martin Rojo, 2015; McIlwaine, 2005; 2011). Their learning English is often frustrated due to their nature of their jobs, which are often underpaid and involve fragmented schedules that require them to work early in the morning or late at night as well as limited opportunities to interact with English speakers (Ramos, 2017, p. 6). Other obstacles are also found in the workplace and their everyday life as they try to incorporate to a host society since many of them do not receive their salary for the work they have done (McIlwaine, 2011). The latter is an exploitation practice that very often those with an undocumented migration status, on which I will elaborate below, face and that do not denounce due to their inability to speak English (ibid).

Recently tighter immigration controls in the UK have resulted in a more varied nature of migration routes. Alternative migration channels from Spain to the UK have also been fallen back upon and their illegal nature such as people smugglers and fake passports are pointers to the complexity of migration; however, it is worth mentioning that these migration routes are rarely travelled (James, 2005; McIlwaine, 2015). More recently, the arrival of Latin American students and professionals in the UK adds to the heterogeneous composition of LA migrants. It is noteworthy that many LA migrants enter the UK with tourist visas; however, their overstaying them leads them to an irregular status (ibid). In this light, certain nationality groups such as Ecuadorians,

Colombians, Bolivians and Brazilians find themselves in such status (see Wright, 2011; James, 2005; McIlwaine, 2016).

The above phenomena must also be taken on board as they can help us explain why people congregate in specific physical spaces given that they as well as high rents can also encourage domestic segmentation (Castles, 2002). Although Latin Americans are dispersed across London, certain boroughs that are often associated with poverty (Aldridge et al, 2013) such as Haringey and Southwark, for instance, have become the places with the largest concentration of Latin American migrants in London (Marquez Reiter and Martin Rojo, 2015). This last statement should be interpreted cautiously since it does not mean that all Latin Americans are necessarily poor but they may live in such area due to their intent to save money that they could remit back home (see McIlwaine 2016). In addition, there is a significant and evident presence in other areas such as Lambeth where there are restaurants and shops run by Latin American migrants. The conditions in which many of them live in these boroughs are inappropriate and often exemplify cases of overcrowding among different nationalities such as Ecuadorians, Paraguayans, Bolivians (see McIlwaine, 2011; McIlwaine, 2016, p. 29), and it is also documented that many of them live with people they do not know (Ramos, 2017, p. 6). In contrast to these living conditions, people from other nationalities such as Argentinians and Mexicans are usually based in Chelsea Westminster, Camden and Kensington, often because of their higher socioeconomic status (McIlwaine, 2016, p.17).

The presence of Latin Americans has also contributed to their political recognition and the emergence of Latin American-oriented organisations. As stated in chapters 1 and 2, Latin Americans have received recognition as an ethnic group in the above-mentioned boroughs where they are concentrated as well as in the borough of Islington (CLAUK, 2015). This means that they aim to underscore not only their presence but also their needs as they seek inclusion in terms of policy and services. In addition, organisations such as The Coalition of Latin Americans in the United Kingdom (CLAUK), Latin American House (LAH), the Indo American Refugee Organisation (IRMO), Latin American Women's Rights (LAWRS), Movimiento Ecuador en el Reino Unido (MERU) as well as el Teléfono de la Esperanza UK, etc., are some institutions that they have created and that attempt to address Latin Americans' needs. These range from offering workshops about labour rights among other services on which I will elaborate in chapters 5, 6 and 7 where we will learn of their role in context.

In light of the above, Latin American migration to the UK is a South to North migration that certainly draws attention to the global economic inequalities that exist today. As more people from developing countries are attracted to industrialised countries (see Martin, 2013), their

migration trajectories mainly reflect their disillusionment with sending societies in which a low income or the lack of both political instability and the rule of law usually acts as a major push migration factor (see McIlwaine, 2011). Their arrival, social and job insertion and lives in a receiving society such as the UK in a post-Brexit environment merit being observed and should therefore be contextualised within future migration policies that, as it has been historically demonstrated, have an effect on routes to travel and the identities and living conditions of migrants (see Somerville, 2018).

Latin American migration to the UK is an example of the complexities of present-day migration routes and channels, and a phenomenon that since 2000 has remained largely understudied (Block 2006; McIlwaine, 2011). Natural disasters, internal as well as external political and economic factors have damaged the societies and stability of countries of origin for decades and have transformed the social texture and interaction in both sending and receiving countries. Migration policies in recipient countries have also interacted with political and socioeconomic conditions of sending societies and have contributed to the intensification and orientation of migration outflows and Latin American immigrants' status. It is in this context where the distinction between the local and the global dilutes as processes of economic globalisation and neoliberal policies have surpassed borders and have had a harmful effect on the economic and political stability of non-elite groups of people. Thus, the above-mentioned factors draw attention to Latin American migrants' current contexts as their places and conditions of origin still bear an imprint upon their arrival in a global society. Nevertheless, migration from Latin America and other European countries where they have resided should be viewed as a strategy to which people resort in order to both circumvent economic adversities, join family and friends as well as look for better job opportunities in remote areas to improve their living conditions.

### **3.4 Community**

As noted in the previous section, Latin American migration to the UK is characterised by a complex interconnection of natural disasters as well as political and economic factors. These, encourage us to think of the varied motivations and resources with which they emigrated from their countries of origin, and, in this context, their interests, aspirations as well as socioeconomic backgrounds contribute to the diversification of what has been called the Latin American community; a concept on which I now concentrate.

Community has been defined as a construct that metaphorically depicts people living together and it is suggestive of favourable conditions and social spaces in which people cohabitate, "it evokes a comfortable place" (Bauman, 2001: 1). The latter argument can be further explained by

the premise that the word community also contains an affective element to it. It carries feelings of belonging and membership and a shared emotional connection and thus here it can be defined as “the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences” (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, p. 9). That is, people in a community could be “bound together by a common set of beliefs, values, practices, language and artefacts” (Block, 2006, p. 25). Under this interpretation, the notion of community rests upon the presence of commonalities, which can act as an incentive on people’s aspirations to come together for particular and shared interests. A case in point is the ethnic recognition that Latin Americans have achieved in the London boroughs that I mentioned in the last chapter and which suggests that feelings of belonging and mutual needs could also be mobilised for political representation. Furthermore, the organisations that they have founded to help those in need provides further evidence of a sense of community. However, processes that help us explain community formation in the context of Latin American migration need to be brought to the fore and put in a historical context.

Community formation in receiving societies involve a range of factors. These encompass economic, political and social causes as well as migrants’ motivations to be together in order to cater for their needs by the creation of businesses and different types of associations (see Castles and Miller 2009). The Latin American community and its gradual formation in London exhibit these traits. Roman Velazquez (1999) documents how individual Latin American entrepreneurs who settled in London started commercial initiatives that contributed to the visibility of Latin Americans in London. She states that Latin Americans by the creation of shops, small businesses and restaurants in areas around the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark began to gain presence; however, there are two spaces that are fundamental in the formation of the Latin American community: The Latin American House and the Elephant and Castle shopping centre (Roman Velazquez 1999).

The Latin American house, one of the first Latin American oriented places in London, emerges as a consequence of local policies that attempted to cater for minority groups in London in the mid 1980s. Roman Velazquez (1999) states that the labour-controlled Greater London Council (GLC) intended to address inequalities and injustices, which were due to class, race and ethnicity. At the same time, the GLC aimed to help and benefit the poor, women and ethnic groups by improving housing, creating jobs and providing transport for them (ibid). According to the author, it was in this historical moment in which the GLC provided funds to buy a building in Kilburn in which the Latin American house has been located and functioning since 1986 to solve some of the problems with which the presence of Latin Americans dealt. Nevertheless, the purchase of this building entailed political instability and economic pressures that to a great extent influenced its



acquisition and explain its location. The money to buy the house, £ 200,000, was granted close to a date when the GLC was to be abolished, which resulted in the speeding up of the purchase of the house and generated disagreements about its suitable location (Roman Velazquez 1999). Indeed, although the Latin American house has attempted to address many Latin Americans' diverse needs since its creation, its location may be problematic due to the geographical distance that it has with sites where they have a stronger presence.

Apart from the building acquired in Kilburn, there is another culturally and economically meaningful site that deserves attention. The Elephant and Castle shopping centre is currently identified as a place with a distinguishable Latin American presence that should also be contextualised in times of economic instability. The shopping centre was open in 1965 in Southwark, which was an area characterised with high unemployment and which was severely hit by the economic recession towards the end of 1980s (Hall, 1992 in Roman Velazquez 1999). The adverse economic situation at the time led to the closing of almost all the shops but it was also an element that contributed to the presence of Latin Americans in it. Low rent in the shopping centre was a stimulus to move into it at the same time that by means of loans they started their businesses, usually in locations that had been closed or had not been used for years and which they repaired themselves to open their shops (Roman Velazquez 1999). The gradual growth of Latin Americans in the shopping centre started in 1992 with the opening of *La Fogata* restaurant followed by Inara Travels whose manager played a central role in encouraging other Latin Americans to start their businesses in the shopping centre, and by 1994 ten Latin American shops were open (ibid). At the time of this research study there were more than 90 shops within the shopping centre and around it (see also Marquez-Reiter and Martin Rojo 2015; Paffey in press; McIlwaine 2016; Patiño-Santos and Marquez-Reiter 2018), and thus the Elephant and Castle shopping centre and its surrounding areas have become one of the iconic places where Latin Americans have created and have found employment as well as have in turn become an important part of the economy of the area. Furthermore, their presence and business activities also exhibit cultural practices that demonstrate how they have transformed, appropriated and resignified this space as many of them from different nationalities and backgrounds, as I noted above and was able to observe during my fieldwork, get together with their families and friends to eat and interact in Spanish in it. It must be noted, nevertheless, that the economic conditions in which a Latin American entrepreneurial spirit can be seen also sheds light on important distinctions that should not be obscured. Processes of globalisation have contributed both to the disembeddedness of traditional forms of collectivities from their traditional foundations and have engendered new notions of community of membership that are worthy of scrutiny (Sassen, 2002, p. 218).

In a globalising world where human mobility has intensified and economic inequality has increased, the term community may conceal important distinctions and particularities. Variables such as ethnicity, socioeconomic class, education capital, language variation, gender, migration trajectories and statuses could be found within one single nationality group or even regional origin (Guarnizo et al, 2003). This multiplicity of variables should still be delved into since despite their apparent fixity they are constantly negotiated and are factors that throw light on our understanding of how people relate to one another in various domains of social life. In other words, the complexity of present day societies forces us to observe social interaction within groups with common national ties that term themselves communities and that may exhibit hierarchical relations. For instance, McIlwaine (2008) notes that there is evidence of diverging loyalties in immigrants of Colombian origin in London. She reports mistrust among undocumented migrants who feared being reported to the Home office after disagreements that had usually started in the country of origin and that were often linked to contrasting political views (McIlwaine, 2008, p. 20). Additionally, it has been reported that exploitation and discrimination as well as feelings of envy also appear to influence their social relations and which are explained by distinctions of migration status and jobs (ibid: McIlwaine, 2016). These instances suggest what could be the superdiverse and multi-layered composition of social groups (see Vertovec, 2007), which demand attention particularly in a larger conglomerate of experiences and nationalities that make up the population under study.

In light of the above, it has become imperative to pay attention to a population whose heterogeneity is the norm and whose various worldviews, expectations, level of resources, and levels of social satisfaction and aspirations may influence a need for affiliation in a city such as London (see Kingston et al, 1999). The latter has been described as a multicultural city where a great diversity of nationalities and languages are encountered; but it has also been described as a complex site where there is a stratified class of professionals (see Sassen, 2002). In this stratified structure, many Latin American (non) professionals have also various levels of linguistic proficiency and exhibit a varied socioeconomic background, which have been determinant in their social and labour insertion and which adds to the complexity of stratification processes and interactions in such city and even with members of the same geographical origin. As it will be shown in chapters 5 and 6, there are practices of social distancing and tension among Latin Americans living in London, which suggests that their linguistic, educational, socioeconomic capital is also accompanied with values that could be grounds for either inclusion or exclusion (see O'Byrne, 2002). In this vein, the notion of community in a global city should also be interpreted as a construct that also produces context-based negotiations among its members as they may build their social relations with people belonging to the same socioeconomic class.

Another aspect to bring into this discussion is an ideology that contradicts the meanings and undermines the values that community evokes. As I stated in chapter 3, neoliberalism is an ideology that has penetrated many domains of social life at different scales as well as the way social relations are built. It promotes individualism, entrepreneurialism and is characterised by a market-driven logic (Harvey, 2005; Bourdieu, 1998) from which the Latin American community, as we will see in chapter 5, 6 and 7, is not free. As we saw in chapter 2, Marquez-Reiter and Patiño Santos' study (2017) on Latin American entrepreneurs provides us with a glimpse of the attitudes and discourses of personal gain that two Latin Americans exhibited. In this context, neoliberalism may have two interrelated detrimental effects on notions and practices of community. One of these effects is that feelings of belonging, membership and collectivity may be weakened by the individual-centred tenets that neoliberalism seeks to foster as a common-sense attitude towards life. In other words, neoliberalism may strip individuals off their community-oriented character and social ties with other individuals (Ramos Perez, 2004). Furthermore, neoliberalism and its meritocratic ideology may normalize the economic inequalities that members of a community deal with by inculcating indifference towards the others' troubles and it may lead to the atomisation of individuals (Chomsky, 2017).

The conception of community is accompanied with powerful images that are nestled in the emotional and in unifying symbols that influence people's gregarious nature. It fosters unity and equality. However, community formation in a host society also involves political and economic factors that force people to come together to address their economic and social needs, and the spaces of social interaction are not impregnable from three intertwined phenomena such as migration channels and social class as well as neoliberalism. The first has an impact on people's social identity that also influences access to jobs and that may result in the hierarchisation of social relations. The second involves a social and migration trajectory accompanied with (non) economic resources indicative of differences and inequalities that become evident in people's living conditions. In addition to this, a neoliberal ideology of individualism may sever the ties that bind people together since inequality and social disadvantage is viewed as a person's own responsibility. In this context, we may see a multi-layered depiction of community whose inner layers and dynamics may evidence stratification within stratification, and the presence of people from Latin America adds to the complex social texture and interaction in such a global city as London.



## Chapter 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, I provided a historical account of Latin American migration to the United Kingdom. I described a transcontinental movement motivated by political and socioeconomic factors from which Latin American migrants intend to escape as well as the aspirations they aim to accomplish in a new society. Additionally, the last chapter also referred to the concept of community, which is not only a term with which the population under study is known and with which my participants associate but a term whose meaning is not impregnable from social class distinctions and neoliberal ideologies to which I also referred in the previous chapter. As we move closer to the analysis of my participants' experiences, it is now necessary that I offer the reader a depiction of the fieldwork and its concomitant as well as ensuing processes.

This chapter will now concentrate on the various methods used to collect the information that makes up the analysis chapters. Its first section will describe the participant recruitment process of the study in which I will firstly refer to my assumptions and perceptions as a Latin American researcher as I entered the field before I mention the sites where I identified potential participants to be recruited to the study and the accompanying social implications of this process. I will also offer a description of my attempting to arrange meetings with and approaching Latin Americans in various sites across London, which was also accompanied with complexities on which I will elaborate below. Finally I will refer to the number and gender of the participants in this study as well as their complex migration experiences that have influenced my interactions with them.

The second section will concentrate on life story interviews as a data collection strategy. In it, I will describe the selection of my participants whose diverse characteristics such as age, gender, racial phenotype, etc., are included in a table in order to allow the reader to better understand their migration and social trajectories. I will then describe how the sites, the length and the language of the interviews were selected in order to provide a wide picture of the interview context. I will then move on to the justification for the selection of life stories as well as their benefits as a data collection strategy. Subsequently I will describe the interview interaction, which will be in turn linked to the adequacy of life stories to bridge the micro elements of the interview to the macro-determinants of social life. Finally this section will point to the human-centredness of life stories as they allow us to listen to people's needs and prerogatives. In a third section, I will detail the data selection process in which I will make reference to the role of the research

questions of this study accompanied with a perspective informed by Critical Discourse Studies in the data selection process. I will then detail each of the steps that I have taken for such process and subsequently will mention what I was able to identify through a close interaction with the data by also approaching them in an inductive manner. Finally this chapter concludes with my discussion on how I will analyse my participants' accounts. I will firstly point to the analytic instrumentality of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) in thematically organised interview excerpts. I will also refer to the criticism that CDS has received and that I will bear in mind when analysing my participants' discourse in the corresponding chapters. I will subsequently focus on van Dijk's sociocognitive approach as the method that is to guide and inform the following analyses, and such a method has been chosen as it will help me link the micro aspects of discourse that the participants produce to its macro aspects by defining the role of ideologies. The latter and their relevance in a sociocognitive approach will be subsequently discussed before I point to those features of discourse that I will examine as well as the rationale to analyse them in the following chapters.

## **4.2 Participant Recruitment and Ethical Implications**

My experience of doing fieldwork for a time span of five months was often accompanied with assumptions and values informed by sociohistorical experiences that have shaped my academic passions (see Blommaert and Dong, 2010b; Hammersley, 1995). Being a Latin American myself and speaking a common language would allegedly ease access to the social spaces that I set out to explore since language is an important constituent of social relations. However, it must be acknowledged that I also perceived my presence to resemble that of an outsider (see Düvell et al, 2009) due to my limited familiarity with such spaces. Thus to broker access to these sites without a gate keeper I turned to a number of strategies that to some extent could help me gain people's trust (see Sieber, 1992).

I attended talks and workshops organised by Latin American-oriented NGOs in their headquarters and distributed leaflets with a short description of the study for participant recruitment in the same sites. Likewise I paid casual visits to shopping and community centres, festivals, and markets where I talked to different people in Southwark, Lambeth and Newham. These visits and conversations were the conduit whereby I began to learn of Latin Americans' complex socioeconomic, linguistic and political realities, all of which required my cultural sensitivity. However, I often found the discrepancy between my presence as a researcher and their immediate economic needs in what often were their workplaces that I regarded as research sites. In a conversation with a Colombian woman who was selling shirts, jeans and handbags in a festival in Southwark, I was shown the contextual inadequacy of my research agenda since after

three or so minutes into the conversation, she asked me whether or not I was going to buy something from her given that she did not have much time to talk. This and other experiences reminded me that my research interests, thus, constantly needed to be mitigated and I needed to keep in mind my potential participants' varied socioeconomic conditions, social circumstances that could also be influential on future social interactions such as interviews.

The arrangement of interviews was concomitant with experiences that foregrounded the unpredictability of this process. For example, a gradual snowballing process evolved initially due to one of my participants' surprising openness to be interviewed and willingness to introduce me to her social circle. However, I neither met nor recruited all my participants through the same means. Serendipitous encounters also happened as I walked through the streets and visited markets of London, and at the same time people would contact me after having read the leaflets that I had distributed in the above-mentioned sites. My speaking Spanish was certainly a valuable vehicle for the above interactions as it allowed me to broker access and to some extent to be perceived as another Latin American; however, wanting to talk to people so they could share their stories with me was also an intricate process. That is, some potential participants changed their minds and decided not to participate in the study minutes before the interview while some others could not arrive at the site of the interview due to their jobs. In addition, sharing one's life story may generate social problems of which I believed I was conscious (see Blommaert, 2010b; O'Hara and O'Hara, 1994). As we will see in chapter 6, one of my participants lowered his voice as he recounted his experiences as an undocumented migrant and working with other Latin Americans in the service sector as a cleaner. His as well as other stories made me aware of the social responsibilities that I was to be entrusted as a Latin American researcher.

In addition to the above, the complexities that accompanied the interactions that I had with the ten female and six male participants recruited in the study presented me with both opportunities and challenges to understand complex migration experiences (see Berg, 2004 in O'Reilly, 2009: 12). These are neither linear nor stable since, as stated in chapter 3.2, some of them have lived and worked in Spain before coming to the UK and others have been in an irregular migration status. In addition to this, gender also played a significant role. As I was able to learn through my conversations with NGO volunteers, Latin American women have experienced domestic violence. This has had an effect on their mental health and social relations, which, as we will see in chapter 5 and 7, to a great extent also limited my encounters and interactions with them. Being a Latin American researcher, in this light, entails being confronted with personal biases, assumed knowledge and social imaginations that are repetitively destabilised by the multi-layered realities that people's stories disclose. The stories, thus, collected in this study may exhibit variegated needs and interests that inform the value-laden accounts that we have co-constructed.

### 4.3 Data Collection through Life Stories

Upon having interacted with many Latin Americans in different sites across London, I successfully arranged meetings with 16 people to be interviewed. The selection and number of these participants were not defined by a quantitative-oriented mindset or approach to the study and understanding of Latin Americans' sociolinguistic experiences in London but by one main motivation. This is the need to capture a diversity of voices, social and linguistic experiences that the participants could share and that could be explored in depth since previous studies have mostly concentrated on demographic aspects (see McIlwaine 2011; 2016) or the role of spaces in creating a sense of community (see Cock 2011) that nonetheless have left the multilayered-composition and diverse identities of the Latin American community unexplored. Thus I set out to recruit and invite participants from different nationalities whose varied background and contextualised stories brought to the fore the complexity of their social realities, their interrelations and their aspirations in a new society in order to cast light on the little explored heterogeneity that characterises it in a globalised context rife with inequalities. The participants' diverse identities are shown below.

Participants' Pseudonym	Nationality	Gender	Age (approx.)	Education	Race	Length of stay in the UK	Marital Status	Job/Occupation
Marcia	Brazilian-Italian	Female	45	M.A in Arts M.A in Education	Mixed	23 years	Married to an English man	Language teacher
Miguel	Venezuelan-Spanish	Male	44	High school	Mixed	3.5 years	Married (wife and daughter living in Venezuela).	Worked in a storage house and as a waiter in a Mexican restaurant
Karla	Chilean	Female	36	B.A in Journalism M.A in Anthropology	White	3 years	Engaged to a Scottish man (she held a spouse visa)	Volunteer and secretarial job at NGO
David	Ecuadorian-British	Male	38	B.A in Physical Education	Mixed	15 years	Married to Ecuadorian-British woman	Outsourced Cleaner in a London-based University
Irma	Ecuadorian-British	Female	36	High school	Mixed	16 years	Single	Ran her own event-management business directed to



								Latin Americans
Sharon	Colombian-British	Female	36	B.A in Business and Finance	Mixed	20 years	Married to Colombian-British man	Import and export business.
Diego	Colombian-British	Male	40	High school	Mixed	17 years	Married to high school educated, Colombian-British woman	Cleaner in Hospital
Alfonso	Venezuelan-British	Male	38	College (Technician)	Black	14 years	Divorced	Care assistant in hospital
Linda	Mexican-British	Female	45	B.A in Psychology	Mixed	26 years	Married to an English man	English teacher, domestic worker and ran her own antique bussiness
Mayra	Ecuadorian	Female	35	B.A in International Relations	Mixed	4 years	Married to Ecuadorian man	Part-time job at Ecuadorian embassy and Entreprenuer
Jazmin	Colombian-British	Female	36	M.A in Transport Management	Mixed	13 years	Divorced	Worked at tourism-promoting concierge
Sonia	Ecuadorian-Spanish	Female	33	High school	Black	6 years	Married to Spanish man	Network marketing
Mario	Peruvian-Spanish	Male	55	B.A in Accounting	White	2 months	Married to Peruvian-Spanish woman living in Spain	Unemployed
Andres	Colombian-British	Male	35	High school	Mixed	16 years	Married to Colombian-British woman	Care assistant and salsa-class instructor
Julia	Chilean-Spanish	Female	40	High school	White	2 years	Married to Chilean-Spanish man	Housewife
Sarah	Mexican	Female	38	High school	White	14 years	Divorced	Unemployed

The sites of the interviews are varied and their selection was not predetermined by the researcher. The interviews that I undertook took place in such London boroughs as Southwark and Lambeth among others, and the meeting places as well as the time of the interviews were

selected by the participants themselves since meeting with them hinged upon the nature and location of their work as well as their daily activities. Thus the interview places ranged from coffee shops, restaurants, train stations, pubs to the front yard of an abandoned house as well as the workplace of one of my participants. Each interview was tape-recorded and their length varied given the availability and willingness of my participants to share their life stories. They all amount to seventeen hours of tape-recorded interviews in Spanish since it is the first language of most of the participants, with the exception of Marcia from Brazil whose first language, as we will see in chapter 5, is Portuguese but her being schooled and six-year stay in Paraguay enabled her to speak Spanish confidently and fluently in the interview. Consequently such interaction with my participants in a common language ensured a more natural rapport and development of the interviews.

A life story interview was chosen over alternate options as data collection strategies. For instance, a structured interview was ruled out due to the rigid interaction it promotes between the researcher and the participant since its predetermined questions not only contradict the inductive nature of the study but leave no room for the participant to elaborate on their views (Pettersen and Durivage, 2008). Similarly, the choice of other approaches such as oral history and focus groups was discouraged due to their respective foci on specific past events, places or topics (See Abrams, 2010; Atkinson, 2002; Czarniawska, 2004). In this light, a life story interview took precedence over the above mentioned methods since the focus is the individual and “telling a life story can be one of the most emphatic ways to answer the question, “Who am I?”” (Atkinson, 2002, p.128). A life story interview allows us to explore the tellers’ social identities and to show “I am such and such a kind of person since I acted in this way” and is therefore a “social unit” that involves the constitution of the self (Linde, 1993, p. 21). In addition to this, it proves to be a highly interdisciplinary tool for both the analysis of social identities, sociological issues and for the examination of language and social practice since various discourse units surface as people tell and explain stories about their lives (see Linde, 1993; Mkhonza, 1995; Atkinson, 2002). For instance, it was through this interview method that I was able to capture my participants’ linguistic repertoire, which we will see in chapters 6 and 7.3, as they narrated their experiences in different social domains. Thus life stories lend themselves as a flexible and open-ended approach that captures language and identity in context and, unlike structured interviews and focus groups, to some extent undermines the researcher’s presence that could prescribe the direction and length of the interview.

At the onset of the interviews, I would pose an open-ended question, which elicited stories with topics, and experiences that I did not anticipate but that I would pursue as my participants touched upon them with follow up questions. By doing so, it must be acknowledged, I contributed

to the co-construction of their stories by providing more prompts to my participants for a more elaborated description of certain events (see De Fina and Georgeakopoulou, 2012); but such an approach enabled me to develop an unrestricted and more dynamic exchange with my participants whose perspectives of relevance were the predominant voice that dictated the direction of the narrative (see Esterberg, 2002; Hammersley, 2013). In this light, my participants' selection of experiences provided vivid accounts of their migration trajectory to which I listened attentively in order to not impinge upon their private lives. These are reflective of their migration trajectories as well as the social circumstances in which they speak; in this sense, subjectivity is also present in their stories and should also be recognised as an element that plays a significant part in their construction (see Padgett, 2008).

In light of the above, the Latin Americans immigrants' personal accounts drew me to both the micro experience of the narrative production and to macro aspects such as the political, the historical and economic aspects that influenced their perspective and how they voiced their experiences (see Pavlenko, 2007). For instance, as we will see in chapter 7, Sarah, a Mexican immigrant mother narrated how she physically fought with social services staff when they attempted to take her British-citizen daughter from her while Sarah's visa on compassionate grounds was being processed. This and other life stories such as that of Peruvian-born Mario who lost his house and whose precarious economic situation in Spain after the 2008 economic crisis motivated him to move to England confirm that life stories can help us link the micro aspects of the personal experience to larger socioeconomic and political factors that directly affect the life conditions of people (see Goodley et al, 2004).

However, the value of life stories is not restricted to its methodological instrumentality. Life stories are also human centred since they could have a mitigating effect on the adverse experiences that the Latin American immigrants in this study have narrated, and they have been the vehicle through which they have brought forth their need to communicate their experiences (see Atkinson, 2002). In this vein, Mario's interview, for instance, explicitly describes the loneliness that his inability to speak English forced upon him prior to the interview but after which he even expressed his gratitude for being heard or as he said 'thank you for listening, I long needed to be heard'. Thus life stories help us depict people's private realities and are the means through which they exercise their prerogative to voice their opinion as well. Therefore the life stories that the participants have shared describe who they are in various social domains and they position the tellers as the main voice of their complex experiences. The latter, however, comprise a wealth of topics and situations that the space restrictions and the analytical aims of the present study cannot address.

## 4.4 Data Selection

After having described the challenges that involve doing fieldwork and entering different sites of the interviews as well as the method and the usefulness of the life stories to capture my participants' accounts, this section now concentrates on how I have selected the data that I will analyse in the next chapter.

Narrative responses in an unrestricted manner can produce a wealth of personal experiences that give voice to relevant social situations. However, decisions must be made as to the choice for the selection of data for analysis, which must be justified by what one is after (Paton, 2002). In this light, keeping in sight the research questions of this study in conjunction with a view of language informed by Critical Discourse Studies has been an instrumental strategy for both sifting through large amounts of seemingly unconnected pieces of information and selecting units of analysis respectively. The latter are themes that not only reflect the analytical aims of the study but exhibit discourse structures and practices that represent a number of social issues and inequalities that are not to be taken for granted (Wodak, 2016, p. 3; van Dijk, 2016, p. 63) and that the present study subsequently seeks to scrutinise.

After having transcribed each interview verbatim, I firstly conducted a word by word reading of each of them in order to make sense of the data, immerse myself in them and understand who is telling what as well as the places and the participants in the situations that the Latin American immigrants in this study describe. As this meticulous reading progressed I would thus manually highlight key words and phrases that could account for their functions such as categorisation, evaluation, in-group vs outgroup formation, perceptions of language, the selection of which was certainly influenced by a CDS perspective for which, as I have discussed in chapter 2.3, language use is never neutral (Van Dijk, 1997; 2001). Consequently, I would then take notes on the margins of the texts at the same time that I created headings that could potentially help me thematically organise the data. I would repeatedly undertake such systematic reading through the same lens but it is worth mentioning that I also approached my data in an inductive fashion since the analytical aims of the study could change as it progressed.

Every step of each of the processes aforementioned in turn lent itself to the discovery of salient patterns across the texts such as the descriptions of the interactions among Latin American immigrants in the service sector, the negative self-presentation of being an immigrant and language ideologies. These are specific themes that this study did not originally set out to explore but that now form a central part of it since they generate knowledge about relevant social issues and capture the contextual meaning of accounts that at the time of the interview could have escaped my attention. Thus the corresponding themes have been grouped together under

headings that will also frame the ensuing in-depth analysis that responds to the inductive nature and aims of the present study; research decisions that, as I have discussed, may be biased by my own experiences of migration, values and position as a Latin American. Hence my own subjectivities are still to be confronted with epistemological arguments made through the approach within Critical Discourse Studies on which I will rely (see Hammersley, 1995).

#### **4.5 A Critical Discursive Analysis of Data**

As noted in the previous section, the data selection process involved a detailed reading of the word by word-interviews transcribed that led to the organisation of them into themes, but these are still to be examined through a particular lens within Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) on whose analytical instrumentality I will elaborate below.

The particular use of language of the Latin American immigrants in this study lends itself to a critical analysis of their personal experiences. The latter are social situations that exhibit power relations that lead to the polarisation and fragmentation of social relations, exclusion and discrimination, and their occurrence as many other social phenomena are subject to critical investigation through a CDS approach (Wodak and Meyer, 2016; van Dijk, 2001). In this light, my motivations, on the one hand, to select an approach of CDS as method of investigation lie in its problem-oriented nature that probes critically into social inequality that is expressed explicitly and implicitly in language use (Wodak, 2001; Van Dijk, 2016). On the other hand, by looking at Latin American immigrants' metalinguistic discourse and the way they self-present, interpret events and categorise people via language use, we gain valuable insights into their identities, ideologies and social relationships with themselves and other groups of people since language use is socially constitutive (see Wodak, 2013; van Dijk, 2013 in Wodak and Mayer, 2016). Furthermore, as I mentioned in chapter 2.2, the tools CDS offers allow me to take on a critical attitude to problematise assumptions, commonsensical ideas and views in discourse since they can become reified in the ways we regulate and organise our social interactions (van Dijk 2001; Machin and Mayr, 2012).

CDS, nevertheless, has not escaped criticism. This categorises it as selective of texts known to be contentious, as putting a high price on textual analysis or as either too ambitious for social change or invalid as a discipline (see Blommaert, 2005; Simpson and Mayr, 2010; Hammersley, 1996; Jones, 2007). It is also criticised for putting a strong emphasis on textual analysis disregarding context (Blommaert, 2005; Blommaert, 2001). In this vein, Breeze also notes that sometimes critical discourse analysts have not paid enough attention to aspects and characteristics of the immediate context where discourse is produced, "which has led to interpretations which are

pragmatically inappropriate or remote from the concerns of the participants” (2011, p. 520). This means that context within CDS studies is often interpreted as the macro-context into which analysts make huge jumps leaving the day-to-day experience and the situation in which social actors produce discourse ignored. Such criticisms should neither discourage analysts from pursuing what they are after nor should demotivate them to abandon discourse analysis as a method of analysis. Rather, such observations should be taken on board, as I will attempt to do so in this study, in order to both capture the participants’ discourses in situ and incorporate the social encounters and interactions with them so I offer a richer description and critical analysis of their narrated realities. Furthermore, by considering context we can attempt to gain better insight into the participants’ various and intricate social practices and relations that could be explored by the particular version of CDS to be employed in this study.

For the current analysis, I will draw on Van Dijk’s sociocognitive approach. This approach is one in which the interpretation of the relationship between discourse and society is mediated by mental models (Van Dijk, 2001; 2016). These are subjective representations of individual personal experiences categorised as situation models and context models (*ibid*). I will say more about these two below. According to van Dijk (2016, p. 66; 2014, p. 49), mental models are multimodal and embodied, and define and control human beings’ perception and social interaction as well as the production and comprehension of discourse. They are multimodal in the sense that they may feature information of social experiences that encompass the visual, the emotional, the auditory, and the evaluative (*ibid*). In other words, mental models are the interface between sociocultural experience and discourse that represents or constructs social events from the perspective of an individual (*ibid*). In addition to this, mental models also feature social cognition. This is a more general, abstract knowledge about the world shared with other individuals with whom we may also share attitudes about, for instance, immigration (van Dijk 2016, p. 67). In this vein, mental models do not only construe or interpret personal experiences in a seemingly isolated cognitive domain but on the basis of a partial social cognition (*ibid*).

