REGENERATION, ELITISIZATION OR SOCIAL CLEANSING?

The Challenges for Latin American Migrant Identity in London in the Face of Urban Displacement

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"*I believe if you lose the will to fight for your rights, you lose the essence of you as a person. Regardless of whether I'm here, in Colombia, in whichever place, I will never lose that essence because the day I do that, that would not be me anymore.*
My identity will be gone.
So, with respect, I fight for my right to community".

(V. Álvarez, interview with author)

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INTRODUCTION

This document is the final result of a qualitative investigation on the phenomenon of the elitization of the Latin American cultural centres in the districts of Seven Sisters and Elephant and Castle in London. It concerns the struggle of the community to make their voices heard in the context of a lack of official recognition and the redevelopment of their cultural centres.

It focuses on the relationship between the redevelopment proposed by the local authorities and the defence of Latin American cultural identity in London. The research will analyse the two main sites of Latin American culture and commerce in London - *Pueblito Paisa*, or Latin Village, and the Elephant and Castle shopping centre. It studies the perceptions of local traders and residents, academics and activists, regarding the elitization of these sites, and how the struggle to make their voices heard influences their sense of identity as a minority group in the UK today.

In the first chapter, the theoretical framework is laid out, introducing the concepts that helped guide the investigation. The central concepts on which the study focused were elitisization, Latin American identity in London, community organisation, socio-urban marginalisation, right to the city, *autogestion* or self-management and urban displacement.

The second chapter describes the situation in London over the last half-century, with respect to Latin American migration into London, elitizisation of the boroughs which they inhabit, and more broadly the historical beginnings of elitizisation in the city. The challenges faced by the Latin American community, and their organisation to combat issues related to their lack of visibility and elitizisation projects.

The third and final chapter presents the results of the research conducted as part of the fieldwork. The first part introduces the methodology used and characterises the sample used. The third chapter analyses the interviews conducted with representatives of the Latin American community in London on the themes of migration, identity and elitizisation.

The objectives which guided the study are: (a) understand the significance of cultural centres in the affirmation of the right to the city by the Latin American community in the city of London; (b) identify the challenges that have confronted Latin American immigrants in their attempts to establish themselves in London; (c) assess the power of community organisations and pressure groups to protect their cultural centres from urban displacement; (d) analyse the impact of the elitizisation process on Latin American cultural centres in London.

The questions corresponding to the research objectives are the following:

a. What is the significance for the Latin American community of cultural centres in their affirmation of the right to the city in London?
b. What are the challenges that Latin American immigrants have faced in their attempts to establish themselves in London?
c. To what extent are the efforts of community organisations and pressure groups effective in protecting their cultural centres from urban displacement?
d. How has the threat of the destruction of their cultural life impacted on Latin American identity in London?

The corresponding hypotheses to the aforementioned elements are the following:

a. Cultural centres represent a destination for the Latin American community, an authentic expression of their identity that has been built up through years of immigration, but are less important for the new generations who feel British as well as Latin American.
b. The challenges for Latin American immigrants are related to economic uncertainty, xenophobia and the threat of urban displacement, challenges that have made the community more determined to stay in London.
c. The fight to protect the cultural centres is effective in the sense that it articulates and consolidates a common Latin American identity, but the community has a limited capacity to prevent the elitization of these places.
d. Elitisization is seen as an existential threat to Latin American culture in London, but at the same time the immediate economic benefits may be tempting for the community.

This descriptive investigation involved qualitative research and the fieldwork took place in London, United Kingdom between July and September 2020. Fieldwork development was defined to a certain extent by the conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic, which removed the possibility of conducting in-person interviews or participant observations. As a result, the semi-structured interviews took place over Zoom and Skype. The methodology employed corresponded to the following:

1. Bibliographical analysis of secondary sources on elitization, urban regeneration and migration in the context of the Latin American community in London;
2. Semi-structured interviews with representatives of Latin American organisations with questions on identity and challenges for migrants, recorded by Skype or Zoom due to health conditions;
3. Semi-structured interviews with 4 academics on the phenomena of elitization, urban regeneration and urban displacement and their relation to

Latin American identity in London, recorded by Skype or Zoom due to health conditions;

4. Semi-structured interviews with local shopkeepers and users of cultural centres, recorded by Skype or Zoom due to health conditions.

The author would like to take the opportunity to express his gratitude to the thesis supervisor, Professor Pablo Isla Monsalve, for his support and advice, as well as to the key informants and interviewees, particularly those working for Latin Elephant and Save Latin Village, who found time to speak to the author while tirelessly struggling for the dignity of their communities. Thanks also to Jack Walters for providing access to Queen Mary University Library, as well as the author's family for their unending support.

Finally, the motivation for this study came about as a result of curiosity regarding the lack of visibility for the Latin American community in London and their presence at the Elephant and Castle shopping centre, a unique space that brings together different communities, representing the best of London's ability to accommodate diverse cultures.

CHAPTER 1
Elitizisation and Right to the City: A Theoretical Approach

1.1 Transnational Social Places

The attachment between migrant identity and the right to the city, activated by the threat of socio-urban marginalisation and urban displacement, which are in turn created by the phenomenon of elitisization, must be understood in the context of the rise of transnational social places cultivated through the immigration of various communities. McIlwaine (2012) has argued that social spaces become fields of negotiation for economic, social and cultural power.

Pierre Bourdieu (1991) conceptualized social fields as the spaces where social struggles over power take places as capitals are valued, transformed and converted. It is first important to touch on Bourdieu's (1990: 53) proposition of *habitus* as the "durable, transposable, structured (and structuring) dispositions of individual that function as a set of social practices within a given field."

Physical spaces are subject to similar processes, as Massey (1994, as cited in Román-Velázquez, 2014: 26) argues, suggesting that their fluctuating identities are "for ever open to contestation", as well as being simultaneously produced by other groups. In this vein, Román-Velázquez (2014: 25) asserts that the identities of places should be understood as "that being claimed by different groups at particular moments and locations", in line with the power structures within which they are negotiated.

In this context, physical spaces where migrants establish businesses in their adopted country become domains of transnational negotiation for both capital and identity. These places provide a focal point in which migrants from various communities can mobilize civic capital by gathering knowledge and accumulating capabilities to attain legal immigration status or to navigate immigration regimes which present a challenge to achieving settled status due to contradictory guidelines or linguistic barriers (McIlwaine, 2012: 295).

Bourdieu (1991) identified linguistic capital as being particularly important in defining an individual's ability to convert and mobilize institutional-cultural capital into economic capital, as attributes such as accent greatly influence their position in the social hierarchy in the country receiving them. In this context, transnational social places become crucial, as entrepreneurs can establish small, informal businesses in a place where resources and advice is available, facilitating the transition to a formal transnational economic network (Román-Velázquez, 2014).

Following Bourdieu (1986), these transnational places provide the framework for the valuation and accumulation of various forms of capital, aiding integration and well-being. As well as capital, these places are a key field of negotiation for migrant identity, which can revolve around several factors, including ethnicity, language and migrant status itself.

Granada (2014) has postulated that ethnic identity, as a mechanism for organising a group, is influenced by several factors, including the socially constructed belief in a common heritage, shared community practices and people's living conditions. However, the transnational nature of these places is detrimental to a cohesive belief in a common heritage, as Patiño Santos and Márquez Reiter's (2018) research has demonstrated. The phenomenon of *banal interculturalism* arises from a need for certain members of a diaspora to position themselves in opposition to the 'others' within the group, and to justify views towards other migrants, usually negative. This often comes about as a result of cultural differences between the sub-groups of the diaspora, but it may be motivated by competition for the aforementioned forms of capital that are such valuable assets in establishing oneself in the country receiving the migrants.

McIlwaine (2012), drawing on Bourdieu's (1991) theory of transnational capital bargaining, postulates that the socio-spatial marginalisation suffered by migrants can be attributed to a lack of linguistic capital, which jeopardizes their opportunities to convert and mobilize other types of civic institutional capital. This counts them among the groups most vulnerable to the processes of contingent marginality, caused by competitive inequality which marks migrant communities among those least prepared to negotiate the marketplace due to their social, cultural, locational and ecological limitations and the spontaneous disadvantages that arise as a result (Mehretu et al., 2000).

These structurally embedded positions of marginality take place on the micro scale of urban neighbourhoods, hence the term 'socio-urban marginalisation'. Kühn (2015: 371) argues that this is principally defined by poverty, which manifests itself in groups "disadvantaged by a low level of education, low income or a high level of unemployment". As previously stated, the key factor in migrant communities is a lack of linguistic capital, which impairs individuals' ability to market their qualifications, exercise their entrepreneurial abilities outside their own communities, and to access information about employment opportunities.

In this context, transnational social spaces play a critical role in overcoming migrants' position in contingent micromargins, which emerge due to various dimensions including macro-social and economic factors (Wacquant, 1999). Despite the lack of agreement over a common heritage, they are a key field of negotiation for migrant identity, and a crucial point of valuation, accumulation and conversion of various forms of capital, most importantly linguistic, allowing migrants to set down roots, claim identity and ownership over a place, and to survive. It is the unique nature of these places that makes them prime

targets for elitisization and the vision of destination culture that uses the so-called authenticity of these places to drive regeneration projects.

1.2 Destination Culture and Authenticity as a Commodity

In order to understand the phenomenon of elitisization, it is important to underline the vision proposed by developers as an alternative to the fluctuating, transnational spaces created by migrants. This vision incorporates Zukin's (2010) emphasis on authenticity, and her argument that it has been reinvented and folded into destination culture, which is marketed as the general model by which property developers seek to encourage high value of urban land in previously deprived areas.

Destination culture ignores the sense of migrant attachment and ownership towards transnational social places, presenting them as a point en route to somewhere else, defining it as what Román-Velázquez terms a 'no place' (2014). A no place relates to Augé's (1995) concept of 'non-place', which refers to transient anthropological spaces, in which human beings are anonymous, that are too lacking in meaning to be considered 'places'. This rejection of these spaces as vibrant fields of negotiation for identity and capital, and their labelling as non-places, contributes to a sense of socio-urban marginalisation as developers ignore the fact that, for existing residents, these spaces are already a destination, holding great significance for their sense of place and identity.

Authenticity has been conceptualised by Zukin as relating to the *social* origins of urban spaces. Origins refers not to which group settled in a neighbourhood earliest, but rather to a moral right to the city that allows people to put down roots, cultivated by residence, use and habit over time. Thus, migrant identity, cultivated through shared practices and spaces in a transnational frame, is connected to the origins of the urban locations which they inhabit, activating a right to the city, which in its simplest terms denotes the urban user's right to change themselves by changing the urban space around them.

However, authenticity as a concept underwent a change in terms of the notions to which it refers, having "migrated from a quality of people to a quality of things, and most recently to a quality of experiences" (Zukin, 2010: 3). Where migrants tend, by necessity, to conform to a political view of social life, this reinvention of authenticity appeals to a younger generation with an aesthetic view of social life.

Aesthetics are used to preserve the appearance and experience of authenticity rather than to preserve the social classes and ethnic groups that have made neighbourhoods peculiar or idiosyncratic, but also to depoliticise class relations for middle-class youth who see social life in aesthetic rather than political terms (Zukin, 2010; Harvey, 1989). Here, it is crucial to underline the concept of elitisization, used in lieu of the more commonly used English expression gentrification. Gentrification refers to the high bourgeoisie, or gentry,

who actually play a smaller role in driving the pursuit of the look and feel of authenticity that fuels developers' plans than the medium-high, particularly younger, segments whose yearning for authenticity, a result of modern anxieties and desires surrounding the feeling of rootedness, drives the process (Zukin, 2010: 220).

The Spanish term *elitización* captures Bourdieu's notion of the elite, a broader group who possess a complex combination of different forms of capital: economic (buying power and inheritance), cultural (skills, expertise, taste) and social (interpersonal relations, group of belonging and the possibility of being accepted). There is a huge disparity between the capital possessed by this group and that held by migrants, as well as a dramatic socio-political gulf. Thus, by maintaining the aesthetic feeling of authenticity, property developers can use it as a fetish to depoliticise class relations and dispense with elite guilt, resulting in a dissolution into tastes and lifestyles.

The theoretical approach to the recent commodification of authenticity draws upon earlier considerations of the city and urban space from a political-economic perspective, mainly as a result of the capitalist production process. Harvey (2008) argues that cities owe their formation to geographical and social concentrations of surplus product, as part of an intimate connection between capitalism and urbanisation, where there is a perpetual need to find profitable terrains for capital-surplus production and absorption.