As noted above, mental models are categorised as situation and context models. Situation models, also called semantic models, “represent the situation a discourse is about” (Van Dijk, 2016, p. 67). Such models, which are also subjective representations of events, people or actions, account for implications and presuppositions that can be derived from the explicit information a discourse contains or that a communicative exchange conveys (van Dijk, 2014). That is, language users draw inferences about a topic or a situation given that situation models define the gist of text and talk (*ibid*). For instance, producing a phrase such as “we’ve got a situation” makes us think of, infer an event or action laden with a particular connotation. In this light, semantic models also define the meaningfulness and coherence of a situation. That is, a language user may

want to talk about a personal experience or a topic by producing sequences of sentences that express temporal or causal relations between events or that have functional meaning relations (van Dijk 2014).

In addition to the situation models discussed above, discourse production in a sociocognitive approach also involves paying attention to context models. These are also called pragmatic models and they account for the appropriateness of the communicative event, how a personal experience should be described in a specific context. For instance, the way we relate an accident to a friend will differ from the way we tell it to a physician since these mental models organise the selection and production of information by keeping track of our intentions in discourse as well as the setting and the participants of the situation language users describe (see Van Dijk 1998; 2014; 2016). In this manner at the micro level of discourse production we frame how Latin American immigrants verbalise their personal social experiences using particular ways of speaking such as positive or negative (self) presentation, categorisation, etc. that exhibit how they understand and construe them in particular and contextually relevant social environments. Nevertheless, their individual experiences must be located in wider spatiotemporal frames with other social actors with which they interact.

Latin American immigrants' are members of larger social groups with whom they may or may not share ideologies. The latter, as stated in chapter 2.7, are a system of ideas with a social formation, "worldviews that constitute social cognition; complexes of representations and attitudes with regard to certain aspects of the social world" (van Dijk 1998; 1993, p. 258 in Wodak 2016, p. 9) and they are the basis of knowledge and attitudes of certain groups such as neoliberals, feminists and other groups (van Dijk, 2001, p. 115). In a sociocognitive approach of CDS, ideologies influence language users' mental models since they affect how people plan, understand and interpret their social practices as well as they influence the representation of basic characteristics of social groups such as their identity, values and norms (van Dijk, 2016). In this vein, Latin American immigrants' discursive representations of their personal experiences do not occur in a vacuum since they contain traces of ideologies that contribute to the definition of the communicative event (see van Dijk 1998; 2016). Thus by recognising such traces we learn of the various social identities and practices that influence Latin American immigrants' relations amongst themselves and with other social actors, phenomena that can be criticised through particular features of their discourses.

It must be said that a full, detailed analysis of Latin American immigrants' discourse is not an ambition of this study since such aspiration exceeds its aims and it is not a plausible result of CDS approaches (see Van Dijk, 1985; 2001). Consequently, I will carry out the subsequent analyses by

focusing on the global and local meanings of the participants' discourse. The former, as suggested above, stand for what the participants' discourse is about; that is, the topics that are intuitively derived from the participants' word choices and that characterise the meaning of a discourse as speakers choose to foreground or background information that resonates with their interests (van Dijk, 2000; 2001; 2016). The latter, the local meanings, account for lexical meanings, pronouns, word repetition, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies such as *topoi*, disclaimers, hedging, implicitness, presuppositions, implicatures and other argumentative moves that help us scrutinise the participants' self-presentation and group description such as other-descriptions as well as language ideologies. It must be added that both global and local meanings will be under analysis depending on the research questions that I attempt to answer in each of the analysis chapters and thus there will be some units of analysis that may be more contextually relevant than others.

The units of analysis mentioned above still need further detailing. By lexical meanings, I refer to lexical choices or items that may reveal people's beliefs about another person or social groups as in "benefit scroungers" or "bogus asylum seekers" that typically result in negative other representation (van Dijk, 2006). In addition, I will also look at pronouns such as the generic use of *you*, *tú* in Spanish, and the both explicit and implicit use of the *We vs Them* pair that speakers use to either appear neutral in an attempt to gain social distance or draw boundaries between ingroups and outgroups. By disclaimers and hedging, I mean those words in context that the speaker employs to save face as a form of positive self-presentation and those which are used to avoid directness, mitigate or dilute the force of a statement (Machin and Mayr 2012). I will also pay attention to presuppositions and implicatures. These are respectively here defined as meanings that are assumed as given in a text and what the speaker implies or suggests beyond the literal meaning of what is explicitly stated (see van Dijk 2006).

Furthermore, I will also concentrate on two important rhetorical strategies, one of which is metaphor. By metaphor I mean the use of language to "refer to something other than what it was originally applied to or what it literally means, in order to suggest some resemblance or make a connection between the two things" (Knowles and Moon 2006, p.3). In other words "the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff and Johnson 2002, p. 5). It must be noted that the use of metaphor is pervasive in everyday language and it carries social significance. Lakoff and Johnson (2002) have studied and have demonstrated how a metaphor can transcend its rhetorical purpose in that it regulates our habitual functioning and structures social relations given that the way people choose to talk about social phenomena contributes to a certain kind of understanding of what society is (Antaki 1994). In a context associated with this study such as migration, Van Dijk (2006, p.738) has underscored the social relevance of metaphors and has referred to how "abstract, complex, unfamiliar, new or



emotional meanings may thus be made more familiar and more concrete". Common metaphors to represent migration, for instance, are the use of military metaphors which are used for representing immigrants and refugees as threats and as an invasion by big numbers of dangerous "aliens" or "parasites" (ibid, inverted commas in original). I argue that the study of the use of metaphor in this research study is socially relevant not only as a discursive strategy but as a way of understanding what speakers can socially accomplish in terms of their social relations, alignments and experiences in context in which other discursive strategies are concomitantly employed.

The second important unit of analysis in the participants' discourses is the use of topoi. They are here understood as "central parts of argumentation that belong to the premises. They justify the transition from the argument(s) to the conclusion. Topoi are not always expressed explicitly but can be made explicit as conditional or causal paraphrases such as "if x, then y" or "y because x" (Reisigl 2014, p.75). In other words, topoi are "the common-sense reasoning typical for specific issues" as well as "the most typical elements of the argumentative and persuasive nature of debates on immigration, integration and the multicultural society" (van Dijk, 2000, p.97-98 in Blackledge 2005, p.68). Having this definition in mind, both the implicit and explicit production of topoi for the analytical purposes of this study should also be identified and captured within three main types: topoi of culture, topoi of history and topoi of burden.

Topoi of culture refer to essentialising characteristics attributed to a group of people as in "problems arise because a group's culture is as it is (Blackledge, 2005, p. 70). An instance of this was given by Mexico's former president, Enrique Peña Nieto, who stated that corruption in Mexico was a cultural problem and not one associated with the particular interests of political parties or specific actors in positions of power (Proceso 2014). Topoi of history are here interpreted as an argumentation strategy intended to show that a present situation can be relevantly compared to earlier events (positive or negative) in history" and that therefore history teaches us a lesson; that is, people's attitudes, present-day events are explained and reduced to an alleged law of history (see van Dijk, 2003). The direct or indirect numerical representation of immigrants is typically related to the topoi of burden. This may also be articulated by a view that depicts immigrants as either passive or negatively agentive in the sense that too many of them will undermine or abuse the resources or benefits that a host society provides. We will see instances of these in chapter 5 and 6.

The decision to analyse the above-mentioned features in individual chapters lie in two main reasons. The first reason, as stated in chapter 2.2, is based on the observation that these are forms of discourse that can to some extent be subject to speaker control (Van Dijk, 2001). The

second reason is explained by their analytic usefulness that can allow me to both account for the participants' language ideologies and capture other intersecting, overlapping ideologies such as class and neoliberalism that emerge in their discourses, and which allows, it is worth emphasising, for the connections between the multiple dimensions of discourse and society as well as an examination of their social relations and realities.

In addition to the units of analysis mentioned above, a concept on which I will also draw in order to capture the multidimensionality of discourse is interdiscursivity (Fairclough 1993). This concept, on which I will elaborate below, derived from Bakhtin's heteroglossia and then was developed by Kristeva's intertextuality. As to heteroglossia, Bakhtin (1981) writes:

"The living utterance, having taken shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance, it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276).

His interpretation of language, or more specifically of the utterance as being interwoven and in interaction with other dialogic threads enables us to think of, understand and view discourse as a verbal practice that is not directly our own but also associated with reference to another source, full of transmissions and interpretations of other people's words (see Bakhtin 1981, p. 338). Kristeva develops this idea further. She uses the concept of intertextuality by which she means "the insertion of history into a text and of this text into history" (Kristeva 1986, p. 39). Intertextuality is, in other words, "reference to the same events as the other texts or the reappearance of a text's main argument in another text" (Wodak 2009, p. 319). In this vein, such a concept functions as an optic through which we locate and recognise discourse in a historical frame in which there has been an interaction of interrelated social voices. These ideas, as stated above, have also derived in what Fairclough calls interdiscursivity. He defines it as "the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth" (Fairclough 1993, p. 84). The relevance and analytical instrumentality of such concepts in the context of this research study lies in that they help us become aware and identify that the discourses that the participants (re)produce voice other ways of speaking of social reality and intertwine with other discourses that, as stated above, are not necessarily our own but come from other sectors of society which we cohabit. In this vein, interdiscursivity in this study can also allow us to see how some of the participants' discourse challenges or helps sustain a social order by contesting, negotiating or accepting certain social identities. For instance, as we will see in chapter 5, the participants' depiction of immigration voice and reproduce discourses that are also found and

come from other sources such as the media in which the figure of the immigrant is negatively constructed and is associated with danger and illegality.

The discursive representations of social events that the participants depict through specific verbal choices are worthy of scrutiny. They allow us to shed light on how they construct their identities, their social relations and how they make sense of their experiences in context. The latter is complex and dynamic, and, as stated above, should not be disregarded in the analysis of their discourse since it constitutes the participants' day-to-day lived reality that we intend to understand.



## Chapter 5 Migrant Identities

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I move away from the macro picture of Latin American migration to the UK to concentrate on a micro examination of the different identities that emerge in the participants' life stories collected in this research study. The following three chapters contain individual accounts of the sixteen Latin American immigrants interviewed in this project and who narrate their social, work and linguistic experiences in different domains in London. As to this chapter, it aims to serve as a canvas against which the various migrant identities in this work help us gain insight into how the participants of this study discursively construct themselves. That is, by looking at how members of the Latin American community use language to talk about immigration and self-present, we will begin to see divergent social alignments and identities that both constitute their social relations and exhibit asymmetrical realities. Thus the subsequent analysis will also shed light on the different and stratified social structures in which Latin American immigrants live in a receiving society.

In addition, this chapter will help us address the first research question posed for the aims of this study; how do Latin American migrants self-present in the social spaces they have inhabited in a receiving society? In order to address this and the subsequent research questions, it is worth remembering what I mentioned in sections 2.2 and 2.3 of this study about the relation between language and identity; it is interpreted as contextually constructed, relational and attributive (Miller, 2000; Joseph, 2004; Edwards, 2009) and that language use plays a decisive role in the genesis and construction of social conditions and interactions (Barker and Galasinski, 2001, p. 65). That is, language is regarded as a social practice that is a mostly intentional human activity (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 8).

It is in this light that I will firstly introduce five of the sixteen research participants. These are Marcia from Brazil, Miguel from Venezuela, Karla from Chile and David and Irma from Ecuador. Their introduction will be preceded by how I met them in order to contextualise and locate their lives in London before I move on to the micro analysis of their experiences. In order to examine the latter, as I said in chapter 4, I will draw on the tools offered by a sociocognitive approach within critical discourse studies and concentrate on rhetorical tropes such as metaphors and topoi. Other units of analysis such as lexical items, implications, modality, disclaimers, implicatures and hedging will also be under scrutiny, and I will draw on the concept of interdiscursivity as the participants talk about their lives in London. In addition to this, we will also gain insight into how the length of stay, education, social and economic capital seems to influence

the self-presentations of the participants as Marcia and Karla speak of a reality and thus construct identities that diverge from those of Miguel, David and Irma respectively. Marcia's language use exhibits interdiscursive elements that voice negative representations of immigration found and originated in other sectors of society as well as other immigration countries, and her self-presentation as a successful individual in adapting to her new society suggests that she distances from features that allegedly defines who an immigrant is. Furthermore, Karla's discourses also show elements of interdiscursivity since they contain rhetorical strategies that exhibit a discourse of concern about immigration on which I will elaborate below. In Karla's case, I will take into account her racial phenotype as a construct that intersects with social and cultural capitals that also help us understand her self-presentation and thus the social position from which she speaks and that in turn illustrates inequality in the Latin American community. Also Marcia's and Karla's discourses suggest an ideology of an economic principle such as neoliberalism as the type of conventional knowledge that justifies people's presence in a host society where the migrant is presented as either a passive object or an agent whose social practices are negatively evaluated and from which both Marcia and Karla through disclaimers and other discursive strategies distance themselves.

The remaining discourses in this section also carry negative overtones about being an immigrant and they draw our attention to the social consequentiality of language use when the participants self-present as illegals. Miguel's self-presentation as vulnerable is illustrative of his experience of migration as an event of misfortune that is concomitant with a social dispossession and downward mobility explained by economic circumstances. As to David and Irma, their self-presentations as illegals draw our attention to two interrelated discursive elements, one of which is the interdiscursivity of voices of illegality that they reproduce. The second element pertains to the implication contained in their discourses in the sense that they suggest a precondition of criminality as a normalised way of designating a presence that reproduces the topos of suspicion embodied by the social behaviour their discourses describe. However, we will see that such a lexical choice as illegal blurs transcendental distinctions such as deportation and removal that could determine the conditions in which they can stay and re-enter the country. The discourses here gathered reflect a negative social meaning attributed to the figure of the migrant as well as reveal social identities and relations in stratified spaces discursively constructed.

## 5.2 Voices of Immigration of Latin American immigrants

### Marcia

As a result of my observations, participations in workshops and conversations in cultural events with Latin Americans in various London boroughs, I gradually began to interact with people who through a snowballing process allowed me to meet more Latin Americans who I could recruit to this study. It was through one of the participants of this study that I was put in touch with Marcia. After a number of emails, text messages and re-scheduled meetings due to her availability, we were able to meet near her workplace in Beckenham, London. Since the moment Marcia and I met, she showed an animated and open personality and immediately started speaking in Spanish to me, an interaction that developed spontaneously before, during and after the interview.

Marcia is a mixed-background woman who was born in Brazil to an Italian father and a Brazilian mother. At the age of ten, she and her parents lived in Paraguay where she attended school for six years and consequently she learnt Spanish in addition to the languages she grew up speaking with her parents, Italian and Portuguese. Subsequently they moved back to Brazil and after she finished her university studies there, she moved to London to study a Master's Degree in Arts that she supported through her cleaning and waiting jobs in fast food restaurants. Later on, she obtained a second MA in education. In such jobs, she met other Latin Americans with whom she shared a flat and interacted in Spanish and who she described as a strong support in times of adversity and made the work environment more relaxed and at times festive. At the time of the interview, she worked as a language teacher of Portuguese, Italian and Spanish in a school in London and was married to an English man with whom she had three daughters. She has been in England for twenty-three years.

In the interview, Marcia touched upon a number of topics. One of which was that she decided not to take British citizenship since she said that it was a way to avoid social pressure and be herself even though she said that she had British values and ways of behaving that she described as a body language that is not as lively or expressive as that of Latin Americans. She also narrated the way she felt in a receiving society where a referendum to leave the European Union was to take place. I then asked her about her perceptions of immigration in this context since, as I have argued in section 4.3, her life story is not impervious from larger socio-political processes (see Goodley et al, 2004).

esta generación ahora viene con la idea de que el migrante es una cosa mala es una basura que te están tirando en tu puerta y en la época en que yo vine aquí el inmigrante era necesario para la economía ellos estaban desesperados había mucho trabajo y poca gente para trabajar<sup>1</sup>...

In the excerpt above, Marcia reports what she perceives are the prevailing attitudes towards immigration; that is, attitudes that echo wider discourses of immigration such as the ones disseminated by the media that remind us of the interdiscursivity of different social voices that I mentioned in chapter 4 and that exhibit an ideological representation of it. As to the interdiscursive element, Marcia's depiction of who an immigrant is echoes and brushes against other texts that are not strictly hers (see Bakhtin, 1981; Fairclough 1993); that is, immigration is portrayed through the typical lens of the tabloid press as the main source that she voices. Furthermore, in her depiction, the prominence of a particular topic accompanied with a frequently used rhetorical trope in media texts deserves attention. For instance, the organising topic of Marcia's depiction is that of the immigrant as a passive object, a representation that is reinforced by the phrases, *es una cosa mala es una basura que te estan tirando en tu puerta*. These in turn foreground the metaphor the immigrant is a pollutant, which objectifies the presence of immigrants and present them as unwanted outside one's doorstep. The use of the generic you in the above phrase is also noteworthy but I will discuss it in more depth in the last excerpt where it is used repetitively. As to the metaphor, *es una basura*, its relevance lies in the fact that, as I stated in chapter 4.5, it transcends its rhetorical purpose in the sense that it regulates our habitual functioning and structures social relations (see Lakoff and Johnson, 2003; Cisneros, 2008; Knowles and Moon, 2006) since the way people talk about social phenomena contributes to a certain kind of understanding of what society is (Antaki, 1994, p. 102).

Furthermore, it is interesting to see that Marcia's description provides us with the setting of the attitudes to which she points; that is, temporal frames, *ahora* and *en la epoca que yo vine*, where she locates perceptions about immigration and herself respectively. The latter adverb introduces phrases such as *era necesario para la economía, mucho trabajo, poca gente para trabajar*, which foreground the topos of money as the main ideology that informs her account above and that is used to explain why the presence of immigrants was justified then. It must be noted that Marcia reports a description of immigration that is not only found in the UK and it thus deserves to be connected to ideological discursive representations promoted in other immigration countries.

Santa Anna (2002), for instance, has studied the metaphorical representation of Latinos in media discourse in the USA and has highlighted how it shaped public perceptions and polarised social relations. In that context Santa Anna (2002) points to racist and debasing depictions of immigrants given that the dehumanising discourse resulted in what and not who immigrants are. Returning to the case of the UK, other studies have reported that media representation of migration has concentrated on a discourse of concern about high levels of immigration (see Allen, 2016). Nonetheless, the role of the media in shaping public opinion does not seem to be determinant in such a context but it still demands attention since it is both argued that most of



the information we get comes from them (see van Dijk, 2016; Allen, 2016) and will continue to appear further below in Marcia's and Karla's perceptions of immigration. As Marcia's description progressed in the interview, she acknowledged that politics in immigration countries is not human-oriented but dominated by a money-centred view. Interestingly she said that if it was in her power to change it she would do it but there seems to be ambivalence between her desire to change such a view and what she subsequently said.

yo tuve la suerte de ser de una generación de que que aquí ellos necesitaban de los inmigrantes y hoy no necesitan porque no pueden pagarles la casa del gobierno el sistema de salud está empezando a no funcionar o sea las cosas que eran buenas hoy ya no son buenas<sup>ii</sup>...

In this excerpt Marcia self-presents as a lucky person who felt welcomed in the UK and, as we have seen above, her description contains temporal frames in which she not only differentiates what her receiving society needed and what it no longer needs but apart from constructing a polarised discourse, it presents such situation as an assertion, *hoy no necesitan*. In addition to this, her account of immigrants both resonates with that of the first excerpt and reinforces a description of their presence as passivized and undesirable. For instance, her use of such phrases as *no pueden pagarle la casa del gobierno* and *el sistema de salud está empezando a no funcionar*, seems to be informed by the topos of the immigrant as a numerous, heavy burden for the state since the former phrase implies that immigrants are recipients of social housing provided by the government, and the latter that they are the social agents that threaten to undermine such institutions as the public health service. Moreover, it is also worth noting Marcia's implicit depiction of the role of the state. It is painted as the bona fide provider of help that despite itself cannot offer assistance to what is suggested as excessive numbers of newcomers, which reproduces a disclaimer as in we would like to welcome you but there are too many of you.

Marcia's above description, nevertheless, begs to be examined in a broader historical and social frame. According to some studies documenting immigration to the UK, negative perceptions and attitudes about immigration are not new. Blinder and Allen (2016, p. 4), for instance, report that since 1964 the majority of people in Britain have believed that there are too many immigrants and that they and their descendants have faced hostile attitudes for decades (Panayi, 2010, p. 203). Additionally, the passivized depiction of the immigrant that Marcia reproduces is also contestable given that it has been reported that immigrants are economically active and that they pay more in taxes than they receive in welfare (The Royal Geographic Society, 2008, p. 9; Dustmann and Frattini, 2013; Wadsworth, 2017). In this context, Marcia's description intimates two relevant intertwined discursive and social elements. On the one hand, her word choices, as stated above, index the interdiscursivity of texts since it points to another source of information and thus connote interpretations of immigration and events that are not strictly hers and which

are not limited to our current times given that they echo those found in other texts historically reproduced. On the other hand, even though she voices a version of immigration that the media characterise, her depiction also suggests a class-based view of it that we can peruse below. When asked about how she felt in this context, she responded as follows.

a mí yo siento que personalmente el el cómo te voy a decir el nombre de inmigrante no me sirve más porque creo que ya pasé de este. periodo de adaptación y como que *I made it* ¿no? vamos a ponerlo así ¿no? yo soy parte de esto pero además que soy yo tan diferente y que ya...ya me incorporé en la sociedad yo creo que una vez para un inmigrante tener suceso es integrarse en su sociedad en la sociedad que lo recibe yo creo que ese es el suceso<sup>iii</sup> ...

Marcia, in this excerpt, openly rejects the name of the immigrant and her description conjures up a story of success that involved going through what she calls a stage of adaptation and incorporation into her local society. Interestingly the process to which she refers is presented as a concluded action that is accompanied by values that underscore her own agency. In other words, instances of an English phrase, *I made it*, as well as a reflexive verb, *me incorporé*, in the simple past tense are not only illustrative of a finite process but of a social behaviour indicative of her own social and cultural accomplishment, and as she discursively moves on to make an assumption, *yo creo*, as to what being a successful migrant means, she reinforces that sense of an individual's agency, *tener suceso es integrarse*. It is evident that in this phrase, the word *suceso* is taken as a cognate for the word success, which means *éxito* in Spanish, that in turn reminds us of Marcia's linguistic repertoire, which I will follow up in Chapter 7, that in this account emerged but it did not prevent her from expressing her idea. The latter seems to echo an ideology of immigration that points to beliefs about properties of immigrants who should be responsible for their own integration to a host society (van Dijk, 2016; Ager and Strang, 2008). However, what does integration mean?

In the interview, Marcia did not specify what integration signifies, and to some authors there does not seem to be an agreement about what constitutes it in a world of mobility and flows of people (Grzymala-Kazłowska and Phillimore, 2017). However, her biographic information can help us draw a conjecture of what it may mean to her. As stated above, Marcia holds two MAs and has a job that generates an income for her and her family and has access to an English-speaking social circle of friends with whom she reports to interact frequently and that she was able to develop through her husband with whom she lives in a house of their own. In this context, integration for Marcia seems to be synonymous with a particular lifestyle in which she has an income, a property and a social life that is oriented towards the host society. Interestingly the accumulation of cultural, social and economic capital may explain why she openly does not self-present as an immigrant, and it points to differentiated access to resources that construct a class-based figure

of the immigrant. As the interview went on, she then continued to describe perceived attitudes towards immigration.

hoy el inmigrante es una cosa que no quieres en tu jardín que no quieres que llegue y te tome más dinero de tu país porque está usando tus escuelas y tu hospital y yo creo que aquella época nosotros nos sentíamos que teníamos el poder financiero como se dice<sup>iv</sup>...

We have seen in the previous excerpts how Marcia reproduces a media discourse that paints immigrants disparagingly, which, as stated above, exhibits interdiscursive features and is not limited to our current times, it is “the reappearance of a text’s main argument in another text” (Wodak 2009, p.319). In this excerpt, such discourse again becomes evident in a conspicuous metaphor evoked in *es una cosa que no quieres en tu jardín*. It conjures up the nation as home metaphor (Billig, 1995; Knowles and Moon, 2009) in the sense that the nation is discursively constructed as a property that must be protected from a foreign body; an unwanted weed that is to decimate what is cultivated in our territory. As Marcia continues to describe what current attitudes towards immigration are through a discourse feature such as *tu* employed as a generic possessive pronoun and repetitively used in *tu país*, *tus escuelas* and *tu hospital*, she also seems to achieve an interesting implicature that allows her to keep face. The generalised conception of the immigrant in the above excerpt functions as a disclaimer that enables Marcia to distance herself from the attitudes that she depicts given that she appears to be reporting what public opinion is and not hers. In this light, she self-presents neither as an anti-immigrant individual nor as an immigrant.

However, by temporally locating her discourse, we gain a valuable insight into how she negotiates her identity and with whom she associates, and we can do this by looking at phrases such as *en aquella época* and *nos sentíamos que teníamos el poder financiero*. The former provides the setting and a clearly demarcated historical period in which Marcia produces a we discourse informed by a capitalist oriented view with which she aligns herself. In this context, Marcia’s descriptions and views must be located in a historical time where the presence of immigrants as well as social roles are interpreted through an economic ideology that generates a social distance that her self-presentation suggests. Her account thus suggests that education, social and economic capital play a significant role in and influence not only how immigration may be lived but narrated, and the acquisition of such capital enables her to position herself within mainstream society. All of the above encourages us to probe into the various identities and alignments towards which the participants orient themselves in the different London boroughs where they live, work and socialise.

### Miguel

As I mentioned in chapter 3.2, the presence of the Latin American community is increasingly evident in various boroughs of London. One of these is Lambeth where restaurants as well as other shops run by Latin Americans are situated and where I met Miguel. He worked in a restaurant as a waiter and there we would have our conversations before and after the interview. Miguel is a white Venezuelan immigrant whose first experience abroad was in 2001 when he left for New York in order to accomplish his dream to visit it. However, he found this experience very gruelling and a month later, he decided to go back to Venezuela. A year later, he left his home country again and this time he stayed in New York for four years and worked as a kitchen assistant. He then went back to Venezuela and after a short time, he immigrated to Spain where he would live for 7 years. Miguel's ancestry enabled him to have Spanish citizenship as his father was born in Galicia. Without any connections in England and with his wife and daughter in Venezuela, he emigrated from Spain to escape unemployment. At the time of the interview, Miguel had been in England for three and a half years while his family still lived in Venezuela.

Miguel's life story implies negative attitudes towards the event of migration at the same time that it reflects his own situation as one of misfortune and contempt. As we will see, his account contrasts with that of Marcia, and in order to understand his discourse in his current social context, it is important to see how he refers to his experience living in Spain as a way to construct his identity and compare it with that in England.

cuando estamos en España nos damos cuenta que ese pensamiento de esclavismo de esclavitud todavía ellos lo tienen de dominación sobre los latinoamericanos todavía. y tratan al lat al inmigrante en general lo tratan con mucho desprecio<sup>v</sup>...

The brief description that Miguel gives and that he attempts to extend to a generalised attitude towards immigration depicts his experience in Spain in an interesting light. It seems to be illustrative of a discourse of polarisation. For instance, for Miguel, the historical memory of colonialism that becomes evident in the negatively connoted nouns, *esclavitud*, *dominación*, is what explains a hierarchical social treatment of Spanish people against Latin American immigrants, and the former are thus attributed cognitive characteristics of cultural superiority that defines them. In this light, the immigrant is presented as a victim and, as we will see below, as a vulnerable person. As to the above description, however generalised it may be, it is still worthy of attention given that it echoes accounts recorded in previous studies on Latin Americans in London who talked of leaving Spain due to the high levels of racism that they perceived (see McIlwaine, 2011, p. 44). As his narrative continues, Miguel depicts the experience of migration from Spain to England with negative overtones.

actualmente estamos en Londres y el mundo da muchas vueltas actualmente hay habitaciones en Londres donde vive un español y un boliviano en la misma habitación

entonces. ya no puede ser despectivo ya no puede ser denigrado denigrante el español porque está viviendo en las mismas condiciones que el otro que la otra persona. son inmigrantes los dos exactamente igual en un país distinto<sup>vi</sup>...

Miguel's account is reminiscent of a larger economic and social event that affected the lives of many people in Spain that should not be omitted to understand his narration since, as stated in chapter 3, in 2008 Spain was hit by an economic recession that left people unemployed and triggered emigration to various European countries (see McIlwaine, 2011; Izquierdo et al, 2016). His description underscores adverse socioeconomic conditions that not only forced him, as we saw in his brief biography, but also Spanish people to relocate their lives outside their country to spaces that they cohabit with other migrants, *un español y un boliviano en la misma habitación*. Miguel in this light narrates an event that denotes a downward social repositioning that places Spaniards in the same socioeconomic circumstances as other immigrants, *está viviendo en las mismas condiciones que el otro*. The description that Miguel provides is also indexical of people's economic resources when moving to another country as it attempts to reflect the living conditions of many immigrants in London that will also help us gain insight into his discourse.

As I stated in chapter 3, many Latin Americans either rent an apartment with two or more people or live in small, overcrowded spaces, and in some cases entire families live in a room where they also eat (McIlwaine, 2011; 2015; Mas Giralt, 2017). Other immigrants resort to this type of living as a tactic to save money that they can remit back home (Wills et al, 2009, p. 131). Miguel himself rented a flat with two more people from European countries. In this context, these depictions along with Miguel's situate the lives of immigrants in a limited socioeconomic condition. That is, Miguel seems to portray and rationalise the experience of migration both as a form of social dispossession in which economic resources are lacking and as an event of misfortune with which immigrants have to come to terms. In the following excerpt, Miguel refers to the way he perceives his being an immigrant in English society.

aquí el inglés es muy distinto es muy. en ese particular es muy amable con el inmigrante es muy amable no he tenido ningún tipo de queja con ningún inglés porque lo tratan a uno de una forma muy amable que eso el inmigrante es una persona vulnerable y lo que necesita es que lo traten bien y aquí es un muy buen país para inmigrar porque los que son de aquí tratan bien al inmigrante<sup>vii</sup>...

As his narrative progresses, Miguel becomes reflective of his previous migration experiences as he implicitly evaluates them in relation to his current context, *aquí el inglés es muy distinto*. His word choice provides a picture where the English is positively presented, *es muy amable*, and that resonates with what he describes as a social environment of affability, *tratan bien al inmigrante*. Moreover, the adjective he uses to define immigrants generically, *es una persona vulnerable*, produces a discourse of empathy that on the one hand humanises them but on the other hand

projects them as socially disempowered. In this sense, the immigrant is presented as a person in need of special care and protection. However, what may vulnerability mean in Miguel's context that could influence his self-presentation?

As I mentioned above, Miguel moved to England with no connections to escape unemployment. Additionally, in our conversations he mentioned that he had two jobs, one of which is at the restaurant and another in a storehouse where he worked from Monday to Saturday due to his need to remit money back to his wife and daughter in Venezuela. These jobs largely influence his daily life given that he had a limited circle of friends mostly from Latin America who also had two jobs or do odd jobs to make their ends meet. I came to meet and interact with three of them. They were working class Latin Americans from Colombia and Venezuela who had also left either Spain or Portugal in search of a better job and who were working in the service sector. In this light, Miguel's discourse of vulnerability index two interrelated aspects of his social life that may influence his description of the migration experience as well as his social alignments: his pressing economic needs that forced him to a secondary migration as well as the absence of a stronger social capital.

Miguel's limited capital clearly contrasts with that of Marcia, and their descriptions and self-presentations are contextualised as stories speaking from two different social spaces; while Miguel speaks from a marginal social position as he associates with and self-presents as a vulnerable immigrant, Marcia self-presents as a successful person who speaks of being part of her receiving society and thus does not define herself as an immigrant. Moreover, Marcia's discourse about immigration is located within an abstraction of the perceptions of immigration while Miguel's focuses on the experiential and thus their discourses signal not only a socioeconomic condition in which they emigrated, but also education and social capital as valuable resources with which they travel to and arrive in a new society. In addition, two factors that impact and contribute to the differentiated quality of the lives of both Marcia and Miguel are their length of stay and their age when they arrived in the UK. This is a socially significant distinction that should not be dismissed given that it sheds light on both the processes of integration into a new society and the development of social networks that they both describe in their accounts. Marcia, after having lived in the UK for more than twenty three years and without ignoring her social and economic capital, arrived in the UK when she was twenty two years old and had the opportunity to work and study as well as interact with people from varied backgrounds with no need to remit money back to her family. Her life in a receiving society thus suggests a contrasting and different reality compared to that of Miguel who is high school-educated and arrived in the UK at the age of forty-one and whose experience has not been conducive to socioeconomic mobility but rather reflects the economic constraints that he attempts to overcome with his two jobs.

The resources and circumstances mentioned above become crucial to understand how Latin Americans may form their social relations, how they live and with whom they may align. The way their experiences are narrated may suggest value-laden discourses that may shed light on the complex multi-layered composition and social class-based interrelations of the Latin American community.

### Karla

As I noted in chapter 4, and we will continue to see in chapter 7 where I will expand on their role, the places that I visited and where I began to gain access to talk and interact with people from Latin America were Non-Governmental Organisations. NGOs are based in central, south and north London and provide Latin Americans with services and information through workshops, talks about labour rights or access to the health system, etc. After attending one of the many workshops offered in north London, I met Karla who held a secretarial job in a London-based NGO. Karla is a white woman from Chile and she holds a B.A in Journalism and an M.A in Anthropology from her country and moved to England in 2012. Originally, she arrived in London to take English-language courses and then she would move to France where she had been ten years ago and where she intended to study French. However, her plan changed as she met a Scottish man in the school where she was studying and eventually they became engaged. At the time of the interview, she held a spouse visa. Language has been an issue for her professional development as she described her job interview training as daunting and nerve-wracking due to limited language skills, which gradually she was able to hone through her English-speaking fiancé.

es mucho más fácil para mí por por esa vía a veces por el idioma también. porque él me ayuda con el idioma me corrige porque ahora todavía la policía te hace preguntas. en el aeropuerto “a ver esta visa” como que a veces ni siquiera leen bien “su visa se vence” pero cuando voy con él es distinto hasta hacen bromas “¿de dónde vienen? ¿Están de vacaciones?” entonces todo bien pero cuando voy sola hay un poquito más de preguntas pero cuando estoy con el jah! estamos de vacaciones ¿me entiende?<sup>viii</sup> ...