Meanwhile, Castells' (1977/72: 126-145) urban question concerns an ideological consideration of the process whereby labour power is collectively reproduced. For Castells (1977/72), the 'urban ideology' works as a political justification for the capitalist modes of development, ensuring that the political-economic structure, which is based on social contradictions, would be seen as a natural and inevitable accompaniment to development of modernity.

According to Castells (1977/72: 85), "the social efficacy of this ideology derives from the fact that it describes the everyday problems experienced by people, while offering an interpretation of them in terms of natural evolution from which the division into antagonistic classes is absent." In the same way, the urban ideology proves useful in fetishizing authenticity, offering an interpretation of experience where the complex and troubling class structure that defines the socio-urban marginalisation lived by migrants every day conveniently dissolves into aesthetics.

Drawing on Marx's theory of commodity fetishism, both Harvey and Castells work implies that the end result of this process is the commodification of the city, wherein it is marketed and sold as a particular types of consumer product. Zukin (1995: 28) describes this process as "pacification by cappuccino", whereby the quality and experience of urban life becomes a commodity. The result is the restoration of class power to rich elites, elitisization, and political withdrawal from collective forms of action, both of which acts

as a tremendous barrier to migrant identity, while capitalising on and driving the processes of socio-urban marginalisation.

In this context, Harvey (2008) argues that any notion of the city as a collective body politic ripe for the emergence of progressive social movements representing the interests of the wider community, including the urban poor comprising migrants and other groups, is deeply implausible. However, the violence inherent to the processes of elitisization, entailing urban restructuring via 'creative destruction' enabled by the vision of property developers, compels the traditional users of urban space to express a territoriality by claiming a 'right to the city', strengthening community organisation (Harvey, 2008: 33).

1.3 Right to the City and *Autogestion*

In this study, the territoriality that expresses a deep attachment to urban space is understood through the theory of the right to the city, which is presented as a struggle to 'disengage' the space separated from the community of its users by the processes of *elitisization* (Lefebvre, 1996). The strengthening of community organisations can thus understood as a manifestation of the interpretation of right to the city as the result of political struggle, with the objective of *autogestion* rather than handing over decisions to a state apparatus that does not represent their interests (Purcell, 2013; Lefebvre, 2003).

Lefebvre originally conceived of the right to the city as the outcome of political struggle, an essential element of wider political struggle for revolution. His holistic understanding of urban social life, which involved seeing the city as a complex whole "a teeming multitude of different desires and drives that are not reducible to economic imperatives" (1970; 1972, as cited in Purcell, 2013: 145) differed from Harvey (1973) and Castells' (1977/1972) economistic view of the city.

In Lefebvre's radical vision for a city, users exercise their right to urban space by managing resources for themselves, beyond the control of both the State and capitalism. However, the right to the city, as adapted and conceived within the liberal democratic framework, promotes greater democratic management of urbanisation (Harvey, 2008; Purcell, 2013). However, rather than genuinely achieving greater democratic control over the production and utilization of the surplus, it instead offers a 'veneer of legitimacy for neoliberal governance, and potentially depoliticizes previously political struggles by incorporating dissenting faction' (Lombard, 2013: 137).

By democratizing the right to the city and incorporating it within the framework of liberal democratic rights, the state apparatus creates a 'performative citizenship' through which urban actors attain legitimacy (Lepofsky & Fraser, 2003).

Kreckel (2004) makes the point that peripheralization and marginalisation are structurally embedded as a result of competitive and social inequality. As long as that is the case, migrant communities will continue to be excluded from decision-making centres and from actor networks that also have decision-making power (Kuehn & Bernt, 2013). This is connected to Lefebvre's idea of expropriation, which Zukin (2010: 246) raises in relation to authenticity being used as a lever through which State and capital can "claim space and take it away from others without direction confrontation."

In the case of right to the city, urban citizenship and democratic participation in urban decision-making is granted as a token to users. However, these gestures have no real impact on the urban process.

Within neoliberal framework, Harvey (2008) sustains, the disbursement of surplus through state apparatus will always favour corporate capital and elitisization, reflecting "existing uneven power relations' and 'strengthening unequal patterns of distribution" (Raco, 2000, cited in Lombard, 2013: 137).

The State's inability to effectively and meaningfully involve inhabitants in decision-making process results in the processes of urban displacement and "accumulation by dispossession", backed by property developers, corporate capital and local state apparatus (Harvey, 2008: 34). As a result, socio-urban marginalisation and urban displacement activates Lefebvre's version of right to the city. In Lefebvre's conception, this right takes precedence over property rights, defended by the local and national state apparatus, and is the end result of collective claims made by citizens, who are mobilized by the threat of socio-urban marginalisation and urban displacement posed by elitisization.

Alongside the right to the city, *autogestion* or self-management is crucial among the rights laid out in Lefebvre's new contract of citizenship. Originally conceived in the context of workers in a factory managing production themselves, Lefebvre and others generalized the idea to argue for the invocation of *autogestion* in all areas of life. Lefebvre says that "each time a social group refuses to accept passively its conditions of existence, of life, or of survival, each time such a group forces itself not only to understand but to master its own conditions of existence, autogestion is occurring" (2009: 135).

Here, we can draw a connection with traditions of self-help, discussed in the work of Turner (1968; 1972) and others, which arises in the context of government failure to provide, or, indeed, protect, affordable housing and services for low-income urban residents. Many of these are members of migrant communities, who are increasingly marginalised by the State's support towards corporate capital, and the disbursement of surplus implemented through property developers' vision of elitisization.

By refusing to accept the vision and conditions of elitisization proposed by property developers and the local state apparatus, migrant identity asserts their right to the city, which in turn makes a claim for *autogestion*, and vice versa (Purcell, 2014). This is the process from which community organisations draw strength and legitimacy among migrant communities, representing their interests where the government has failed to protect their cultural centres, using their perceived authenticity as a fetish to depoliticize class relations between the elite and migrant groups, brushing over the vast disparity in forms of capital between them.

1.4 The Impact of elitisization: Socio-Urban Marginalisation

Socio-spatial marginalisation in this context is considered on the micro scale of urban neighbourhoods, and can thus be referred to more specifically as socio-urban marginalisation. Marginality, as defined by Mehretu, Pigozzi and Sommers (2000), is a complex condition of disadvantage experienced by individuals and communities vulnerable to unequal or inequitable environmental, ethnic, cultural, social, political and economic factors.

From a sociological perspective, marginalised individuals are those on the fringes of a society. Kühn (2015) uses the term 'peripheralization', which describes production of peripheries through social relations and their spatial implications. However, this process is better expressed through the terms 'marginality' or 'marginalisation', which avoids the geographical implications related to the peripheries described in geography from the start of the twentieth century. The urban areas which elitisization impacts bears little relation to their position within cities, whether on the peripheries or in the inner city.

Rather, it relates to the potential of the area for surplus absorption through urban transformation (Harvey, 2008). The dual impact of elitisization and socio-urban marginalisation is encapsulated in the term 'urban reconquest', used by Castells (1974) to describe the processes of rehabilitation and renovation, as a result of the change in the social occupation of the space. These interventions result in the geographical peripheralization of the working classes to the periphery of the city, but also their socio-urban marginalisation, whereby elitisization occurs with their replacement by the upper strata of society, backed by their combination of economic, cultural and social capital.

Socio-urban marginalisation bears the greatest consequences in terms of relegating the urban poor, including migrants, to the sociological peripheries of decision-making processes and control over agenda-setting (Kühn, 2015). In advanced economies, where elitisization often takes place, it can be considered what Mehretu, Pigozzi and Sommers (2000) term contingent marginality, the result of competitive inequality and free market forces that puts individuals and communities at a disadvantage.

Migrant communities, with their lack of linguistic capital among other forms, are rendered vulnerable and unable to convert the limited capital they do possess. They face huge difficulties in navigating the marketplace due to unattractive locations, cultural restrictions, inadequate labour skills and lack of useful information about opportunities (Castells, 1989).

Migrants are particularly susceptible to cultural marginality, which is one of three different applications of marginality in sociology (Billson, 2005). Race, ethnicity, religion, and linguistic differences play a defining role in this type of marginality, wherein one belongs either to the 'in-group' or the 'out-group' (Billson, 2005). Belonging to the latter leads to a sense of rejection and isolation, as well as insecurities surrounding status and role (Billson, 2005).

In the urban context of socio-spatial marginalisation, those on the fringes of society due to cultural differences have their difficulties compounded by the effects of elitisization, which capitalises on the structural marginality experienced by disadvantaged segments such as migrants. The isolation which results from cultural marginality is exacerbated as migrant communities are excluded from decision-making processes regarding their neighbourhoods, allowing property developers to impose their vision, supported by both capital and local and national authorities.

The property developers' plans incorporate authenticity as part of their claim to ownership over the neighbourhood, redeveloping the area to confirm to an 'interesting' aesthetic, which bears no resemblance to the previously 'low-key, low-income, and low-status' residential identity of the margin (Zukin, 2010: 243). Destination culture, fuelled by contingent marginality wherein metropolitan margins reflect competitive inequality, expropriates the transnational spaces cultivated over years of efforts on the part of migrant communities.

Socio-urban marginalisation has negative consequences for the psychological wellbeing of migrant communities, ranging from "...an inner strain and malaise, a feeling of isolation or of not quite belonging" to "discouragement and perhaps despair" (Stonequist, 1937: 201-202). It can thus be argued that, in addition to encouraging political withdrawal from collective forms of action, elitisization also leads to a psychological withdrawal from society at large, consolidating their peripheral, structurally embedded positions on the fringe of society (Kreckel, 2004).

The urban displacement imposed upon migrant groups requires the spontaneous emergence of urban social movements as a barrier to the 'translucent hegemony' of the State and capital, which prevents them from exercising their political rights, as well as their cultural and economic freedoms (Mehretu, Pigozzi & Sommers).

Migrant groups', already mobilized due to their vulnerable status upon migrating, are further activated in their defence of right to the city by the threat of being displaced due to elitisization. Zukin (2010) argues that the failure to democratize right to the city on the part of the State, top-down political recognition, must be countered by the construction of political will from the bottom up, and the emergence of a rhetoric that connects three elements: the social goal of rootedness, the economic goal of stable rents, and the cultural power of authenticity.

While Harvey (2008) argues that democratization of right to the city is the only way to achieve some element of control for those who have been dispossessed, structural marginality ensures that they will continue to be excluded from these decision-making processes even if performative urban citizenship is granted. In this context, Purcell (2013) highlights the emergence of networks of activist groups, who advocate for the passing of national urban development legislation that simultaneously recognises and finds a place of compromise between property rights and social use value.

CHAPTER 2
Historical context of Latin American migration to London from the 1970s: A struggle for recognition

2.1 The Challenges Faced by Latin American Immigrants (1970-1990)

This section will set out to provide some historical context to waves of migration, particularly that of Latin American communities, to London, looking at the areas in which they settled, the demographic makeup of the migrants, their cultural leanings, and how their arrival impacted the urban areas where they set down roots. This will form the backdrop to a later investigation of how migration relates to elitisization and its historical processes, influenced by governmental rhetoric and the politics of neoliberalism. The chapter will then investigate the impact of the politics of elitisization on migrant populations affected by pauperisation, and community-based action in the face of these processes of elitisization.

The first prominent wave of extra-European migration to the UK took place in the 1950s and 1960s, coming from developing countries within the Commonwealth, whose populations maintained "a direct colonial link with Britain" (Però, 2014: 1161).

In the 1970s, the UK experienced its first significant influx of Latin Americans. The first arrivals were political refugees from Chile and Uruguay, escaping the military dictatorships of Pinochet (1973-90) and the military junta (1973-85) respectively (Román-Velázquez, 2014; Ramírez, 2014). Despite the fact that the UK government refused to accept any refugees from Chile in 1973, changes in migration allowed asylum-seekers from Chile and Uruguay, as well as Argentinians, to trickle in (Román-Velázquez, 2014; Ramírez, 2014). Due to a lack of social spaces for nationals of their own countries, Uruguayans and Argentinians assimilated within "predominantly Chilean social scenes" (Ramírez, 2014: 675). Shortly afterwards, political and civil unrest in Colombia and Peru resulted in the further arrival of refugees from Latin America (Román-Velázquez, 2014).

In the same decade, a separate stream of migration emerged due to a work permit scheme that ran until 1979, through which Colombians, as well as some Ecuadorians and Bolivians, arrived in the UK to work in the hospitality sector and as cleaners in public buildings (Bermudez, 2010; McIlwaine: 2011b). Between 4,000 and 10,000 Colombians are thought to have migrated during the decade (Bermúdez, 2010).

The 1970s marked a clear shift towards the arrival of "mostly non-citizens who entered the country with different, more fluid and precarious statuses" (Però, 2014: 1161). This continued into the 1980s, during which the flow was dominated by "students, people seeking to be reunited with their families and refugees, although fewer of them than in the previous decade" (Blay Arráez et al., 2017: 51).