Karla's account provides us with a glimpse of the relevant role of social capital that could function as a mechanism of linguistic support when language capital may become devalued in a different country. At the same time, the symbolic value of Karla's social capital that she describes seems to materialise in such a regimented space as an airport given that it seemingly generates a type of social membership. The immigration officers' ambivalent attitudes that she reports are illustrative of this experience, *cuando voy con él es distinto hasta hacen bromas*, that nonetheless she mitigates through her phrase, *un poquito*. The latter points to a discursive strategy that helps her negotiate the presentation of such attitudes, which are, in either the presence or absence of her fiancé, presupposed as given and unquestionable through her use of a rhetorical question *¿me entiende?* In other words, being the fiancé of a local citizen enables her to be perceived as a

member of an ingroup, which allows her to broker access to a new society less enquiringly. Moreover, there is an additional relevant aspect about Karla's social position that we could follow up below and that could help us gain insight into how she continues to self-present.

Karla, in the interview, stated that her friends are usually women who are in the same situation as she is; they are either married to or fiancées of English people. She and her fiancé sometimes get together with these couples for dinner or go out with her fiancé's co-workers with whom she also practices English. Before she joined the NGO, she said that she would go to museums or would spend her time visiting tourist sites. These activities draw our attention to a particular lifestyle with a relative comfort that are nonetheless clearly opposite to that of Miguel whose two jobs and a limited circle of friends of working class Latin Americans constitute his lifestyle. They point to social class dimensions that I will describe in a more detailed manner below. As the interview progressed, I then asked her about her social situation and position as a Chilean in London in current times.

Yo he tenido una situación digamos fácil de obtener un estatus migratorio regular es que.. no no podría ser tan radical en decir en el fondo aquí no le dan oportunidades a la gente pero es que mi situación particular es.. hay a ver.. entiendo. entiendo también en el fondo que tampoco es mi situación pero podría entender por qué la gente quiere venir para acá que tienen el derecho quizás de poder quizá elegir<sup>ix</sup>...

In this excerpt, Karla describes her own situation as unproblematic due to her regular migration status, and it allows her to position herself as different from a group of people implied as undocumented. Her self-presentation nonetheless discloses two particular features, one of which is the recurrent hesitation in Karla's discourse that evidences a face-keeping effort as she attempts to negotiate her ambivalent attitude towards immigration. That is, the vagueness contained in the modality of the phrase *no podría ser tan radical*, since it implies both possibility and ability, seems to suggest that she aligns to a non-migrant group in an effort to not ill-speak of her receiving society. Subsequently, through the phrase *a ver*, and the repetitive use of a verb of cognition, *entiendo*, she attempts to step back from her own social position in order to give her opinion objectively and seems to produce a discourse of empathy respectively. She recognises people's rights to mobility. However, her hedging epitomised in her use of *quizás* dilutes her alignment with immigration into the UK at the same time that it serves as a discursive strategy through which she distances herself from her statement.

Her narrative in light of the above illustrates non-linguistic features that allow us to understand her self-presentation. Karla is a white woman, and her racial phenotype is worth considering since it is not limited to a physical appearance but to a social representation and position of who is a migrant. As a number of studies have demonstrated, depictions of immigration often exploit



the figure of the migrant as non-white and poor, and it is conflated with issues of illegality and with assumed attitudes towards disintegration (see Castles 2010; Lundström 2014). In addition to this, like Marcia, Karla is a well-educated woman whose capital matters and has not been lost after relocating her life. Before moving to the UK, she had a well-paid job in the Chilean government, and it was the means that allowed her to save money before her planned trip to England and then to France where she would take a three-month language course for which she had already paid. Apart from the linguistic support from her fiancé who also speaks Spanish, Karla stated that she also received economic support from him, which took her mind off any monetary issues. Additionally, before her secretarial job at the NGO, she did volunteer work for two years in the same site, which brings to the fore her situation of economic stability. In this context, her discourse suggests two intersecting factors. On the one hand, it points to a social reality of a gendered outcome of her migration experience in the sense that she to some extent is economically dependent on her fiancé and resonates with what Weiss (2005) calls a “quality of space”. This is a social space to which she had access, a new society to which she moved and that does not illustrate a downward or declassing process with which, as we will see below, many migrants deal but that she did not experience. In other words, she speaks from a privileged social position that she implicitly acknowledges. On the other hand, it suggests that the construct of race may also play a role in the constitution of relations in which it intersects with economic, social and cultural capitals that come to be organised and valued leading to a social location of structural advantage (see Skeggs, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993). These characteristics and those described above help us understand her self-presentation as different from the identity of the immigrant to whom she implicitly referred above; that is, an undocumented immigrant. At the same time her self-presentation to a large extent resonates with Marcia’s and is different to Miguel’s in the sense that, as stated above, it indexes social class as the main construct from which they speak. That is, the differentiated access to the sociocultural resources that the participants possess becomes manifest in the discursive depiction of who an immigrant is.

Pero..a veces digo sí claro si todo el mundo quisiera quisiese emigrar venir de la capacidad real de poder sostenerlos a todos no lo sé a lo mejor yo me sentiría a chile están llegando muchos extranjeros quizás también yo allá desde esa lógica que están ocupando..pero no sé es es compli es complicado<sup>x</sup>...

Karla’s attitude in the above depiction strikes a chord with that of Marcia since the topic of immigration as a threat organises her discursive choices that at the same time exhibit the interdiscursivity of the description of immigration mentioned above by echoing dominant representations of it in the media (see van Dijk, 2014; 2016, Wodak, 2009). The occurrence of hyperbolic language such as, *todo el mundo*, and the unspecified but culturally differentiated numerical representation of immigrants, *muchos extranjeros*, foreground the generalised

representation of immigration as big numbers of people coming into the country. Furthermore the use of a verb in *sostenerlos a todos*, contributes to the characterisation of immigration as a heavy burden for a receiving society, which in turn, as we have seen in Marcia's discourse, produces the topos of money that implies that immigration is thought about in economic terms and not in human terms. Such lexical choices border on the discourse of concern (van Dijk, 2016); that is, although she struggles to remain neutral, she presents immigration as a problem that threatens to take possession of a territory as suggested in the metaphorical process of the verb *occupy*, *que están ocupando*. Consequently, Karla's self-presentation and attitude towards immigration oscillates between her avoidance to speak negatively about local authorities and society and her intent to understand people's rights to relocate their lives.

The dominant and organising topics of the three cases thus far presented along with the events foregrounded therein seem to confirm that language use plays a crucial role in the constitution of social identities and space if we regard language as "the architecture of social behaviour and relations" (Blommaert and Dong, 2010b:7). It must be added that the words that the participants have chosen exemplify that there are no neutral terms to describe social experience (van Dijk, 2014) given that they index a particular social position and status also suggestive of the construct of race and reflective of their education, social and economic capital. Block (2014) reminds us of the importance of the latter as it intersects with social class differentiation, and it will continue to appear crucial in shaping the lifestyles and migration trajectories that David and Irma relate as they tell their stories.

### David

The three different cases and contexts to which I have referred above have allowed us to catch a glimpse of their migration trajectory, and they have helped us to locate a Latin American presence in London that illustrates different socioeconomic realities, identities and alignments. The case that I now present is that of David who I met in a so-called Latin American festival that I attended in Newham. Upon my arrival to the site of the festival, I realised that the theme was predominantly dominated by political activism and there were information desks from which David shared out leaflets describing labour rights for cleaners. I approached him and received a leaflet whose content he vigorously began to explain to me. We talked at length and after telling him I intended to learn more about Latin Americans' needs and experiences, he invited me to go to his workplace where we continued our conversations and shared his life story.

David is an Ecuadorian immigrant who has been working in the service sector for more than 10 years in a London-based university and his story exhibits social repositioning, an experience of declassing, which, as I stated in chapter 3.1, refers to changes in an individual's life conditions

such as the loss of economic power and prestige and status that formerly were a person's class position" (Block 2017:140) and with which, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, many Latin Americans deal. David decided to leave Ecuador in 1999 due to a combination of factors. At the age of sixteen, he became a professional football player, a career that he was able to do in conjunction with a degree in Physical Education until the age of 21. At this age, his football career ended due to constant muscle problems from which he was unable to recover and the lack of job opportunities were increasingly pressing, as he needed to provide for his wife who was expecting their first child. In 1996, his sister came to England to study a Master's Degree in a medicine-related field and had no intention of going back to Ecuador. It was through her that David learnt of the existing and promising job opportunities abroad as she represented the social capital that helped him leave Ecuador.

David brought his wife to the UK in 2000 as they planned to work and save more money in order to go back to Ecuador as soon as they could since they had to leave their child with his mother in his country. Unfortunately, they went through a rough patch and were unable to save enough money and stayed in the UK longer than planned. Such a situation led them to live without their child for nearly four years before they were able to bring him to the UK. However, even though they were together, they faced other challenges. David and his wife worked without a work visa for all this time but his wife was able to have her migration status legalised eventually. However, the legalisation of her migration status was not necessarily conducive to his family's wellbeing and as his account suggests it could result in family separation.

mi esposa pudo lograr los documentos acá en un momento legalizarse ella.pero ella quiso legalizar a mí pero no pudo. y hasta que un día pues por medio de la aplicación que ella metió me fueron a ver a la casa y me dijeron usted no puede estar en el país.. incluso mi esposa ya estaba embarazada del segundo niño ella estaba embarazada y a ellos no les importó nada "usted está de ilegal y ella es la única que está legal y se puede quedar entonces y usted se va" me..bueno ellos dicen *remove* me removieron del país<sup>xi</sup>...

Many authors and policy makers have argued against the use of the term illegal due to its overtones with criminal conduct (Sciortino, 2004; Pinkerton et al, 2004; Dauvergne, 2009) and have argued that the adjective undocumented or irregular has increasingly replaced the label illegal (Triandafyllidou, 2012). This is, nonetheless, contradicted by the language use that David voices, and as we will see below that of Irma. As we have seen in the analysis of Marcia's discourse, the representation of immigration that her discourse exhibits contains interdiscursive characteristics that also appear in David's account. The use of the word illegal that he reports immigration officers used to address him and inform him that he was not allowed to stay in the UK brushes against widespread and unquestioned depictions of undocumented migration. In other words, he is voicing wider discourses of migration that are not only found in the UK but are

full of transmissions and interpretations of other people's words that make reference to another source and that are laden with the social intention to exclude (see Bakhtin 1981). In this context, David describes his migration status as illegal, and the seemingly normalised use of the verb legalise in conjunction with its object as well as the adjective that describes an immoral behaviour in his account carries heavy implications about his social identities. His evaluative self-presentation and that of his wife as the objects of the legalisation process implies a social precondition of illegality that is interpreted as a prohibition that becomes manifest in David's use of modality as in *no puede estar en el país*. Such phrase both casts light on the process of differentiation between citizens and non-citizens and on the attributes and rights that demarcate them from us as David's use of a relational verb and modality confirms, *está legal y se puede quedar entonces y usted se va*. However, it is important to point out that David's word choice in terms of legality blurs relevant distinctions, which we will see below, since his irregular migration status became reified in the top-down practice of removal, which exhibits the specificity and consequential effects of language.

y claro pues yo no sabía que. pues la desesperación mía que me iban a deportar a mi país y yo he escuchado que si me deportan yo no puedo volver en cinco seis años entonces era la desesperación yo ya en Ecuador yo no tenía nada.. como se dice tenía mi vida acá mis cosas mi trabajo ya mis hijos acá también entonces fue desesperante<sup>xii</sup>...

Experts in migration law draw a relevant distinction between removal and deportation in which the former is regarded as administrative detention that does not imply a criminal offence while the latter does or is enforced when it is 'conducive to the public good'(see Blinder, 2016, p. 3 quotation marks in original). It must also be noted that, although David worked without a work permit, such violation is treated as an executive fault (ibid), an administrative removal that determined the conditions and terms in which he was made to leave and later on did not prohibit him from re-entering the country. Nevertheless, his self-presentation as the object of the material process of removal conjures up knowledge of migration laws as the organising topic of his discourse, which in turn implies that such knowledge or the lack of it establishes the rules of social behaviour. Through verbs of cognition and perception, *yo no sabía, yo he escuchado*, we gain insight into both David's mental processes and his non-agentive social position, which subsequently can be seen through negatively connoted lexemes such as, *desesperación* and *desesperante*. These describe David's reactions, not actions, to his feared prohibition to return to the UK illustrated by modality, *no puedo volver*.

He recounted that he was eventually removed to Ecuador after having been in a detention centre for one month, and his experience reflects the social and economic inequalities that largely affected his migrations status. Unlike Karla, David despite having a B.A did not have a job back in his country that could allow him to secure an income but rather the lack of it was an incentive to

leave and attempt to provide for his family. Therefore, he could not save money that allowed him to have relative comfort upon his arrival to the UK with a passport. These structural differences in their home countries may explain why David got inserted into what has been called survival employment in another contexts such as Canada (see Creese and Wiebe, 2012). That is, immigrants with tertiary education take on any jobs irrespective of how unrelated to any previous training or how low paid they are as long as they meet their immediate economic needs (ibid). At the same time, his story reflects that of many immigrants who become irregular. According to some studies, it is thought that most irregular migration to the UK is because people overstay their visa and that the vast majority of Latin Americans in such status face this situation (Wills et al, 2009; McIlwaine, 2015). In this context, David's story exhibits a process of cultural dispossession such as his loss of education and another of social expulsion such as his removal from the UK. Subsequently in the interview, he described how he got back to his wife and kids in the UK.

mi hermana en ese tiempo tenía un novio que era manager de *pizza hut* y entonces justo tuvo una vacante y me pudo conseguir un contrato en *pizza hut*.. todo legal ¿no? contrato pedido y todo y ahí ya a los cuatro meses pude venir ya tuve un *spouse* un *spouse* visa para estar acá con mi esposa y ahí pude legalizarme y estuve con mis hijos y bueno.. por un lado fue duro pero por otra ya tuve tranquilidad de que tú dices ya estás con todos los documentos legales. ya no tienes esa tensión de que tu sales mañana alguien te denuncie que esto que veía la policía me daba un miedo me escondía entonces fue como se dice. fue un mal pero al final del día estuvo bien tuve ya pude tener legalizados los documentos<sup>xiii</sup> ...

Through the topic of legality, David self-presents as both an agent and object of his own legalisation. On the one hand, his emphatic use of legal-related terms, *todo legal, ¿no? contrato pedido y todo*, presents David as a rule-abiding individual that turned to authorised vehicles to his return and which also functions as an argumentation strategy to justify his own social reinsertion, a process of which he self-presents as the agent through the use of modality, *pude venir, pude legalizarme*. On the other hand, behavioural processes contained in such verbs as *denunciar* and *esconder* present David as an illegitimate object that implies distrust and surveillance by society itself due to the social values attached to them. Thus, David's description of legalisation, removal and return produces the topos of suspicion that reveals processes of consensual differentiation in which the human is conflated with the inhuman as evidenced in the interchangeable object of legalisation, *legalizarme* and *legalizados los documentos*. Illegality can thus be interpreted as 'a space of forced invisibility, exclusion, subjugation' (Coutin, 2000, p. 30), a discursive construction of self-regulation that can produce mechanisms of social disentanglement that we can further examine in Irma's account.

**Irma**

Irma is an Ecuadorian woman who left her country twenty years ago, and I met her through another NGO that cater for Latin American women who have suffered domestic violence or who are economically disadvantaged. In one of my visits to this organisation and conversations with the General Operations Manager, I was told that the cases to which they provide assistance are very delicate such as domestic violence and that I would be very lucky if someone volunteered to tell me their life story after leaving my contact details. Nevertheless, Irma contacted me and we met after two failed attempts in central London.

In her life story, she described that as she was studying towards a university degree that she did not finish in her home country she got word about job and better life prospects in Brussels from former classmates. She decided to join them in a flat in which she and nine more people were living. She recounted that she obtained a job as a live-in maid through her housemates who were also working as undocumented domestic workers. Two years later, she went to London to see her boyfriend from Ecuador for five days but in the end, she stayed longer and became pregnant. With no knowledge of English, no visa and in need of medical attention, she got help from a Latin American woman who submitted Irma's visa application. After two weeks, she got a letter from the immigration office that granted her temporary stay in the UK and she got the medical attention that she had been seeking for six months and gave birth to a girl. However, she narrated that her migration status changed from regular to irregular once again.

yo seguía de ilegal porque me negaron el caso con el tiempo.. y claro todo mundo en ese tiempo había de que de pronto la gente te decía “mira las leyes están muy malas y si viene la policía te deportan” enseguida te hacían asustar te hacían tener miedo yo como era muy nueva sin hablar inglés sin conocer casi a nadie me creí todo. me negaron mi caso y lo primero que hice el mismo día en que me llegó la carta con el padre de mi hija salimos de ahí corrimos de ahí solamente con el coche de mi hija pusimos lo que más pudimos<sup>xiv</sup>...

In this excerpt, Irma narrates how the absence of contacts and the inability to speak English seem to exacerbate her experience as an undocumented immigrant that in this sense is interpreted as a space of asymmetrical relationships. Irma's use of the word *illegal* to describe her migration status reflects the interdiscursivity also seen in David's account and thus reproduces a social voice of exclusion. In addition, it also shows how her social identity is vertically positioned since verbs such as *deportar* and *negar* are indicative of top-down material processes of social expulsion. However, the subtle and significant difference between deportation and removal (Blinder, 2016), as we have seen in David's case, is not a distinction of which Irma is aware. Such distinction becomes relevant to help us explain and gain insight into mental and behavioural processes, *asustar* and *corrimos*, that respectively present Irma's decisions as reactions rather than actions that place her in a peripheral social space. Therefore, these two last processes must also be understood as a consequence of a type of social knowledge to which Irma had access, *la gente decia mira las leyes*

*están muy malas, te hacían tener miedo*, which sheds light on the complex social structures where discourses of immigration laws seem to circulate. In this context, the lack of linguistic and social capital that Irma describes particularly contrasts with that of Marcia and Karla whose regular migration status, social and economic capital draw our attention to issues of inequality.

Like Miguel and David, Irma left her country due to economic motivations rather than academic ones, and her boyfriend who was her main contact and motivation to come to England was undocumented and worked as a cleaner. As she and her boyfriend lived in hiding, she worked as a cleaner or as a domestic worker part time since she also needed to look after her daughter. In this light, Irma's migration trajectory and experience resonate with that of many Latin Americans whose lives and work are located at the lower levels of the socioeconomic ladder in a vulnerable position. In larger studies, and as I mentioned in Chapter 3, McIlwaine (2014) has documented that nearly half of all Latin Americans have moved to the UK for economic reasons and work in the service sector. Additionally, it has also been reported that those in an irregular migration status face a stratified sense of belonging that labels them as deportable (*ibid*). Thus, the combination of a low income with an irregular status places Irma's life in a precarious situation that she continues to relate.

del miedo que supuestamente venía inmigración no volvimos a esa casa nos quedamos prácticamente de ilegales mi hija y yo porque el padre de mi hija ecuatoriano era ilegal o sea no teníamos alternativa de nada<sup>xv</sup>...

What Irma describes in this short account provides us with a depiction of how she perceived the presence and function of authorities, fear fuelled with an element of uncertainty, *supuestamente*. Also the personification of immigration authorities evident in the verb of motion, *venía inmigración*, at the same time resonates with what De Genova (2002, p.438) has described as "the palpable sense of deportability" in the sense that "what defines illegality is not deportation" but its possibility, and such dread, also evident in David's account, is what seems to regulate her behaviour, *no volvimos a esa casa*. The latter description is also illustrative of a social identity whose free mobility is inhibited and consequently arrested to a social space of marginalisation. In this light she self presents as an individual who recognises that her undocumented status contravenes the rules that dictate the organisation of the society in which she finds herself and thus rationalises the prerogatives to which she was not entitled, *no teníamos alternativa de nada*.

The spatial restriction that Irma narrates and that coincides with David's is explained by an irregular migration status but the behaviour she depicts also suggests a social uncertainty that could lead to other consequences. As documented in other migrant populations inside and outside the UK, being in an undocumented or irregular status forces people into practices of invisibility that could result not only in limited social relations in order to avoid detection by

authorities but also in ill health such as depression, anxiety disorders or post-traumatic stress (McIlwaine, 2015; Teunissen et al, 2016). Irma's story in this context also sheds light on processes of seclusion and alienation, which, as we will see below, restricts access to information and may lead to family separation. Later on in the interview, she related that her boyfriend made the decision to go back to Ecuador and take their daughter with him since, due to their undocumented status, their future was not promising; a decision with which she agreed. She also recounted that three years later she received a telephone call from the Home Office that a friend of hers helped her interpret, and who told her that they had indeed been looking for her for the same time to inform her that she had been granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK since then. Her account is the following and the label of being illegal again comes up.

a los pocos meses de que yo me salí de esa casa mandó migración una carta con mi residencia para mi hija y para mi. residencia indefinida. tres años yo supuestamente de ilegal en este país <sup>xvi</sup>...

In the three previous excerpts we find a common organising topic that both informs Irma's account and reflects the social circumstances from which she speaks; the topic of fear that restricts mobility that is nonetheless not only constructed symbolically but as a physical barrier since it determined the places to which she could and could not move, *no volvimos a esa casa, me salí de esa casa*. Her reaction to leave the house for her presumed illegality to be unidentified at the same time implies that she moved to a place where she did not have true knowledge of her migration status as it becomes evident in the lexically present assumption, *supuestamente*. Additionally this physical barrier is also reinforced through the use of a negatively connoted noun, *de ilegal*, given that, as we have seen in David's case, it produces the topos of suspicion that attributes criminalising characteristics to her social identity. That is, in Spanish a noun introduced by the preposition, *de*, as in *estoy de maestro, de coordinador, de asistente*, is highly descriptive and constitutive of the identities of individuals since it indexes assumed expectations about their functions and behaviour, and thus Irma's word choice functionalises her social role and relations as surreptitious and illicit. In this vein, the underlying assumption of her discourse implies that the dichotomy of legality and illegality renders social identities as acceptable or unacceptable (see Flores Farfan and Holzscheiter, 2011, p. 142) and that access to particular sources of information and social capital shapes social relations.

As the interview went on, Irma explained that she had been informed that her indefinite leave to remain was granted through an amnesty in 2000. She then began to work in restaurants and saved money to bring her daughter back to England but her intent was unsuccessful and she stayed with her father in Ecuador. At the time of the interview, she ran her own event management business mainly directed to Latin Americans who also made up her main social



network. Her life plan was to become a successful business woman and thus become a role model for what she called her community so they know there are more jobs and not only cleaning.

### **5.3 Summary**

In this chapter, we have seen how the five participants self-presented. Their self-presentations suggest, on the one hand, how they distanced themselves from the figure of the immigrant either openly or implicitly. On the other hand, they self-presented as vulnerable or illegals through a number of ways of speaking that nonetheless blur socially significant distinctions. Additionally their discursive choices appeared to be influenced by other non-linguistic feature. The accumulation of education, social and economic capital in the lives of the participants seemed to have lent itself for the construction of a social space and a class-based view of who an immigrant is. This has provided us with pointers to a diversity of identities and practices that may influence social relations and alignments of Latin Americans in various social domains in which they have come to interact.



## Chapter 6      Work and Social Interactions of Latin American Immigrants in London

### 6.1      Introduction

In chapter 5 we explored the various self-presentations of five Latin American people living in London. They self-presented as (non) immigrants and illegals, identities that introduced us to their *sui generis* motivations to move to the UK as well as their diverse economic, cultural and social capital that are influential on their lifestyle and how they experience and interpret their lives in a host society. We also saw that the tools of CDA employed in the previous analysis in turn helped us probe into the participants' self-presentations whose ways of speaking through lexical choices, tropes, assumptions, disclaimers, among other units of analysis reflected social values and ideologies that are also constitutive of their social spaces. In this manner, I located such micro analysis in the macro context of migration phenomena of which the Latin American immigrants in this study are a part and where the often negative discourses of immigration also circulate.

In this chapter, I will now concentrate on the interactions of Latin Americans by looking at how they categorise other Latin Americans and themselves as they describe their work and social experiences in certain social domains. One of these domains is the service sector where as I have discussed in chapter 3, a large proportion of Latin American immigrants working in London are concentrated (McIlwaine, 2015). I will firstly focus on the experiences of Sharon from Colombia, David, who was already introduced in the previous chapter, Diego from Ecuador and Alfonso from Venezuela. Their accounts of working with other Latin Americans depict practices of exploitation and manipulation, which I will analyse through a sociocognitive approach within Critical Discourse Studies. The latter approach will lend itself to the exploration of negative 'other' representations, metaphors, topoi of culture and history as well as presuppositions and common ground knowledge that emerge in the participants' ways of speaking. Such units of analysis have been chosen as they are the vehicle through which we can see how the participants justify attitudes of distrust, dishonesty and subjugation due to the assumed expected social roles that Latin Americans are to take on. The experiences of the Latin Americans here involved intimate social values and asymmetrical power relations that seem to disarticulate their social interactions. It must be taken into account that these interactions are contextualised in a larger socioeconomic reality that also affects other migrant groups and whose experiences in the same domain interestingly echo those of the participants in this study.

As I move away from the examination of the participants' discourses in the context of the service sector, I will continue the analysis of their interactions by looking at the case of Linda from Mexico whose work experiences are told in the context of domestic work and Spanish language teaching. Linda's experiences will introduce us into an exploration of Latin Americans' social relations in other social domains such as volunteer work, network marketing and cultural events that I will subsequently present as I include the descriptions of Mayra from Ecuador and Jazmin from Colombia. Their accounts bring to the fore ideologies that inform and construe their relations with and views about other Latin American immigrants. That is, ideologies of neoliberalism that depict success or failure as the responsibility of the individual and that also intertwine with notions of social class that vertically demarcate in-groups from outgroups. The latter, as we will see in their discourses, are attributed social behaviours and cognitive properties that categorise them as immoral, insecure, unpleasant or poorly educated individuals who, according to one of the participants, do not make a good impression of what being Latin American is supposed to mean, or do not know how to live in a receiving society. Additionally, we will see that their social relations and interactions also appear to be divergent and at times conflictual due to their language experiences, interests and views. These are influenced by the social and education capital that the participants possess and that will surface as a distinctive trait that is mobilised by the participants to distance themselves from other Latin Americans.

The analyses in this section thus will help us address the following research question: what insights into the social interactions of Latin Americans in London can we gain by looking at the social values and ideologies emergent in their discourses? As I said in chapters 1 and 3, Latin American immigrants are lumped together under the term community, which may conceal important distinctions and divergent interests due to their heterogeneous composition and, as we were able to gather from chapter 5, social class differentiations that constitute both their identities and social relations. In this context, an answer to this question through the intended analysis aims to enable us to explore and understand what might affect their relations in the social spaces in which they have interacted and how they make sense of the experiences that they describe. The discourses presented and examined here are both preceded by how I came to meet the participants and their biographies that will help to contextualise their experiences in London.

## **6.2 Discursive Categorisations of Latin Americans; Assumptions, Values and Ideologies**

I noted in chapter 4.2 and 5 that my observations and interactions with Latin American immigrants as part of my fieldwork in London were accompanied with serendipitous

conversations and meetings in events and sites where they usually congregate and work. Some of these sites were shopping centres, cafes, cultural events as well as universities and markets. I met Sharon in the Elephant and Castle shopping centre having been put in touch with her through one of the study participants from Ecuador who I will introduce in the next chapter.

Sharon is from Colombia and has lived in the UK for twenty years. The decision to move to the UK was not her own but her parents' as they faced pressing economic problems in their country. She was thrown into the service sector by the family's economic needs and found herself in a swim or sink situation. She started out as a cleaner, then she got promoted to supervisor and subsequently to manager in a cleaning company where she then was taken under the wing of another person and began to work in the accounting department. In this context Sharon recounted that her work enabled her to understand Latin American workers' basic needs inside and outside the workplace as well as witness work interactions among them.

veía mucho cómo un manager latino de diferentes nacionalidades trata a sus empleados. y como yo empecé allí haciéndolo estar en la otra posición pues sí dolía ¿sí me entiendes? entonces se trataba de ayudarles de cooperarles con el mismo manager y con el mismo empleado. es como ser una fuente allí ¿sí me entiende?<sup>xvii</sup> ...

In the excerpt above, Sharon points to the different roles and positions of Latin American employees as well as her experience that helped her relate to them who she suggestively presents as being subject to asymmetrical interactions. In this context we see the emergence of a topic; the Latino manager, who Sharon represents as a figure that embodies practices that deteriorate Latinos' work relationships. The latter can be inferred by looking at her use of lexical items such as the verbs *trata* and *dolía*. The former begs the question, how does a Latino manager treat his employees as Sharon presents him as the agent of such treatment? The latter helps us draw conjectures of this type of work relationship by analysing its connotative use, which is indicative of adverse work interactions. However, Sharon negotiates her description of what she witnessed. For instance she does not seem to want to expose such interactions by referring neither to a particular nationality nor to a particular tense event and she appears to suggest that she did not intend to side with a particular party but rather act as a negotiator. The latter role emerges as she uses verbs such as *ayudarles* and *cooperarles*, which not only exhibit Sharon's discourse of empathy but also imply conflicting work relations between the manager and the employee.

The description of this work interaction still merits further scrutiny. The latter description may have been influenced by the public space in which she was sharing her life story given that Sharon and I met in a Latin American-run cafe and were surrounded by more people from Latin America. Such a setting needs to be borne in mind in order to understand the word choices and discursive strategies that the participants employ as they recount their work experience. I pursue this in

David's following explicit account that helps us understand their interactions in the same context better.

### David

As we saw in the previous chapter, David is an Ecuadorian immigrant who has been working in the service sector as a cleaner for more than 10 years in a London-based university despite the fact that he holds a B.A in Physical education obtained in Ecuador. His migration trajectory reflects that of more than 50% of Latin Americans who work in the service sector, many of whom deal with a downward social repositioning (McIlwaine, 2015). He invited me to go to his workplace to tell me about his life story during his lunch break in which he not only touched upon his experience as an undocumented immigrant but as a cleaner who had faced exploitation. In the following excerpt, he relates his experiences with Latin American managers in the cleaning job that, at the time of the interview, he did through an outsourcing company at this site. As his life story unfolds, he recounts that he and his co-workers did not have many problems until Latin American managers took over management.

teníamos un manager inglés. por ahí sacarían cosas pero no. nunca tuvimos queja nosotros trabajábamos hacíamos horas extra pero llegaron estos. latinos encima de manager se complicó todo. a parte de robar a la compañía ellos nos robaban a nosotros también <sup>xviii</sup>...

This account contrasts with that of Sharon given that in David's the representation of the Latino manager is an example of a negative discursive categorisation that explicitly refers to their dishonest practices. By resorting to an argumentation strategy through which he mitigates the implied negative practices of the English manager, he foregrounds and emphasises polarised work interactions between Latinos. Illustrative of this interaction is his use of such a demonstrative adjective in Spanish as *estos*, which carries a derogatory meaning about them and exhibits a strategy of distancing. Additionally his discourse produces a topos of culture, a generalisation through which he intends to explain how Latinos exercise and abuse their position of power, *latinos encima de manager se complicó todo*. This categorisation of Latinos is reinforced by the repetitive use of a negatively connoted verb, *robar*, which both presents the Latino manager as the agent of such practice and points to fragmentation between Latin Americans in clearly delineated in-groups vs outgroups. However, why does David seem to speak so openly about exploitation and manipulation among Latin Americans?

As I noted in chapter 5 and above, David and I met in a festival where he was handing out leaflets with information about labour rights for cleaners who were outsourced. Later on, I learnt that David had taken courses about labour rights and that he had acquired British citizenship. These practices and status contrast with his experience that we saw in the previous chapter as an

undocumented immigrant who had to hide and go unnoticed. In addition to this, there are two important factors that will help us gain insight into David's discourse. One of these is his participation in demonstrations held outside his workplace that I was able to observe during fieldwork in which he would denounce exploitation practices and demand that he as well as his co-workers were directly hired and not outsourced by the university at which he worked. Another factor was the place of the interview. It was an unoccupied, quiet room on the third floor to which only he had a key in the building where he worked. Nevertheless, it must be added that as he narrated his experiences, David constantly looked out the window in order to make sure, as he later stated in the interview and our conversations, that his boss did not catch him giving an interview. In this context, his political activism, his access to information about labour rights and his British citizenship conjoined with a private room as the setting of our conversation generate the social conditions in which he, unlike Sharon, openly categorises Latino managers as unscrupulous. After hearing the above in the interview, I asked David whether he thought that the Latin American manager was presented with a challenge when working with more Latin Americans. My question, it must be acknowledged, was motivated by my assumption that there was comradeship between Latin Americans.

No más bien encontró un tesoro. porque él conoce las debilidades de nosotros él sabe las políticas de la compañía ellos saben muy bien. tienen que representar la compañía y vinieron aquí y ¡bingo! porque saben cómo manipular al trabajador "te doy tanto" y mucha gente somos muy agradecidos el manager te dio cuatro horas pero te está sacando veinte sin darte cuenta tienes que tú sabes cómo somos los latinos <sup>xix</sup>...