The 1990s saw a spike of Latin American migration into the UK, as more asylum seekers fled the violence in Colombia, alongside Ecuadorians and Bolivians "seeking an alternative to economic and political turmoil" (Román-Velázquez, 2014: 27). This influx was made possible by the authorities granted these groups permanent residence permits recognising their vulnerable status and need for protection; regularisation processes, including a 2003 family amnesty, also facilitated their arrivals (Blay Arráez et al., 2017).

After the dawn of the new millennium, increasing numbers of Brazilians arrived, rapidly becoming the largest national group within the Latin American diaspora in the UK (Blay Arráez et al., 2017). Most recently, in the wake of the financial crisis of 2007-2008, freedom of movement within the European Union enabled the secondary migration of Latin Americans with EU passports from Italy, Portugal and Spain, but principally the latter (McIlwaine et al., 2011).

The migration of Latin Americans to the UK, the vast majority of which settle in London, can be seen as part of an emergent phenomenon resulting from the transformative processes of "intensified globalization, upheaval, and conflicts", working both in tandem and as a consequence of global neoliberal restructuring (Berg, 2019: 1). Increasingly diverse groups of migrants arrived in London, which was already a metropolitan city with a strongly multi-ethnic society (Però, 2014).

Vertovec (2007: 1025) labelled this phenomenon "super-diversity", a "transformative diversification of diversity". The term extends to describe "a range of further interacting variables of difference including socio-economic status, labour market integration, language, religion, migration trajectory and immigration status" among others (Berg, 2019: 1).

The Latin American community is London is a heterogeneous group with a large degree of internal difference, including a wide range of variables typical of super-diversity, such as language, education and class, as well as generational differences between the political refugees of the 1970s and more recent labour immigrants (Berg, 2019; Berg and Eckstein 2015[2009]). Furthermore, a disparity appears related to 'migration status and trajectories' between those who have arrived directly from Latin America and more recent migrants, naturalised EU citizens migrating from Southern Europe, particularly Spain, after the 2008 financial crash (Berg, 2019; McIlwaine et al., 2011; McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016). The size of the Latin American population, estimated in 2013, stands at 250,000, of which 145,000 were based in London (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016). Despite

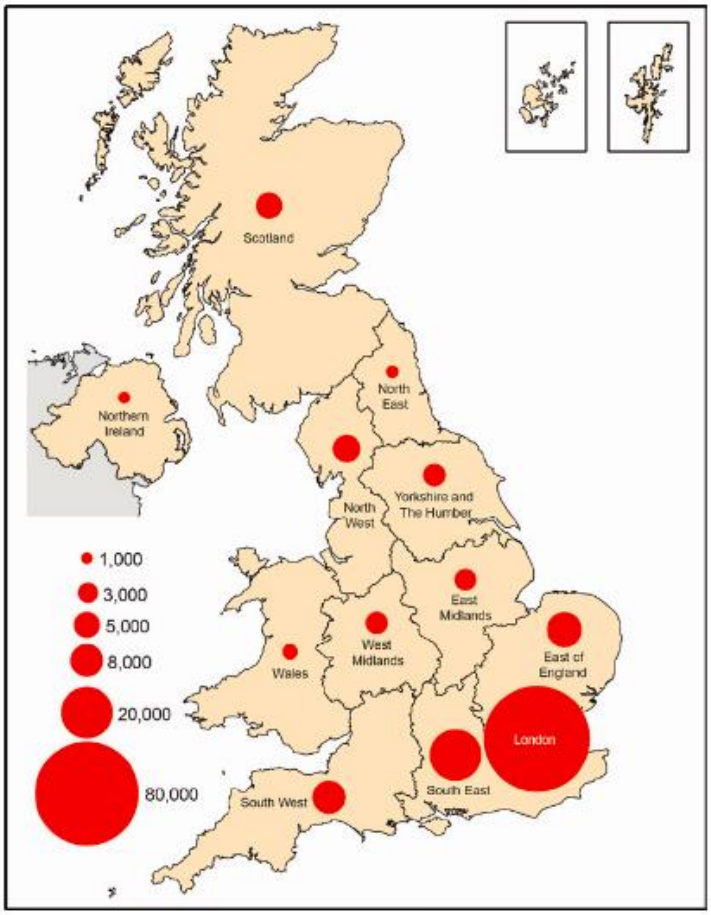
their considerable numbers, making them the second fastest growing non-EU migrant population in London (after Chinese), their status as a new migrant community in the UK context means that they have struggled for both public and official recognition (McIlwaine et al., 2011; McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016).

Table 1: Estimates of Latin Americans in London and the UK

Region	Population Census 2011	2nd Generation 1990-2013	LA NINO registrations 2012-13	LA with EU passports 2012-13	Irregulars 2012-2013	LA in 2013
UK	144,470	46,002	13,383	39,257	2,266	245,378
London	83,198	28,349	7,598	22,289	1,287	142,721

Source: McIlwaine and Bunge (2016: 14).

Figure 1: Map of Latin Americans residence in the UK

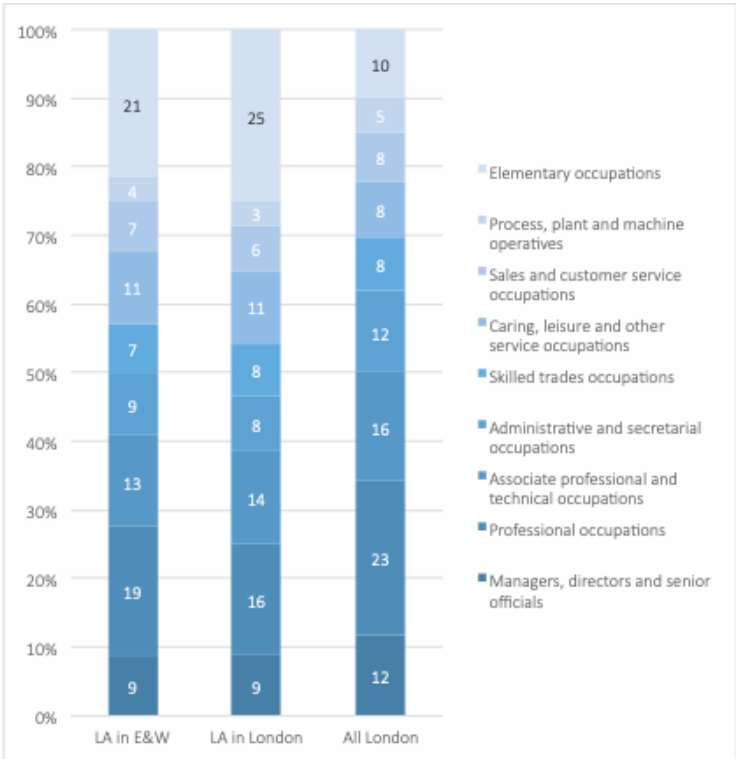


Source: McIlwaine and Bunge (2016: 16).

Latin Americans have faced many challenges throughout their presence in the UK, including language difficulties, social exclusion and disadvantages in the job market, getting poorly paid jobs in unregulated areas of work, which makes them a target for

discriminatory practices and exploitation (Granada, 2014). Despite the fact that around half of Latin Americans in London are educated to university level, the high proportion of language issues (17% struggle with speaking English) forces many into lower skilled jobs (46%), including elementary, service, caring and processing jobs (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016). In addition to this, access to services present a challenges to the Latin American community, not only due to language difficulties, but especially in the context of the "hostile environment" policy presenting "formal and deliberate" barriers to service provision for immigrants (Berg, 2019: 7).

Figure 2: Occupational status of Latin Americans in London and England & Wales

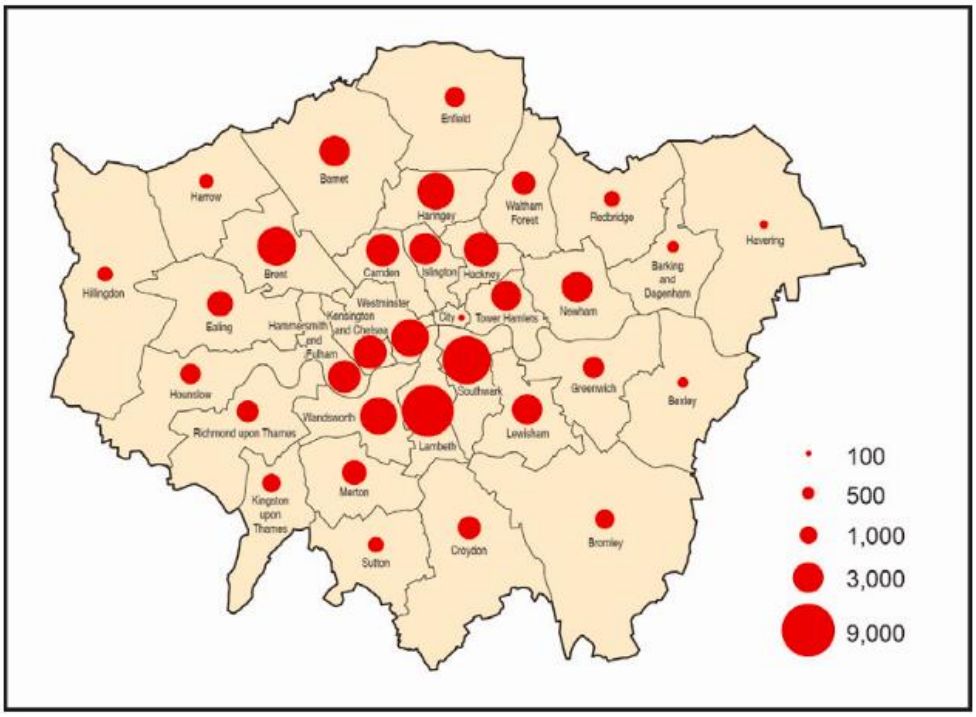


Source: McIlwaine and Bunge (2016: 16), based on Census 2011 (10% sample): LA in England & Wales (n=12,067); LA in London (n=7,217).

Further barriers include the access to affordable and good quality housing, with around three-quarters of Latin Americans living in rental accommodation and 14% experiencing overcrowded conditions, schooling and education, and health service (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016; Berg, 2019). Many of the challenges faced by migrants are related to the neighbourhoods in which they settle. Super-diversity is the process produced by the interaction between 'new' diversity and 'old' ethnic diversity, elitisization, and resident churn "to create multi-layered, dynamic, and complex patterns of difference in urban spaces" (Berg, 2019: 1).

Latin American communities, who live across all of London, are particularly identified with two areas in the city: Seven Sisters in the borough of Haringey, North London, and Elephant and Castle in the borough of Southwark, South London (Berg, 2019). These urban spaces reproduce the patterns of difference typical of super-diversity, such as business clusters serving Latin Americans as well as members of other minority ethnic communities (ibid.). Importantly, both "are currently undergoing large-scale public- and private-led regeneration projects that are likely to dramatically increase rents and lead to a loss of ethnic businesses" (Román-Velázquez, 2014).

Figure 3: Map of Latin Americans' residence in London



Source: McIlwaine and Bunge (2016: 18), based on Census 2011 (Office for National Statistics, 2013).

Latin American activity in South London began in the 1970s, with a place-making process resulting in the creation of a space called *la cancha* where Chilean political refugees mixed with other Latin Americans, as well as 'native' Londoners, so named for an improvised football pitch in a disused patch of ground one might find in a working class district of Santiago (Ramírez, 2014). The Latin American presence in Clapham Common was added to in the 1990s by the appearance of shops nearby, as well as in the areas of Brixton and Vauxhall (Román-Velázquez, 2014). The most significant cluster in South London, however, formed in Elephant and Castle (E&C), with most of the retail activity taking place at the Elephant and Castle shopping centre, where ten Latin-American owned shops had been set up during the 1990s (Román-Velázquez, 2014).

By the end of the decade, Latin American began to thrive both economically and culturally, not only in the borough of Southwark, home of the E&C shopping centre, but also in parts of North and East London, including the area of Seven Sisters (Román-Velázquez, 2014). In Southwark, the *Carnaval del Pueblo* festival, organised by the various Latin American groups in London, has celebrated the community's culture and heritage in the form of Europe's largest Latin American festival since 1999, while the informal cultural and commercial centre of Latin Village or *Pueblito Paisa*, named after a replica historic village in Medellín, became integral to a predominantly Colombian segment of London's Latin American population (Berg, 2019; Román-Velázquez, 2014). These locations and cultural outlets are integral to Latin American cultural life in London with 85% visiting the E&C shopping centre and Pueblito Paisa, and almost two-thirds attending summer carnivals including *Carnaval del Pueblo* (63%) (McIlwaine and Bunge, 2016).

2.2 Elitisization and Migration in London

Elitisization in London predates the regeneration projects taking place in Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters. Ruth Glass first identified elitisization taking place in London in the 1960s and early 1970s, as well as the social and housing market changes associated with it. Describing the changes, she writes that:

> "one by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower... Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed" (Glass, 1964: xviii).

This pattern continued over the next 30 years, and continues at an ever greater pace today, with Butler noting that London is in the process of being reconstructed by a new, urban centred middle class (Butler, 1999).

Using the percentage and numbers of professional managerial males in a given area as a measure of elitisization, Hamnett and Williams (1980) concluded Islington, Greenwich and Southwark had experienced 'primary' or early elitisization in the first half of the 1970s. These boroughs were later followed by Wandsworth, Camden and Hammersmith, examples of secondary elitisization partially dependent on the process having taken place elsewhere first.

Looking at these gentrifying boroughs, Lyons (1996) found that, due to their dependence on a range of locally available goods, services, and contact, lower status households, including migrants, are tied to migration within the borough, despite the dramatic changes to their original working class character. In the case of ethnic minority communities, who had established transnational social places essential to their access to neighbouring, family ties, local acquaintances for work, familiarity with social services,

and access to housing. Lyons' findings have theoretical implications for urban displacement in London, as the difficulties facing migrants in moving out of elitisizing boroughs, and their resulting permanence, creates impoverished working class areas in close proximity to elitisizing neighbourhoods, justifying further 'improvements'.

Elitisization in London, and its resultant displacement, continued into the 1980s as "an active and extensive process" (Atkinson, 2000a: 163). Like Hamnett and Williams, Atkinson used the proportion of professionals or managers in a given borough as a proxy measure for elitisization. Atkinson presents explicit evidence of the impact of elitisization on ethnic minorities, finding that increasingly professionalised areas also experienced a decrease in the size of those groups, as well as the working class, unskilled, households privately renting, and the elderly (Atkinson, 2000a).

Anecdotal evidence on the ground from case workers in tenant's rights projects across three recently gentrified London boroughs supports this. In recently gentrified areas, substantial displacement of ethnic minority groups had occurred. This is due not only to recent elitisization of these areas, but also "the historical location of such groups in previously 'filtered' areas" (Atkinson, 2000b: 317). As the evidence suggests, the social consequences of elitisization in London have unfolded in a predictable fashion:

> "In a competitive housing market where access is ruled by price, the expansion of the middle classes in inner London has been associated with the rolling-back of the less skilled, the unemployed, the poor and ethnic minorities who have been steadily concentrated into the remaining inner London local authority estates and the growing housing association sector" (Hamnett, 2003: 2417).

Between 1981 and 1991, two of the boroughs which experienced the greatest percentage change in the proportion of residents who were professionals and managers were Southwark (46%) and Lambeth (43%) (Hamnett, 2003). This reveals a continuing trend which has contributed to the targeting of these areas for urban regeneration.

Two-thirds of Latin Americans live in Inner London areas susceptible to interest from property developers (McIlwaine & Bunge, 2016). 1 in 5 Latin Americans in London live in the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark alone (McIlwaine & Bunge, 2016). Southwark, with 9% of the total Latin American population in the city, has historically been one of the 25 most deprived areas in England, but has gone from ranking 14th place in 2000 to 25th in 2010 (McIlwaine & Bunge, 2016; Román-Velázquez, 2014a).

Table 2: National and local rankings on Local Authority summary measures, London Boroughs

DISTRICT NAME	1998 Degree Rank of 354	1998 Intensity (Rank) of 354	1998 Extent (Rank) of 354	2000 Rank of Employment Scale of 354	London Rank of 33	2000 Rank of Income Scale of 354	London Rank of 33	2000 Rank of Average of Ward Scores of 354	London Rank of 33
Lambeth	12	9	5	17	1	21	4	42	7
Hackney	4	8	1	18	2	17	3	4	2
Newham	2	10	2	20	3	7	1	5	3
Southwark	8	14	6	22	4	23	5	14	5
Haringey	13	12	7	25	5	26	6	20	6
Lewisham	14	19	17	29	6	31	7	53	10
Brent	20	16	21	32	7	33	8	68	13
Islington	10	22	3	33	8	43	12	11	4
Tower Hamlets	6	5	4	34	9	16	2	1	1
Ealing	36	52	48	38	10	39	10	107	16
Camden	17	32	9	44	11	51	15	54	11

Source: Index of Local Deprivation 1998 and Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000, Borough of Lambeth.

Table 3: National rankings on Local Authority (LA) summary measures, London Boroughs

	Summary LA measures: borough rankings (out of 326 LAs)					
Most deprived = 1	Average IMD Score*	Average IMD Rank	Extent	Local Concentration	Income Scale	Employ-ment Scale
Hackney	2	1	1	49	15	30
Newham	3	2	2	51	8	32
Tower Hamlets	**7**	**3**	**3**	**38**	**10**	**38**
Haringey	13	11	8	53	19	41
Islington	14	6	11	68	41	46
Waltham Forest	15	7	13	62	32	54
Barking and Dagenham	22	8	20	89	46	74
Greenwich	28	19	29	71	39	51
Lambeth	29	14	41	120	21	23
Lewisham	31	16	40	128	31	35
Brent	35	24	53	60	20	42
Southwark	41	25	46	138	25	33
Hammersmith and Fulham	55	31	71	127	76	80
Enfield	64	63	68	93	13	44
Camden	74	55	81	143	49	58

Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, Borough of Tower Hamlets.

This slow and steady increase in the quality of life of the area, combined with increasing professionalization of its residents and an increase in land value has resulted in the designation of Elephant and Castle as opportunity area in the London Plan (2002).

Figure 4: Percentage change in house prices in London boroughs, 1995–2002.

Source: Hamnett (2003: 2411).

The Latin American presence in Southwark, mostly within the E&C Shopping Centre, stretches back to the early 1990s. Over nearly three decades, Latin Americans "have not only participated in the economy of the area, but… have transformed it" (Román-Velázquez, 2014a: 91). At the beginning of the 1990s, when levels of deprivation were even more extreme than in 2000, low rent allowed Latin Americans to invest in the Elephant and Castle Shopping centre, which had 'filtered down' into their hands due to an economic decline at the end of the 1980s (Román-Velázquez, 2014a; Lyons, 1996). The neglected facilities had been vacated and devalued as a result of the decline, which provided Latin American entrepreneurs investment opportunities in the E&C shopping centre, as well as the surrounding areas of Clapham Common, Brixton and Vauxhall (Román-Velázquez, 2014a).

The success of the Latin American community in transforming the local economy of the area, as well as the creation of a vibrant community of migrants, has contributed to the vision put forward by property developers in order to elitisize the neighbourhood. In Inner London areas where property has been neglected and devalued, facilities have filtered down into the hands of the urban poor, including migrant communities such as the Latin Americans. They transform the economic and cultural fortunes of deprived neighbourhoods. Low rents permit them this opportunity, as well as the opportunity for a new, urban middle class to move into areas which had been the preserve of the urban poor, including ethnic minorities.

Figure 5: Colombian flag next to a hairdressing shop at the Seven Sisters indoors market

Source: Getty Images, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/latin-village-seven-sisters-indoor-market-london-colombia-elephant-castle-a9637001.html

Figure 6: Ecuadorian flag in front of a *carnicería* (butcher's shop) at *Pueblito Paisa*

Source: http //ilovemarkets.co.uk/listing/seven-sisters-market-pueblito-paisa-market/

As land values in the inner city have increased, migrant-led success in increasingly valuable areas has contributed to their targeting for regeneration projects which encourage the elitisization of those boroughs. Latin Americans, thus, face an uphill battle in maintain the character of their neighbourhoods, given the appropriation of their migrant identity in branding exercises, which include labels such as London's "vibrant Latin quarter" (Román-Velázquez, 2014a: 86).

The displacement pressures felt by the Latin American population in Lambeth and Southwark are also felt by migrants of African and Caribbean origin (Paccoud, 2014). The two communities share many of the same spaces, including within the Elephant and Castle shopping centre. However, it appears that the pressures applied by elitisization has had a tangible effect on the population numbers for this community, which have seen a fall from 0.5 and 3% (Paccoud, 2014).

Figure 6: La Bodeguita restaurant at Elephant and Castle shopping centre

Source: Patria Román-Velázquez, 2014b: 32

There is an interesting pattern in the African and Caribbean communities that may be mirrored within the Latin American community. Lambeth and Southwark have seen a greater fall in the proportion of the members of those communities born in the UK than those born outside the UK (Paccoud, 2014). One of the hypotheses to explain this is that lower status households, which in the Latin American case would include more recent Latin American-born migrants, are more dependent on a range of locally available goods, services, and contact, and are thus tied to shorter moves (Lyons, 1996). Thus, their attachment to these areas prevents them from moving outside the borough in the way

that second and third-generation members of the community would be more willing to (Paccoud, 2014). It seems, therefore, that displacement pressures including elitisization affects migrants of lower socioeconomic status disproportionately.

Figure 7: La Bodeguita café at E&C shopping centre

Source: Ingrid Guyon & Latin Elephant. Retrieved from Alborada Magazine (2016), https://alborada.net/latin-elephant/

2.3 From Multiculturalism to Diversity: The Struggle for the Recognition of the Latin American Community in the Political Discourse of London

Despite the size of the Latin American population in London, the community lacks official recognition. Due to the fact that the majority of the community has arrived after 2000, they constitute a new migrant group in the UK context and have thus gone largely unnoticed by policymakers and the general public (McIlwaine, Cock and Linneker, 2011). Furthermore, contrary to many recognised ethnic minority groups from Commonwealth countries where English is the official language, the linguistic difference in the Latin American community has made them much harder to integrate (Blay Arráez, 2017). The community's character as "a clearly heterogeneous group with different levels of identification" have also presented difficulties (Granada, 2014: 215).

The challenges of elitisization have made the need for the group to coalesce around an identity even more pressing as, in order to engage with local authorities, there needs to be a level of agreement within the community over how to represent itself. To avoid a disadvantaged situation whereby the community lack visibility, two campaigns emerged advocating for the official recognition of Latin Americans as one of London's ethnic minorities: *Alianza Iberoamericana de UK* (AIU) and the Latin American Recognition Campaign (LARC) (Granada, 2014). The AIU was founded in 2009, with the aim of providing political representation for the community through the organisation of meetings and conferences with local authorities. Their goals for the 'Ibero-American' community are summed up by their slogan: "Regularization, Respect and Recognition". LARC was formed in response to the AIU's campaign, arguing for the official categorisation of the community as 'Latin American' in ethnic monitoring at a national and local level. LARC is made up of a small group of 'community workers, artists, teachers and journalists' and functions with the support of other organisations, including the Indoamerican Refugee Migrant Organisation (IRMO), the Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS), the Latin American Workers' Association (LAWAS) and the Lambeth Spanish and Portuguese Speaking Community Forum (Granada, 2014: 70).

AIU seeks to capitalise on the fact that the so-called 'Ibero-American' community, comprising native Spanish and Portuguese speakers living in London, is the largest ethnic linguistic minority in this city (Blay Arráez, 2017). It also serves to include Brazilians, the largest national group represented within the 'Latin American' community, whom the AIU claim do not identify with the term, due to the fact that "Brazilians feel strongly linked to Portuguese people and Portuguese speakers from Africa, as their country has 85% of all Portuguese speakers of the world" (Biggio, 2010, cited in Granada, 2014: 171). Interestingly, this is disputed by a representative of one of the campaigns fighting against redevelopment:

> "When we get together as a community, there are many Portuguese speakers and it just seems that the differences are erased somehow... it just happens, whereas maybe it wouldn't happen with another language group; but, for some reason, the Portuguese language group - the difference is so minuscule that it's almost the same language. So I would say there is great unity between Spanish and Portuguese speakers" (interview with representative of community organisation).

The AIU argue that belonging to a broader Ibero-American community, made up of Latin Americans and Spanish and Portuguese speakers of European and African extraction, may not only increase the opportunities available to London's Latin American population, but also result in them being less constricted to particular boroughs, such as Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters. This could head off the threat posed to the community by elitization, as possessing social ties with Ibero-American groups across the city would open the doors to moving away from boroughs targeted by property developers for redevelopment.

On the other hand, LARC takes a less strategic approach, and a more political ideological stance, arguing for the recognition of those who identify as Latin Americans in statistical data. LARC was involved in the consultation process for the regeneration process of Elephant and Castle, and also forms part of the Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK), which encourages collaborative work between Latin American organisations. Their stance was described by leading figures in the Latin Elephant campaign, which has advocated for guarantees and affordable rent for traders at the Elephant and Castle shopping centre:

> "The Latin American is formed on a political ideological stance – the Bolívar dream and so on. And it's also rejecting colonial power upon the region" (P. Román-Velázquez, interview with author).