David's answer depicts a picture of manipulation and exploitation in which assumed cultural characteristics seem to define the nature and the direction of the cleaners and managers' work relations. These are in turn characterised by a metaphorical representation that, as we saw in Marcia's account in the previous chapter, could help us explain how social interactions could be conceived of and structured (see Lakoff and Johnson, 2003; Santa Anna, 2002; Cisneros 2008; Knowles and Moon, 2006). That is, David's word choices such as *un tesoro* and *bingo* produces the metaphor the Latino manager's behaviour is mercenary given that it points to a conduct motivated by a personal economic gain at the expense of others. Furthermore, his negative categorisation of the Latino manager becomes emphasised since through the verbs, *manipular*, *saber* and *conocer*, he interpellates them as unscrupulous individuals who schemingly exploit workers.

In addition to the above, it is noteworthy how David seems to rationalise the behaviours he narrates and that my presence co-constructs. David's concluding remark, *tú sabes cómo somos los latinos*, again seems to be informed by a topos of culture as it presupposes that such deviant and dishonest practices are a defining characteristic of Latinos as in 'it is normal and expected that we

Latinos carry ourselves this way'. In this sense, my position as a Latin American researcher who is supposedly to have inside knowledge of what Latin Americans are like is interpellated and am invited to agree with this common sense view of what defines not them but all of us. Consequently, his representation of these events essentialises Latinos' interactions and behaviour which is to be explained and justified by a sociocultural shared knowledge that is not to be questioned.

Nevertheless, there is a lexical item that is worth attention. David's mention of *la compañía* is indexical of a business practice that I mentioned above and which is that of outsourcing through which many Latin Americans like David find a job in the service sector where they are either underpaid or hired for few hours of work (see McIlwaine, 2016; Linneker and Wills, 2016). Their job insertion, as stated in chapter 3 and as we will continue to see in the following case of Diego, is through contacts and other Latin Americans employed as cleaners. In this context, the role of outsourcing companies should be taken into account. As we saw in chapter 2.7 and according to a report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2014, p. 69) outsourcing firms in an attempt to deliver a high quality service at the lowest cost possible "can try to reduce their costs and improve their profit margins by reducing pay rates, increasing work intensity, reorganising work or creating a more flexible workforce", all of which has been proven to affect work conditions in the service sector negatively (ibid). David through his demands of fair labour rights for cleaners, as stated above, exhibits awareness of this business practice but interestingly his description rather concentrates on traits that allegedly define Latinos and that explains the nature of their work interactions. In the next excerpt through which we will be able to pursue the above description, David continues to describe his work interactions and explains why managers exploit him and his co-workers.

también somos muy sumisos ¿me entiendes? porque nosotros somos muy agradecidos "ah mira este trabaja" y "tengo que pagártelo" entonces abusan también ¿me entiendes? hasta que nosotros reaccionamos ¿me entiendes?<sup>xx</sup>...

In this account, David points to characteristics embodied by cleaners and for which they are treated unfairly by the managers. According to David, the latter identify cleaners' industriousness and attitudes of gratefulness and indebtedness as exploitable qualities for their ends, attitudes which are presented by David's use of quotes through which he additionally intends not only to re-enact those events discursively but also present them objectively. Consequently the categorisation of the Latino manager as abusive by David foregrounds conflicting and contrasting values that in his narration appear to disarticulate and polarise Latinos' work relations.

However, the latter argument should not be treated as a definition of cultural essentialism or fixed work relations among Latin Americans in London since it reflects work interactions in a



larger scale. Other studies have focused on Chinese migrant workers relations and employment practices with their co-ethnics outside and inside the UK. In the context of Australia, Li (2017) documents exploitation and low pay of Chinese employees who are paid in cash and not hired through a contract by their co-ethnic employers, and it is reported that it is a practice that seems to be justified due to their cultural expectations and economic vulnerability. Additionally, David's description evokes other contexts in which other behavioural characteristics, such as being hardworking, are exploited by employers. In a glass factory in England, MacKenzie and Forde (2009) reported the attitudes of employers towards migrant employees who were deemed 'good workers'. These were recently arrived central European employees who were willing to work hard for long hours at a pay rate unattractive for locals and who at times were rented out to other companies (*ibid*). In this light, the defining cultural characteristics as well as the attitudes to which David refers are not unique of Latinos but the interactions described are framed within neoliberal work conditions.

The descriptions presented so far through Sharon's and David's accounts respectively point to asymmetrical power relations that are seemingly predicated by the specific positions of power that the actors described occupy. However, it is pertinent to pursue such power relations among Latin American immigrants in the context of the service sector in order to obtain a better insight into them and examine how they are connected with other stories that are also situated within a larger neoliberal frame and socioeconomic class differences.

### **Diego**

My various interactions and conversations with other Latin Americans described at the beginning of this section proved fruitful as they allowed me to negotiate access to more participants in various sites in north London. Such a process also enabled me to build trust with other participants since we would meet and talk in restaurants and cafes before the actual interview. It was in a restaurant where Diego shared his life story with me. He was born in Ecuador and has been in England for over sixteen years, a time span in which his migration status has gone through a refugee and undocumented status until finally getting British citizenship. In Ecuador, he used to be a sales agent for a transnational company in his country but he left it due to a combination of factors such as economic hardship and death threats. Upon arriving in Heathrow airport, he applied for political asylum, which was granted to him, and contacted an acquaintance's uncle already living in London. This last person provided him with accommodation before he was allocated with housing by the government and helped him expand his social network that consisted mostly of Latinos. The latter was instrumental for Diego to get a job in the service sector

through which he was able to remit money to his wife and sons in Ecuador and where at the time of the interview he still worked.

In the excerpt below, Diego recounts how he moved from one cleaning job to another and what his motivations were to make such decision. He relates how his supervisor began to assign him extra work given that he was an industrious worker, which Diego saw as unfair treatment. He did not complain but rather he kept silent and continued to work under the same person's supervision as he did not want to risk his three-hour job until he found a full time job somewhere else.

él era colombiano.. pero eh yo lo que veía era que mucha gente abusaba mucho o sea él lo que hacía como supervisor era meter gente con papeles así..no correctos no les pagaba a tiempo.. empezaba a abusar de ellos le venía...bueno a robarle prácticamente el dinero y él abusaba de la gente y yo decía que por qué pero a mí ya me empezó a ver con esa situación entonces yo dije no ya no ya no voy a seguir más.. me fui a trabajar el *full time* <sup>xxi</sup>...

In this excerpt, Diego describes both illicit ways of hiring people in the service sector and practices of exploitation with which he seemingly disagreed since he decided to move to another job. However, unlike David who openly narrated a similar tense environment, negative attitudes and actions in the same context, Diego's account is characterised by discursive negotiations that hesitantly provide a picture of asymmetrical relations. On the one hand, Diego's reference to the supervisor's nationality, *colombiano*, both culturally differentiates him and characterises him as dishonest since this trait is emphasised as he describes the supervisor's recurrent behaviour through negatively connoted-verbs of which he is the agent, *abusaba*, *no les pagaba a tiempo*, *venía a robarle practicamente el dinero*. On the other hand, it appears that Diego intends to save face as though he did not want to depict the supervisor's attitudes negatively and discursively hedges the supervisor's practices, *meter gente con papeles asi...* His face-keeping effort continues as he introduces the noun, *no correctos*, intended to function as a euphemism that attenuates unlawful hiring practices. Furthermore the phrase *esa situación*, which Diego employs to refer to exploitative attitudes not only seems indexical of them but pads his statement and obfuscate the manager's abusive practices that he undecidedly describes.

On the day of the interview, Diego and I met in a cafe but he decided to go to a Latin American restaurant where he said we could talk and he felt more comfortable. This was a place owned by an Ecuadorian family with whom Diego seemingly had a very good relationship and to which, according to our conversations and my observations, he would go and sing karaoke on either Fridays or Saturdays. In fact, after the interview, he invited me to join him on a Friday night when he introduced me to his friends from Ecuador who also worked in the service sector as cleaners. This setting and the activities there on the day of the interview seemed to have had a particular

effect on the language Diego employed. The restaurant had just opened and the owners and one of the waiters were setting up the tables and chairs and were walking back and forth past the table at which Diego and I sat. As Diego touched upon events that he suggested as delicate such as his being undocumented and working without a permit more than ten years ago, he either spoke hesitantly, euphemistically or lowered his voice. This was a speech pattern that he also showed while he narrated the events in the above excerpt, which implied he did not want to talk about it openly before he changed the subject of his account. This illustrates a social space and environment unlike the more controlled conditions in which David openly talked about exploitation, and it also reminds us that language use is a practice co-constructed with the situatedness of the social environment in which the interaction occurs and that physical space is not neutral (Lefebvre, 1974; Dong, 2017). For Diego, the restaurant seemed to be a space of recreation rather than space of denunciation.

As the interview went on and approached to its end, Diego narrates another experience in a different site where the role of social capital also highlights strategies on which Latin American immigrants draw for accessing and keeping their jobs. A friend of Diego's asked him to fill in his cleaning job in a hospital while his friend covered for someone else's cleaning job in another site with a higher salary.

había muchas personas latinas ahí. y lo que hacían es.era de recargarles trabajo recargarles el trabajo y la gente se iba y tenían que hacer el trabajo del otro por el mismo precio entonces ¿quién se beneficia de eso? es el manager o el supervisor que está a cargo no le paga a la persona que debe ser <sup>xxii</sup>...

In this account, Diego points to the numerical presence of Latin American workers who are described as the recipients of unfair treatment due to which they left their jobs resulting in wards unattended to and tasks undone, which required that the latter activities had to be taken over by those who stayed in the job and for which they received no remuneration. In this context, Diego's description resonates with the description of David and also with other studies documenting London's migrant division of labour in which cleaners have to work long hours of overtime and who are often underpaid (See Wills and Kavita, 2009). I will elaborate on this below. As to Diego's discourse, it foregrounds the topic of exploitation that becomes the situational frame in which a person in a position of power performs unfair actions. Such practices are emphasised by the repetition of *recargarles el trabajo*, and by his use of *no le paga a la persona que debe ser*. Consequently Diego's narrated experience exemplifies a discourse of polarisation indicative of vertical interactions that present Latin American employees as victims in contrast to the manager who is presented as an agent who deliberately exploits them as also the rhetorical question implies. Nevertheless, the reference to either the manager or the supervisor in charge remained

vague, and in order to understand his experience more closely in the interview I asked him if he knew the managers.

¡Son LATINOS!..son latinos mismos colombianos ecuatorianos qué se yo <sup>xxiii</sup>...

This very short excerpt exemplifies his direct and emphatic answer that carries overtones of frustration and disappointment. We must remind ourselves, as we have discussed in chapter 3 and above, that Latin Americans as many migrant groups rely on social capital as both the conduit to their inclusion in a new society and as a mechanism of job insertion that allows them to develop social relations through which they also generate interpersonal trust (Portes, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Diego's stress on the word *LATINOS* and his use of *mismos*, that also functions as an emphasiser of its precedent noun seems to imply his own disbelief about exploitation among Latinos since it appears that his assumed cultural commonalities and relations of trust have been transgressed. Nonetheless, his answer containing disillusionment, as we noted above, is accompanied with vagueness and a face-keeping effort; his use of hedging as illustrated in the concluding phrase, *qué se yo*, discursively emerges as an attempt to point to neither a particular nationality nor a particular social actor, and after which in the interview he kept silent. I noticed certain discomfort in him that may have been explained by the conditions and environment of the interview that I described above but I attempted to follow up his account by mentioning that there was then a tense environment in which he worked but he corrected me.

Bueno corrupción lo que hay es también entre mismos latinos porque la gente viene necesitada y hacen lo que sea por tener ingreso porque tienen que pagar. porque ellos hacen lo que sea por sobrevivir en este país. pagar renta comida qué sé yo transporte de aquí este país no es fácil de vivir económicamente es muy costoso <sup>xxiv</sup>...

Although Diego recognises a dishonest practice such as corruption among Latin Americans in London in the service sector, it gradually becomes backgrounded in what unfolded as a discourse of empathy. In Diego's account, corruption is nominalised given that the actors of it are not explicitly mentioned and seems to be implied as an understandable practice through which those in positions of power knowingly exploits the socioeconomic needs that Latinos in search of work face. Phrases such as *la gente viene necesitada*, *hacen lo que sea por tener ingreso*, foreground the main monetary motivations of people to take up a job, which are in turn accentuated by Diego's pointing to how they struggle to make their ends meet, *hacen lo que sea por sobrevivir*. He thus aligns himself with those in search of work and whose behaviour he seems to rationalise as exploitable and as generalised reactive practices due to the socioeconomic environment in which Latin Americans live. After telling me this, Diego once again changed the subject and I

decided not to pursue his description of exploitation as he was noticeably not at ease talking about it.

Diego's narrated experiences seem to be consistent with those of Sharon and David in the sense that their interactions with other Latin Americans suggest and reflect asymmetrical relations articulated by the positions of power that the actors involved in the accounts hold, and it is also suggested that the industriousness of workers that their accounts depict is treated as exploitable. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that the attitudes portrayed here, although they have been reported in previous studies of the same population (see McIlwaine, 2011; 2014), go beyond conflict and asymmetries among Latin Americans and, as we have seen, they rather interrelate with wider practices of labour exploitation within other migrant groups. As I have said above, Diego's account is reminiscent of the discourse of the "good worker" (MacKenzie and Forde, 2009) but it is also intertwined with what other researchers have identified as the unequal distribution of income and resources that have been exacerbated by "the uneven effects of globalisation" (Wu and Lie 2014, p. 1392). That is, the limited economic resources with which migrants move to a new society, and whose lives largely resonate with Diego's, point to issues of socioeconomic class differences and inequality rather than tensions or exploitation explained by national origin or ethnicity. The subsequent account of Alfonso, nonetheless, can offer us another window to the interactions that we have set out to explore in the same context where nationality and geographical origin are discursively presented as factors that influence how Latin Americans associate or dissociate with other Latin Americans.

### **Alfonso**

In chapter 5, I mentioned that part of my fieldwork involved visits to NGOs, workshops organised by the latter and festivals as well as markets in Lambeth. This is one of the boroughs in which Latin Americans have obtained official recognition as an ethnic group (McIlwaine, 2016; CLAUUK 2015). Here I would meet with contacts from Colombia and Venezuela that I had made in my previous visits and who worked in either restaurants as waiters or informally selling home-made cheese to market goers. They helped me widen the number of people I wanted to invite to this study and introduced me to Alfonso. His work was not based in the same site but his visits to it were more motivated by his circle of friends there as I was able to observe. Alfonso is a Venezuelan immigrant who has been living and working in London for over thirteen years. He was trained as a Telecoms Technician in Venezuela and practiced this training in the Dutch island of Aruba where he worked for an American company. At the time of the interview he worked as a care assistant in a hospital in London that he described as the best thing that has happened to

him since he came to London, and such a hindsight is illustrative of the nature and conditions of the various jobs he has done in his time in London.

In the next excerpt, Alfonso attempted to describe his social activities in answer to my question about how he organised his social life. The question sought to understand his social interactions as well as events and places to which he could go with more Latin American people.

Yo mira a ver.. yo te voy a decir algo. yo soy cien por ciento latinoamericano ¿verdad? no me gusta vincularme con latinos para serte honesto ¿verdad? Porque el latino fuera de su país es distinto desafortunadamente <sup>xxv</sup>...

Alfonso's account interestingly opens with a confession-like description through which different values are intimated and that seemingly influence his social relations. It is interesting to see his use of hyperbolic language to refer to his being Latin American since it emphasises an identity that he does not seem to treat as synonymous with the noun *Latinos* given that the latter is introduced through a phrase of affective distance epitomised by *no me gusta*. As his narrative progresses, he euphemistically begins to distance himself from *Latinos* by defining them as *distintos*, a vague definition about which I asked him what he meant by it.

Es muy materialista es excesivamente materialista y prácticamente yo creo que el dios de ellos es el dinero. ¿me entiendes?. y es bastante incomodo en sí es bastante incomodo porque yo no soy así ¿veda?. yo entiendo que las personas e su tiempo es importante porque ellos lo necesitan para producir dinero para lograr sus metas.. todo eso yo lo entiendo me parece muy bien pero en lo consiguiente me vinculo muy poco con latinos. o sea poquísimo prácticamente porque los latinos aquí funcionan como pequeños clanes. si tú no eres colombiano es muy difícil que entres en ese clan imposible casi ¿me entiendes?.. Si no eres ecuatoriano si no eres boliviano ellos son muy muy cerrados en su situación ¿me entiendes? <sup>xxvi</sup>...

In the excerpt above Alfonso gives the reasons why he decides to socialise very little with other *Latinos* in London and justifies them by detailing their defining characteristics. Through hyperbolic language such as *excesivamente*, and a metaphoric representation of what dictates their lives, *el dios de ellos es el dinero*, *Latinos* are emphatically categorised as money-oriented individuals whose behaviour is directed to material gain, which does not reflect that of Alfonso. In addition, he argues there are other conditions that influence his infrequent interaction with them. The construct of national identity comes to the fore and appears by means of a simile, *como clanes*, as a common ancestry that for Alfonso establishes and articulates rules of inclusion and exclusion among *Latinos*. By drawing on such simile, Alfonso represents them as culturally differentiated groups that socially organise themselves independent from one another, a practice of cultural segmentation that nonetheless discursively typifies *Latinos*.

In addition to Alfonso's narration of events, there are three intertwined elements that should not be disregarded in order to enrich our understanding of the social relations he depicts. The first one is the act of moving to another country and what this involves. As stated in chapter 3, people move for a number of reasons and the routes that they travel to a great extent influence both their social experiences and may impact their social identities. Also they may mobilise their socioeconomic resources and social networks at both micro and meso level such as personal contacts and ethnic identity or nationality in order to make their move and their arrival less challenging. They provide information about where to live and work. These capitals are indeed relevant material and symbolic elements that affect and to a great extent organise the formation of cultural groups and thus their delimitation from others (see Castles and Miller 2009), and they help us gain insight into Alfonso's view of nationality as a factor that shapes social relations in migrant groups. It must be added that the description included above is not exclusive of Latin Americans in London but rather reflects what other researchers have referred to as enclaves based on this symbolic element that may offer support or a respite from the challenges they may face in a new society (Portes and Bach 1985; Samers 2010). In this vein, it must be noted that moving to another country may create new conditions of existence such as economic pressure that indeed plays an influential role in migrants' experiences and ways of organising their lives in a new society (see Mahler, 1995). We will see more of this below that relates to a highly important third element.

The second element pertains to what some authors call residual culture. A residual culture refers to "experiences, meanings and values which cannot be expressed or verified in terms of the dominant culture", in this case the receiving society, "but are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of some previous social and cultural formation" (Williams 1977, p. 122). In addition to this, in a residual culture there is also a "reaching back" to those meanings and values which were created in actual societies and actual situations in the past, which still seem to have significance because they represent areas of human experience (Williams 1977, p. 124 inverted commas in original). This means that migrants' experiences in their countries of origin may inform and articulate those in their new society. In this vein, Alfonso's view of Latinos as materialist and money oriented suggests traces of a residual culture in that it points to previous social relations with them opposed to material-based ones and oriented to and located in the homeland. Thus, Alfonso's discourse evidences an understanding that is rooted in a meaningful former social experience that nonetheless is not only an element of the past but it figures as an active element of the here and now through which he makes sense of the attitudes that he discursively disqualifies (see Williams 1977).

There is additionally a third element that intertwines with the two mentioned above. Alfonso's lexical choice, *distinto*, also leads us to think not only of elements of a residual culture where there is a disruption of his former social relations but people's new conditions of existence. We should bear in mind that Latin American migration is a South to North migration in the sense that, although not in all cases, people move to the UK in search of economic advance, an objective that people attempt to reach and that by implication influences their behaviour. Thus their being different in a new society conjoined with a material-oriented attitude that Alfonso describes are indexical of a behaviour that characterises neoliberalism in many societies. That is, a competition-driven attitude comes forth and is suggested as a force that creates antagonism between Latin Americans. This has also been captured in other migrant groups who exhibit their disillusionment with fellow migrants whose behaviours and attitudes change when living in another country. Mahler (1995) documents how Salvadoran and Honduran immigrants in Long Island, USA describe their compatriots as jealous or competitive and find that they are victimised by their own. The economic pressures that they face such as the payment of travel debts, remittances, and rents result both in the suspension of social rules such as reciprocity that existed before migration and in an aggressive, competitive subculture where migrants exploit other fellow migrants (ibid). In the context of this study, we will continue to explore these socioeconomic factors and attitudes in Alfonso's penultimate excerpt in more detail.

It must be noted that the description that Alfonso provides, nevertheless, seems to be ambivalent due to his social practices that he also mentioned in the interview and that I was able to observe. Alfonso's preferred leisure activity was to play chess in the Elephant and Castle area where he had a close circle of friends with whom he would get together at the weekends and who would be from Latin America. As stated above, Alfonso visited a market in the borough of Lambeth where he would interact with other Latin Americans that introduced him to me and where through my observations and participations in their conversations I did not identify any confrontation among them. On the contrary, they talked, joked and interacted in amicable terms. Alfonso's actions thus contradicts his discourse and, although it is a type of contradiction that has also been recorded in previous studies of Colombians in London (see McIlwaine, 2012; Cock, 2011), it still merits further examination as the recurrent topos of culture, that is the common-sense view that stereotypically aims to explain people's behaviour due to their geographic origin, and the construct of nationality keep being resorted to as a sense-making mechanism of the experiences that my participants describe and that may background other larger socioeconomic factors that may impact the quality of their social or work relations which we will continue to examine below. As his narrative progresses, Alfonso he then touches upon his work experience with Latin Americans in a London-based hospital in an attempt to justify his previous description.



a mí me toco una vez trabajar de supervisor en X hospital de cleaner donde el manager era colombiano. el noventa por ciento del staff era colombiano. el otro resto eramos yo venezolano boliviano y ecuatoriano y los colombianos en bloque nos hacían bullying a nosotros<sup>xxvii</sup> ...

In the excerpt above, Alfonso describes the make-up of nationalities as well as the positions that each of them occupied in the workplace where he used to work as a cleaner as well as he describes alliances that become manifest in in-groups vs out-groups with which he identifies. His discourse brings about the topic of intimidation of which he as part of the out-group was the object as his narrative suggests, and which presents him as the underdog. This is furthermore emphasised by his employment of a discursive strategy of numbers exemplified in the numerical superiority of the staff, *el noventa por ciento*. However, such strategy of numbers has a hyperbolic vague effect since there is no mention of specific numbers of the people to whom Alfonso attributes a violent behaviour. The latter nevertheless becomes evident in his metaphorical use of the adverbial phrase, *en bloque*, which is followed by a negatively connoted action, *bullying*, through which Alfonso categorises Colombians' attitudes as systematically aggressive and who are thus presented as agents who deliberately intimidate co-workers who do not belong to the same nationality. The accusation that Alfonso's discourse produces in the above excerpt seems to be justified by way of examples:

a mí me tocó ser supervisor y habían dos colombianos. llegaban a las once de la mañana y se iban a la una y media de la tarde cuando supuestamente tenían que llegar a las seis de la mañana e irse a las tres y media ¿verdad?. y eran amigos íntimos del manager. yo no había dicho nada porque vamos estábamos en un buen rollo estábamos todo bien pero cuando el manager le hizo un *complaint* a un boliviano que llegó media hora tarde después de las seis le hizo un *complaint* por escrito al boliviano ahí fue cuando yo dije. bueno e.. "tú haces *complaint* por media hora pues yo voy a hacer *complaint* por tus dos amigos que lo que trabajan son dos horas si acaso tres horas y y el pago es full time"<sup>xxviii</sup> ...

In this excerpt, Alfonso details a work routine in another setting where two of his Colombian co-workers used to turn up late for work and still received a full-time job salary. They, as Alfonso's passage suggests, had a close friendship with the manager whose tolerant attitude to lateness was influenced by their common nationality. What his discourse produces is the topic of partiality as a top-down practice from which his Colombian co-workers benefitted and about which Alfonso complained. As he continues to describe these vertical work interactions he produces discourses of both empathy and derogation that exhibit, as we have seen in the previous cases of Sharon, David and Diego, polarised and antagonistic work relations. On the one hand, a discourse of empathy is accorded to the non-Colombian group which is therefore represented as the victims of arbitrary rules that placed him in the out-group and that could threaten his own job. On the other hand, by mitigating a fault committed by his Bolivian co-worker he produces a discourse of

derogation through which he foregrounds and stresses the others' dishonest practices to which he nonetheless decided to turn a blind eye initially.

The negative other-representation that we saw above is also best understood within a frame of time and productivity; while Alfonso obscures the agency of his Bolivian co-worker by only alluding to the timeframe, *por media hora*, he not only foregrounds their habitual unpunctuality but their leaving early and receiving a full time salary. In this light, Alfonso's discourse implicitly categorises the Colombian workers as unprincipled whose practices are explained by cultural ties that seemingly justify partiality and strengthen power relations that lead to exclusion. The existing antagonism that Alfonso describes above by alluding to *sus dos amigos* can still be further examined in the following excerpt and that figures as an organising topic that nevertheless backgrounds an economic phenomenon that transcends the construct of nationality as we will see below.

entonces yo le dije a él “el problema es que son amigos tuyos son de tu misma ciudad en Colombia. son casi de tu mismo barrio y son amigos desde allá”, ¿me entiendes? <sup>xxix</sup>...

Alfonso's short passage intends to re-enact his confrontation with the manager and narrates how he stood up against what he described as an injustice. Social capital in Alfonso's account is depicted as problematic since, as he has implied above, it generates partiality that he emphasises through the repetitive use of a possessive pronoun such as *tuyo*, *tu*. In the interview, Alfonso told me that after a meeting with hospital administrators and the manager he had one of the Colombian workers fired due to his recurrent unpunctuality whilst he helped the other stay and work a full time schedule. He later learnt that they had three jobs in different sites across London, which, as Alfonso acknowledged in the interview, explains their lateness. In this sense, there is an interesting aspect. Having two or three jobs, as we were able to see in the previous chapter and above in Miguel's and Diego's account respectively, is a practice found in migrants from many nationalities working in the service sector and it points to the migrant division of labour in London (Wills et al, 2009; Alberti et al, 2013). In addition, it must be noted that service sector jobs are usually underpaid, outsourced and require that employees work unsociable hours or commute by bus long distances from one work site to another (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010; McIlwaine, 2016).

The above observation is not to delegitimise Alfonso's view, as I did not have access to the experiences described here or more empirical evidence that could have greatly enriched this study and analysis. It is rather an attempt to draw attention to a material reality that mainly affects a working class migrant population of various nationality groups and to shed light on the economic and work conditions in which they find themselves in a receiving society that has been documented to show signs of growth in low paid-work (see Wills et al, 2009). As stated above, this

problem among fellow migrants has been studied and has been found in other contexts such as the USA (see Mahler 1995). However, this socioeconomic reality does not figure as the organising topic of Alfonso's discourse but what dominates his account is the construct of nationality. In order to pursue this last statement in the interview I asked him whether he thought that the geographic origin of people influences these interactions.

estoy cien por ciento seguro porque yo lo he vivido aquí por eso es que a mí no me gusta trabajar con latinos ni vivir con latinos. no ¿vivir yo? en la casa donde estoy viviendo todos son ingleses ¿verdad?. a mí no me gustan los latinos ¿vivir con ellos? no vamos ni que me paguen y trabajar con ellos ni que me vuelvan a pagar otra vez, ¿me entendiste?<sup>xxx</sup>..

Alfonso's answer to my question encapsulates two different domains of his social life such as his private life and his work life. The affective distance that his discourse exhibits in the repetitive negative use of the verb *gustar* seems to be informed by a discourse of evidentiality (see van Dijk, 2006); that is, the hyperbolically emphasised negative experiences he describes he has had in the workplace with Colombian co-workers provide a justification for him to dissociate from them socially. Nevertheless, his account seems to typify Latinos and ascribe negative attributes to them indiscriminately. For instance, the implied comparison between the English and Latinos embedded in Alfonso's discourse produces a topos of culture to explain and contrast values and practices that define a particular social behaviour of what is conceived of as a clearly delineated and homogenised cultural group. Such comparison was also found in David's discourse about the Latino manager whose negative actions were emphasised by obscuring what seemed dishonest practices of the English manager, and in both comparisons we find a negative generalised categorisation of Latinos.

In light of the above, a striking feature in both Alfonso's and David's representations of Latinos is their attempt to create a common-ground understanding of what Latinos are like by turning to implications and rhetorical questions that aim to account for a seemingly recognisable ethos that characterise how Latinos carry themselves and that I, as a Latin American researcher, am supposed to recognise, *tú sabes cómo somos los latinos, no me gusta trabajar con latinos ni vivir con latinos ¿verdad?, ¿me entendiste?* Therefore the attitudes and practices of those who have access to power positions in the specificity of their work context where they are described are made sense of through topoi of culture; assumed traits that create expectations of social interactions that nonetheless background neoliberal work practices that fragment social relations among the Latin Americans involved here.

The interactions among Latin Americans that I have described and analysed so far are not limited to one single work context such as the service sector. As I said at the beginning of this chapter,

their interactions can also be located in the domains of language teaching and domestic work where cultural, social and economic capital seems to be mobilised as class distinctions and differentiations among the Latin Americans in this study.

### Linda

Linda is a Mexican immigrant who I met through the snowballing process that I have described above. Emails and phone calls were the means through which we communicated and agreed to meet in a London train station. Linda moved to England in 1989 and has inhabited diverse social spaces. She grew up in Mexico City where she obtained a degree in Psychology, and before she migrated to the UK she took English-teaching courses to become an English teacher. Her reasons to leave Mexico range an intricate and complex combination of factors that aim to a forward looking life view. Her quest for her true sexuality that could be stifled by a regulatory Mexican society was a major incentive for her to discover it abroad. Also domestic violence figures as a major catalyst for her to leave Mexico and improve her living conditions. Furthermore, she intended to improve her English and become an English teacher in the UK. Although she reached her goal, she narrated that it was not easily achievable as she explained that cleaning was one of the first available jobs to which she had access. Before leaving Mexico, she got in touch with an Irish woman through Linda's sister and who put her in touch with a group of English-speaking friends and who would provide her with accommodation and who became her social network. At the time of the interview she was married to an English man who was part of the group of people that welcomed her in the UK and with whom she had a daughter.

Among the many jobs that Linda had, she narrated that she also worked for other people from Latin America whose attitudes she depicted through a negative light.

Los latinos fueron mis peores jefes. principalmente dos de ellos ¿no? un chileno él me mandaba a las oficinas de gobierno en español ¿no? y él me pagaba. ocho libras por hora y un día me manda con los *invoice* y él cobraba treinta y cinco libras por hora para empezar y él me pagaba ocho y de ahí me descontaba <sup>xxxi</sup>...

In this account, Linda retrospectively assesses her experience working for a Chilean person who used to run a Spanish teaching school that offered language classes to London-based companies to which Linda was sent. As we have seen in the previous accounts of David and Diego, the organising topic of Linda's account is also that of deceit. This lack of transparency is instantiated by the underpayment that Linda reports she received and from which on top of that she was deducted. In this light Linda's discourse categorises her boss as abusive and dishonest. As the interview went on, Linda recounts her experience with an Argentinian woman whose needs differ from those of Linda.

ella me pidió que que siempre hablara español con la niña lo cual yo no quería porque yo quería aprender inglés ¿no? este..me pagaba creo que me pagaba tres libras por día no me acuerdo o sea no por día por hora. una cosa ridícula y vivía fuera de Londres o sea yo tenía que viajar un montón para ir a su casa y nunca me entendió que lo que me pagaba no me servía. que además yo le estaba haciendo el favor de enseñarle a su hija español o sea igual ¿no? y me contestó de una forma así de que “te estoy haciendo un favor de darte un trabajo” y..no sé<sup>xxxii</sup> ...

Linda's account exhibits an interesting interaction with her Argentinian employee whose daughter Linda looked after and to whom she was asked to speak in Spanish, which seemingly Linda reluctantly did due to her interest in learning English. It must be noted that her reluctance to speak Spanish in England as well as other language ideologies that will continue to come up in her account and subsequently in that of Mayra will be nonetheless pursued in the following chapter in more depth due to the focus of analysis of this chapter. As to this interaction, the topic of language interest and job needs are foregrounded as the site of struggle that is redolent of two-way hierarchical attitudes from both parties. Through the phrase *yo le estaba haciendo el favor de enseñarle a su hija español*, Linda indexes her language capital as a valuable asset that empowers her and that, although is presented as underestimated, is needed by her employer. The latter is in turn discursively placed in a position of power as the individual who can give Linda a job but is discursively categorised as unappreciative and condescending, *me contestó de una forma así de que “te estoy haciendo un favor de darte un trabajo”*. The description that Linda provides is consequently illustrative of conflictive power relations as the interactants in the event narrated seem to exploit the language and economic needs each of them sought to meet.

In addition to the injustices and tensions that Linda narrates, her migration experience also instantiates a process of declassing that to some extent resembles that of David as she was also undocumented for a time due to her overstaying her passport. This led her to job exploitation in hotels and forced her to leave the country to re-enter it through France. After this she and her now husband decided to get married and she no longer risked entering on an irregular migration status. She also recounted that once they were married they faced economic problems and thus decided to move to Mexico and teach English in language schools and universities. Furthermore, her story also echoes that of Alfonso, Miguel and Diego in the sense that the jobs available to newcomers are at the lower echelons of society or are found in a context of informality which are usually poorly paid (McGregor, 2007). However, her experience contrasts with those above due to two main interrelated elements. The first one is her language capital aspiration that appears as one of the main drives to be in the UK and not necessarily an economic one as she said she did not have to remit money back to her family. The second one pertains to her and her husband's moving to Mexico. Linda stated that relocating their lives to Mexico in order for them to teach English for three years enabled them to save more than enough money and return to England

where they for a time would live in her mother-in-law's house. In this sense, there are social as well as language capital and socioeconomic class differences that index a reality that do not reflect the pressing economic living conditions or the precarity that an irregular migration status may bring about and in which other migrants such as Miguel, Diego, Irma and David found themselves respectively. This allows us to gain insight into and reminds us of the material conditions of migrants' lives (see Block, 2017; 2018) since they exhibit both how migration is experienced and how social relations may be narrated and constructed.

As Linda continued to narrate her experiences living and working in London, she touched upon working as a hotel maid in London where she reported abuse from her employers which she could not denounce due to her limited knowledge of English. For Linda, language is not only crucial for fighting the maltreatment she reports but also for integration in a receiving society that in her view explains behaviours and attitudes of many Latinos.

Si la gente no. no aprende el idioma termina por nunca integrarse y eso pasa con muchos latinos hay muchos latinos que tienen mucho resentimiento contra o sea todo acusan ¿no? "ay no los ingleses ay no esa vieja la directora de la escuela me trata así que no sé qué" pero es simple y sencillamente porque ellos no tienen el idioma y muchas veces hay muchos malos entendidos y ellos se sienten humillados.. pero por desgracia muchos latinos vienen con la idea de trabajar como burros de hacer mucho dinero de llevarse su dinero a su patria nunca se regresan a su patria nunca se integran..en verdad. nunca se regresan a su patria nunca se integran muchos terminan mandando el dinero a su patria y allá se los transean.. o sea es una locura ¿no? y terminan muy amargados contra los ingleses pero no es eso ¿no? xxxiii ...

The feelings of resentment of Latinos towards the English and the poor mutual understanding between them that Linda describes above places language as a valuable resource at the centre of human relations, particularly in a context where scholars have argued that there are social rules that the migrant is expected to fulfil (see Blommaert, 2013). Linda's account brings about the topic of Latinos' integration that, although it is not made explicit what it exactly means, is implied that it is achieved by learning the language of the host country that will be conducive to social cohesion since, according to Linda, failure to learn the language of a receiving society results in a misinterpretation of social interactions. As she elaborates on her explanation through the adverbial, *por desgracia*, Linda frames this process in an interesting way. It evaluates their motivations to be in the UK negatively as it is suggested that they have no interest in integrating into their host society due to their economic needs that she depicts by means of a simile on which I will elaborate below. In this sense, the process of integration that Linda mentions seems to reflect a notion in which the migrant is held accountable for their own success or failure, a view of failed integration that is the sole responsibility of those Latinos whose feeling of humiliation that she mentions many of them have is simply unjustified. In other words, what surfaces in her

discourse is an ideology of neoliberalism in which, as we saw in chapter 2.7 and in Marcia's account in the previous chapter, 'any success or failure is no longer attributed to social or economic inequalities but becomes a matter of the individual's aspirations and capabilities' (Park, 2010, p. 25). I will say more about this ideology when we analyse Mayra's case below.

The interview with Linda went on and I asked her about her relationship with more Latin Americans and her views on their presence in London.

mi relación con gente de latinoamérica ah..veo un grupo de gente latinoamericana que vino con aspiraciones de hacer mucho dinero que han trabajado como burro enormemente que han perdido la salud han perdido el dinero. nunca se han regresado a su país y odian todo ¿no? y son muy nefastos<sup>xxxiv</sup>...

In the context of the interview Linda demarcates three different groups of Latin Americans in London. The first group is described in the excerpt above where she refers to a group of people whose economic aspirations seem to be the main drive to relocate their lives but whose plans of economic advancement despite their industriousness seem to have fallen through. The other two groups are depicted in a more positive light; the second is characterised as mentally positive, hardworking people who despite speaking no English still have managed to become property owners, and the third one with whom she identifies and depicts as people who have clearly identified academic and professional goals and have set their mind to achieving them.

In light of the above, the discursive subdivision of groups she made marks the group in the excerpt as losers. Their losses, *han perdido la salud*, *han perdido el dinero*, are accentuated by the simile, *han trabajado como burro*, which illustrates that her industriousness was to no avail. Furthermore this simile carries a heavy cultural meaning with an implicit top-down categorisation. In Spanish, *burro*, a donkey is culturally depicted as a beast of burden that although works incessantly is also forced into heavy labour usually by means of a yoke. Through such a simile in this context, Linda seems to subsume both industrious behaviours and relegate them to a social hierarchy of symbolic subjugation. Additionally her lexicalisation and the indicative tense of her statement *odian todo*, *son muy nefastos*, characterises the behaviour of those Latinos to whom she refers as factually unpleasant. Thus Linda's discursive choices exhibits an evaluative social distance that places them beneath her at the same time that, as we saw above, evidences an ideology of neoliberalism in which the individual self-constructs as successful or unsuccessful.

The depictions of the participants' experiences with more Latin Americans that I have so far analysed shed light on interactions that seem to be accounted for by topoi of culture and by ideologies that focus on the achievements or failures of the individual. These interactions also point to social class differentiations and stratification among Latin Americans that could be

further probed outside the settings narrated above as I now introduce Mayra from Ecuador and then Jazmin from Colombia.

### Mayra

I was able to get in touch with Mayra through a snowballing process initiated by one of my participants from Ecuador who I met in the Elephant and Castle area. Mayra and I met in a cafe in central London and although she greeted me effusively, she did not seem to open up as the interview progressed. Her attitude can be explained by the limitations that a one-time encounter can produce as she and I had not interacted with each other before the interview and thus I must acknowledge that this is one of the limitations of this study. However, her life story contains relevant information that can be linked to my observations and visits to various sites in London during my fieldwork and that I will incorporate in this discussion to understand her discourse and situate it within a larger group of people with whom she interacts.

Mayra's migration to the UK was motivated by her husband's need for professional development. He holds a degree in architecture that he studied in England where they have now lived for four years. Mayra recounts how her initial experience in the UK led her to depression due to both a lack of a social network and the fact that her husband would spend most of the day at work. She eventually realised there was a presence of Latin Americans coming from Spain mainly and with whom she would get involved. She would fill in forms in English and would work as a translator for them, work that was free of charge as in the interview she stated that she did it as a contribution to her community. At the time of the interview she held a part-time job at the embassy of her country in London and had her own business that I will describe below.

Due to her voluntary work experience mentioned above she said she also befriended many people who told them how people from their own community treated them. She narrated how a friend from Latin America living with another Latin American woman used to rent her one side of the bed for fifty pounds a week. Mayra refers to this attitude as follows.

Los británicos no te segregan. los que te segregan son los mismos de tu comunidad y había como muchas personas que querían aprovecharse de ellos <sup>xxxv</sup>...

Mayra in this short excerpt refers to segregationist attitudes among Latin Americans as in the interview she said that recently arrived Latin Americans are subject to exploitation and abuse by their same community members to whom they initially resort for help. She categorises them as discriminatory and sly, *segregar* and *aprovechar*, which are practices that her use of the generic object and possessive pronoun, *te* and *tu*, in the present tense interestingly presents them as facts. I asked Mayra why she thought this problem happens, and in the following excerpts we see



the prevalent use of the present tense that allows us to see how Mayra positions herself and categorise other Latin Americans.

Es por falta de conocimiento.. el pueblo parece por falta de conocimiento. es muy claro que las personas vienen acá y piensan que porque les falta el idioma no les queda otra que ser humillados que no les queda otra que dejarse someter por otras personas que ven en ellos una oportunidad de enriquecerse o de hacer dinero extra. es simplemente ignorancia<sup>xxxvi</sup> ...

This very categorical explanation about the problem of abuse among Latin Americans that Mayra gives points to what she claims is the main core of the issue. Ignorance comes up as the organising topic of her discourse that is foregrounded by a noteworthy feature of her account such as the phrase, *el pueblo parece por falta de conocimiento*. The latter leads us to pose the question, where does it come from? It appears to be a biblical reference from the book of Hosea 4:6 where the people, *el pueblo*, are cut off by their god as punishment for rejecting knowledge; in other words, their punishment is a consequence that they have brought upon themselves. In Mayra's account, such phrase instantiates an interdiscursive practice that promotes a view of a hierarchised social order and functions as an argumentation strategy of generalisation since she resorts to it as a maxim that is proverbially to explicate a behaviour and the lack of knowledge which is allegedly typical and by extension predictable of *the* people with whom she indirectly associates Latinos. Interestingly her account does not concentrate on the abusers of the practices above but on those who suffer them and who exhibit cognitive and linguistic characteristics presented as deficiencies that the lexical item, *falta*, evidences. In this light, Mayra's explanation places the responsibility on those who suffer exploitation as a result of their ignorance and thus describes such asymmetrical interactions as facts, truth values that she emphasises through an adverbial of manner such as *simplemente*.

In addition to this representation of Latinos, there also seems to be another non-linguistic aspect that may influence how Mayra voices her opinion and that to some extent resembles the self-presentation of Marcia and Karla in the previous chapter indexing a socioeconomic position from which she speaks as well as an ideology on which I will elaborate below as I describe what her work involved. As her account goes on, Mayra touches upon why in her view people from Latin America are not culturally visible and politically organised to claim their rights like the Muslim community in London.

La mayoría de los latinos que se asentaron aquí son latinos que ya tienen formado su carácter en su país de origen. la mayoría entonces. tú sabes que como latinos hubo una época en la que se traía como ese yugo ¿no? la esclavitud de. de haber sido conquistados y entonces yo considero que muchos de esos latinos vinieron acá y vienen con la actitud de que aquí están los patrones aquí están los reyes los que nos conquistaron. entonces vienen agachados ¿me entiendes lo que te digo? vienen con una actitud ser sumisos bueno con una actitud de más allá de ser sumiso<sup>xxxvii</sup> ...

As we have seen in the above excerpt Mayra produces a categorical assertion about the defining behaviour of the Latinos to whom she refers and which has prevented them from establishing themselves as a politically present community. She characterises them as subservient, and she accomplishes the above characterisations by the argumentative strategies of the topos of culture and the topos of history as a lesson since her discourse is located in spatiotemporal frames such as their geographic origin that interacts with the memory of colonialism in Latin America. As to the former, the topos of culture, it is employed to categorise most Latinos' behaviour as a fixed attribute, *ya tienen formado su carácter en su país de origen*, explained by their geographic origin.

As to the latter, the topos of history, it is introduced by the assumed socioculturally shared knowledge in *tú sabes*, whereby she not only intends to create a common ground with me as a Latin American researcher aware of this historical event but justify her previous claim and support her subsequent negative categorisation of Latinos as subjects. Her word choices, *yugo*, *esclavitud* and *conquistados*, are illustrative of the latter, the topos of history, but they also carry a denotational meaning that intertwines with what Bourdieu (1986) and Block (2017; 2018) have referred to as the embodied manifestation of habitus and body language respectively contained in *agachados*. It indexes a negatively evaluated behaviour since it acts in opposition to the positively evaluated demeanour of holding one's head up resembling confidence and in this sense this way of behaving ascribed to Latinos exploits the idea of servitude and diffidence that the adjective *sumisos* further underscores.

In light of the above, Mayra's categorisation of Latinos points to a particular social space and lifestyle from which she makes sense of the attitudes she evaluates. As noted above and at the time of the interview, Mayra worked part-time at the embassy of her country and said that she had her own business which enabled her to travel to other European countries. According to her description, her work consisted of training people how to obtain their financial freedom and it aims to recruit people who are willing to mentor themselves as well as go the extra mile. Additionally she also described that her social network encompassed people who she called entrepreneurial and who would have monthly meetings in different venues across London. As part of my fieldwork, I was able to visit two of these meeting points, which were conference rooms in hotels in central and north London and thus I was able to talk and interact with the attendees and potential recruits. Most of them were Latin Americans who either had recently arrived from Spain or had been working in the service sector as cleaners. They were being encouraged to become part of a network-marketing group to widen their contacts and thus sell dietary supplements, the type of job that is commonly known as pyramids and that, as I was able to learn through my conversations with them, promotes the financial responsabilisation of the individual.

In this context, Mayra's account seems to be illustrative of two intertwined aspects: one of which points to a relative socioeconomic position that, akin to Linda, allows her to gain social distance from the Latinos who she evaluates, and the other is the ideology of neoliberalism in which the individual is held accountable for their own success or failure and which comes through her identity as an entrepreneurial individual. As the interview progresses, she subsequently attributes people characteristics that are also worthy of scrutiny.

Un ejemplo los ecuatorianos que estaban en España dos o tres meses te hablaban con un español más marcado que los mismos españoles. es una falta de identidad es un miedo es una manera de reaccionar para tratar de ser aceptados. y eso es lo que pasa la gente **esa** generación antigua que está presente tiene ese esos paradigmas de que se sienten tal vez menos de que se sienten la clase trabajadora <sup>xxxviii</sup> ...

As an attempt to bolster her previous claim of Latinos as subservient and insecure, Mayra provides an example that aims to contextualise the behaviour of her countrymen who she evaluates. However, the level and degree of detail in which she describes this outgroup exemplifies a discourse of negative other representation that categorises them as linguistically inauthentic and socially diffident individuals explained by their socioeconomic class. In this manner we see the intersection of two ideologies. By employing the phrase, *te hablaban con un español más marcado*, Mayra's discourse conjures up what seems an ideology of linguistic authenticity. As we saw in chapter 2, Woolard (2008; 2016, p. 22) has explored such an ideology in which speech varieties are perceived to be socially and geographically rooted in a territory so that they can have value. This means that the authenticity of a speech variety rests in its local origin where ways of speaking are identifiable as legitimate and natural (ibid). In this sense the "markedness" to which Mayra refers, on the one hand, points to a seemingly iconic way of speaking imagined as *the* Spanish accent and, on the other hand, delegitimises their countrymen's way of speaking by suggesting they do not sound authentic, and represents them as linguistically insecure individuals with an inferiority complex who faked an accent so they did not stand out and thus allegedly went culturally unnoticed.

Additionally, Mayra's account is informed by an ideology of social class. Through the demonstrative pronoun, *esa*, conjoined with *generación antigua*, Mayra's account exhibits a social distance reflected in what seems to be an ageist discourse, and subsequently she attributes them cognitive characteristics and ways of behaving that although she intended to hedge still categorise them as an outgroup, *esos paradigmas de que se sienten tal vez menos*, whereby she reveals contrasting social values evidenced in *se sienten la clase trabajadora*, and thus she positions them beneath her. Her account, in this light, confirms what other researchers have drawn attention to: class distinction appears as a relevant construct in the choice of and dispositions of social relations in migrant groups. In his work on Latinos in London, Block (2006;

2008) also analysed both how a well-educated Colombian immigrant led a middle class life even though his work was located in the service sector and how it affected his work relations and sense of place since his participant was never comfortable in his workplace or with his colleagues. The class-based discourse and attitude that Mayra openly discloses is also illustrative of a hierarchical sense of place and space as it points to ways of behaving with which she disassociates herself and thus her discourse draws social boundaries. As the interview went on, we touched upon how migration trajectories could shape people's worldview and I asked her whether she perceived a difference between Latin American people coming to the UK from Spain and those directly from Latin American countries.

El que viene de España. la mayoría vienen a buscar protección del gobierno. viene en busca de los beneficios que da el gobierno. el que viene de latinoamérica no porque nosotros no sabemos que existe eso en Latinoamérica. no existe protección del gobierno entonces como no estuviste expuesto a esa información vas al otro país y ni sabes que hay beneficios te enteras porque alguien te cuenta pero así como voy de latinoamérica en busca de beneficios en uk no. los que vienen de españa sí. porque europa por mucho tiempo han sido bastantes paternalistas no tanto como éste pero han sido. entonces te acostumbras y vienes a buscar lo mismo <sup>xxxix</sup> ...

The topic of benefits in the UK has been widely promoted by media discourses as a problem since it is allegedly an incentive that attracts enormous numbers of European immigrants who are escaping unemployment in their country of origin and purportedly expect the government to provide them with money, care and housing. As we saw in Marcia's and Karla's accounts in the previous chapter, such discourses have contributed to the representation of immigrants as lazy and dishonest since they are in the UK to exploit the local society's welfare. In this light, expressions such as *viene en busca de los beneficios*, and *nosotros no*, bring about a discourse of polarisation in which Mayra clearly contrasts values that distinguish them from her collectivity and that unfolds in a discourse of neoliberalism. That is, this us vs them representation is further enhanced by, *nosotros no sabemos que existe eso, no estuviste expuesto a esa información*, through which she locates herself with an ingroup coming to the UK directly from Latin America and distances herself from those who have been in Spain and who she tacitly categorises as immoral since it is suggested that they relocate their lives in full knowledge of and with the goal of obtaining benefits. Mayra, in this sense, reproduces a discourse of neoliberalism as the Latinos to whom she refers seek to depend on the state and are thus implicitly depicted, as Brown (2005, p. 42) has stated, as lacking "the ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions".

The generalisation that Mayra makes above, nonetheless, provokes scepticism about people's working conditions and motivations to relocate their lives and that should be contextualised. In chapter 5, we saw the case of Miguel who moved from Spain and who worked in a restaurant and

a storage house six days a week, which contests the view that Mayra expresses categorically; that is, Miguel did not depend on benefits and these were not his main motivations to move to England since, as I learnt through my conversations with him, he needed to remit money back to his family in Venezuela. Furthermore, other studies document that 89% of all Latin Americans in the UK are employed and that among those who came from Spain in recent years, around 22,000 people, 6% claimed an out of work benefit (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016). Additionally, Mayra's discourse may also suggest a degree of ambivalence. Latin American people who were part of her network, as stated above, had arrived in London after having lived in Spain for years and thus it is worth asking whether they fall into the same category. The insight that we can gain into this categorisation of Latin American immigrants is that the above views and experiences index different socioeconomic conditions from which emigration and immigrations occurred and that at the same time seem to shape their social relations; ideologies of self-responsibilisation and social class that are worth perusing.

### Jazmin

As we noted in chapters 4.4 and 5, NGOs were sites that I visited and talked to volunteers and staff in order to invite people to participate in this study and left leaflets with my contact details for those interested in sharing their life story. Jazmin volunteered and sent me an email to arrange to meet in a cafe near her workplace in central London. Jazmin was born in Colombia and has been in England for nearly thirteen years. She currently works for a concierge that promotes tourism to Latin America. In Colombia, she would work for a travel agency and she came to England to better her English. After a year in London, she met and married an English man with whom she had a child. Unfortunately, their marriage failed due to domestic violence that she experienced for one and a half year. She managed to redo her degree in tourism as her previous college degree was not recognised in the UK and at the time of the interview she was about to finish her MA in Transport Management. She said that she frequently becomes nostalgic of Colombia and that she identifies with Latinos.

para mí la conexión con los latinos siempre es importante estar conectada de alguna manera.. trato de ir a eventos a donde bailo salsa no hay muchos latinos porque a donde yo voy son como clases diferentes son como diferentes estilos de salsa entonces no hay muchos <sup>xl</sup>...

In this account, Jazmin narrates the relevant role that her ties with Latin American people play in organising her social life in London, although it is interesting to see that her connection and identification with Latinos as she put it is mediated by an activity, *bailo salsa*, rather than a direct interaction with them, which is explained by, as she suggested, the little presence of Latinos in the places that she visits. As her account went on, she mentioned that she is aware of places and

events such as the Latin American annual festival in the Elephant and Castle area where she has interacted with more Latinos.

ese tipo de eventos no. ya no me gusta es muy lleno de gente y a veces la gente es grosera no es la mejor gente en términos de que.. de pronto no tienen educación no se comportan de una manera que uno.. como que eso no me identifico me identifico más con gente como yo que ha estudiado ¿me entiende?<sup>xli</sup>...

As Jazmin continues to explain her affective distance with the festivals in that area, she draws a symbolic boundary through which she demarcates a social space inhabited by a collectivity whose behaviours and attributes she presents as dissimilar from hers. That is, politeness appears as the organising topic of her discourse given that she brings to the fore an outgroups' differentiating behavioural characteristics, *grosera, no se comportan*. As she continues her description, she resorts to the phrase, *no tienen educación*, which appears to be vague due to its polysemy since in Spanish *educación* could mean either politeness or having a good education such as a university degree. However, by referring to social attributes and values that they do not embody, she still accomplishes a social demarcation that is confirmed in the phrase, *no me identifico*. She nonetheless attempted to hedge her statement, *como que*, in order to save face but her pointing to her education capital further differentiates the outgroup by implying it is a capital they lack as the concluding rhetorical question suggests.

The social differentiation that emerges through Jazmin's discourse has also been reported in other migrant groups in the UK in which cultural capital may serve as common and bonding characteristics. Ryan (2011), for instance, documented the case of educated Polish migrants who sought to form networks and social relationships with people from the same social and educational background and not necessarily from the same ethnicity or geographic origin. Interestingly Ryan's participants mobilised their education capital as a valuable and distinctive trait even in the absence of economic capital (*ibid*). This study along with Jazmin's social positioning resonate with what we saw above and in chapter 2.6 and what Bourdieu termed *habitus*, a sense of space and place on which I will elaborate below and that we can peruse below as Jazmin continues to demarcate Latin Americans into subgroups.

gente que sabe lo que es vivir acá con ese tipo de gente yo me conecto. es que aquí hay mucho latino que ha vivido toda su vida aquí que. desafortunadamente no. no dan la mejor imagen<sup>xlii</sup>...

In this very short passage, Jazmin attempts to provide a justification why she relates with a particular group of people in London. As we have seen above, she differentiates the good social behaviour of her ingroup from the outgroup by pointing to the former's cognitive properties, *sabe lo que es vivir acá*, that distinguish them from the outgroup who are in turn implicitly categorised

as lacking a type of social knowledge of what it is to live in their receiving society despite the length of their stay. The representation of Latinos in this context, nonetheless, begs the question: what does knowing how to live in the UK mean? Although we cannot address this question directly since Jazmin did not state it explicitly, we can still attempt to examine it by drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus.

Habitus, as we saw in chapter 2.6, refers to the physical embodiment of cultural capital "turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking and thereby of feeling and thinking (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 69). It is to have a "feel for the game" (ibid). These characteristics are situation-based ways of behaving that are deemed either appropriate or inappropriate social practices that hinge upon the social places or spaces that particular groups of individuals build. Within this logic, Jazmin's evaluation of those Latinos with whom she does not identify produces a lower class distinction that does not resemble her values. In addition to this, her categorisation and social demarcation goes on and is euphemistically expressed in, *no no dan la mejor imagen*, whereby, as we have seen above, not only she attempts to save face and distance herself from her statement but implicitly disapproves of their behaviour. Thus, Jazmin hierarchises their social identities and attributes them qualities that seem to be informed by an ideology of a superior social class that she justifies via the capital with which her academic education provides her.

The above description is reminiscent of the relevance of class distinction in migrant groups as it suggests that their relations are stratified. Such stratification in the context of the discourses examined here reflects social values that both demarcate ingroups from outgroups and point to the multi-layered social spaces and relations that the participants evaluate and hierarchise.

### 6.3 Summary

In this section, we have seen how the participants describe their experiences working and interacting with other Latin Americans in contexts such as the service sector, language teaching, and domestic work, and outside them such as volunteer work, network marketing and cultural events. The various categorisations that the participants produce interestingly pointed to ambivalences and contradictions as well as divergent and at times conflictual interests in the social spaces in which their accounts are situated. The latter suggest work conditions and ideologies of neoliberalism that index the precarity of their jobs and depict success or failure as the sole responsibility of the individual and that also intersect with social class distinctions, views through which they vertically evaluate and demarcate their social groups from other subgroups.





## Chapter 7      Language Ideologies

### 7.1      Introduction

In the previous two chapters, we have seen Latin American immigrants' multifarious identities that have emerged through their discursive choices when relating their experiences. These are influenced by specific socioeconomic conditions in terms of not only how they are lived but also how they are narrated and made sense of, which has also enabled us to gain insight into who they disassociate or associate with. In chapter five, we saw, on the one hand, that the participants' self-presentations exhibited dominant negative discourses about the presence of immigrants as well as, on the other, a seemingly normalised characterisation of undocumented immigration that has shed light on fine and consequential distinctions between deportation and removal. In chapter six, we concentrated on Latin Americans' descriptions of work and social interactions with other Latin Americans in contexts such as the service sector, cultural events, language teaching and domestic work. The values, assumptions and ideologies that came to the fore in their discourses pointed to topoi of culture and history as well as ideologies of social class, which also allowed us to understand what informed their categorisations of other Latin Americans living in London.

In this chapter, I move away from a focus on categorisations and now concentrate on language ideologies that in the previous chapter began to draw our attention and emerged in the participants' narrated experiences, and for this analysis, I will look at the metaphors, implications and implicatures in the participants' descriptions. As noted in chapter 4.6, "language ideologies are profitably conceived as multiple because of the plurality of meaningful social divisions (class, gender, clan, elites, generations, and so on) within sociocultural groups that have the potential to produce divergent perspectives expressed as indices of group membership" (Kroskrity, 2010, p. 197). However, within this very general interpretation of ideologies, it is still necessary to locate my analysis in specific contexts and situations. Linda's accounts, for instance, in the last chapter began to provide us with a window into her perceptions of language, and thus an analysis of them will open up this section.

Firstly, I will concentrate on ideologies of linguistic assimilation. The latter in turn will lead to an examination of ideologies of accents, followed by ideologies of authenticity and insecurity before we move on to the case of Sonia from Ecuador whose (meta) linguistic comments suggest ideologies of Standard English as well as ideologies of language superiority and assimilation. These interestingly interact with ideologies of social class and neoliberalism. Both cases will then transition to those of Victor, Andres, Julia and Sarah who in due course I will introduce. Their

accounts respectively suggest ideologies of language and socioeconomic mobility that interact, as in Sonia's case, with ideologies of neoliberalism. Julia's and Sarah's experiences point to the one-nation one-language ideologies as well as monoglot ideologies in institutional sites such as hospitals and a town hall. Their analysis additionally points to the power of language associated with the social positions of the participants that in turn seemed to have faced asymmetrical power relations. In all these accounts the role of social capital will also be taken into account as I explore the upcoming discourses and see how relevant the language ideologies mentioned above are when people along with their language and economic capitals traverse national boundaries motivated by specific circumstances. Finally, in a separate but interrelated section I will again include interview excerpts in which the focus of analysis will be ideologies of language as a separate and impregnable system. I will refer to such excerpts in due course. Thus the research question that I posed in chapter 1.4 and that I will try to answer in this section is, to what extent can the emergent language ideologies enable us to gain insight into the constitution of Latin American immigrants' social relations and experiences when such ideologies intersect with social capital and class? By answering this question we can learn of the participant's selective (di)associative practices with other Latin Americans and other people as well as processes of exclusion and inequality that they have encountered in (non) state-sanctioned spaces where their accounts are contextualised.

## 7.2 Multi-sited Language Ideologies of Latin Americans

As I noted in chapter 4.1 the use of life stories as an interview strategy enables me to identify complex topics that arise in the participants' narrated migration experience. The life story of Linda is a case in point since ideologies of language began to emerge as she narrated her experience interacting and working with more Latin Americans. As we noted in chapter six, one of the major motivations for Linda to move to the UK was to improve her English in order to become an English teacher. Linda arrived in the UK with the help of an Irish woman who she met in Mexico and put her in touch with English-speaking friends, one of whom became her husband. Although she accomplished her goal, her trajectory towards it is illustrative of language assimilation strategies that influenced and constituted her social relations in the different social spaces where she entered. In Linda's previous account about working with an Argentinian woman she described a reluctance to speak in Spanish, an attitude that in the following excerpt we can follow up as Linda narrates how she refused to speak in Spanish while she was taking English-language teaching certification classes.

Linda: había tantos españoles estudiando en las clases estas que se la pasaban hablando español entonces yo decidí que yo no iba a hacer eso y a mí me decían "¡EY!

¿por qué? tú eres latina” y yo decía “NO yo soy turca” ¿no? yo siempre fui turca para ellos

Daniel: ¿a poco?

L: y ya cuando ellos vieron en la lista que mi apellido era ramírez me mandaron a la mierda (risa) y ya nadie se me acercaba pero fue mi forma de aprender inglés el negarme realmente a negarme a hablar español ¿no? hablaba inglés con mi esposo tenía todavía el círculo de amigos de mi esposo e.. yo seguía limpiando cuartos de hotel y como limpiaba cuartos de hotel yo siempre traía mis audífonos escuchando bbc era mi forma de aprender entonces precisamente por aprender el idioma yo por años me negué a hablar español<sup>xliii</sup>...

In the above sequence, Linda provides a depiction of the linguistic interaction that she avoided and about which in hindsight she laughs, and at the same time, she relates that she had an English-speaking circle of friends who, as stated in the interview, has proved durable. This carries interesting connotations that suggest an intricate relationship between a notion of language interference leading to an ideology of linguistic assimilation in which social capital plays a significant role. Her reported refusal to speak Spanish to the extent that she denies her geographic and cultural origin that could give her away as a Spanish speaker seems to index a valorisation of her social relations. That is, the interaction with other Spanish speakers is implied as a type of company that would allegedly be an obstacle to her learning English, which seems to indicate that her decisions to speak only English point to a common sense ideology of linguistic assimilation. The latter, nonetheless, involves social and linguistic interaction with English speakers in a work context that Linda depicts as little conducive to a constant interaction with English to which, as her account suggests, she listened on the radio. In this vein, her work-related experience, on the one hand, resembles that of many Latin Americans working in the service sector in the sense that such a sector most of the time does not lend itself for language opportunities (McIlwaine, 2016). However, on the other hand, Linda’s experience contrasts with other cases and studies that document ethnic ties, family or friends from the home country as the main networks that could provide support before or after the migration experience given that her social network encompasses an English-speaking social capital (see Haug, 2008; Heering et al, 2004; McIlwaine, 2011). This has proven to be both influential in the development of her social relations and instrumental in the access to a particular linguistic resource that within a logic of linguistic assimilation are constructed on a linguistic capital that she aspired to obtain. In the following sequence, Linda relates her work experience in a language-teaching institute where she worked as an English teacher in London.

L: a mí una cosa que me dijeron cuando yo empecé a dar clases fue que si podía tratar de imitar un poco el acento inglés “sería un poco más conveniente ¿no?” yo dije “sí sí lo voy a intentar” pero yo dije “por qué mierda” ¿no? si me están dando el trabajo se joden porque o sea ellos saben que hay algo bueno que yo puedo ofrecer

D: ¿entonces no cediste?

L: NO ¿PORQUE? incluso me pagaron clases de dicción y “si tú quieres dar clases de inglés” me decían “siempre tienes que tener los músculos de las mejillas arriba y como decir *hello my name is Linda*” y “siempre tienes que hablar así (modifica su postura corporal y cambia expresión facial apretando las mejillas) para hacer una mejor entonación del idioma” ¡yo que voy a estar haciendo eso!

D: ¿pero te lo dijeron ahí?

L: ¡ah! me lo sugirieron claro que me lo sugirieron y me me me sugirieron clases de dicción que tomé o sea pero me fui a tomar clases de fonética porque a fin de cuentas la irlandesa que me animó a hacer el curso y todo y ella sabía de todo eso y ella me decía “tú no te preocupes con que tu sonido fonético sea lo más cerca y lo más acertado es suficiente” y fue suficiente y yo nunca pretendí o sea yo no puedo hacer un acento inglés. no. yo siempre tuve problemas porque en la escuela en mis clases siempre metía fonética y metía gramática y en mis clases de fonética yo jamás pretendí que los alumnos repitieran tras de mí o sea yo siempre tenía casetes con *native speakers* o sea aprenden lo que tienen que aprender<sup>xliv</sup>...

Here we see how Linda’s accent seemed to have been regulated by a series of interconnected ideologies in different work-related situations in which an Irish colleague showed her support. Firstly, we see that speaking with an English accent that generates problems of representation by concealing the variety of accents associated with different regions and social classes among other variants, indexes a social construct in which the individual is expected to speak with the “right” accent and points to a model of linguistic authenticity. The latter, as we saw in Mayra’s categorisation of Latinos in the previous chapter, reflects an ideology in which the value and legitimacy of a language must be associated with an identifiable social and geographical space to be perceived as genuine (Woolard, 2016, p. 23). That is, Linda’s accent did not seem to have indexed the “authentic” pronunciation of what English is supposed to sound; it is not the “right” accent for the type of job she performed and that therefore had to be corrected.

What also comes forward in Linda’s description in relation to the classes she had to take is both a prescription of her body language and an ideology of accent reduction. Such prescriptivism and

the accent reduction ideology depict a process of linguistic purification (Blommaert, 2010), that is, it is implied that she had to take diction and phonetics classes that would dispose of pollutant and foreign elements. Although Linda suggests that she did not give in to the above mentioned attitudes and that she kept her job, as it is implied in *fue suficiente* and stated in the interview, a number of studies about language ideologies confirm that the latter can be a mechanism of social discrimination and job selectivity (see Lipi-Green, 2012; Piller, 2016). In previous studies, for instance, about the relationship between accent and employability in the UK, Ashley (2010, p. 722) reported that a group of lawyers of ethnic minorities educated in private institutions faced minimum discrimination in the job market since they spoke with the “right” accent (cited in Timming 2016, p 412). Similarly, Creese and Wiebe (2009, p. 67) and Garrido and Codó (2017) have documented the accent discrimination experiences that well-educated immigrants from sub-Saharan and African countries have encountered in both Canada and Barcelona, which affected their ability to become employed. These accounts index homogenisation processes that in the context of migration ideologically delegitimise other language variants and their speakers and may economically affect their lives.

In light of the above, it is also interesting to see how Linda implicitly assesses her own accent when she reports that she did not intend to model pronunciation in class. Her description seems to suggest a teaching practice that promotes the ideology of the native speaker in which the pronunciation of the latter acts as the only language model and norm to follow (Holliday, 2005; see Jenkins 2009). It must be noted that audio material is used as support materials and that is widely employed in language classes; however, in this context it is worth posing the questions, why did Linda not intend to model the pronunciation? Moreover, what do the phrases “*yo siempre tuve problemas*” and “*aprenden lo que tienen que aprender*” index? The event narrated in this way implies that Linda appeared to have given in to an ideology that disqualifies her accent and qualified it as inauthentic. Taken all together, the ideologies that Linda’s experiences evidence are reminiscent of what we discussed in chapter 2.5, that language ideologies are contextual, multiple and necessarily built from the sociocultural experience and orientation of the speaker (Kroskrity, 2004). Likewise it is pertinent to take on board what Bourdieu (1977) stated as to social judgements and valorisations of language, “speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it”. Ideologies of language are not strictly associated with language but with the search and exercise of power (Woolard, 1988).