> "One thing that often goes unnoticed when these things about identity come up, especially about Latin America, is the fact that we were all former colonies of Spain, that we come from colonised countries. For instance, living in the UK, where the monarchy is such a big thing, puts us in a very interesting position in terms of «What do we think about the monarchy? ». Because we exist as countries, because we got rid of the monarchy - this is something that often goes unnoticed" (S. Peluffo Soneyra, interview with author).

According to Granada (2014: 196), both campaigns appeal to shared cultural elements such as language and habits, while at the same time stress the practical benefits of gaining visibility through the inclusion of their proposed ethnic categories". Despite the heterogeneity of the group, there is a clearly identifiable ethno-culturally Latin American presence in London in Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters. In order to protect the social spaces they have constructed, the groups which argue for the official recognition of Latin Americans as an ethnic minority believe that their common heritage, community practices, and living conditions cannot be reduced to linguistics (Granada, 2014).

The campaign for official recognition of the Latin American community has also been influenced by political discourse in the city of London. Examining selected documents from four specific periods between 2008 and 2017, namely *The London Plan* and the *Manifesto for All Londoners* by Sadiq Khan, the current Mayor of London, Blay Arráez (2017) found that the concepts of 'multiculturalism', or 'multi-ethnic', had practically disappeared from institutional discourse. Instead, policies carried out involved recognition for London's diversity, rather than its multiculturalism. This change in terminology reflects a trend away from multicultural policies that can be linked to increasing anxieties over national identity across Europe, beginning in the mid-1990s and culminating in the United Kingdom's vote to leave the European Union in 2016 (Kymlicka, 2010, cited in Blay Arráez, 2017). Policymakers began to perceive that multiculturalism had led to the socio-urban marginalisation of the minorities it sought to incorporate into society (ibid.).

By moving towards the broader, more ambiguous framework of diversity, London's local government avoids the greater commitment to ethnic minorities implied by multiculturalism. Furthermore, it opens the doors for property developers and corporate interests to embark on regeneration projects without making firm commitments to specific ethnic minorities who live in the targeted areas (Blay Arráez, 2017).

It is this reality that the movement advocating for the recognition of an Ibero-American ethnic minority are reacting to. By engaging with diversity, which refers to "the differences in the values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, ethnic background, sexuality, skills, knowledge and life experiences of each individual in any group of people", AIU dilutes and distils Latin American identity into a broader pool which could survive urban displacement as a result of elitisization (Blay Arráez, 2017: 60). However, in acquiescing to the establishment's reduction in emphasis on the idea of a 'multi-ethnic' London, Latin American identity loses strength, as does the community's ability to argue for the specifically Latin American nature of the cultural centres threatened by elitizisation, and thus their ability to protect them.

The efforts to fight for the recognition of a Latin American ethnic minority have born some fruit. At a borough level, Lambeth, Southwark, Hackney and Islington have recognised the Latin American population as an ethnic minority, while there are other in the process of recognising them, namely Haringey, Newham and Brent.

Despite their recognition in Lambeth and Southwark, it has sometimes been an uphill struggle by organisations, such as IRMO, to achieve practical measures:

> "When it comes to boroughs officially recognising it, when it comes to Lambeth and Southwark, officially it's recognised; practically, so in forms, surveys and other things, it's not present every time. In fact, most times it's not there. And so it is a constant effort to hold councils to account" (L. Picone, interview with author).

IRMO's focus is on the development of services to accommodate the needs of the wider Latin American community of London, particularly "the provision of legal advice and casework on immigration and social welfare for Latin American migrants, refugees and asylum seekers" (Granada, 2014: 68-69). They are part of the Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK), which encourages collaborative work between Latin American organisations. The organisations within CLAUK have fought tirelessly for greater recognition of the Latin American community in a whole host of areas.

The Latin American community's ability to assert their right to the city in the face of challenges posed by elitisization is inextricably linked to the work of these organisations, as is their battle for official recognition.

CHAPTER 3
Claiming a Right to Urban Space: Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters as Latin American Diasporic Spaces

3.1 Introduction

This main sections of this chapter will respond to each of the four research questions concerning the elitisization of the Latin American cultural centres in London, located at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters. Respectively, they will analyse the meaning held by these spaces for the Latin American community, the challenges faced by Latin American migrants in London, the role of community organisations, and the current and future impact of the phenomenon of elitisization on the diaspora.

The research took place in the form of semi-structured interviews with eleven individuals, including academics, representatives of various Latin American community organisations, and traders-turned-activists [see annex 1]. The questions created a platform upon which the interviewees could express their opinions and expertise regarding the status of the Latin American community in the UK, and the way in which they believed elitisization and other challenges would affect the community. Some had little to no involvement in the struggle to protect the cultural centres in Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters, others were deeply connected due to their daily use of the markets before the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the representatives, academics and traders intimately involved in the struggle to secure safeguards and protections for traders at those cultural centres offered very different perspectives on how much impact the changes would have on the Latin American community in London. The majority of interviews were conducted in English, with the choice given to interviewees as to which language they would prefer to express themselves in, but one interview was conducted in Spanish with Carlos Corredor of Naz Latina.

Within the sub-sections, the relationship between the variables introduced in the theoretical framework will be analysed: Latin American migrant identity, right to the city, self-management, community organisation, socio-urban marginalisation, and urban displacement.

In the first section, the relationship between Latin American migrant identity and right to the city is examined, as well as the concept of self-management and the tradition of self-help. Then the different significance held by the markets for Latin Americans depending on place of birth and origin is explored, highlighting the case of migrants with roots in

Southern Europe. The second section seeks to shine a light on the main challenges faced by Latin Americans, including political developments of recent years, and their effect on the group's sense of place in the United Kingdom.

The third section examines the need for Latin Americans to come together under an imperfect label, and the power of the community to assert its identity through organised groups and whether this can effect genuine policy changes. Finally, the fourth section reconciles the views of some of the leading voices of the community regarding the impact of elitisization on Latin American culture in London

3.2 The Significance of Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters: Right to the City and Self-Management

3.2.1 Migrant Identity and Right to the City

Within the theoretical framework of right to the city and self-management, the cultural centres in Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters hold a great deal of significance for the ability of the Latin American community in London to assert their presence, connect with other members of the population, and overcome the difficulties faced by migrants in moving to a new country.

First and foremost, they are domains of transnational negotiation for forms of capital, where they can be "valued, transformed and converted" (McIlwaine, 2012: 294). In a context where linguistic capital is lacking, the cultural centres provide a venue where entrepreneurial abilities can be exercised through the advice of 'facilitators':

> "For example, in Elephant and Castle, there is a Chilean gentlemen that had a business offering advice and classes for start-ups and entrepreneurs. He helps them to start up in the English fashion, not the way they used to do it in their own countries. So he places good ground for these businesses to develop" (C. Burgos, interview with author).

The success of these Latin American-owned businesses is integral to the ability of migrants to set down roots and claim identity and ownership over a place. The setting up of shops which sell Latin American goods is crucial to the establishment of shared community practices allowing the community to strengthen a migrant identity, which is attached to right to the city. It is important here to mention that the Latin American community, like any other migrant group frequenting urban neighbourhoods, is susceptible to the conditions of socio-urban marginalisation. Their position in a lower income bracket makes the availability of affordable Latin American goods not only an important component of their identity, but also their ability to survive economically:

> "It's a meeting point, it's a place where people can also get specialised goods at affordable prices, so very much needed for a working class, migrant ethnic community in the Elephant and Castle" (S. Peluffo Soneyra, interview with author).

> "I believe businesses provide a service to the community. It's not just business, not everybody looks at them like that, but I think they are providing a service to the community by being there" (C. Burgos, interview with author).

The commercial aspect of these spaces thus becomes a service for the Latin American community, in fulfilling their most basic needs for food and supplies. Given the difficulties the population face in navigating a marketplace which they are poorly equipped to negotiate, the businesses in Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters draw upon traditions of self-help in the Global South to offer an array of affordable goods in a city where competitive inequality is rife (Turner, 1968; 1972).

These spaces provide a focal point where recently arrived Latin Americans can mobilise civic capital, benefitting from the knowledge accumulated by those more established in London. The government's failure to adequately provide services and resources, both due to hostile immigration policies and a lack of recognition for the community, creates a deficit meaning that the community has no official recourse for advice or help in settling into their new community. Despite their differences in nationality, there seems to be a general spirit of cooperation among Latin American immigrants at both Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters, whereby advice is shared freely:

> "This place is not only a place where we can make money or for business. It's more than that: it's mutual aid, it's a hub of the community, it's the only place that we have for the community even though it's a place for business" (V. Álvarez, interview with author).

> "*Yo voy al sur de Londres y me encuentro con todo el mundo y lo mismo voy al área de Seven Sisters… siempre estamos en función de ayudar a la gente y no demostrarle a la gente cómo se hacen las cosas, demostrar a la gente que sí se puede. Demostrar a la gente que se puede salir adelante*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

The establishment of these businesses has been at the centre of community building efforts at both these locations. A sense of ownership is felt over the space due to the fact that Latin American businesses have had a presence in the cultural centres for decades. It is from these premises that the key elements which shape the new migrant identity claimed by the Latin American community emanate, including "colours, smells, products, shop names, décor, advertising, the sounds and music" (Román-Velázquez, 2014b: 31):

> "This is about protecting our spaces, that which the Latin American people have built over more than a decade. In the case of Elephant and Castle, the first shop that opened its doors was La Fogata, then came Inara, for example, then La Bodeguita, Lucy's Hairdressing, and they all opened around 1992. So these are spaces very well inhabited by Latin Americans in that respect" (P. Román-Velázquez, interview with author).

> "In our experience, we work with a number of people who have businesses at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters, and they have built a community there, they feel that they have a community there" (L. Picone, interview with author).

The strengthening of migrant identity through the specifically Latin American elements communicated from storefronts is connected to the origins of the space, denoting a moral right to the city cultivated by residence, use and habit over time (Zukin, 2010). There is a sense from those who are directly involved in the centres that their presence and development in the spaces over time gives them a right to set down roots and claim the space as their own, as Latin American, or giving it a specifically national label. This claim to urban space also grants the Latin American user the right to change themselves along with transforming physical space, and the self-realisation of a migrant identity that they feel comfortable with, whether a transnational one or one that results from the strengthening of their own sense of nationhood. It is crucial that they are able to use the space they have built within the cultural centres as fields for the negotiation of their identity, which is malleable:

> "*Cuando yo vine a este país, era un sitio absolutamente latinoamericano y, más que latinoamericano, colombiano. Todos los restaurantes, todas las tiendas, todos los negocios eran colombianos*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

> "Just to give an example, someone originally from Peru says «I always thought of myself as Peruvian», but it was only after a few years in London or Elephant and Castle that I saw myself as Latin American. I think that tells you a lot about trajectory and identities and how fluid they are" (S. Peluffo Soneyra, interview with author).

> "My perspective is that the Latin American identity is an ethnicity that makes sense in the context of migration and in negotiation with others, we adopt this identity by differentiation" (L. Granada, interview with author).

Here, it is important to emphasise the heterogeneity of the Latin American community in London, and the fact that the meaning held by the cultural centres at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters is not the same for all the national groups within the diaspora. Banal interculturalism, as well as cultural and linguistic differences, creates divides between various national groups; these divides may be detrimental to a cohesive Latin American migrant identity essential to make a strong claim to a right to the city to negate the harmful effects of elitisization:

> "So on the one hand, there's a sense of belonging and cohesion in terms of people coming together within these spaces. However, they're also known for being places where there's a lot of gossip and conflict amongst different nationalities, which shouldn't be forgotten. It's much more complicated than a universal Latin American solidarity, which is the same everywhere" (C. McIlwaine, interview with author).

> "And it depends on what you call Latin Americans. So for example, if you think of Brazilians, the majority of Brazilians live in northwest London, which is really Brent council. And they will tell you «Well, I really have nothing to do with Elephant and Castle or Seven Sisters», but they have been key hotspots, particularly for some nationalities – Colombians, Ecuadorians and Bolivians, chiefly" (C. Huáscar Tapia Montes, interview with author).

> "Some people highly value these places, both within and without the Latin American spaces and communities. And some people resent them or reject them altogether because there is no one homogeneous type of Latin American identity in London" (P. Román-Velázquez, interview with author).

3.2.2 The Markets as a Consolidating Factor of Identity for Second and Third Generation Latin Americans

The Latin American user's propensity to visit the cultural centres depends on factors including nationality, ethnicity, and class. There is also a generational dimension, which complicates the adoption of a Latin American migrant identity. The importance of the cultural centres may be diluted in the case when the user was born in a country outside of Latin America, where the cultural influence of the country of birth may subsume a Latin American identity, thus decreasing the significance of the cultural centres in the affirmation of a right to the city. A possible consequence of this cultural detachment for the Latin American community's ability to combat the negative effects of elitisization could be an unwillingness to get involved in community activism in the same way as their parents' generation, as a result of their lesser emotional investment in the transnational spaces. Furthermore, those of Latin American descent who possess the economic, cultural and social capital to thrive outside of the socio-urban margins so crucial to migrants are much happier to abandon these pockets in favour of other areas, which weakens the argument for protecting these areas if urban displacement is accepted willingly.

For these reasons, the cultural centres at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters are vital for the Latin American families to maintain common cultural touchpoints, whether linguistic, musical, or otherwise. The cultural centres are perhaps most significant, as far as consolidating some kind of common identity, in providing a space where Spanish is the spoken language. Among representatives of Latin American community organisations, there was near unanimity in declaring the common linguistic bond of Spanish as being the unifying factor of identity:

> "You don't forget your roots, you don't forget your countries, and then you work really hard – or in my case, I have worked really hard for my daughter – not to forget where she comes from and why Colombia's so important, regardless of the progress or whatever the political problems" (V. Álvarez, interview with author).

"*También los dos centros están enseñándole a los hijos de los inmigrantes latinoamericanos español porque algunas veces la lengua se pierde y eso es muy triste, porque conozco descendientes de latinoamericanos de tercera generación que ya no hablan español*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

3.2.3 Latin Americans with Southern European Roots and Their Different Cultural Touchpoints

Another generational aspect, raised by several representatives of Latin American migrant organisations, is the case of EU Latin Americans, for whom their experience of life in the United Kingdom is informed by their upbringing, or extended stay, in Southern Europe. In this case, a Spanish, Portuguese or Italian double identity is at play, even before encountering the possibility of an identity informed and influenced by British culture. They experience a detachment from a Latin American identity, which might result in less of a sense of territoriality over the spaces at E&C and Seven Sisters, due the centres' strong association with Latin American national cultures, particularly the Colombian identity. However, those born in Spain or Portugal sit more easily within attempts to group the Latin American community under the Ibero-American banner, while possessing the civic institutional capital that an EU passport affords adds to a sense of assuredness in a European cultural identity that migrants who have taken more convoluted routes to the UK lack:

"For children who are born in Spain, for example, you can see that the Latin American identity plays a little bit less of a role. However, we also see a more pronounced sense of self-confidence and self-esteem in comparison to, for example, children or young people who have had a different experience of migration, especially multiple experience of migration coming from Latin America then to Southern Europe and then to the UK, which obviously affects and disrupts your sense of identity and connection, so it's a little bit more problematic" (L. Picone, interview with author).

"*La cultura de este país y la cultura europea es muy pesada y muy fuerte, siempre la tenemos presente en la cara. Tú ves televisión, tú ves videos ahora en el Internet, entonces eso hace que a los jóvenes les guste la moda. Ya no les gusta la moda que viene de Latinoamérica, sí les gusta la moda de aquí. Todas las personas jóvenes quieren ser de aquí e identificarse como personas de aquí*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

3.3 Challenges Then and Now: Elitisization and Beyond

There are several dimensions to the challenges that the Latin American community have faced during their stay in the United Kingdom. There are issues faced by migrants, irrespective of their place of origin, as well as challenges that are specific to the Latin American community due to the linguistic and ethnic qualities of the group. Latin Americans with EU citizenship face different obstacles to those with a Latin American

passport, particularly in the context of political developments of recent years such as austerity, the hostile environment immigration policy, and Brexit. These recent developments have resulted in question marks about the Latin American community's position in the UK, in addition to the threat of urban displacement posed by elitisization projects in London.

3.3.1 Lack of Recognition and Access to Services

Two connected factors are chief among the issues raised by interviewees: lack of recognition and access to services. Both these issues were raised in the two reports co-authored by Cathy McIlwaine, *No Longer Invisible* (2011) and *Towards Visibility* (2016); but nearly five years on, the impact of the invisibility of the Latin American community can be seen in the way that regeneration projects have been pushed through in both Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters. The failure of official recognition and absence of ethnic monitoring influences government policy and the provision of services, in areas such as housing, healthcare, employment and education. Without official recognition, the Latin American community faces increasing marginalisation:

> "There's no ethnic monitoring so they're invisible. So when policies are made by policy makers, there's always going to be selection bias. They're not going to know how these policies are impacting certain parts of the population. They won't know the size of the populations that are invisible. So policies will never be tailored for them" (Representative of community organisation, interview with author).

> "*En todos los años que yo llevo en este país siempre he resaltado lo del reconocimiento como una minoría étnica, porque eso hace que el Gobierno, o las autoridades locales o las autoridades gubernamentales de este país destinen fondos específicos para atender a los latinoamericanos. Es decir, buscamos servicios que sean cultural y lingüísticamente apropiados para los latinoamericanos*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

3.3.2 Language and Cultural Barriers

Language is a significant barrier to Latin Americans accessing services and opportunities, but efforts have been made by community organisations such as IRMO to overcome this, including working with the council to translate material, newsletters and information into Spanish. Furthermore, at an individual level, language diminishes as an issue over time, especially when migrants have English-speaking children. A further obstacle to accessing services is a cultural barrier, often exacerbated in the case of Latin Americans who have lived in the European Union. This is where the previously mentioned facilitators play an important role, providing Latin American entrepreneurs with the tools to overcome the cultural barrier in order to successfully establish businesses. Elitisization makes these hurdles more challenging, as the regeneration of their cultural centres deprives the Latin American community of advice given in the self-help tradition:

"Also, the language, and I don't mean the words, but the meaning of the words is not the same. It takes time to understand the way of thinking of the other people in the new country and to understand the system" (C. Burgos, interview with author).

"They don't know immigration rules, they don't know housing, they don't know anything about the NHS,[1] they don't understand sometimes that they can access a doctor for free… And apart from that, I think the major cultural barrier is important. Many have lived in Spain, the ones that move here and they have this Spanish mindset and it doesn't help" (C. Huáscar Tapia Montes, interview with author).

3.3.3 Immigration Status of EU Latin Americans

The immigration status of Latin Americans in the UK is an issue that has become even more crucial in the context of the *Hostile Environment Immigration Policy*, introduced in 2012, the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum in 2016, and the *EU Settlement Scheme*. The resulting environment for Latin American migrants is one in which "super-diversity intersects with super-austerity against a background of everyday bordering practices, 'hostile environment' policies, and an increasingly deregulated labour market" (Berg, 2019: 2). While those who migrate directly from Latin America are more determined to weather the difficulties presented by the current state of politics in the United Kingdom, a small minority of Latin Americans with EU passports either from birth or naturalisation in Southern Europe have reconsidered their position in this country:

"*Ese ha sido el planteamiento, pero no pienso que la gente se quiera regresar a nuestros países porque hay Brexit sino por otras razones… Para mí es lo mismo que sea un gobierno azul o rojo. A mí siempre, cuando yo llegué aquí era azul y después cambió a rojo y esto volvió a cambiar a azul. Y siempre ha sido lo mismo*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

"…I think that instability, the fact that Latin America in general, though there has been a lot of progress, it still has these issues of inequality and racism, and people will stay here. So people from Spain or from other countries, they will move here and from here; sometimes actually, they move back to Spain because they think «Well, I have a better quality of life» But it's been the minority" (C. Huáscar Tapia Montes, interview with author).

"It's often easier, if they're EU Latin Americans, if they move back to Spain or Southern Europe, than going back to Latin America. At least the cases of I know of were all people moving back to Spain or Italy" (L. Picone, interview with author).

[1] National Health Service.

3.3.4 Poverty and Language as Barriers to Assimilation

Despite the fact that Latin Americans are relatively well-educated, with 51% having university level education compared to the London average of 34%, many struggle to convert and mobilise this institutional-cultural capital due to language difficulties (McIlwaine & Bunge, 2016: 19). 17% of Latin Americans struggle with speaking English, increasing to 1 in 4 among the lower socio-economic status groups of Ecuadorians, Bolivians and Paraguayans and 22% among Colombians (McIlwaine & Bunge, 2016: 20). They are forced into lower-status jobs, with almost half working in elementary, service, caring and processing jobs (McIlwaine & Bunge, 2016). The insecure, low-paid nature of this work means that workers often have multiple jobs and work long hours:

> "A huge percentage of the Latin American population living in London work in the cleaning sector or in kitchens and restaurants, where the use of the language is not necessarily crucial. That's the reason why there are so many cases of people with Law degrees in their home countries that don't speak English cleaning floors as their first job here. Sometimes you don't even get paid minimum wage, let alone London living wage. That's a huge barrier when you have a family, and also the quality of life because you have night shifts and long hours" (S. Peluffo Soneyra, interview with author).

The high concentration of the community, particularly Colombians and Ecuadorians, in Lambeth and Southwark is symptomatic of the lower socio-economic status of these groups, as these boroughs rank highly on indices of poverty and deprivation. Their employment, often leading to in-work poverty situations, "leads to a sense of inferiority and problems of depression and lack of self-esteem which often prevent them making a decent living, and this conditions their family happiness and isolation" (Blay Arráez et al., 2017: 71). One of the side effects of this is taking refuge within the linguistic comfort of the Spanish-speaking community, which strengthens a sense of ethnic identity:

> "I think unfortunately they are connecting because they face the same issues. People come to our centre, bonding and wanting to form relationships and support groups because there is a real awareness of the fact that Latin Americans face severe language barriers. They are employed in, or they are trapped in, in-work poverty situations" (L. Picone, interview with author).

Even those Latin Americans who speak English find that speaking Spanish presents a barrier to assimilation, while at the same time making them feel more connected to the community. The phenomenon of 'Spanglish', speaking Spanish using English words, 'can be a positive form of communication', but also has the potential to 'undermine the quality of English', particularly for second generation Latin Americans (McIlwaine et al., 2011: 117).

The lower-status employment situation of Latin Americans in London, compounded by language problems, creates a vicious cycle of low self-esteem, isolation and inability to maximise their economic opportunities. It is crucial for members of the community to improve their level of English, not only in order to make the most of their education, but also to successfully assimilate into wider society, but long hours and low wages make finding the time or confidence to do this very difficult:

> "*Los padres que son la primera generación de inmigrantes, cuando uno emigra tiene que trabajar muy duro para poder conseguir dinero para poder. Entonces eso hace que los padres salgan muy temprano de su casa y que regresen muy tarde y regresan cansados y sin ganas de hablar con nadie. Simplemente quieren ducharse y dormir porque salen muy temprano*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

3.3.5 Brexit and Labour Exploitation

Brexit has been a particular source of strife for the Latin American community with connections to the European Union not only for the uncertainty it creates for their immigration status, but also in terms of that uncertainty or irregularity opening the doors to labour exploitation. Confusion and lack of information regarding immigration status is compounded by the language barrier and low levels of education, creating conditions for vulnerability, which can result in a lack of understanding and access to rights, as well as reticence to report abuse (FLEX & LEAG, 2017). The insecure, low-paid nature of work for many Latin Americans means that workers often have multiple jobs and work long hours. If the conditions for post-Brexit work permits restrict working hours, tie Latin Americans to one employer, or introduce high earning thresholds, it could push many into illegal employment where there is an even higher propensity for labour exploitation (FLEX & LEAG, 2017):

> "Initially, in 2011 immigration status was one of the main challenges, then that became less important when people arrived with Spanish, Portuguese and Italian passports. However Brexit is now affecting them because those people with EU passports are now having to apply for settled status and so on" (C. McIlwaine, interview with author).

> "With a large proportion of the community being here under EU law as EU citizens or family members of EU nationals, Brexit has been quite an important process right from the moment the referendum vote came out. It caused loads of anxiety, increased labour abuse, among other things" (L. Granada, interview with author).

In this context, the urgent need for access to practical information and advice about post-Brexit labour rights and the *EU Settlement Scheme*, the cultural centres at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters provide a crucial space. Elitisization projects risk further marginalising the population, as well as displacing the community to disparate parts of the city without an established Latin American presence and facilitators willing to share their knowledge.