Linda’s recounted experience shows normative language regimes that occur in many parts of the world (see Piller, 2016; Piller 2001) and that point to what is also known as native speakerism in which so called native speakers of English are benefited in both English and non-English speaking countries over teachers who are non-native speakers. Indeed this is problematic due to its

discriminatory effects and it should be a reminder that no accent is neither better than nor superior to another one.

However, even though the description above is implicitly presented through a negative light, the prescriptions that Linda relates should also be viewed from a different angle and consider other factors that may allow us to understand Linda's complex socioeconomic needs and experience better. Linda found herself in an institutional context that offered language classes to a diverse group of people. They were from different countries and class backgrounds whose language needs, aspirations, ideas about language and expectations in a receiving society should also be taken on board when analysing Linda's decision to not model pronunciation. In addition, we should not lose sight of the social relevance and value that society and people attribute to certain language variants, which matter in the every day social experience of individuals. That is, although problematic and as an ideological process that often has a gate-keeping function that should be challenged, people and institutions still place some language variants and accents in a higher social scale. In this logic, Linda's accent reduction experience by taking phonetics classes and her intent to not model pronunciation in an institutional setting also suggest how she negotiated her own social position, which was not entirely conducive to a negative result given that she was able to keep her job. The language ideologies so far examined illustrate experiences of social hierarchisation and valorisation that, in order to understand them better, it is necessary to keep scrutinising them in contextualised situations where different notions of social class and alignments emerge.

### **Sonia**

As I noted in chapters 4.1 and 6, my fieldwork encompassed visits to a number of events and places in London such as the Elephant and Castle area where there is a shopping centre that houses restaurants, money remittance services as well as coffee shops in which many Latin Americans congregate for a number of reasons. One of which could also be to find out about job offers or learn about flats to rent or to socialise. In one of these coffee shops, I met Sonia. She is a black woman who was born in Ecuador but moved to Spain with her family at age of sixteen, due to economic problems in their home country, and lived in Spain for more than 11 years. As her life progressed she married a Spanish man and in 2009 she and her husband decided to come to the UK as their economic situation in Spain was not promising. Since their arrival, she has done various jobs such as volunteer work for law firms and NGO's that work closely with Latin American people in London. Before the interview, I talked to and interacted with her a number of times and she told me that she worked in network marketing to which she recruited more Latin Americans to sell dietary supplements and for which they would hold monthly meetings in London-based

hotels. In one of our meetings in the Elephant and Castle shopping centre, we had the interview in which she touches upon her language challenges and aspirations in London. She also offers an account of her social life where she interacts with different groups of people who seemingly influence her behaviour.

Sonia: no soy tan *british* pero si tengo que estar con *british* pues me hago *british* ¿no?

Daniel: ¿y cómo es eso? ¿cómo que te haces *british*?

S: pues es muy fácil o sea porque por ejemplo eh.. pues lo latinos somos más expresivos más apasionados a la hora de hablar decir las cosas el tono de voz es más como cantadito ¿no?. y claro pues cuando estás con la cultura inglesa muy *quiet* todo muy tranquilo no puedes estar allí como que los ojos están bailando como no no o sea todo tiene que ser mmm.. guardar mucho las formas<sup>xlv</sup>...

Her account goes on.

S: pero si tienes una postura tranquila tu tono de voz es normal ni tan bajo ni alto si tu si tu mirada no es como como somos los latinos o las latinas como más como mas *quiet*

D: mmm

S: entonces si hablas un inglés y de por sí ya tienes un acento inglés ¡guau! o sea lo has hecho

D: ¿el acento [es]?

S: [es] importante es importante porque en cuanto te escuchan hablar ellos sienten que tú eres parte de ellos o sea hablar un inglés súper *hard* o sea está bien porque ellos te entienden ellos prefieren entenderte a no entenderte que hables con *hard* pero te entiendan a que intentes hablar con acento y que no te entiendan entonces.. pero si hablas con acento es mucho mejor<sup>xlvi</sup>...

In this excerpt Sonia describes how she adapts her behaviour depending on the people with whom she interacts; while she describes Latinos as more expressive than the English when talking, she presents the latter group as reserved and concerned with social norms to which she appears to orient herself. For Sonia such behaviour is accompanied with ways of speaking such as the tone of voice, which she defines as normal. Also it is interesting to see her statement, *si ya tienes un acento inglés guau o sea los has hecho*, which indexes a type of language identified as the representative model of a culture that in this light is depicted as uniform and that characterises a particular way of speaking. Furthermore, both the interjection and the concluding

phrase of such statement are worthy of scrutiny. They seem to point to a social recognition and praise attributed to the speaker whose pronunciation reflects what she calls the English accent. Additionally the comparisons that she makes, *super hard* and *con acento*, also deserve attention since they point to an evaluation of these perceived manners of pronunciation in which the former although conditionally acceptable is hierarchised and subjected to the latter. In this sense, nevertheless, her statements become ideological. Accent, as stated by Andersson and Trudgill (1992) and Hughes et al (2012) and as we saw in chapter 2.5, is a manner of pronunciation and given that it is impossible to speak without pronunciation, accent is a property of individuals. Likewise, accent points to language variations which is not strictly limited to a geographic region since, as we also mentioned in the discussion of Linda's case, it also becomes manifest in dynamic social groups of speakers. Thus the belief that there is only one English accent that provides the speaker with prestige seems to reflect a social construct in which a language variant is objectified as a higher value vehicle to social acceptance and inclusion. In this context, Sonia's account seems to be informed by the ideology of the standard language in which a language is imagined or idealised as homogenous and which is often the language model of the higher social class (Lippi-Green, 2012).

It must be added that Sonia's metalinguistic account is not limited to the context of the UK since similar ideologies have been documented in Latin America, particularly in Mexico and Ecuador that help us explain and understand the accent-based social distinctions that speakers make as well as their relevance for the formation and selection of social relations. In the context of Mexico and Ecuador, language hierarchies and the evaluation of accents are articulated in terms of a rural-urban divide accompanied with evaluated ways of behaving that suggests social class distinctions. A study that concentrated on speakers' attitudes towards variants of Mexican Spanish documents that accents associated with Mexico city are viewed as either unmarked or as more prestigious than other dialects particularly from rural areas (Stockler 2015; see Hidalgo 1986). These, in turn, are categorised as uncouth, uncultured, uneducated and often associated with the term *ranchero*, hillbilly in English, whose ways of speaking are often attributed notions of backwardness and are labelled as noise from which the participants distance themselves (Stockler 2015). Also, Flores Mejia (2014) documents the social prestige attributed to variants spoken in Ecuador. She refers to the negative attitudes of speakers from the capital city of Quito towards the Spanish spoken in Guayaquil and who state that they speak without accent (ibid), unmarked as in the case of the Mexico study. Furthermore, her participants draw relevant distinctions not only in terms of accents that are unpleasant for speakers from the capital city but in terms of behaving that to some extent also echo those that Sonia described above; proper ways of speaking should be accompanied with being polite and courteous and with a use of language that



should not mix words with others from indigenous languages (Flores Mejia, 2014, p. 435). Both studies stress the social prestige assigned by speakers to urban variants where the standard variety is allegedly encountered and practised. In this sense, they both resonate with Sonia's views of the English accent that, although it differs from the perception of the unmarkedness of accents registered in these studies, is also located in an urban setting such as London and exhibit the delineation of and orientation towards higher social class positions that promote class divisions.

The analysis of Sonia's orientation towards the standard ideology, nonetheless, is not to suggest that abiding to it is condemning her. Rather it is an attempt to understand it in a context where other non-linguistic identity traits may also play a role in the constitution of her social relations as she seeks social mobility. As stated at the beginning of this section, Sonia is a black, Ecuadorian immigrant that has experienced discriminatory attitudes and, as we will see this in more detail below, not only speaking English but also doing it with what she implies as the standard accent may be mobilised to contest and counteract the identity hierarchisation that she experienced and that her discourse suggests. In the following excerpt, Sonia continues her account and describes what it is required to be able to speak English.

S: cualquiera que quiera aprender sale del círculo latino o se mete a clases de inglés siete u ocho horas al día mínimo al menos los adultos. mira los niños cuando vienen se meten siete horas al día y en un año siete meses te hablan un mejor inglés que nadie con acento y todo porque el medio te empuja y están como una esponja entonces todo está a favor para que ellos aprendan. y en cambio uno adulto que viene ya con las estructuras mentales y habla poco inglés y estudia poco inglés. ¿el resultado cuál va a ser? pues poco o ¡NADA! entonces. una persona para que tenga un buen inglés mínimo son dos horas al día o sea ¡MINIMO! y aquí como ves todo el día hoy un ejemplo tan claro es español y si me quedo aquí toda la noche seguiré hablando español

D: mmm

S: entonces para no perder YO tengo que tener MIS relaciones para mantener mi inglés al día<sup>xlvii</sup> ...

The social assessment of accent that we saw in the first excerpt continues to organise Sonia's account in which she mentions practices and activities as well as decisions to make and which must be conducive to what is suggested as speaking good English. Nevertheless, it is left unstated to what end or in what context the good English to which she refers must be spoken. We must remind ourselves that the context of the interview is a place where various Latin American-run

businesses such as cafes and restaurants are located and that other Latin Americans attend to socialise and learn of job opportunities and flats to rent. It is in this setting in which her statement, *aquí como ves todo el día hoy un ejemplo tan claro es español y si me quedo aquí toda la noche seguiré hablando español*, gains social significance and points to two socially significant aspects. One of which indicates the evaluation of Spanish and English in which the former is suggested as a disadvantage while the latter is implied as an advantage. However, her phrase seems to go beyond the description of a language choice; that is, the loss of linguistic capital that Sonia attempts to avoid indexes evaluated social identities at the same time that it implies that social relations are constructed as investments of a language capital that she aspires to obtain. The latter argument is an implication contained in her last phrase, which emphasises social values that foreground the speaker's individual aspirations. Such social values can be better understood when they are connected to the second socially significant aspect.

The second socially significant aspect pertains to ethnographic notes taken after our meetings and conversations prior to the interview in the same area and in which I asked her how often she visited the Elephant and Castle shop centre. She said that she did not organise her social life around that area and that her visits were job-motivated.

En el centro comercial de elephant; "si la gente decide quedarse en su *ghetto* porque es aquí donde pueden hablar español no hacen ningún esfuerzo por mejorar sus oportunidades de vida y inglaterra es una tierra de oportunidades" (Field notes July 4th, 2014)<sup>xlvi</sup>

In this context, Sonia's views may help us understand the constitution of Latin Americans' social relations in which ideologies of social class, as we saw in chapter 6 in Mayra's, Jazmin's and Linda's cases, interrelate with their views of language and their speakers. That is, while English is perceived as the language of progress and mobility, Spanish seems to be associated with an area labelled as a social space of seclusion and regress, attitudes and behaviours that allegedly characterise each group of speakers. As the interview went on, Sonia touches upon the relevance of English inside or outside England, and she said that she could even speak it in Latin America if she wanted to and I asked her whether she would do it.

S: quizás sí yo he ido a barcelona y a algunos así yo les hablaba en inglés y ya está porque no me apetecía hablar en español

D: ¿a poco?

S: y tú ves la reacción es diferente

D: ¿qué reacción has tenido?

S: la reacción cuando te escuchan hablar inglés dicen “uy es extranjera” pero cuando hablas español “anda mira esta qué se cree latino no sé qué”

D: ¿a poco?

S: CLARO por eso te digo es muy diferente es cuando tú hablas *english property* (sic) *english* a cuando hablas un inglés *hard* cuando hablas inglés ¿sí te das cuenta?

D: mmm

S: pero para eso hay que vivirlo te consideran más inteligente cuando hablas el idioma

D: ¿cuando hablas inglés?

S: claro.. es es que tienes más posibilidades es que es así es que las mejores obras literarias vienen en inglés las mejores cosas vienen en inglés todo lo que tú quieras viene en inglés el español está muy limitado en todo<sup>xlix</sup>...

Through the interactions that Sonia describes we can both draw conjectures of her language choices in different domains and the interaction of various ideologies and identity attributions. On the one hand, the ideology of cultural superiority with which a language allegedly endows an individual comes forward in this narrated event. For instance, it is interesting to see the higher social and cultural value that Sonia attributes to the term *extranjera*, which here is understood as an English-speaking foreigner and that in Sonia's words enjoys a de-territorialised social prestige. In this sense, Sonia's description about speaking English in a situation where there is an implication of a pejorative attitude towards her Spanish, *anda mira esta qué se cree latino no sé qué*, seems to be motivated by two interrelated aspects. That is, the belief that English helps her counteract a suggested diglossic situation between two Spanish variants through which speakers evaluate themselves and hierarchise their social relations, and, as stated above, that seems to contest a possible top-down racialisation for being a black Latin American immigrant. This, although it is not made explicit in the narrative of Sonia as an ideology that may have informed the attitudes that she describes, is also worth considering given that it has also been documented in the context of Barcelona where Latin American immigrants have faced discrimination and have been positioned in terms of race meaning that they do not look European enough (see McIlwaine, 2016; Block and Corona, 2014).

On the other hand, it is also noteworthy the ideology of intellectual superiority of an individual by speaking a language such as English. That is, speaking English is implied as a cognitive quality of an

individual who is characterised as educated and progressive and who in turn is socially lifted and differentiated from speakers of other languages. Such an ideology should be understood in the specific context where Sonia is situated and where, as stated above, she may have reproduced it to contest the hierarchisation of her identity; that is, a Latin American immigrant who seeks a higher social status and upward mobility. Nonetheless, as her narrative goes on, Sonia's description of English versus Spanish, *el español está muy limitado en todo*, still indexes what Mocek (1999) calls social Darwinism. As stated in chapter 2.5, this is an ideological depiction of English as naturally better equipped for the technological demands of our times and not as a consequence of political or economic processes (Milroy and Milroy, 2005; Moreno Cabrera, 2008). All of the above reminds us of the ideology of English as an indispensable and fundamental skill conducive to social mobility that, as we will see in Mario's case below, also resonates with a neoliberal discourse and worldview to which individuals must orient themselves. The ideologies thus far analysed seem to reflect what I previously established; these are notions, beliefs of a language with specific cultural and political constructs that seek the exercise of power (Del Valle, 2007; p 20; Woolard, 2016). The interview went on and Sonia emphasises the social relevance of English.

S: tú sabes que cuando hablas en inglés es como aprender eso a leer a aprender a hablar. es que es vital es vital en un país donde se habla inglés es vital

D: ¿para tu trabajo para tus relaciones?

S: Para todo para todo para todo para todo para lo que me pongas. es vital el inglés es importante estamos en Inglaterra hay que hablar inglés y eso les cuesta mucho a las personas no entender porque.. las personas lo entienden pero no quieren y a eso se debe muchas veces el fracaso de la educación el fracaso profesional el fracaso personal muchas veces tiene que ver con el idioma el idioma y con el cambio de hábitos de no querer salir a veces de su comodidad!...

In the excerpts above Sonia discursively presents English as an indispensable instrument in every aspect of people's social lives or as she emphatically put it, *para todo*. It must be noted how such emphasis is accompanied by lexical choices that denote specific systems of social values. Sonia's statement, *estamos en Inglaterra hay que hablar inglés*, apart from pointing to the one-language one-nation ideology in which English is assumed the de facto language, conjures up a prescription of linguistic assimilation that is presented as both people's obligation and as the common-sense strategy to take on in order to succeed academically and workwise. Following this line of argument, the one-language one-nation ideology seems to be reinforced by the implicit mention of its educational institutions. Such ideology not only instructs future generations through a

specific linguistic vehicle but functions as a mechanism of a social reproduction such as keeping a socioeconomic order in a London society where more than 300 languages and their variants are spoken (see Piller, 2016, p. 99; Vertovec, 2007). Linguistic assimilation, according to Sonia's description, is therefore an unquestionable norm and a rational decision in which personal failure is explicated by an individual's will.

In light of the above, Sonia's account also points to what other studies have identified as the neoliberal discourses of responsabilisation. As I noted in chapter 2.7, Ullman (2012) in a study of narratives of Mexican immigrants that explored emergent ideologies in the USA found that the participants oriented themselves to ideologies of personal responsibility to educate themselves in English and ideologies of an acceptance that one must learn English to become successful. That is, notions of success that are often associated with social inclusion through language and with economic advancement that the individual has achieved after hard work and self-discipline. Thus, as we have also seen in the previous chapters, what comes to the fore is an ideology of neoliberal values in which success is recognised as the sole responsibility that an individual must take on.

It must be noted, nevertheless, that the attitudes that Sonia shows also merit more scrutiny in order to not contribute to the promiscuity of neoliberalism as the term upon which all blame is put or where individual responsibility is reduced to a neoliberal-self (see Clarke 2008). In order to understand this better, a pertinent comment is that individual responsabilisation predates the times of neoliberalism but there are present political and economic conditions that should also be considered. For instance, in an interesting discussion of the historic evolution of the meanings of social class, authors such as Skeggs (2004) notes that the individual self constructed as responsible of their own economic progress dates back to post Civil War times in England (1642-1648). Here the emergence of an "economic man" is documented and is depicted as a figure upon whom all economic responsibility is transferred (Day 2001 in Skeggs 2004, p.33). In a similar vein, Block (2018) makes reference to Smith's writings in which an individual-oriented attitude is also found. He notes that Smith sees human beings as naturally self-interested individuals whose need of support from others is not explained by a gregarious nature or a need of collective support but by the pursuit of his/her self-interest (Block 2018, p.107). What characterises neoliberalism, we must remind ourselves, is the dismantling of labour rights and, among many other top-down actions, the reduction of public funding in domains such as health, education and even, in the context of the UK, in the provision of language classes for immigrants. It has been documented how the British government initially funded English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to address the linguistic and educational needs of migrants in the 1960s but eventually, in 2007 and then in 2011, it cut funding in ESOL classes (Granada 2013; Williamson 2009). This resulted in the withdrawal of automatic fee remissions, the introduction of fees for these

courses and limited eligibility requirements to a certain category of students or migrants (Granada 2013, Hubble and Kennedy 2011). In this context, Sonia's words referring to why people fail in a new society exhibits a neoliberal logic not only because they concentrate on individual responsabilisation but on the individual's lack of decision and, as she put it, will to change their habits and leave their comfort zone in adverse economic circumstances where state support is increasingly being reduced.

The ideologies that we have analysed so far seem to point to divergent interests that are motivated by language ideologies that construct social relations based on a sought-after linguistic capital. Furthermore, social capital and notions of higher social class also figure as highly influential aspects in the constitution of social relations, the top-down construction of identities and in the interpretation of sociolinguistic realities of Latin American immigrants.

### **Mario**

As I noted in chapter 3.2, the Latin American community spreads across London but their presence is largely concentrated in boroughs such Southwark, Hackney and Lambeth where they have obtained recognition as an ethnic group (McIlwaine, 2016; CLAUKE, 2015). It is in the last of these boroughs where I met Mario from Peru when I paid a visit to a Latin American-oriented NGO based in the same area. As I walked out of the building, Mario accosted me and asked me if I spoke Spanish and then asked me for directions to get to Kilburn where he had heard there was an organisation that could help him get a job. We talked at length and later on, we met on repeated occasions in a market and in a bank in the same borough where he asked me to help him talk to one of the cashiers and ask him about the requirements to open a bank account that he needed as a requirement for a job in cleaning for which he was applying. His limited knowledge of English reflects the frustrations of other participants such as those of Linda and Alfonso whose experiences and metalinguistic descriptions contextualised in their first days of their arrival I also include below. Their representations of language will help us understand the socioeconomic realities they narrate as well as how they make sense of them.

Mario is 55 years old and arrived in England after having lived in Spain for ten years with his wife and son. His wife first moved to Spain where his sister-in-law was able to get her a job as a domestic worker. A year later, they would reunite. He decided to leave Peru due to a lack of job opportunities in his area of expertise.

Mario holds a degree in accounting but in Spain, he did all sort of odd jobs before he ran his own delivery business in Madrid. Due to the crisis that hit Spain in 2008, Mario began to lose his customers that led to a loss of his job and his house in Toledo. He attempted to get back on his

feet and started to work in delivery again but now for a company that eventually went bankrupt. He later on worked as a night watchman in a complex of buildings for sale but these never got sold and he did not get paid. He thus decided to come to England in search of a job as he eventually intends to bring his wife and son who are still working and studying a university degree respectively. At the time of the interview, Mario had been in England for two months and was renting a flat with four more people from Latin America.

Upon his arrival in England, Mario recounted that the inability to communicate with people and loneliness were burdensome and influenced his personality since he described himself as the type of person who likes going into the shop and striking up a conversation with people; activities that he could no longer perform.

yo cuando escucho hablar un inglés parlante..“algún día te voy a entender” y espero que sea pronto porque necesito hablar inglés y lo necesito como que necesito respirar. es que me desespera me siento como un analfabeta ante ello al no poder ni hablar no puedes ni preguntar. a veces quiero preguntar una dirección no sé ni cómo ni cómo ABORDARLO me siento mal pues<sup>li</sup>...

Mario's account depicts an image of how he conceives of his social reality and it produces two interesting tropes that allow us to catch a glimpse of his sociolinguistic experience. For instance, the phrase, *lo necesito como que necesito respirar*, conjures up the metaphor language is a basic human need and it comes forward as he discursively equates English with the natural ability of breathing without which no one can live and whose absence causes anxiety and despair. Additionally, the simile, *me siento como un analfabeta*, is illustrative of Mario's own disqualification of his academic achievement. In this sense, Mario's depiction of his inability to speak English to interact with and communicate his ideas to people seems to reflect that not only does it constrain his social agency but that it strips him of his academic knowledge and deskills him. The frustration and sense of loss that Mario expresses also echo Linda's job experiences that we saw in the previous chapter and who below relates her job aspirations upon her arrival in the UK.

al principio ni siquiera para aspirar a un trabajo en Tesco ¿no? de cajero o de limpieza o sea..no yo nunca lo vi como una posibilidad yo nunca lo vi como una posibilidad entonces es importante es bien importante aprender el idioma el idioma te puede hacer un invalido yo estoy convencida de eso<sup>lii</sup>...

We must remind ourselves that Linda holds a B.A in psychology and that, like Mario as we can gather from this excerpt, experienced a downward social mobility. How she makes sense of her narrated experience draws attention to how she conceives of language. The personification of language as in, *el idioma te puede hacer un invalido*, points to the metaphor language is a physical force since it seems to act upon Linda's reality and by implication it can be interpreted that for

Linda it has agency that undermines her ability to seek a better job. We can still peruse this metaphorical representation of language in Alfonso's experience in which he describes his job aspirations.

es un poco complicado.. entonces cuando tú no hablas el idioma tienes que agarrar el trabajo que te den. no puedes exigir tú no puedes decir NO yo no quiero hacer esto yo no quiero lavar platos yo no quiero trabajar de *kitchen porter* no quiero trabajar de *cleaner*<sup>liii</sup>...

As we saw in the last chapter, Alfonso was trained as a Telecoms Technician in Venezuela and at the time of the interview he worked as a care assistant in a London-based hospital after working as a cleaner in various other schools in the same city. In this description, Alfonso's inability to speak English is accompanied with topics of frustration and resignation. Like Linda's representation of language, the metaphorical depiction of language as a physical force implicitly resonates in Alfonso's discourse given that it seems to be portrayed as materialised in the silencing and marginalising effect that it has on his decision to choose what job to do or apply for. According to these depictions, language is presented as having a discriminatory effect by deskilling, declassing and excluding them from a job market where English is implicitly represented as the de facto language and the language capital that is to be attained and which is perceived as the language of progress.

yo sé que si me pongo a hablar inglés yo me consigo un trabajo el trabajo que yo puedo leer en el periódico "ya pum este quiero" voy ahí ¿ves?. pero bueno.. ahorita no puedo porque me van a decir "usted habla inglés" y si no habla inglés seis euros seis libras y a mí con seis libras seis horas no me ayudan en nada me da para pagar mi habitación nomas yo necesito ganar dinero para ayudar a mi familia sino ¿para qué voy a venir?<sup>liv</sup>...

In this account, Mario describes the job opportunities that he could explore if he spoke English, and his description appears to index an ideology of language assimilation that should be conducive to economic progress. Such ideology promotes the idea that speaking the language of the host society will allow immigrants to obtain a well-remunerated job and that consequently will allow them to be socially mobile individuals. However, it is worth asking, how is such language learning to be done when entering a new social space? In our conversations, Mario told me that he was aware of the English classes offered by the NGO where we met and which he intended to attend twice a week. Below I will elaborate on the role of Latin American-oriented NGOs, which also play a significant role in the following participants. He also said that he had begun to learn English by watching YouTube videos while he was renting a flat for which he was struggling to pay rent. His attitude to learning English interestingly to some extent echoes Sonia's attitudes in the sense that this idea of language assimilation seems to be a practice in which the individual takes



responsibility for their own learning to become successful and, as mentioned above, that is to be conducive to upward social mobility (see Piller, 2016; Warriner, 2007).

Although English may allow him to have the social and economic life he seeks, acquiring it is not a straightforward process given that the social circumstances in which it may occur also interact with access to networks and information about where he could find a job as well as the spatial living conditions that, as we saw in chapter 2.6, also indicate socioeconomic class differences. At the time of the interview, Mario had done two different jobs, one of which was a kitchen assistant and another as a cleaner, which he had obtained through two Ecuadorian immigrants living in the same flat as Mario and whose jobs were located in the same service sector. He quit both jobs due to the long hours and exploitative conditions in which he had to work and had no English language opportunities. His experience in relation to social networks, on the one hand, contrasts with that of Linda whose English speaking social circle very much influenced her access to a linguistic resource that she sought. On the other hand, his deskilling, declassing and job insertion experiences reproduce those of David, Diego, Linda and Alfonso as well as numerous ones in a wider social scale. For instance, the downward social mobility with which many Latin American immigrants deal in London is explained by their inability to speak English (McIlwaine, 2011; 2016). It is also, as stated in the previous chapter, a phenomenon that contributes to London's migrant division of labour in low-paid jobs, which could have emotional impact on and perceptions of exclusion in immigrants (Wills et al, 2009).

Moreover the above mentioned situation is worthy of attention since, as we will see below, it is to cast light on how people could be interpellated by ideas of what skills and what language are allegedly desirable and valuable. Such interpellation becomes problematic given that, as we can gather from Mario's narrative as well as from other migration stories outside London (see Garrido and Codó, 2014), it erases people's job experience and their academic credentials.

lo que quiero hacer con mi hijo es enseñarle de mi experiencia para que de ahí él pueda seguir subiendo no a volverlas a vivir como yo a volver a pasar por el inglés a volver a pasar por la plata a volver a pasar por la misma vaina. yo no quiero que pase eso yo quiero que ya venga con su profesión con su inglés ¿no? y que estudie acá su carrera y que siga subiendo de nuevo en su carrera no va a venir a lavar platos de nuevo como yo ¿ves?<sup>lv</sup>...

In the previous excerpts, we have seen how Mario recounted his experience of socioeconomic frustrations, and what seems to become prominent in all his accounts is the process of inequality that entering a new social space may involve. The latter, Blommaert and Dong (2009, p. 44) remind us in the context of the mobility of people into other countries, could be a symbolic or geographical area into which people move not horizontally but vertically and in which they may "experience the changes of value attached to certain linguistic resources and patterns". Mario's

Spanish, in this light, is implicitly indexed as incongruous with his new social space and in comparison with English as an insufficient means through which he aimed to support his family by implicitly presenting it as devalued. Hence, according to the above excerpt, for Mario's son, English is perceived as the desired resource, a skill that will lead to socioeconomic mobility since it is assumed that knowing how to use it will qualify him for a well-paid job as it is implied in *yo quiero que ya venga con su profesión con su inglés*. In this manner, his perception of English, as we also saw in Sonia's account, reproduce a widely spread ideology of language and progress in which the former is subsumed with education and that after hard work and dedication the individual will be rewarded financially.

The above-mentioned ideology apart from reflecting neoliberal values may also influence the self-worth of people. For instance, what is striking in Mario's account is the social indexicality attached to *no va a venir a lavar platos de nuevo como yo*, and it merits attention for its implicature. It functions as a particular type of social remittance, a role model that should not be looked up to and that he intends to pass it on to his son as a lesson from which he should learn. This can be extended into a story with a moral value in which the experiential is presented as an objective reality of the misfortunes of the individual rather than as the socioeconomic inequalities in which people along with their knowledge and linguistic resources relocate their lives. His description in this context suggests a dominant and widespread ideology of English as the language that will guarantee socioeconomic mobility but how Mario verbalises such perceptions of language also evidences their intersections with a neoliberal view of the individual as the architect of his own success or failure and with a limited economic capital as well as a differential access to social capital. These social class inequalities can be further pursued below where language is also depicted to play a major role in the socioeconomic reality of Andres.

### Andres

As I have stated in chapter 3 and 4, Latin Americans are dispersed throughout London. Such dispersion is evident not only in the physical places on which their work sites are based but in the cultural activities they organise and perform such as folk dances. These are a clear manifestation of festivals such as *Fusion de los Pueblos* and, as the name suggest, it attracts people from various nationalities and different age groups such as children, teenagers and adults. This festival that I also attended was open to everyone and took place in central London where people wore typical Bolivian, Mexican, Chilean, Ecuadorian and Colombian outfits as they danced or played music on stage for nearly four hours. The organisers, as I was able to observe and learn from my conversations with them, are volunteers whose roles involve promoting the event on social media, handing out leaflets on site, setting up the venue, selling tickets for the festival, etc. Andres was one of the volunteers that I met and with whom I was able to have a conversation as I

bought a ticket for the festival. From the moment we started talking in Spanish he was friendly and open, and as he described the programme of the festival he exhibited excitement about it. He later on told me that folklore was something he was passionate about. He also asked me where I was from and what I was doing in London. We talked at length about Mexico and touched upon some its traditions and music that he said he loved. After I told him I was trying to invite Latin Americans into this study, he offered to help me contact more people and volunteered to talk to me in one of his workplaces.

Andres is a Colombian immigrant who has been in the UK since 2000. He left his country with his brother when he was nineteen years old to help his family improve their economic situation. Since his arrival he has done all types of jobs, cleaning included as he said that this is the type of job where every Latin American starts working. After a number of years in London, he met a Colombian woman who was a British citizen and with whom he got married and eventually became a British citizen as well. At the time of the interview, he worked as a care assistant but also taught salsa-dancing classes in the evening in a middle-sized pub in south London where other Latin Americans from Chile worked as bar tenders. Although he had these two jobs, he said that his economic situation was not good enough to have his own home; he and his wife lived in a small room with other people and he was considering moving back to Colombia. In the interview that took place in the pub I mentioned above, he and I talked about the difficulties he encountered in London upon his arrival, and language came up as an issue that he presents in a similar manner to Mario's descriptions.

e mira que fue complicado. es complicado por lo menos para nosotros porque llegamos no había muchos latinos o sea si había pero no habíamos tantos como los habemos ahora la comunidad latina no era tan grande. entonces fue difícil porque primero para empezar a trabajar demoré cuatro meses ¿sí? porque decía “¿ahora qué hacemos?” no sabíamos dónde movernos o sea fue difícil fue difícil porque económicamente no teníamos.. al principio el idioma fue un obstáculo muy muy grande porque lógico no te puedes comunicar te ata las manos entonces fue muy difícil.. después sí empecé a estudiar a adaptarme un poquito mejor<sup>lvi</sup>...

In this excerpt, Andres narrates how complicated his and his brother's arrival in England was and points to the uncertainty that they faced by not knowing what to do or what places they could go or how to get around in London. Likewise he also depicts a place in which there was not a strong Latin American presence on which he could count. In these adverse circumstances that he describes, two interesting representations of language emerge. First, the phrase, *el idioma fue un obstaculo muy muy grande*, produces a metaphorical portrayal of language as personified and

characterised as emphatically problematic due to its silencing effect that he narrates. In addition, the phrase, *te ata las manos*, also evokes the metaphor: language is a physical force that, as we have seen above, is represented as having a disabling effect on the person who does not speak it. This description becomes highly relevant due to the immediate socioeconomic conditions and challenges that he relates he faced and that he attempted to overcome. We must remind ourselves that Andres, like Mario above and Miguel in chapter 5, moved to England motivated by economic needs at a young age and with no connections that could allow him to obtain a job and thus ease his integration into a new society. In this context, Andres' inability to speak English seems to be accompanied with a sense of frustration that in the absence of a strong economic and social capital may have forced him to a marginal social position.

As can be seen in the excerpt, he then describes that he was able to adapt to his new social environment by gradually studying the language. Although he did not narrate how he learnt English in detail, he said that he began to study grammar and eventually began to speak the language fluently through the interactions with other people in the various jobs he has done. Indeed before and after the interview, I observed his interactions with his salsa-class students, most of whom were English and Polish, and he greeted them and gave them instructions in English fluently and he seemed confident while speaking it. However, his ability to speak the language has not allowed him to have the economic mobility that he initially sought when he moved to England as we will be able to observe in more detail below.

algo me está dando vueltas en mi cabeza. no sé si sea una buena idea no sé si lo vaya a realizar pero tengo la idea de como dentro de dos años regresarme ¿sí? quiero sacarme los certificados para enseñar inglés. tal vez sea una manera de bueno tener un trabajo allá y no sé tener una mejor calidad de vida no sé de qué bueno eso depende de mí pero bueno lo estoy cocinando ahí<sup>lvii</sup>...

In this excerpt, Andres expresses his thoughts about where he could move and what to do in the future since he suggests that he is concerned with his lifestyle and living conditions in London. As stated above, he and his wife were living in a small room that they shared with other people and were paying six hundred pounds a month for rent. His description very much resembles that of Mario, in two interrelated aspects. The spatial conditions of living that he describes are also part of the same reality experienced by Mario who, as we saw above, lived in a small flat with other Latinos. Additionally, and similar to Mario's goals, his aspirations to improve his living conditions are based on language, and it is in this context where a neoliberal ideology of language is implied. English is presented as the vehicle that could enable him to improve his economic situation since he, although hesitantly as it can be seen in hedging phrases such as *tal vez* and *no sé*, discursively

constructs it as the skill necessary to get him a job. Furthermore, such a skill, as he suggests, must be complemented by a language certification that is to legitimise his knowledge of English and that should equip him to teach it in Colombia. His discourse, as we saw in chapter 2.7, resonates with Duchene and Heller's (2012) argument in the sense that ideas about language are framed in economic terms as a matter of "added-value", an investment that people are interpellated to make and from which they are to reap the profits.