3.3.6 Mental Health

Brexit and threats to Latin American cultural centres, and the socio-urban marginalisation they encourage, also exacerbate feelings of anxiety, isolation and of not belonging. These feelings are common to migrants, but they are particularly harmful to the Latin American community, because they are often, but not always, accompanied by a withdrawal from collective political action, as well as from society, leading to a consolidation of their marginal position (Kreckel, 2004). Due to the urgent need for a politically engaged community in the face of issues surrounding immigration status, official recognition and right to the city, expressed through the defence of cultural centres as transnational social space, the mental health of the community is crucial:

> "First, there is the sense of loneliness because you cut your connection with your own country because of the distance" (C. Burgos, interview with author).

> "You imagine people think you just came here to take away their jobs, but you experience a lot of other things. Therefore, you just become very introverted, in that sense of going through that process" (V. Álvarez, interview with author)

> "Sense of community for young people, lack of aspiration or knowing your place, there's a lot of trauma as well - trauma in migration, trauma experienced through discrimination" (L. Picone, interview with author).

> "Also a lot of Latin Americans work in very difficult jobs. Mental health-wise, you need a community and you need a place. I'm just worried about the effect of vulnerable populations becoming more vulnerable, more marginalised" (representative of community organisation, interview with author).

> "At the moment the main concern is related to the EU Settlement Scheme and the fear that the most vulnerable groups won't make the deadline (e.g. domestic workers, people facing mental health challenges or living in isolation, etc.)" (L. Granada, interview with author).

3.3.7 Discrimination from Within

Racism and xenophobia towards the Latin American community has seen an uptick due to an increase in hate crime, hostility and discrimination since the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union (FLEX & LEAG, 2017). However, racism within the community is an issue that divides opinion. Patiño Santos and Reiter (2018) have studied the phenomenon of *banal interculturalism* within the Latin American community, referring to forms of intercultural 'knowledge', framed as truth but often stereotypes and prejudices, which serve to 'other' different groups within the diaspora. While competition for forms of capital in a difficult migratory landscape in London plays a huge role, cultural and ethnic differences lay the conditions for discrimination within the community. However, some argued that the community was largely free of discrimination, citing

factors such as the ethnic diversity within Latin America and community solidarity due to the difficulties faced by all:

> "*A nivel étnico en Latinoamérica existe todo el espectro del arcoíris… pero como cosa curiosa, allá el sistema del racismo no funciona como funciona aquí, porque nosotros somos de todos los colores… entonces nosotros no podemos estar con discriminaciones*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

> "I think when you're Latino, you are tolerant because you are faced with so many difficulties. So perhaps it's in your DNA that you are naturally tolerant" (V. Álvarez, interview with author).

A common migrant, Latin American identity and community solidarity in the face of difficulties such as elitisization can certainly play a role in reducing discrimination, but there is no doubt that it does exist, not only because of empirical evidence, because racism continues to be an issue in Latin America, and diasporic conditions usually reproduce similar conditions to those in the country of origin:

> "When it comes to ethnic identity, what we note is that there is some kind of hostility. Sometimes it ends up in discriminatory language towards Afro-Latin Americans and towards Central Americans and people of different ethnicity. This is something that we are exploring through a project on hate crime. We did a survey and one of the questions that we asked was 'Have you ever been discriminated by a member of your community?' Around 40% said yes" (L. Picone, interview with author).

> "Even ethnically, the fact that you are white, or you are *mestizo* like me, or black - there are lots of black Colombians, black Peruvians, black Ecuadorians – and for these people it's sometimes very difficult to fit in, they don't match. This is something that we as a community need – a really important protection of race, for example" (A. Patiño Santos, interview with author).

In the context of elitisization and the challenges it presents to the cultural and economic life of the Latin American community, it is vital that the Latin American community acknowledges discrimination from within as an issue. The marginalisation of groups within the diaspora will only serve to open the doors for the marginalisation of the community as a whole, as it weakens the argument for official recognition of a Latin American ethnicity if race is a divisive issue.

3.4 Effective Efforts? Community Organisations and the Struggle Against Urban Displacement

The proposed elitisization of the cultural centres at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters has vitalised community organisations representing the interests of the diaspora, as a result of the failure of property developers and local state apparatus to involves traders

and users in decision-making process regarding the spaces. The consequent threat of socio-spatial marginalisation and urban displacement has activated within the community a collective claim of the right the city, whereby the Latin Elephant and Save Latin Village campaigns, supported by the organisations that make up CLAUK (Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK), have fought for the community's rights to space with some success.

3.4.1 Many Organisations, One Latin American Banner

Speaking to representatives of various organisations within CLAUK, it is clear that the organisation of the Latin American community into one group is a strategic, necessary measure to meet the challenges faced by the various members of the diaspora. While there is divergence between the precise points of solidarity or agreement within the community, whether ethnic identity, migrant identity or language, there is consensus that it is politically important to achieve official recognition, particularly for labour rights, services, education and a host of other issues:

> "It's a very generalised categorisation and some Latin Americans don't agree with it. However, and I think CLAUK is very important here, there is also agreement that it is politically expedient because one needs to have the recognition in order to be able to do things like lobby for services such as language services in relation to advocacy in Spanish, and translation of local government materials into Spanish and Portuguese for instance" (C. McIlwaine, interview with author).

> "Diasporic conditions create the need for people to organise themselves somehow. And I think it's a strategic thing, a strategic organisation in the end. Of course, if you are from different countries, if we want to talk in terms of nationalities, it's not the same, you are not visible, you need to be visible, and to present yourself as a unified community. It's the conditions of that diaspora that make and oblige people to organise themselves" (A. Patiño Santos, interview with author).

3.4.2 Efficacy of Community Organisations

In the absence of official recognition in both the 2011 Census and the upcoming 2021 Census, with the Office of National Statistics using the justification of the small representation of the community outside of London, perhaps the most significant victory of community organisations has been their ability to make the voice of the Latin American community heard. The campaigns have led to engagements with the Greater London Authority (GLA), local councils and the Mayor of London, as well as media coverage, on a range of issues affecting the community, including elitisization:

> "In terms of the different campaigns that exist for saving these places, I think they've being highly successful in terms of media coverage, impact, in terms of being heard by the

different governments. They've been quite loud expressing their discontent with certain developments" (P. Román-Velázquez, interview with author).

"I think that was a huge battle from organisations, but there should be pathways for the community, for residents and business owners, to be heard" (L. Picone, interview with author).

"We had a roundtable with somebody from GLA, from the Mayor of London, a couple of weeks ago… to emphasise the fact that now more than ever we need some support and recognition" (C. Huáscar Tapia Montes, interview with author).

Getting a foot in the door is not only important in the context of a lack of recognition at a national level, but it is also impressive, particularly in the sphere of regeneration projects. Actual victories have been won in terms of securing guarantees on affordable spaces, relocation benefits, as well as progress in local recognition, labour rights and other issues:

"In terms of Elephant and Castle, for example, Latin Elephant has been doing a great job at policy level with the traders themselves. We've achieved quite a lot for the traders in terms of the development, which provided nothing at the beginning, not even 10% affordable spaces for them. We managed to secure a relocation package. We're now monitoring those who are still not receiving an allocated space" (P. Román-Velázquez, interview with author).

"Without those organisations, many of the traders would have lost out even more, but because they're so small it's very difficult to prevent and stop the demolition because you're operating against powerful councils and interests, such as the Delancey Group in the case of Elephant and Castle. As for Seven Sisters, Save Latin Village has been really important and they've done really amazing work. However, it's incredibly difficult because they're not funded and you're operating and trying to fight corporate and government interests, so it's very challenging" (C. McIlwaine, interview with author).

"I think [the efficacy of community organisations] is also evident in organising and coming together to respond to employment rights issues. We worked with UVW (United Voices of the World) before, and I think they do brilliant work in organising workers, and I think that's really important" (L. Picone, interview with author).

There is evidence of real progress in the form of recognition by four local boroughs (Southwark, Lambeth, Hackney and Islington), as well as the GLA, translation of government materials into Spanish and language services, and guarantees for traders and rent controls, engaging with authorities does not always translate into positive action. It is undeniable that there is frustration and resignation about the fact that organisations representing the Latin American community have a limited capacity to prevent elitisization.

"It is a constant effort to hold councils to account. As I said earlier, the problem that we see is that at policy level, a lot of beautiful things are said, discussed and agreed with

> community organisations, with the voluntary sector and with the communities. The problem is transferring and translating those policies into action" (L. Picone, interview with author).

The projects are a clear example of accumulation by dispossession, driven by the vision of property developers, supported by corporate capital and the local state apparatus (Harvey, 2008). Against such powerful interests, where the community has been excluded from the plans for redeveloping the cultural centres, everything is an uphill battle and success is achieved in managing transitions and limiting the scale of urban displacement and socio-urban marginalisation, rather than affecting the plans:

> "So the question is how to manage those transitions. How do we manage our spaces and transition to different spaces that we still can afford?" (P. Román-Velázquez, interview with author).

> "For example, especially in hubs like Elephant and Castle, I don't think the community was heard enough and was considered enough when Southwark made those plans" (L. Picone, interview with author).

> "At the beginning, I thought we were just arguing with the council and then, as things started to progress, we found out the real agenda of the whole project. We were not part of the project. [The property developers] were forced to include us in the project and, because they were forced, this has been like a forced marriage in which none of the parties is happy" (V. Álvarez, interview with author).

3.4.3 The Struggle Against Elitisization and Shared Latin American Identity

The lack of genuine agreement in the Latin American community around the issue of ethnic identity, contributing to issues such as banal interculturalism and discrimination within the diaspora, lies in the highly heterogeneous nature of its members. However, elitisization and the threat of urban displacement have intertwined the factors which converge to produce a Latin American migrant identity: "the poor socio-economic conditions of a large sector of this fragmented and heterogeneous community, the development and maintenance of community practices, and government actions" (Granada, 2014: 205-206):

> "The collective identity and the organising around ethnicity happens because of a number of factors, some have to do with shared spaces and community practices, but I'd argue that solidarity on the basis of exclusion, as well as some level of adaptation to the local system" (L. Granada, interview with author).

The community's exclusion from the shared spaces at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters, where community practices so important to the group's sense of identity are normally performed, has encouraged the strengthening of the claim of a right to the city,

which is connected to a shared sense of spatial justice demanded by groups suffering from socio-urban marginalisation:

> "What's shared is the cause, the idea that people are being squeezed, that gentrification is affecting BAME communities the most, that it's affecting the urban poor. On those causes, there is a shared understanding of 'we are', the ones on the receiving end. We need to fight for spatial justice and social justice. So, in that sense, it's strengthening a sense of shared commonality through spatial justice" (P. Román-Velázquez, interview with author).

> "I think it has [increased a sense of a shared Latin American identity] because his relates to the struggle for independence in a different way, obviously, but seeing yourself priced out, forced out, by a Goliath, in a sense, puts you in a very weak position when it comes to the balance of power, creating this dynamic" (S. Peluffo Soneyra, interview with author).

The struggle to fight for the dignity of the Latin American community and their right to the city has also transmitted to second and third generation Latin Americans, who didn't have access to their culture growing up, the value of the cultural centres, strengthening a sense of identity across generations:

> "Second generation Latin Americans or other Latin Americans that didn't have the culture growing up, are understanding the value of these places… I think it's certainly made people more conscious of the importance of identity and how it ties to belonging" (representative of community organisation, interview with author).

3.5 The End of the Road, an Opportunity or a Fresh Start? Elitisization's Impact on the Latin American Community

3.5.1 A Negative for the Community

The loss of the 'authentic' cultural centres, in the sense of being a space for the community, by the community, will have a devastating impact on the Latin American community, because of the importance of these transnational economic and social spaces, for which no replacement is planned. The loss of the ability to network and its nature as a 'pole' of Latin American culture were highlighted:

> "If you look at most community groups, for example the Chinese population, they have Chinatown and that's sacred to them. How would they feel if Chinatown was taken away from them? The Sikh community have a strong presence in Southall and they've got the famous temple there. How would they deal with that temple being taken away from them?… Mental health-wise, you need a community and you need a place. I'm just worried about the effect on vulnerable populations becoming more vulnerable, more marginalised…because of a lack of networking" (Representative of community organisation, interview with author).

"*…es una gran pérdida y es una gran lástima que ese polo cultural latinoamericano, el foco cultural latinoamericano, desaparezca… Entonces, naturalmente que ese desplazamiento social va influenciar muchísimo, porque yo pienso que en unos cinco o diez años nada de lo que conocemos de Elephant and Castle va a ser igual. Va a ser un sitio totalmente diferente*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

3.5.2 Economically Beneficial for Some

There is also no doubt that there are some who will benefit from elitisization projects. In this sense, those Latin Americans higher up the socio-economic ladder, who own big businesses, stand to lose less and gain more. This is a reminder of the highly heterogeneous nature of the Latin American community in London, in terms of class as well:

> "…but the reality is that there are inequalities, even within those traders or business people or sellers. Some of them are relatively big businesses. So in Seven Sisters, for example, you have the big restaurant which is outside. And actually, for example, someone could argue, on the other hand, that has been one of the key drivers for that area to become more valued and look for developers thinking of regenerating it… Then in Elephant and Castle it's the same, you have the big restaurants and then you have the occasional informal sellers, which don't have any support" (C. Huáscar Tapia Montes, interview with author).

> "There are those who will benefit themselves from this gentrification. I know some of them are already buying flats and investing in the place… It's interesting what's going on there because when the council markets that space as the Latin American Quarter, as 'vibrant' etc. in their publicity, there's an interest there from those Latin Americans in a position of economic power who will have a chance, and they will be the winners of this project, not everyone" (A. Patiño Santos, interview with author).

There is also a sense from interviewees of a segment of the Latin American population waiting in the wings, displaying performative solidarity, happy to conform to local expectations of the Latin American stereotype in terms of food and music if it will benefit them economically:

> "In my view, there is a real danger of becoming the commodified version of what a 'Latin American' should look like and do, which I believe we should resist. Becoming this 'homogenous', easy-to-digest, simplified version of a community can be tempting because it can create business (for restaurants, dance groups, etc.) and because there is a more positive reaction, we become 'easier to integrate' than if we were plural" (L. Granada, interview with author).

> "It's a kind of solidarity that is perhaps superficial, but there's no awareness at all of being a political collective. So they are aware, they know that, and those of them who have their resources are reproducing what happens back in their countries of origin. If I have the economic resources and I will be able to move easier than others, I will take advantage of

that, and this is what I believe is happening… The discourses produced by those who are in the market and will be affected in the shopping mall is not the same as those who are in the outskirts just witnessing and waiting" (A. Patiño Santos, interview with author).

3.5.3 Resilience, Survival and Geographical Peripheralisation

While there are some who consider the redevelopment of the Latin American cultural centres an existential threat to the community, there is sense of quiet, dignified optimism for the future, in spite of sadness over the loss of these irreplaceable sites. The resilience displayed at both Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters by residents, traders and activist groups in the face of huge difficulties is a source of hope for the economic and cultural future of the community:

> "I think the Latin American community is really resilient, as are their businesses, so I'm hoping that many of them will survive. Whether we'll survive as a cluster as we are, I don't know" (P. Román-Velázquez, interview with author).

> "There a lot of, for example, cultural organisations and artist organisations for high art and low art, so culture is expressed not just through these centres, which are just one part of the wider jigsaw of what Latin American cultural identity is in London" (C. McIlwaine, interview with author).

> "They're very resilient and they have these entrepreneurial mind-sets, which makes [the community] survive and even thrive despite all of these forces that are there. I can speak for a fact because, from the traders who are being displaced in Elephant and Castle, 100% of the Latin Americans have secured relocation" (S. Peluffo Soneyra, interview with author).

There is also already evidence of movement towards the periphery and the formation of Latin American clusters in other areas:

> "*Ya está luciendo bastante diferente. Yo pienso que se moverá hacia Brent porque la mayoría de la gente está yéndose hacia Brent. Y lo mismo que hacia East Ham, donde se ha movido mucha gente por lo mismo, porque les han ofrecido acomodación y vivienda social en esas áreas de Londres*" (C. Corredor, interview with author).

> "Well, I'm optimistic. I definitely think it can survive. I think it's part of life. London is a city that is constantly changing. Perhaps that's personal, but you have to look at it from a positive and optimistic perspective. I think it will be even good for the people that in a way work or live around there, and I think it's necessary honestly" (C. Huáscar Tapia Montes, interview with author).

> "I want to hope that there will be other hubs and probably there will be, in a smaller size and probably in different places and further out" (L. Picone, interview with author).

The Latin American community will come away from this traumatic experience with a stronger sense of their right to the city, with greater, if still limited, recognition from the authorities and the general public, and closer engagements with the local state apparatus and property developers. All of this will prepare them better for inevitable future battles as elitisization continues.

CONCLUSION

As previously stated, there is a degree of pragmatism and optimism within the Latin American community in the face of facing urban displacement in London, but also defiance on the part of those invested in protecting their facilities.

It can be concluded that the following hypotheses have been confirmed to a certain extent, but that they all require reformulation due to the complex picture presented by the findings: [a] that cultural centres represent a destination for the Latin American community, an authentic expression of their identity that has been built up through years of immigration, but that they are less important for the new generations who feel British as well as Latin American; [b] that the challenges for Latin American immigrants are related to economic uncertainty, xenophobia and the threat of urban displacement, but that these challenges have made the community more determined to stay in London; [c] that the fight to protect the cultural centres is effective in the sense that it articulates and consolidates a common Latin American identity, but that the community has a limited capacity to prevent the elitization of these places, and finally, [d] that elitisization is seen as an existential threat to Latin American culture in London, but that at the same time the immediate economic benefits may be tempting for the community.

The first hypothesis' contention that [a] cultural centres represent a destination for the Latin American community, an authentic expression of their identity that has been built up through years of immigration was confirmed by most of the interviewees, who also highlighted the authenticity of the cultural centres, Latin Elephant and Latin Village, as well as the attachment and sense of ownership felt by its users. However, the generational divide between earlier arrivals and British-Latin second and third generations suggested was only raised by one interviewee. Instead the fact that the spaces are of particular importance to the Colombian community was raised by several interviewees. Furthermore, the cultural centres are likely to hold less significance for groups who migrated earlier, such as Chileans and Argentinians escaping dictatorship, and those who have strong roots in Southern Europe.

As for the second hypothesis, the identification of the challenges faced by the Latin American community differed from those anticipated. Representatives of Latin American community organisations suggsted issues such as housing problems, labour exploitation and a lack of official recognition as being greater challenges than xenophobia and the threat of displacement. Furthermore, discrimination within the community was raised by two of the interviewees, as well as mental health challenges. However, in line with the hypothesis, there does seem to be a strong element of determination to continue calling London home, and the response to the challenges faced seems to have forged a greater sense of community and place.

The third hypothesis was generally verified by the findings. The answers of the interviewees revealed the symbolic yet important element of an increased sense of cohesion within the Latin American community. Meanwhile, activists for the community interest groups highlighted victories won in terms of guarantees for traders, new facilities and rent controls, particularly in Elephant and Castle. However, as to the actual fate of these physical spaces, the data confirmed the suspicion that community organisations have a limited capacity to prevent the gentrification of these places in the long run.

Finally, regarding the fourth hypothesis, it is difficult to make generalisations about how elitisization of the cultural centres is perceived by the Latin American community at large. For some, the changes represent an opportunity in terms of making a fresh start, rather than the economic benefits described in the hypothesis, while for others, the idea of losing the facilities they have put so much effort into building and maintaining represents an unimaginable horror.

It is important to revisit the key concepts and how they relate to the research field work, with reference to the content of the theoretical framework in the first chapter. The concept of transnational social places, fields of negotiation in which Bourdieu's forms of capital can be mobilised and converted, helped to provide a basis for understanding the nature of the Latin American cultural centres in London. The markets at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters both fall into this category, especially due to the presence of facilitators and the supportive nature of the environment, which helps newcomers overcome cultural and lingusitic barriers to thrive.

The second sub-section of the first chapter features the concepts of destination culture and authenticity, both of which are developed by Zukin in the context of New York. Destination culture is a strategy for urban redevelopment employed by property developers involving the creation of a cultural district in order to encourage high value of urban land in previously deprived areas, while authenticity relates to the social origins of those same urban spaces.

Several interviewees touched upon the idea of the commodification or the fetishization of the authentic nature of the cultural centres, forming the basis for plans for a 'vibrant' Latin American quarter in the model of destination culture. At the same time as expropriating the authenticity of the spaces, it involves the rejection of the current users, a sentiment felt keenly by those deeply involved in the struggle against property developers. This sentiment of rejection is accompanied by a sense of ownership and attachment, rightfully felt due to the time and effort invested by the community into the creation of these spaces, a spontaneous expression of their culture that has broadly avoided commodification, maintaining its authenticity.

The third concept discussed was that of right to the city, presented by Lefebvre as a struggle to 'disengage' the space separated from the community of its users by the processes of *elitisization*, originally conceived as the outcome of political struggle. The sense of right to urban space was felt keenly by many members of the community, particularly the users of the cultural centres. However, an alternative conception of this right, adapted and conceived within the liberal democratic framework, seemed to be emerging through the hard work of various organisations. By achieving greater engagement with the Greater London Authority, several boroughs and the Mayor of London's Office, the democratization of urbanization and the recognition of a right to the city by local authorities seems to be a greater possibility.

As for the fourth concept incorporated into the first chapter, *autogestion* or self-management was crucial to understand the struggle of the community against the redevelopment of the spaces at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters. Lefebvre defines *autogestion* as a social group's refusal to passively accept conditions being imposed upon them and, in so doing, understanding and mastering those conditions. The interviewees emphasized the fact that the conditions originally imposed on traders and users of the cultural centres contained absolutely no guarantees, no involvement, and no recognition. By struggling for a deal for traders, a voice, and recognition, the community can be said to have achieved a degree of *autogestion*. The spirit of self-help, a concept discussed by Turner which arises in the context of government failure to provide, or, indeed, protect, affordable housing and services for low-income urban residents, has also been crucial in the ability of the community to fight for their economic survival.

The last concept in the first chapter was socio-urban marginalisation, defined by Kühn as a process relegating the urban poor, including migrants, to the sociological peripheries of decision-making processes and control over agenda-setting. This concept is a key element in understanding the struggle of the Latin American community to overcome the challenges they face in the United Kingdom. Continuing lack of recognition at a national level was highlighted by several interviewees as being an obstacle to accessing funds and the creation of policies tailored for the group, due to selection bias. As a result, the threat of increasing socio-urban marginalisation looms, coupled with urban displacement to the geographical peripheries of the city. The worry is that victories won in certain boroughs mean nothing if Latin Americans are forced out of those same boroughs.

The failure to involve Latin Americans in decisions regarding the redevelopment of spaces into which they have poured an immense amount of time and effort is shocking, and sustainable urban development can only be achieved in consultation with the groups that already live there. Elitisization is a process that, whether intentionally or not, leads to the social cleansing of marginal urban areas, destroying the authentic character of spaces crucial to minority groups. While the need to upgrade these areas must be acknowledged, any decisions have to be taken as part of a collaborative approach, and not just with a view to maximising profit for property developers and investors.

With this in mind, considering the results of the investigation, the following recommendations for further research can be made:

1. Within the Latin American community in London, investigate the mental health impact of insecurity related to the threat of urban displacement. How important, quantitatively, is a sense of place to the group's psychological wellbeing?
2. Explore the impact of elitisization of Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters in terms of destinations for outgoing Latin American immigrants. Where are the group forming new clusters, and how do they aim to maintain their culture in the absence of the authenticity of the cultural centres?
3. Investigate the extent to which local authorities aim to implement a right to the city as part of a liberal-democratic framework of rights. Can pressure from the community result in greater legal recognition of this right?
4. Assess the effect of the coronavirus pandemic in speeding up the redevelopment project, particularly at Latin Village. To what extent have authorities and developers used the pandemic as a justification for displacing the community?

While Latin American identity in London is more than just the cultural centres at Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters, this study has demonstrated the deep sense of ownership felt by the community over these spaces. There is no doubt that their redevelopment will leave an irreplaceable hole for many Latin Americans, and there is a pressing need for alternative sites where Latin Americans can congregate freely and express their culture.

ANNEX I

Interviewed	Affiliation or role	Place and date	Time
Cathy McIlwaine	Professor of Development Geography, Department of Geography, King's College London (KCL)	22/7/2020	09:00
Patria Román-Velázquez	Senior Lecturer, Media & Creative Industries, Loughborough University London	3/8/2020	10:00
Adriana Patiño Santos	Associate Professor, Modern Languages and Linguistics, University of Southampton	3/8/2020	11:00
Carlos Burgos	Trustee, Save Latin Village	4/8/2020	10:00
Carlos Corredor	Latin American Services Manager, Naz Latina	5/8/2020	12:00
Victoria Álvarez	Trader and Chair, Seven Sisters market tenant association	5/8/2020	21:00
Carlos Huáscar Tapia Montes	Director, Latin American House	6/8/2020	11:30
Lucila Granada	CEO, Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)	6/8/2020	15:30
Name hidden	Chair, community interest group	7/8/2020	12:00
Ludovica Picone	Senior Programme Manager, Indoamerican Refugee Migrant Organisation (IRMO)	12/8/2020	09:00
Santiago Peluffo Soneyra	Programme Director & Media, Latin Elephant	10/9/2020	10:00

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