However, the reality described by Andres also foreground other factors that could present him with obstacles. As we saw in chapter 2.3, the acquisition of cultural capital such as a language certification, which requires a significant economic investment (see Heller, 2018; Grin, 2015), to a great extent involves freedom from economic constraints, which I have established Andres is not free from; rather, having two jobs and struggling to pay a high rent for a shared room bring to the fore his economic pressures. In addition, his current cultural capital may provide him with differentiated access to the mobility he wishes to obtain given that he has a high school diploma and no degree. This, as I stated in the case of Mario, is neither to suggest that Andres' aspirations are unjustified nor underestimate his cultural capital. It is rather a statement to stress the ideology of English as the language of economic progress that is to some extent equated with a better job and thus a better lifestyle that nonetheless masks socioeconomic inequalities. In this light, Andres' aspirations may be undermined by the lower class structure in which his economic, cultural and social capital are located. Issues of social and cultural capital will continue to appear as a valuable resource as we analyse the following cases of two immigrant mothers whose reasons to be in the UK are not strictly economically motivated and whose experiences are located in institutional sites.

### **Julia**

I met Julia through another London-based NGO where, apart from interacting with its staff in talks and workshops, I distributed information about this research study. After a number of exchanged emails, text messages and three failed attempts to meet, Julia and I talked in a coffee shop in north London. Julia is a Chilean mother who has been in England for two years with her son and husband. The family lived eight years in Spain where she, her husband and son got Spanish citizenship. They left Chile due to their son's illness, cystic fibrosis, which could not be treated in Spain, as they did not want their son to die like their younger son who had died of the same disease in Chile years before. Julia relates that she and her husband who used to be a blacksmith sold their house in Chile to move to Spain where their son's disease was treated but eventually he needed more advanced medical treatment that he could only get in England. Her husband works as a cleaner in London and she looks after her now sixteen-year old boy whose health requires

that he be frequently hospitalised. This is the reason why we could not meet before. He is the only one in her family that can speak English. In her narrative, she states that she has received support from other Latin Americans who have proved to be a strong network; while going to the hospital for the first time, a Colombian woman interpreted for her and helped her get the medical attention her son needed. However, in her narrative she describes discriminatory attitudes that she has faced in the hospital where her son was treated.

She recounts that her sixteen year old-son's medical treatment is rigorous. He needs to be hospitalised for intravenous detoxification regularly apart from the physiotherapy he needs to do, as well as the medicine he takes at home. In addition, he always carries an oxygen tank wherever he goes. According to Julia, her son is at an awkward stage and was not following his treatment as he should, which caused his lung capacity to be low. She and her son went for his check up to the hospital where they were usually provided with an interpreter but on that visit, they did not get one and describes an interaction with a Doctor as follows.

le pregunta “¿por qué está tan bajo?” y yo le digo “porque se ha vuelto desobediente” mi hijo traduciendo “se ha vuelto desobediente con las fisioterapias no cumple con su tratamiento está un poco rebelde” y le dice “mano ah eso no se hace” le empezó a decir cosas y mi hijo escuchaba yo el inglés lo entiendo.. me dice “esta es la edad en que los hijos se suicidan y no vengas tú apuntándome a mi llorando” y diciéndome “yo te lo dije” y mi hijo traduciendo y los médicos adultos que estaban ahí le dicen “¿por qué le dices eso?”..entonces me chocó me chocó lo que me dijo y yo le dije bueno pero “¿por qué se expresa usted de esa manera? ¿Por qué me dice eso?” yo en castellano y mi hijo traduciendo<sup>lviii</sup> ...

According to Julia, her son had learned English through the various interactions he had had with nurses throughout their stay in England and he is who translates and interprets for her and her husband in shops and, as we see above, in hospital. As to the above excerpt, the physician's attitude that she describes is, although mediated by her son, directed to her, and in it is located in a physical site where a language and institution element merits to be examined in order to gain insight into how Julia could have perceived its social impact. As stated in chapter 2.3, Bourdieu (1977b; 2003) reminds us of the power of language that is not strictly an inherent feature of it but it is associated with the social position of the speaker as well as the situation in which the communicative event occurs. In Julia's description, a setting such as a hospital is identified as an institutional space in which there is a hierarchisation of identities characterised by the roles of the actors here described. It is also the site in which the physician holds a position of authority, which is highly significant given that it also seemed to have been deployed in the physician's utterance at two interrelated levels. One of which is the language of the interaction that seemed to have put Julia at a disadvantage due to her inability to contest such attitude directly in English. The other is the implicature of, *esta es la edad en que los hijos se suicidan*, given that it seems to

function as a diagnosis of her son's health. Both suggest the exercise of power in an ideological site, a field where they seemed to have had a downward and discriminatory effect on Julia and have silenced her voice.

The asymmetrical interaction that Julia recounts does not seem to be isolated from similar experiences that deserve attention in a state-sanctioned environment. Studies by Phillimore et al (2010) and Johnson (2006) have also documented insufficient translation and interpreting support for non-English speakers as well as cultural insensitivity of health providers in the UK (The Migration Observatory, 2014). Similarly, Julia's related experience resonates with other studies in which immigrants accessing health services face a form of gender or language related discrimination and where their medical issues and their children's are disparaged (see Lonergan, 2015; see Moyer, 2013). In the following excerpt, Julia touches upon another experience.

llevábamos como un mes en el hospital estaba una máquina ahí en la que le sacan a mi hijo el azúcar y me dice se expresa conmigo en inglés y yo le digo "no speaking english" me dice según mi hijo me dice "tienes que aprender a hablar inglés" y yo toco el computador de mi hijo que tenía abierto yo pongo las manos en el computador de mi hijo y cierra el computador así de bruces y dice "TIENES QUE APRENDER INGLES". eso me pasó con una enfermera lloré como una magdalena porque no era justo que..la acusé sí la acusé porque no..hizo llorar a mi hijo también<sup>lix</sup>...

Julia's above account depicts another incident in a different hospital but this time with a nurse when her son was to have his blood-glucose monitoring. As we saw above, her son interpreted this interaction for Julia who later on in the interview clarified that she was yelled at and told she had to learn English. She reported the incident to the hospital staff and requested that she and her son did not see the nurse anymore. Her related experience, nevertheless, indexes an ideology that, although it has been widely studied, does not cease to be relevant for our discussion due to the self-righteous and at times violent attitudes that it may trigger or legitimise (Billig, 1995). The one nation one-language ideology promotes the idea that linguistic boundaries coincide with the political boundaries of the nation state (Piller, 2016) and regulates as well as produces identities in an idealised monoglot state (Blommaert, 2006). It also implies that immigrants have the moral obligation and responsibility to learn the language of their new environment; that is, if people are in England they have to speak English. Within this logic, Julia is expected to learn English in a nonetheless multilingual society, and it is an expectation that, according to the interview, she had been trying to fulfil. However, due to her son's illness that required her to be with him at all times and her family being relocated a number of times to different London boroughs, her attempts to enrol in English classes provided by a Latin American-oriented NGO had failed for nearly two years.

It must be said that learning the *de facto* language of the host society is neither negative nor an undesirable practice since it may bring benefits for immigrants who seek integration that may also be conducive to a better lifestyle. Indeed, Julia, in my conversations with her and as I was able to observe, expressed a desire and need to learn it due to her inability to communicate with people and her frustration with merely pointing to objects that she wanted to buy when she was in shops. Learning the language of her new context may provide her with more choices and alleviate social isolation and exclusion in sites and contexts where she may need to have a voice. What is problematic is the means and, as stated above, the circumstances in which she intends to learn English that are often obscured in views of why immigrants do not learn the language of their receiving society and that directly affect her English-learning opportunities. Researchers have discussed the challenges and diverse needs that may motivate or hinder immigrants' language learning. In the context of the USA, McHugh and Doxsee (2018) draw attention to immigrants' and refugees' family responsibilities and changeable work schedules that limit class attendance and participation and that hinder their opportunities to become proficient in English. In England, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has also made a similar report. The DCLG stated that the Government has wanted to offer new ways to teach basic English courses to people facing integration challenges but it has been reported that these courses are often not suited to their needs as they may be either too far from home or lack the adequate infrastructure that lead to an impractical learning environment (Foster and Bolton 2018, p. 9). In addition to this, English language-learning opportunities for Julia are also very limited. Latin American-oriented NGOs, about which I will say more below, offer free English classes but these take place two times a week (Latin American House 2018). Thus learning English for Julia involves dealing with a series of personal circumstances as well as political, material and structural factors that hinder her language learning and impact her life.

Also Julia's account resembles that of Mario in the sense that both sought to meet their language needs through the help of NGOs that cater for the various needs of Latin Americans in London. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, during my fieldwork I visited a number of places among which there were NGOs that offered IT and English classes as well as employment rights workshops, and they were the sites through which I got to meet and contact more Latin Americans in London. The role of NGOs has proven to be a valuable source of information, and they seem to function as a type of social capital since they also offer immigration and housing and social welfare advice in Spanish. The latter, as a vehicle of communication, could be helpful in clarifying things for many Latin American immigrants who are not only unable to speak English but who are unfamiliar with rules and policies implied in a specialised language that we can continue to examine in the following case.



## Sarah

Through a Kilburn-based NGO I met Sarah with whom I met and talked in London a number of times before the recorded interview. We would meet in Victoria train station but our conversations took place either in coffee shops or in her social housing flat. The life history of Sarah resembles the complexities of citizenship in and the motivations as well as the circumstances in which she immigrated to London. Sarah met an English man in Mexico and had a daughter with him and after a five year-marriage the couple divorced but their daughter obtained dual citizenship while living in Mexico. Sarah relates that her daughter began to experience health problems that were too costly for her. A cousin of hers took care of her daughter's medical treatment for three months but he was unable to support her more as it was economically onerous. She also recounts that she did not receive economic help or moral support from her father due to Sarah's decision to renounce Catholicism, although at the time of the interview they had begun to repair their relationship. As she kept looking for help, she went to the British consulate in Mexico City where she was advised to move to England where her daughter's illness could be treated. Before moving to England, Sarah had a fair knowledge of English but no contacts that could inform her of immigration laws or of her rights. She recounted that her daughter received the medical treatment of which she came in search but they did not have a permanent room where they could stay. She and her daughter would live in hostels or in a living room of newly made acquaintances from Spain but then these people would return to their country, which forced Sarah and her daughter to sleep on the streets. Below I include her account that will help us contextualise her life story and understand the subsequent analyses of language ideologies as well as their consequentiality better.

yo pedí ayuda a *social services* me lo negaron siempre me hablaban con leyes siempre no encontré apoyo como una madre sola en este país aunque sabían que ya estaba mi aplicación en migración no me fue nada fácil siempre me decían que era la niña inglesa y yo mexicana<sup>x</sup>...

In the above excerpt Sarah describes the experience she had when asking for social housing assistance that she eventually obtained while, through the help of one her Spanish acquaintances, she was applying for a visa on compassionate grounds that after five years she was granted. Her depiction, nonetheless, is illustrative of an experience of exclusion. Although not all cultural distinctions are essentially exclusionary, in this context, her account both points to the contemporary complexity of nationality and to delineation of borders between citizens and non-citizens that differentiate who have rights and who do not. Her depiction portrays, and as later on she found out, that she could have been legally separated from her daughter due to the precarious situation in which she relates she lived. Moving to a new country involves learning new rules, and her limited knowledge of English seems to have affected her experiences.

tuve que luchar por mi niña físicamente y no dejé que me la quitaran ya estaban llamando a social services que porque decían que si yo también estaba poniendo en riesgo a mi hija al no estar yo bien al no darle una buena casa alimento y todo ¿no?. ellos tenían que asegurarse que la niña no estaba siendo afectada con nada. y que yo le estaba dando los cuidados tenía que como una niña e. cubrir todo lo que tengo como madre de cuidarla entonces yo ya no sabía qué hablar ya no sabía yo qué decir qué cosas me perjudicaban.. yo no tenía la facilidad del idioma para defenderme para poder explicar las cosas correctamente no me AHORA sé que hay traductores no me ofrecieron traductores ni nada entonces yo traté de defenderme con lo que yo sabía de inglés en ese entonces ¿no? y era muy frustrante<sup>lx</sup>...

In the above excerpt, Sarah describes an asymmetrical linguistic interaction with the council. She narrates that she did not have access to interpreters who could help her explain why she was asking for social housing in a situation where she recounts that a female staff member attempted to take her daughter from Sarah and told her that she would put her in a foster family. Language in these circumstances is represented by Sarah not only as a vehicle of communication but also as an instrument to fend off what she describes as an aggression. For instance, the metaphorical representation of language as a shield, *la facilidad del idioma para defenderme*, gains social significance in the situations described given that it points to the knowledge of language as a tool to protect herself and her daughter in an event which she implies as threatening due to her fear of losing her.

Additionally for Sarah to be able to explain her situation and need for social housing ‘properly’, in a language that she did not ‘master’ also carries implications of the context-based use of language. This is what it has been interpreted as communicative competence (Rampton, 2006; Agha, 2007) in which speakers choose particular ways of speaking with specific social functions whose impact and end also hinge on the spaces that the interactants inhabit. That is, describing an illness to either a friend or a doctor involves the use of a particular register and the result will therefore vary. In a state-sanctioned space and with a liminal migration status, the appropriateness of Sarah’s discourse is crucial given that her ability to explain things in English did not seem to be strictly associated with her knowledge of the language. Rather, her narrated frustration of describing things inappropriately in conjunction with *ya no sabía yo qué decir qué cosas me perjudicaban*, implies that she may not have had access to the contextual meaning of a particular register that articulates and that could materialise in rules enforced in her new social environment that could have separated her from her daughter.

Her account thus suggests that Sarah seems to have been faced with a top-down specialised monolingual ideology that placed her in a disadvantaged social position and that may have aggravated her sense of frustration at the time. Later on in the interview she stated that she eventually got social housing benefit for her and her daughter but her visa application was still

being processed and, as mentioned above, such application process took five years, time during which social services would send her letters annually to notify her that she was going to be withdrawn from benefits. She would initially explain to social workers that her visa was still being processed and which by then she had not been denied. She then would be called to meetings with the managers to whom she would try to explain that she would not leave the country until immigration issued her with a deportation letter.

Todo en inglés todo en inglés también ellos tienen la facilidad del traductor (sic).. no me lo dieron y este.. y ellos decían que me podían entender bien pero yo sé que cometí muchos errores y que no pude expresarme como yo me hubiera gustado expresarme yo tenía muchas dudas muchas preguntas que hacer y yo no no..no podía hacerlo ¿no?<sup>lxiii</sup> ...

In this excerpt, Sarah responds to my question about the language of the interviews with the managers and, as we saw in the above passage, she reports not having been provided with an interpreter. The lack of access to an interpreter seems to have had a downward effect on Sarah's social identity articulated by two intertwined aspects in a situation that points to a situation of inequality. The first one, her inability to communicate her ideas, *no pude expresarme como yo me hubiera gustado*, points to both how her agency is undermined and how her communicative needs appear to have been silenced in an office of social services. The latter is a site where the power of language, as we saw in Julia's case, is enforced by the social position of the interactants implicitly described. In other words, the event is located in a state institution and thus politically and legally sanctioned in which, as Bourdieu noted, "the use of language, the manner as much as the substance of discourse depends on the social position of the speaker, which governs the access he/she can have to the language of the institution" (2003, p. 109).

As to the second one, a monoglot ideology in which a language is treated as homogenous, uniform and that encompasses all the social domains as a neutral vehicle of communication (Anderson, 1991; Spotti, 2011, p. 40), is suggested in Sarah's phrases such as *tenía muchas dudas muchas preguntas*. Both seem to index both the variations in meaning as well as the social function of a particular register, which, as we saw above, Sarah may have sought to clarify in the absence of an interpreter, and whose consequentiality transcends a communicative event in a politically charged site. Her experience echoes those of women reported in various institutional sites in the UK. Blackledge (2000, p. 37), for example, reports how Bengali-speaking Bangladeshi mothers in school felt embarrassed to approach English-speaking teachers. Moreover, the consequentiality of such a monolingual ideology was that their language was not accommodated in the school when one of them received a letter about the need of remedial classes for her daughter (ibid).

Sarah narrated that she was finally granted a six year visa on compassionate grounds and that when this time elapsed she subsequently applied for indefinite leave to remain in the UK but her application fell through since the lawyer that assisted her submitted the wrong application about which she only found out through a letter from the immigration office. In her account she said that her lawyer did not keep her informed of the visa application process even though she tried to stay in touch with her through telephone calls, text messages and emails, which her English-educated daughter helped her write to avoid any misunderstandings. At the time of the interview, Sarah had applied for a visa extension and was still expecting an answer from the Home Office, an immigration process she was undertaking through the help of a Spanish-speaking lawyer volunteering in a London-based NGO.

llegué a esta ONG y conocí a Marcos que conoce de migración y me comenzó a dar consejo migratorio pero prácticamente yo soy la que me estoy representando sola ante migración.. él me aconseja me ayuda me guía me ayuda a escribir las cartas y todo y entonces ya tengo un poquito más de conocimiento y todo gracias a ese apoyo que encontré ahí que ayudan a los latinos y sentí que se me quitó así totalmente un peso de encima porque me sentía totalmente sola. pero con este tipo de organizaciones que yo no sabía que existían si te ayudan emocionalmente te ayudan mucho te cambia mucho mentalmente también y. yo he contado con la bendición de que es una persona Marcos que en cualquier momento que yo lo necesite él siempre está ahí para aconsejarme.. a veces quiero hacer algo para migración porque a veces siento que no hago lo suficiente y él me dice “no espera a que ellos te contesten espera” y sí me ha ayudado mucho ¿no?<sup>lxiii</sup> ...

In our conversations in coffee shops and her home with her daughter prior to the interview, Sara exhibited an ability to communicate in English. Nonetheless, Sarah’s account, despite the circumstances of her migration status, reveals a sense of relief in which language appears to function as a sense-making instrument when she is confronted with the exclusive and specialised discourse of the law. In this context, her receiving help to write letters to the Home Office continues to point, on the one hand, to the above-mentioned monoglot ideology in which a state’s institution glosses over the linguistic diversity of its society and permeates all the social domains as a neutral vehicle of communication (Blackledge, 2009; Spotti, 2011). On the other hand, the specialised register in which she is not fluent and to which she has no access, continues to appear as socially meaningful and politically consequential. The specificity of legal language, as we saw in David’s case of removal in chapter 5, influences social behaviour, and lack of access to it may obscure entitlements or may have marginalising effects. For Sarah, to be able to receive information and legal advice in Spanish has enlightened her understanding of migration laws and

by extension of her situation that in this context strikingly contrasts with and thus helps us get a better insight into those that she previously depicted. In my last contacts with her, the Home Office had neither denied nor confirmed her visa extension yet.

The role of Latin American-oriented NGOs is also worth highlighting since the information and courses they provide interestingly coincide across their sites in London, which to some extent allows us to place Mario's, Julia's and Sarah's linguistic, metalinguistic and migration stories as well as their capital in a larger social reality in which Latin Americans in London live. The latter argument is not to be treated as a generalising or reductionist statement through which I intend to say that their needs and realities are easily identifiable or even predictable. Rather it is to argue that these NGOs function as a type of social capital that may be made accessible to those who cannot afford it. Their roles, however, also deserve more attention as they may also function as sites where the ideologies identified above also circulate. In a survey obtained from London-based NGOs users from Latin America, McCarthy (2016, p. 4) documented that one of the main reasons to learn English pertains to job improvement aspirations and because it is the language of their country of residence; that is, monoglot ideologies that merit further research.

## **7.3 Language Contact and Migration**

### **7.3.1 Introduction**

In the previous section, I have offered an analysis of six participants' experiences and perceptions in which various language ideologies came forth. Various language ideologies also seemed to interact with a differentiated access to social capital and ideologies of neoliberalism that influence the participants' social relations and identities in London. In this section, I would now like to draw the reader's attention to the interrelated phenomenon of language contact located in the context of globalisation. The latter along with migration, as documented by scholars such as Coupland (2003), Blommaert and Dong (2010a) and as mentioned in previous chapters, have accelerated and highlighted the complexity of social and cultural phenomena, and language contact figures as one of its many manifestations. People interact with, use and appropriate words, terms and meanings from other languages, and the way in which they communicate their ideas exhibits linguistic repertoires, which, as I have stated in chapter 2.4, are indexical of their migration trajectories.

This section, thus, concentrates on some evidence of such language contact between Spanish and English that we observed in chapter 5 and 6 as the participants described their work experiences. The accounts and descriptions that I will partially reproduce here will be first that of Marcia,

which is to be followed by those of Sharon, David, Diego and Alfonso and I will also include that of Sonia. In order to account for the linguistic practices that I present here, I will use the analytical concept of bivalency to which I referred in chapter 2.5 and which is understood as “the use by a bilingual of words or segments that could “belong” equally, descriptively and even prescriptively, to both codes” (Woolard 1999, p. 7; 2006). Additionally this section will help us answer the last research question: to what extent can the situated linguistic practices that the participants deploy allow us to challenge ideologies of language? This analysis is intended to shed light on the processes of language change as one of the many processes of globalisation in a social space of which the Latin American community in London is a part.

### 7.3.2 Ideologies of Language as Discrete Systems

In chapter 2.5, I made reference to how people’s mobility has challenged Saussurean and Chomskyan views of language as systems and discrete entities that overlook language in context, and such mobility has motivated researchers to view language as practices and repertoires. These can be observed in the following cases, one of which is Marcia’s who, as we saw in chapter 5, described her perceptions about not being an immigrant and her account is illustrative of an interesting linguistic trajectory.

a mí yo siento que personalmente el el cómo te voy a decir el nombre de inmigrante no me sirve más porque creo que ya pasé de este.. periodo de adaptación y como que *I made it* ¿no? vamos a ponerlo así ¿no? yo soy parte de esto pero además que soy yo tan diferente y que ya.. ya me incorporé en la sociedad yo creo que una vez para un inmigrante tener suceso es integrarse en su sociedad en la sociedad que lo recibe yo creo que ese es el suceso

In the above excerpt Marcia does not align herself with the name of the immigrant and relates a story of success through a phrase of social and cultural accomplishment, *I made it*. This is accompanied with interesting language resources that are illustrative of political processes rather than merely linguistic ones in the designation of languages (Bourdieu, 2003). For instance, in the Spanish-speaking context of the interview, Marcia’s choices such as *tener suceso*, *el suceso*, should be treated sceptically in relation to common sense notions about language. It is worth remembering, that Marcia is from Brazil and was mostly educated in Portuguese even though at elementary level she was educated in Spanish while her Italian father with whom she also spoke in Italian did an engineering job in Paraguay. Additionally at the time of the interview, she was married to an English man with whom she interacted in English and worked as a Spanish and Portuguese language teacher. In this context, it is not clear whether Marcia’s expressive needs resemble that she resorted to the Portuguese-designated word *sucesso* or to the English-labelled word *success* to express her view. Furthermore, although there are phonological variations, the

distinctions become even blurrier by considering Marcia's Italian ancestry since her choices also point to the Italian-designated word *successo*. In this vein, Marcia's word choices reflect the phenomenon of bivalency in the sense that they are words also found in more than one language and that challenge the ideological representation of languages as discrete systems, representations that also promote the idea of language interference. (Woolard, 1999; Hall and Nilep, 2015, p. 612). However, such distinctions in Marcia's word choices were not an obstacle to the situated communicative event since they neither prevented her from expressing her idea nor prevented me from finding the linguistic vehicle to understand it in the interview interaction.

In the following cases, we can continue to analyse the participants' linguistic repertoire. For instance, Sharon, David and Diego respectively relate their job experiences in the service sector that we saw in chapter 6 and produce statements such as "veía mucho cómo un *manager* latino de diferentes nacionalidades trata a sus empleados...", "teníamos un *manager* inglés por ahí sacarían cosas... llegaron estos latinos encima de *manager* se complicó todo...", "entonces ¿quién se beneficia de eso? es *el manager* o el supervisor que está a cargo...". This is also the context in which Alfonso situates his accounts and through which he adds to the diversity of the above linguistic practices.

a mí me tocó una vez trabajar de supervisor en X hospital de *cleaner* donde *el manager* era colombiano el noventa por ciento del *staff* era colombiano el otro resto era yo venezolano boliviano y ecuatoriano y los colombianos en bloque nos hacían *bullying* a nosotros...

It is noteworthy that words such as *manager* and *staff* are widely circulating in more Spanish-speaking contexts and are often found in and promoted by business talk. Bullying can also be increasingly heard in work and educational settings that report and denounce discriminatory practices (see Proceso, 2017). The above instances can be further examined in conjunction with what Alfonso continues to describe in the same context.

cuando el *manager* le hizo un *complaint* a un boliviano que llegó media hora tarde después de las seis le hizo un *complaint* por escrito al boliviano ahí fue cuando yo dije bueno\_e... "tú haces *complaint* por media hora pues yo voy a hacer *complaint* por tus dos amigos que lo que trabajan son dos horas si acaso tres horas y el pago *full time*...

Words such as *cleaner*, which we saw in the first instances, and *full time* are also reproduced by Sonia and Diego as they both describe interactions and experiences with other Latin Americans; "si vienen aquí y solo van a estar trabajando *cleaner cleaner cleaner cleaner* hostelería y solo ganan ganan para pagar así...", "a mí ya me empezó a ver con esa situación entonces yo dije no ya no ya no voy a seguir más me fui a trabajar *el full time*...". Each of these words, as stated in Marcia's account, reflects instances of bivalency since the words that the participants employ exhibit a simultaneous membership of linguistic segments to two languages in contact.

Additionally, the participants' consistent use of words exhibit both how they have appropriated such words and their familiarity with specific social roles that give plasticity to their language use. The latter on the one hand questions ideologies of language as a discrete and complete entity that should not be contaminated by so called Anglicism and on the other hand demonstrates that their language choices respond to historical moments of their lives. Why would they not use other linguistic resources in Spanish such as *gerente* for manager, *personal* or *plantilla* for staff, or *intimidar* for bullying, *queja* for complaint, *conserje* for cleaner and *tiempo completo* for full time? What we seem to gather from these accounts is that the participants appear to draw on them in an attempt not only to accomplish a communicative goal but also to recreate such roles and identities that are specific of and echo their situated experiences and practices. Their language choices may thus conjure up the socioeconomic and cultural environment that they intend to name.

In light of the above, Silverstein (1998, p. 136) and Rampton (1995, p. 30) remind us that the expression of ideologies are culturally and socially situated and that their expression is also connected to language users' consciousness. That is, their manifestation is deployed by language user's intentions in specific sites within social systems of which they are aware (Kroskrity 2010, p. 200). The linguistic practices performed above thus should be interpreted as dynamic, deliberate and historic given that they are reflective of their migration trajectories that constitute their identities and realities that thus invite us to understand how they may linguistically and socially navigate their day-to-day life.

## 7.6 Summary

We have seen the manifestation of a number of ideologies in the above accounts. Ideologies of accent, cultural superiority and socioeconomic mobility as well as assimilation, etc., emerged as the participants described their experiences and aspirations in a receiving society. Such ideologies, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, are not strictly associated with language and are multi-sited (Woolard, 1998; Kroskrity, 2004), and do not occur in isolation. They intersect with ideologies of neoliberalism, social class as well as with a differentiated access to social capital that influence not only how the participants make sense of their sociolinguistic experiences but also how they constitute their social relations. Furthermore, their experiences in institutional sites also suggest a hierarchisation, marginalising and consequential effect that institutional authorities and specialised registers could have on the participants' family lives when the circumstances of their trajectories limit their language and social capital. Additionally, the linguistic practices that we saw also point to the plasticity of their language use and they are illustrative of the socioeconomic environment in which they live. The diversity of social practices and inequalities here explored merit further research since they cast light on the various stratified identities, relationships and



interactions of Latin Americans with other Latin Americans and other social and linguistic groups with which they cohabit in London.



## Chapter 8      Conclusions

### 8.1      Language, Identity and Migration

In this section I offer concluding comments and reflections about how the theoretical framework and the key concepts that I have used have helped me explore and understand the complex objects of analysis in this thesis.

The aim of this thesis has been to explore language and identity issues in a population that has been termed the Latin American community and whose presence has been understudied by sociolinguists. As we have seen in the previous chapters, its make-up is highly heterogeneous not only in terms of nationalities but also in terms of migration trajectories, experiences and status that are also associated with socioeconomic backgrounds, various identities that the term community does not reveal. This led me to reflect upon theoretical concepts and analytical instruments that could help me explore the identities of Latin American immigrants in order to understand their relations and interactions among themselves as well as their interests and linguistic practices in London.

Given that one of my key interest was identity, I needed an analytical tool that could enable me to capture such an often elusive concept. As stated in chapter 2.1, there may be important identity symbols such as clothing, music, etc., but one that encompasses many domains of social life is language. My understanding of language as the means whereby we can see identity has been and continues to be informed by the work of various researchers such as Blommaert (2005), De Fina (2011), Block (2006), Bucholtz and Hall (2005). Their views have allowed me to construct a theoretical framework in which language is key to our understanding of identity since it is in its use that we capture who people are and who they are not. As we were able to observe in chapter 5, through the language choices they made, Marcia and Karla discursively self-presented as non-immigrant women while Miguel, David and Irma self-presented as vulnerable and illegal immigrants respectively. It must be said that there were other factors that influenced their self-presentations but I will say more about them below. What must be emphasised is that language as a vehicle through which we see identity is at centre stage and should also be put in context.

My work has also conceptualised the intrinsic relationship between language and identity as context-based, attributive and dialogic. I have argued this since our language use very much hinges upon the people with whom we interact in a specific moment and social situation. In addition to this, our language choices interact with the ends we may want to meet in a specific situation in which we also enact different social identities. This could be seen, for instance, in the

case of David in Chapter 6. His account of working with other Latin Americans in the service sector as a cleaner exhibits a different reality from his experience as an undocumented immigrant in chapter 5, since he produces a discourse of denunciation through which he characterises Latino managers' identities as dishonest and sly, which contrasts with his identity as a hard-working cleaner. Thus I have rejected an essentialist view of identity that ignores the complexity and variability of a situation-based language use, which reveals different realities from which and about which language users speak.

In addition to my understanding of language as the vehicle of a context-based identity, I have also interpreted language use from two main perspectives. First, my view of language use is informed by a perspective from Critical Discourse Studies in which language is regarded as a social practice through which we perform actions that constitute our social life and relations. Second, I have also understood the social practice of language as deliberate, intentional and never neutral. In addition to this, I have also drawn on the concept of interdiscursivity. This has enabled me to understand and capture the different social voices that my participants reproduce and through which they thus contribute to a particular social order of exclusion in which the social identity and position of immigrants are discursively and historically devalued. Together, these interpretations have been very useful in the way I have approached the ordinary use of language, which have enabled me to problematise common-sense views in context and that materialise in the social relations and realities of my participants. Various instances demonstrate the social impact of language as a deliberate social practice, such as not being an immigrant or being educated and successful in the context of this study, but there is one in particular that stresses its social significance. The discourses of illegality that David and Irma produce in chapter 5 exemplify situations of social marginalisation, self-disqualification and expulsion that can end up in family separation. Their discourses carry important distinctions to which I will return later.

The sociocognitive approach (Van Dijk, 2014) within Critical Discourse Studies on which I have drawn for the analysis of my participants' discourses has also been instrumental to explore my participants' self-presentations, categorisations and language ideologies. As to the two first ones, a sociocognitive approach has enabled me to identify those units of analysis such as lexical items, implications, modality, disclaimers, and implicatures among others that Latin American immigrants employ deliberately. Through various topoi of history, culture and suspicion as analytical tools I have been able to delve into how they make sense of the various experiences that they have narrated as well as the people with whom they (dis) associate. We have seen how the participants, for instance David and Alfonso in chapter 6, employed topoi of culture and metaphors to rationalise practices of exploitation and intimidation and through which they generalise and essentialise a dishonest behaviour of Latinos. In addition to this, Mayra employs a

topos of history whereby she categorises and characterises Latinos as diffident, insecure and subservient individuals whose behaviour is explained by the history of colonialism in Latin America; that is, their identities are suggested to bear an imprint of subjugation that positions them as socially inferior, an argument on which I as a Latin American researcher aware of this historical event was invited to agree. Furthermore, she explicitly depicts those coming from Spain as dishonest as they seek to obtain benefits and thus through implications they are portrayed as dependent upon the welfare provided by the state. Other participants such as Linda and Jazmin lexically and implicitly categorise these transnational migrants as uneducated, rude, unpleasant or simply ignorant of the social rules of their receiving society.

Regarding language ideologies, in a sociocognitive approach, units of analysis such as metaphors, similes, implications, implicatures, the indexical value of language among others have been the main lens through which this study has thrown light on the various processes of social exclusion that the participants have constructed and have faced. Linda's and Sonia's discourses have shown how they selectively build their relations and how they devalue and distance themselves from Spanish speakers. Mario, Andres, Julia and Sarah offer a contrasting picture. Mario metaphorically represents language as a basic human need that in turn conjures up a reality of stratification that erases his academic credentials. Like Linda, Sonia and Andres, Mario discursively constructs English as an instrument of social inclusion and socioeconomic mobility. Julia and Sarah produce the metaphorical representation of language as a shield in state-sanctioned institutions dominated by a monoglot ideology with politically and socially exclusionary effects. Taken all together, these analyses made from this approach have demonstrated how Latin Americans selectively build their social interactions among themselves and with other people as well as how unequal and divergent their experiences and interests are in a larger socioeconomic environment in which other extra linguistic factors such as social class and neoliberalism also influence their lives and relations.

## **8.2 Social Class and the Overlapping Emergence of Ideologies**

As I have stated in the previous section, there are other non-linguistic factors that cannot be overlooked in the analysis of Latin Americans' ways of speaking. Social class is indeed a major construct that has allowed me to understand how, why and from what social reality my participants speak.

As stated in chapter 2.6, social class encompasses the material as well as the symbolic. It is materially based in the sense that it is understood in relation to people's economic conditions which are used to locate people in a social structure (Wright, 2003; Elbert and Perez, 2018). This

interpretation of social class has become relevant for this study to understand and explain why Latin American immigrants have travelled migration routes that have had an impact on both their migration status and the social realities that they have experienced; that is, why they live where they live, work where they work. As to the symbolic aspect of social class, I have drawn on both Bourdieusian interpretations of economic, social and cultural capital and Block's (2018) interrelated dimensions of class, which have also helped me think about class in terms of sociocultural resources, lifestyle and spatial conditions of living. Such understanding of class and class markers have benefitted this study as they have lent themselves to offer a more encompassing and in-depth view of the participants' ways of speaking indexical of their lives, social alignments, experiences and thus their identities.

As we have seen in the three data chapters of this study, social class often intersects with various ideologies. Ideologies of language, which are understood as ideas that articulate notions about language and language use with specific cultural, political and social formations (Del Valle, 2007, p. 20), are multifarious and overlapping, and they apply to everyone due to the complex and dynamic sociocultural experience of the individual as well as the plurality of social divisions such as class, gender, age, etc. (Kroskrity, 2004). In this context, we have observed how ideologies of linguistic assimilation, homogeneity, accent and authenticity have figured in my participants' discourses, and their conceptualisation has enabled me to analyse and note processes of exclusion in my participants. Additionally, as we have seen in Chapter 7, the emergence and (re)production of language ideologies also intertwine with aspirations of socioeconomic mobility and inclusion, which are intricately associated with a particular economic model.

Neoliberalism in this study has been understood as a historical and deliberate economic project whose logic of the individual as the architect of their own destiny has permeated the way people conceive of and build their social relations. I have mostly drawn on Harvey (2005) in order to locate and understand neoliberalism historically and politically, and I have also referred to its effects on and relation to Latin American immigration to the UK. Additionally, in chapter 2.7, I have also written about outsourcing as a work scheme that functions according to and promotes the tenets of neoliberalism and in which, as we have seen in chapter 6, some of my participants also find themselves and relate their work experiences with other Latin Americans. As stated above, the ideology of neoliberalism has also penetrated many domains of social life that also has resulted in particular ways of speaking. Language, as I have noted in chapter 2.7, has been discursively constructed as an object, a skill as an added value (Duchene and Heller, 2012) in which individuals should invest. In chapter 7, we have seen how the participants are thus interpellated to acquire English as a capital, an instrument that is to secure mobility in a competition-driven society, which is, nonetheless, increasingly unequal.

### 8.3 Significance of the Study

After having taken into account the concepts mentioned above and how they have enabled me to inform the analysis of my participants' narrated experiences as well as my observations, the significance of this research project in sociolinguistic studies in the context of Latin American immigration to the UK is underscored by seven main contributions.

The first one is methodological, which was made through in-depth analyses of the participants' different and various discourses that did not merely concentrated on the textual but incorporated the contextual. That is, although in some interviews this is limited, my analyses considered the social and physical environment of the discursive acts through which I was able to account for and enrich the examination of the discourses that I have presented in this work. This is worth mentioning since studies that approach language use from a perspective within Critical Discourse Studies, as I stated in chapter 4.5, have been criticised for neglecting the (immediate) context in which discourse is produced (Blommaert, 2005; Breeze, 2011). In this sense, by considering non-textual information in my analyses such as the settings and context of the interview, I believe that my analyses both have addressed such criticism and have demonstrated how ethnographic observations can complement the analytical sociocognitive approach that I have employed.

Another aspect that highlights the significance of this study is related to the conceptual and the empirical, which has also helped me answer the research questions of this study: how do Latin American migrants self-present in the social spaces they have inhabited in a receiving society? And what insights into the social interactions of Latin Americans in London can we gain by looking at the social values and ideologies emergent in their discourses? By incorporating conceptualisations of class into the analyses, this study has cast light on the social class differentiations that we observed in the previous chapters and that to a large extent explain how the participants self-present, categorise others and themselves. That is, the participants' discourses evidence social alignments and distancing that allowed us to gain insight into the inner social layers that constitute the Latin American community. We have seen that the material as well as the symbolic construct of social class foregrounds the distinctions and divisions that affect and hierarchise their relations. It must be noted that although socioeconomic differences in other studies of the same population have been pointed to (see McIlwaine, 2015), they have been explored from a quantitative lens and they have been mentioned in passing and without theorisation. This theorisation and a more in-depth analysis become necessary, as this study has demonstrated, in order to understand people's identities holistically and how participants justify and evaluate the selection of their relations as well as how they make sense of the realities they describe.

Another contribution that is also related to the second research question mentioned above pertains to a pervasive ideology that also affect and inflect the participants' relations and realities. The ideology of neoliberalism that emerges in the discourses analysed offers us both a view of individual-oriented values that some of the members of the Latin American community have produced and the evaluative way in which they build their social relations. An attitude of self-responsibilisation intersects with the participants' different capitals and aspirations, and at the same time it contradicts the values of commonality and collectivity that the term community implies. Within this context, such ideology is discursively mobilised implicitly and explicitly to explain the socioeconomic realities in which the participants live or deserve to live, which further underscores the hierarchisation of Latin Americans' relations.

Also, this study has shed light on the participants' work relations located in a neoliberal work scheme. This provides the socioeconomic conditions in which the discourses of David, Alfonso and Diego are located and which negatively affect their relations given that their accounts point to conflict, exploitation and discrimination that the participants, nonetheless, attribute to cultural traits. That is, an essentialising view of people's behaviour that is allegedly predictable and explained by their geographic origin to which I was also interpellated to agree. It is my intent that, in this sense, this study contributes to a critical attitude towards a neoliberal view of social and work relations that may disguise the inequalities and processes of exclusion that Latin Americans face or may assume to be the natural state of things. Additionally, it is also my intent that an analysis of why immigrants change in a new country, or in Alfonso's words they are *distintos*, casts a wider light on how a neoliberal logic of competition is a major factor in the problem of social injustice in immigrant communities as they seek to meet their economic needs at the expense of fellow immigrants (see Mahler 1995).

Another contribution that this study makes, as I have stated above, pertains to an important and close analysis of the often unproblematised depiction of illegal immigration. The discourse of illegal immigration has been gaining momentum in Western societies that through its dissemination by the mass media and political speeches have generated legitimised processes of social exclusion, self-disqualification and disenfranchisement, and it exhibits interdiscursive elements that should be historically located to understand how it contributes to a social order of hierarchies and exclusion. In this vein, by pointing to and scrutinising a subtle distinction between removal and deportation and their concomitant consequences, the discursive analysis of the participants' self-presentations as illegals intends to bring about awareness and a better understanding of the social identities and relations that such a discourse constructs and perpetuates. That is, to talk about illegal immigrants is antonymous with undocumented or irregular immigrants and although both are loaded with issues of morality and immorality it is



necessary to use our sociolinguistic tools to continue to challenge the discursive normalisation of illegal immigration and inequality.

The sixth one is the detailed exploration of the complexity of language ideologies, which has allowed me to answer the research question: to what extent can the emergent language ideologies enable us to gain insight into the constitution of Latin American immigrants' social relations and experiences when such ideologies intersect with social capital and class? On the one hand, the study of language ideologies in relation to English as a vehicle to socioeconomic mobility and inclusion allows us to see that members of the Latin American community construct and value their social relations within and without the community as investments. In this context, this study underscores the varied and divergent social and linguistic interests that some Latin Americans have expressed and that have assumed to be common-sense views that they have also rationalised through individual-oriented discourses. On the other hand, as we have seen in chapters 6 and 7, this study has shown that ideologies of accent, authenticity, the monoglot nation, etc., have exclusionary effects on the participants who have experienced them. The complex (re)production of language ideologies in the context of this study exhibits the differentiated distribution of economic, social and cultural capital to which my participants have access and that are (un)able to mobilise according to their social trajectory.

Finally this study seeks to make a contribution to the analysis of a little researched phenomenon in the population under study by answering: to what extent can the situated linguistic practices that the participants deploy allow us to challenge ideologies of language? As we saw in chapter 7.5, Latin Americans' linguistic repertoire exhibits word choices that are reflective of their migration trajectories and the socioeconomic environment in which they live and work and that they try to name. I have chosen the term bivalency (Woolard, 1989) to account for my participants' linguistic practices and it is a theoretical construct that has taken precedence over more typical terms such as code-switching. Such a choice, as I stated in chapter 2.7, rests on the rationale that code-switching suggests a dichotomy of two separate codes, which could be interpreted as incongruous due to the lack of linguistic distinctions that the participants make as they describe their experiences in a complex and dynamic social reality of language contact and mobility where the drawing of clear-cut linguistic boundaries is increasingly challenging.

## **8.4 Limitations**

Having established the academic contributions of this research, it is also sensible to acknowledge its limitations in order to inform future sociolinguistic studies. This study exhibits two main limitations.

The first one is the limited amount of time that I spent with some of the participants in this study before the interview. This in some cases meant that there was a lack of openness not only from the participants to answer questions that I asked them but also to pose them. Building trust with one's potential participants is crucial in delving into, better contextualising and understanding their accounts. A way of building a good rapport with them is by becoming familiar with them and their practices in the social domains where they locate their discourses and interact with other Latin Americans. However, as I stated in chapter 4.4, interacting with my participants before or after the interview was accompanied with other challenges that prevented me from longer interactions and closer inspection of their realities. Both the potential and actual participants have jobs and economic needs to address that to a great extent influenced the length of time that we could spend together as well as the place where we could meet. Linked to this and as stated in chapters 4.4, 5 and 7, the role of gender and the experiences of domestic abuse that some Latin American women suffered by men was highly influential in their decisions to participate or not participate in this study conducted by a male researcher. My interaction with two of the participants, Jazmin and Irma, was mediated by the NGOs that cater for their needs and that felt responsible for their protection, which resulted in short one-time encounters with very little opportunity to contact and meet with them again in order to pursue their life stories more closely.

The second limitation of this study is related to my presence as a Latin American researcher that also pertains to my own subjectivity in the analyses presented in this thesis. As stated in chapter 4.2, my presence contributed to the co-construction of the events that my participants have narrated and this has influenced the direction and development of the interviews. As to my subjectivity, my experience of living in three different countries and, as I mentioned at the beginning of this work, my own socioeconomic and academic background have been important motivations to explore language and identity issues as well as migration, and they must be recognised as the filters through which I have approached the objects of study and may have had many others unanalysed.

## **8.5 Suggestion for further Study**

Having identified those areas of improvement in this study, there are three important suggestions that could deepen the study of Latin Americans in London. One initial suggestion is related to ethnography.

More ethnographic work is necessary to understand people's experiences better in order to enrich an analysis of their discourses, particularly of those situated in the service sector. In this

context, Latin American managers' voice and discourses of working with other Latin Americans should also be taken into account as they are necessary for a more in-depth examination and description of their work interactions with other Latin Americans. The rationale to scrutinise their accounts lies in the motivation to shed a wider light on how they describe them and how they make sense of them. This will provide them with a voice in a context where they are negatively depicted as abusive and exploitative in neoliberal work conditions in which many Latin Americans are employed.

Another aspect to follow up for further research is the social and linguistic function of NGOs. As I have shown in the three previous chapters, they certainly play a significant role in the social incorporation of many Latin Americans in London but how they cater for their needs draws attention to a series of intertwined issues. As Codó (2013) has noted in the context of Barcelona, the fact that NGOs have taken up the responsibility to attend to immigrants' legal and linguistic needs is an instance of the off-loading of social responsibility from the state to civil society. In addition to this, it is often the case that through volunteers, NGOs attempt to alleviate immigrants' economic pressures by providing them with free or "low-cost" IT workshops, CV clinics and interview training in English that is meant to ensure them a successful job application. In this context, it is worth exploring these activities in order to understand the language practices and policies that are in place as well as what (non) linguistic ideologies underlie and inform their articulation for the population that they aim to benefit. Their examination nonetheless should not be viewed through a deficiency lens; it should rather respond to establish links between civil society needs and state-sanctioned institutions that can help address immigrants' challenges and exclusion in their pursuit of social, linguistic and work integration.

Finally, the exploration and incorporation of social class in studies of language and identity in the context of migration is highly relevant. It should play a more prominent role in our observations and analyses as we approach issues of identity and mobility given that we evidently live in unequal societies that are increasingly influenced by discourses of competition and entrepreneurship, normative discourses that through a critical sociolinguistic lens we are in a position to challenge. Furthermore, sociolinguists interested in the phenomena analysed here could also benefit from more interdisciplinary work. Several authors (see Gal, 1989; Block, 2014; 2018; Pérez-Milans, 2015) have made the case for the incorporation of a political economy approach into sociolinguistic studies, and their observations are pertinent and should not be overlooked since working in an interdisciplinary way could lend itself to a closer analysis of inequality and processes of socioeconomic exclusion articulated by neoliberal schemes that affect us all.

## Appendix A

### A.1 Transcription conventions

Transcription conventions used in interview excerpts (adapted from Jefferson (1984)):

¿?	indicates question;
.	indicates micropause;
..	indicates long pause;
¡!	indicates interjection/exclamation;
[text]	indicates the end and overlapping of words between interactants;
...	indicates edition/omission of text;
<b>CAPITALS</b>	indicates rising intonation/emphasis;
<b>"text"</b>	indicates words in an indirect style (quotation);
<b>((text))</b>	indicates non-verbal activity (body language; laughter)
<b><i>Italics</i></b>	indicates English (interview excerpts) or Spanish words (analysis).

## Appendix B

### B.1 Translations of interview excerpt

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<sup>i</sup> *This generation has the idea that the migrant is a bad thing that it's rubbish being dumped at your door when I came here the immigrant was necessary for their economy they were desperate there was a lot of work and very few people to work.*

<sup>ii</sup> *I was lucky to belong to a generation that that here they needed immigrants and today they don't need (them) because they ( cannot pay for their home (social housing) the health service is not functioning I mean the things that once were good now aren't good*

<sup>iii</sup> *Me I feel that personally the the how can I put it? the name of immigrant does not work for me anymore because I think I got past this...this adaptation period and like I made it, right? Let's put it that way, shall we? I am part of this but apart from the fact that I am so different and that I already...I have already incorporated in society I think that once for an immigrant to have success is to integrate in their society in their host society I think that is their success*

<sup>iv</sup> *Today the immigrant is something that you don't want in your garden that you don't want to come and take money from your country because they are using your schools your hospitals and I think that back then we felt we had the economic power so to speak*

<sup>v</sup> *when we are in Spain we realise that they still have that thinking of slavery of domination over the Latin American still and generally they treat lat the immigrant derisively*

<sup>vi</sup> *currently we are in London and you never know where life will take you currently there are rooms where a Spanish and a Bolivian live together so it cannot be derogatory the Spanish cannot be denigrated denigrating because he is living in the same conditions as the other as the other person they are both immigrants in a different country*

<sup>vii</sup> *Here the English are different in that respect they are very kind with the immigrant they are very kind I can't complain about any English because one is treated kindly the*

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*immigrant is a vulnerable person and what the immigrant needs is to be treated well and this is a very good country to immigrate because the locals treat the immigrant well*

<sup>viii</sup> *It's a lot easier for me because of the language because he helps me with the language he corrects me because the police still ask you questions at the airport "show me your visa" like sometimes they don't check it properly "your visa is about to expire" but when I am with him it's different they even crack jokes "where did you come from? Are you on holiday?" so everything is fine but when I am alone there are a few more questions but when I am with him we are on holiday, you know what I mean?*

<sup>ix</sup> *My situation has been say easy to obtain a regular migration status it is because... I couldn't be so radical and say here they don't give people opportunities but that's because my particular case is...let's see...deep down I understand that it is not my situation either but I could understand why people want to come here that they have the right maybe to be able to choose maybe.*

<sup>\*</sup> *But sometimes I say yes of course if everyone wanted to emigrate to come I don't know the real capacity to be able to sustain them all and maybe I would feel like many foreigners are arriving in Chile perhaps also me being back there from that logic that they are occupying... but I don't know it's compli it's complicated*

<sup>xi</sup> *my wife managed to get her documents here to become legal but she wanted to have me legalised but she was unable to until one day through the application she did they came to my house and told me "you can't be in this country" my wife was pregnant with the second child she was pregnant and they did not care at all "you are here illegally and she is the only one that is legal and she can stay so you have to go" ...well they call it remove I was removed from the country*

<sup>xii</sup> *I did not know that since my frustration was that I was going to be deported to my country and I have heard that if I get deported I can't come back in five years so that was my frustration I had nothing in Ecuador I had my life here my belongings my work my kids here as well so it was frustrating*

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<sup>xiii</sup> *my sister had a boyfriend back then and he was a manager at pizza hut so he had a vacancy and was able to get me a contract in pizza hut legally, right? with a contract and everything and after four months I was able to come back I had a spouse a spouse visa to be here with my wife and I was able to become legal and I was able to be with my kids and well on the one hand it was tough but on the other hand I felt relieved because you already are with all your legal documents you don't have the tension that someone will denounce you if you go out the next day because I would see the police and I would be so frightened that I would hide so it was like bad but at the end of the day I was able to have my documents legalised*

<sup>xiv</sup> *I was still illegal because my application was denied eventually and of course everybody back then was like people would tell me the law is harsh and if the police come they deport you right away they would scare you they made you feel afraid because I was so unexperienced I didn't speak English I knew very few people I bought it all my application was denied and the first thing I did when I got the letter was to leave my daughter's father and I ran out of there (house) we just took my daughter's pushchair and put all we could in it.*

<sup>xv</sup> *because we were afraid that supposedly immigration would come we did not go back to that house we were practically illegal my daughter and I because my daughter's father who is Ecuadorian was illegal I mean we had no choice.*

<sup>xvi</sup> *a few months after I left that house immigration sent a letter with my residence for my daughter and for me indefinite leave to remain three years I was supposedly illegal in this country.*

<sup>xvii</sup> *I frequently saw how a Latino manager from different nationalities treats his employees and as I had been in their shoes it was painful, you know what I mean? So I tried to help them to be the go-in between with the manager and the employee it's like being a source there, you know what I mean?*

<sup>xviii</sup> *we had an English manager they might have done certain things but we never had complaints we worked we worked extra hours but these people came along Latinos to make*

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*matters worse as a manager all got complicated apart from robbing the company they were robbing us too*

*<sup>xix</sup> No he rather found a gold mine because he knows our weaknesses he knows the company's politics they know it very well that they have to represent the company and they came here and bingo! Because they know how to manipulate the worker "I give you these hours" and a lot of us are very grateful the manager hired you four hours of work but in reality he hires you for twenty without your realising you have to you know what we Latinos are like*

*<sup>xx</sup> We are also very submissive you know what I mean? Because we are grateful "this one is hard-working" and "I am in your debt" so they take unfair advantage of that as well you know what I mean? Until we got tired of that you know what I mean?*

*<sup>xxi</sup> He was Colombian but what I saw was that many people took unfair advantage of I mean what he did as supervisor was to hire people like... under the table he did not pay them on time he started to take unfair advantage of them he was well he robbed them literally and he took unfair advantage of them and I would say why but then he started to be wary of me so I said that's enough I will no longer work here and I moved to a full time work*

*<sup>xxii</sup> there were a lot of Latin American people there and what they did was to give them too much work too much work and when people quit they had to do somebody else's work for the same salary so who benefits from that? It's the manager or the supervisor in charge, they don't pay them their right salary.*

*<sup>xxiii</sup> They are LATINOS they are Latinos themselves Colombians Ecuadorians who knows*

*<sup>xxiv</sup> Well corruption is what there is among Latinos themselves because people come here in need and they do anything to have an income because they have to pay because they do anything to survive in this country to pay for rent food and whatnot transportation here this country isn't easy to live in economically it's costly*



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<sup>xxv</sup> *Look I am going to tell you something I am a hundred percent Latin American, right? I don't like relating to Latinos to be honest, right? Because Latinos outside their country are different unfortunately*

<sup>xxvi</sup> *They are materialist excessively materialist and literally money is their god, you know what I mean? And it's pretty uncomfortable pretty uncomfortable because I am not like that right? I understand that people er their time is important because they need it to make money to achieve their goals I understand all that but therefore I socialise with Latinos very little I mean very little literally because Latinos here function like small clans if you are not Colombian it's very hard that you become part of that clan it's almost impossible, you know what I mean? If you are not Ecuadorian if you are not Bolivian they are very very close-knit, you know what I mean?*

<sup>xxvii</sup> *I happened to work as a cleaning supervisor in a hospital where the manager was Colombian ninety percent of the staff were Colombian the rest was me Venezuelan a Bolivian and an Ecuadorian and the Colombians en bloc bullied us*

<sup>xxviii</sup> *I happened to be a supervisor and there were two Colombians who arrived at eleven in the morning and left at half past one when they supposedly had to arrive at six in the morning and leave at half past three, right? And they were close friends of the manager's I had not complained because we were cool we were ok but when the manager filed a complaint about the Bolivian guy who got to work half an hour late he filed a written complaint about the Bolivian guy that's when I said hold on... "you file a complaint for half an hour alright then I am going to file a complaint about your two friends who work two hours maybe three and they get a full time salary".*

<sup>xxix</sup> *So I told him "the problem is that they are friends of yours from your own city in Colombia they are almost from the same neighbourhood and you have been friends since then", you know what I mean?*

<sup>xxx</sup> *I am hundred percent sure because I have experienced it here that's why I neither like working with Latinos nor living with Latinos no way I live with them/ in the house where I*

*live everybody is English, right? I don't like Latinos/ living with them? not a chance! or working with them not in my lifetime, you got me?*

*xxxi Latinos were my worst bosses mainly two of them, right? A Chilean would send me to the government offices in Spanish, right? And he paid me eight pounds an hour and one day he sent me with the invoices and he charged thirty five pounds an hour and he paid me eight from which he made deductions*

*xxxii she asked me to speak in Spanish to the little girl which I did not want to because I wanted to learn English, right? She paid me I think three pounds a day I can't remember I mean not a day an hour something ridiculous and I lived outside London I mean I had to travel a long distance to go to her house and besides she did not understand that I was doing her a favour by teaching her daughter Spanish I mean and she said that "I am doing you a favour by giving you a job"*

*xxxiii There are many Latinos who are very resentful and complain "ah the English"! "Ah that witch at school" they treat me like this and whatnot but the thing is they don't know the language and many times there are many misunderstandings and they feel humiliated*

*xxxiv I see a group of Latin American people that came here with money-making dreams that have worked their socks off and that have lost their health they have lost money they have never gone back to their country and hate everything, right? And they are very unpleasant*

*xxxv The British do not segregate you the ones who segregate you are those from your own community and there were like a lot of people who wanted to take unfair advantage of them*

*xxxvi It is due to lack of knowledge the people perish from the lack of knowledge it is very clear that the people who come here think that because they can't speak the language they don't have a choice but to be humiliated that they don't have a choice but to be subjected by other people who see in them an opportunity to become rich or make extra money that's simply ignorance*

*xxxvii Most of the Latinos who settled down here are Latinos whose character was formed in their home countries most of them then you know that as Latinos there was an age in which*

*there was like that bondage, right? Slavery to to have been conquered so I believe that many of those Latinos came here and come with the attitude that here is where the bosses are here is where the kings are the ones who conquered us so they bow and scrape, you know what I mean? They come with a submissive attitude well beyond being submissive*

<sup>xxxviii</sup> *For example when the Ecuadorians that spent two or three months in Spain spoke with an accent that was stronger than the Spanish themselves it's a lack of identity it's fear it's a way to react to try to be accepted and that's what happens that old generation that is present has that those paradigms that perhaps they think little of themselves that they feel they are the working class*

<sup>xxxix</sup> *The one who comes from Spain most of them are looking for protection that the government provides he comes in search of benefits that the government gives he who comes from Latin America doesn't because we don't know that there is such a thing in Latin America protection from the government does not exist so since you're not exposed to that information*

<sup>xl</sup> *for me the connection with Latinos is always important to be connected in one way or another I try to go to events/ where I dance salsa there are no many Latinos because the places I go to there are like different lessons they are like different salsa styles so there aren't many*

<sup>xli</sup> *I don't like that type of events anymore it's overcrowded and sometimes people are rude they are not the best people in terms of that they don't have good manners they do not bear themselves in a way that one... like I do not identify with that I identify more with people like me who have studied, you know what I mean?*

<sup>xlii</sup> *People who know what to live here is like I socialise with that type of people because here there are many latinos who have lived their entire lives here and who unfortunately they do not do not make a good impression*

<sup>xliii</sup> *Linda: there were many Spaniards taking those classes and they would speak Spanish so I decided not to do that and they told me "hey, you're Latina" and I would say "NO, I am Turkish" right? I was always Turkish for them*

*Daniel: really?*

*L: and when they saw in the student list that my surname was Ramirez they told me to fuck off (laughter) and then nobody would come up to me but it was my own way of learning English to refuse to speak Spanish, right? I would speak in English with my husband I still had my husband's circle of friends and...I kept cleaning hotel rooms and when I was doing the cleaning I would always wear my headphones to listen to the BBC that was my learning method so because I wanted to learn the language I refused to speak Spanish for years*

*<sup>xliv</sup> L: One thing that they told me when I started teaching was if I could try to imitate the English accent a little bit "it would be a bit more convenient, right?" then I said "yes, yes, I will try" but then I said "why the fuck should I?" right? If they are hiring me then they deal with it because I mean they know there is something good I can offer*

*D: so you did not give in?*

*L: NO, WHY? They even sponsored diction classes for me and "if you want to teach English" they would tell me "you always have to have your cheekbones up and "say hello my name is Linda" and you always have to speak like this (she modifies her body posture and changes her facial expression by puckering) to speak the language with a better intonation" why on earth would I do that!*

*D: but they told you to do it there (in that job)?*

*L: Ah, they suggested it of course they suggested it and they suggested that I should take diction classes that I took I mean but I took phonetics classes because in the end the Irish girl who encouraged me to take the course and whatnot and she knew all that she would say to me "don't you worry as long as your phonetics is as close and accurate it will be enough" and it was enough I never intended I mean I can't do an English accent no I always had problems because at the school in my classes I would always teach phonetics and grammar and in my phonetics classes I never intended that the students repeated after me I mean I had tapes with native speakers I mean they learn what they have to learn...*

*<sup>xlv</sup> Sonia: I am not that British but if I have to be with the British then I become British, right?*

*Daniel: and how is that? What do you mean you become British?*

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*S: well it's very easy I mean because for example err... we Latinos are more expressive and passionate when talking the tone of voice is more like singsong, right? And obviously when you are with the English culture then very quiet everything is very quiet you can't be unfocused like no no all has to be mmmm you have to keep up appearances...*

*<sup>xlvi</sup> S: but if you are composed your tone of voice is normal neither so low nor high and if your look is not like we latinos or Latinas like more like more quiet*

*D: mmm*

*S: so if you speak English and if you have an English accent wow! I mean you have made it*

*D: Accent is..*

*S: it is important it is important because when they hear you speak they feel you are one of them I mean to speak super hard English I mean it's ok because they understand they prefer to understand you than not understand you but to speak hard but they understand when you try to speak with an accent and then they will not understand you so... but if speak with an accent is much better.*

*<sup>xlvi</sup> Anyone who wants to learn (English) must leave the latin circle he either takes English classes seven or eight hours a day at least adults look at the kids when they come they study seven hours a day an in a year seven months they speak english better than anybody with an accent and whatnot because the environment pushes you and they are like a sponge so the odds are in their favour so they learn and on the other hand adults with mental structures and speak little English and study little English what will the outcome be? A little or NOTHING! So for someone to speak good English at least two hours a day I mean AT LEAST! And here as you can see today for example it's Spanish and if I stay here all day I will continue speaking Spanish*

*D: mmm*

*S: so in order not to lose out I have to have MY relationships to keep my English up to date*

<sup>xlviii</sup> *Fieldnotes. At the Elephant and Castle shopping mall, “if people decide to stay in their ghetto because it is here where they can speak Spanish they do not make an effort to improve their life opportunities and England is a land of opportunities”*

<sup>xlix</sup> *S: perhaps I would I have been to Barcelona and to some I would speak in English because I did not feel like speaking in Spanish*

*D: really?*

*S: and you see a different reaction*

*D: what sort of reaction have you had?*

*S: the reaction that when they hear you speak English they say “wow she is a foreigner” but when they hear you speak Spanish “who does this Latina think she is?”*

*D: really?*

*S: OF COURSE! That is why I am telling you that it is different when you speak English properly (sic) English than when you speak hard English when you speak English, you know what I mean?*

*D: mmm*

*S: but that is why you have to experience it they regard you more intelligent when you speak the language*

*D: when you speak English?*

*S: of course you have more opportunities that's the way things are the best literary works are in English all the best things are in English you name it Spanish is very limited in everything...*

<sup>l</sup> *S: you know that when you speak English is like learning how to read or learning how to speak it's vital it's vital in a country where English is spoken*

*D: for your work for your relationships?*

*S: for everything for everything you name it English is vital it's important we re in England we have to speak English and for people that is very difficult to understand because...people understand but they do not want to and that many times explains education failure professional failure personal failure many times that has to do with the language and with their change of habits with sometimes no wanting to leave their comfort zone*

*<sup>ii</sup> When I hear an English-speaking person... "one day I'll be able to understand you" and I hope it is soon because I need to speak English and I need it like I need the air to breathe it's frustrating I feel like an illiterate because of that when you can't speak it you can't even ask questions sometimes I want to ask for directions I don't even know how how to APPROACH people I feel bad you now?*

*<sup>iii</sup> at first it was impossible to aim for a job in tesco, right? As a cashier or in cleaning I mean I never saw that as a chance I never saw that as a chance so it's important it's very important to learn the language the language can cripple you I am convinced of that*

*<sup>liii</sup> It's a bit complicated so when you don't speak the language you have to take the job they offer you you can't be demanding you can't say NO I don't' want to do this I don't want to wash dishes I don't' want to work as a kitchen porter I don't want to work as a cleaner*

*<sup>liv</sup> I know that if I speak English I get a job the type of job I can read in the newspaper and "that's the one I want", you see? But right now I can't because they are going to ask me "can you speak English? And if you don't speak English six euro six pound and six pounds six hours are not enough it's enough for me to pay for my room only I need to earn money to help my family otherwise, what else am I here for?*

*<sup>lv</sup> What I want to do with my son is to teach him from my experience so he can keep making progress and he does not go through the same like me to struggle with English to suffer for money to suffer the same shit I don't want him to suffer that I want him to come with his*

*degree with his English, right? And to study his degree here so he thrives in his career I don't want him to wash dishes again like me, you see? So that's what I want*

<sup>lvi</sup> *Erm well it was complicated it is complicated at least for us because we arrived there weren't many latinos I mean there were some but not many like there are now the latin American community was not so big back then it was hard because first it took me four months to get a job, right? Because I thought "what do we do now? we did not know where to go I mean it was hard it was hard because we did not have money.. at the beginning the language was a very big obstacle because of course you can communicate it binds you so it was very hard.. then I started to study to adapt a bit better...*

<sup>lvii</sup> *Something is going on on my mind I don't know if it's a good idea I don't know if ill do it but my idea maybe in two years' time is to go back (to Colombia), right? I want to get (language) certificate for teaching English maybe that's a way of getting a job there and I don't know maybe getting a better quality of life I don't know doing what but well that is up to me but well I'm thinking about it...*

<sup>lviii</sup> *He asked him why he was so low and I said "because he has become disobedient" my son was translating (sic) "he has become disobedient as to the physiotherapy he does not follow his treatment he is a bit rebellious" and he said to him "you shouldn't do that, mate" and he started to say a few things to him and my son was listening I understand English...and he told me "this is the age when kids commit suicide and don't come to me crying" and he said to me "I told you so" while my son was translating (sic) and the doctors that were there asked him "why are you saying this to her?" So I hated it I hated what he told me and I said "why are you saying these things? Why are you saying these things?" I was speaking in Spanish while my son was translating (sic)...*

<sup>lix</sup> *we had been like a month at the hospital there was a machine that they use to draw sugar from my son and she says she addresses me in English and I say to her "no speaking English" and she says according to my son "you have to learn English" and I rest my hands on my son's computer that was open and headlong she slams the computer close and says "YOU HAVE TO LEARN ENGLISH" that happened to me with a nurse I cried*



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*because it was not fair I reported her I reported her because..that made my son cry as well...*

<sup>lx</sup> *I asked for help to social services but they did not help me they always told me about the law always I found no support as a single mother in this country even though they knew my application was in immigration it wasn't easy they always told me that the girl was English and that I was Mexican*

<sup>lxi</sup> *I had to fight for my daughter and did not let them to take her away from mee they were calling social services because they said I was risking my daughter's wellbeing by not providing her with a house feeding her right? They had to make sure that the girl was not in danger and that I was looking after her properly and that I was being a responsible mother looking after her.. I did not know what to talk about I had no idea what to say what things made it difficult for me back then I was not fluent in the language to defend myself to be able to explain things correctly they didn't NOW I know there are translators (sic) they did not offer me a translator (sic) at all so I tried to defend myself with the English I knew back then so it was very frustrating*

<sup>lxii</sup> *Everything was in English they can provide you with a translator (sic) I was not provided with one and they said they could understand me well but I know that I made a lot of mistakes and I could not express myself the way I would have liked to I had many doubts many questions to ask and I could not do it, right?*

<sup>lxiii</sup> *I went to this NGO and met Marcos who knows about migration (laws) and he started to give me migration advice but I am representing myself before immigration (Home office) he gives me advice he helps me and guides me he helps me write the letters and everything so I have a little bit more knowledge and thanks to the support that I found there where they help Latinos and I felt a burden off my shoulders because I felt absolutely helpless but with this type of organisations that I did not know they existed they help you emotionally they help you they help you a lot mentally and I have been blessed by Marcos' help he is a person who I can count on at all times he is always there to give me advice sometimes I want to do something migration-related because sometimes I feel that I am not doing*

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*enough and he tells me “no wait until they get back to you” he has indeed helped me a lot, right?*

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