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Young Latin Americans in  
Barcelona, London, and Oxford:  
Building Identities in Contexts  
of Inequality and Discrimination

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COMPAS does not have a centre view and does not aim to present one. The views expressed in this document are only those of its independent author

**Abstract:**

International migration changes individual and collective identities. At the same time, social inequalities increase the gap between rich and poor. This paper compares the processes of identity construction of young Latin American migrants in Barcelona, London and Oxford, in relation to situations of discrimination suffered because of their ethnic and social origin. This is qualitative research based on the life stories of the young people interviewed. The findings indicate that, despite the experiences of discrimination, the young Latin American migrants have significant human, social and cultural capital. This enables them to be competent in intercultural relations and they develop flexible, open and positive identities in multicultural societies.

**Keywords:**

Immigration, young Latin-Americans, England, Catalonia, identity flexibility, social inclusion.

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## INTRODUCTION

Although international migration is often perceived as a positive global phenomenon (Arnold, 2012), many studies have focused on the problematic aspects of immigration at the economic, social and political levels emphasizing the insecurity related to unemployment, poverty, violence, ethnic and religious conflict, and dilution of national identity, among others (Martiniello and Rath, 2010). The host society builds otherness to identify immigrants and represents them negatively.

One of the emerging groups requiring greater attention are the sons and daughters<sup>1</sup> of families who have made transnational journeys. They are invisible in global studies on migration, classified as immigrants although they are not, and considered different by the host society.

This paper presents a comparative analysis of <sup>1</sup>research conducted with Latino young adults in Barcelona<sup>2</sup>, London and Oxford.<sup>3</sup> The objective is to analyze the process of identity construction of children in Latin American families, in relation to situations of discrimination experienced in different aspects of their daily lives. Young people from Latin America are a relatively new group in England, a result of new migration flows, while in Catalonia (and Spain), despite a long history of settlement, they have increased in number significantly in the last decade. Although they are different contexts, both are currently influenced by a deep social, economic and political crisis which is generating and reproducing old and new mechanisms of exclusion, and creating new social hierarchies based on social class and ethnicity (Back et al, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> I am using the category 'immigrants' children' instead of 'first- or second- generation immigrant' because such description may lead us to homogenize a heterogeneous group. Apart from this, 'first- or second- generation immigrant' is a category that I consider discriminatory, since it implies the immigrant status throughout life.

<sup>2</sup> The study carried out in Barcelona corresponds to the Thesis *Construint identitats flexibles. adults d'origen extracomunitari entre processos d'inclusió i exclusió social*, presented at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Social and Cultural Anthropology Department. December 2009. The sample includes young children of immigrant families in Barcelona, of Moroccan, Pakistani, Filipino, Cuban, and other Latin American origins. I interviewed 31 boys and girls. Out of this total, 11 Latin American migrants are included in this study.

<sup>3</sup> Study carried out in London and Oxford as Visiting Academic Research of the *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS)* at the University of Oxford, during the months of May and June 2011, and June and July 2012, with a grant funded by the *Fundació Sant Joan de Déu* and *Escola Universitària d'Infermeria Sant Joan de Déu*, attached to the University of Barcelona. The study sample included only children of immigrant Latino families in the UK.

Discrimination based on national origin and race affects immigrant families and puts young members of the family in a condition of precariousness and vulnerability. Variables related to education, labour market, community, social relationships, and immigration policies act as excluding factors (Fangen 2010; Fangen et al, 2010, 2012), hindering social inclusion with equal rights.

What identities do children of Latin American families in Catalonia and England construct? What situations of discrimination do they experience? How do these experiences affect their identity construction process? Do they build flexible, multiple and fluid identities? We should also wonder how host societies integrate or exclude children of immigrant families, and how they contribute to social development. The hypothesis is that, despite the context of economic, social and political inequality, the sons and daughters of immigrant Latino families build flexible identities that enable them to overcome discrimination. Through their life stories, we see how the young people interviewed show a strong human, social and cultural capital with great capacity of empowerment to overcome various barriers and structural inequalities, and strong sense of belonging to majority societies, despite being in disadvantage. Unlike what was observed by Fangen et al (2012), they do not assume or internalize inferiorizing views and develop strategies to address discrimination and racism. They build flexible identities, positive and open that enable them to accommodate and integrate into the host society, without losing ties to their ethnic and national origin (Roca i Caparà, 2009, 2011).

## **METHODOLOGY OF INVESTIGATION**

The general objective of this research is to describe the process of identity construction of the sons and daughters of immigrant Latino families in the cities of Barcelona, London and Oxford. The operational objectives are: (1) to rebuild identity processes of the sons and daughters of Latin American immigrant families in the cities of Barcelona, London and Oxford; (2) to analyze the relationship between experiences of discrimination and social identity construction processes; and (3) to compare the results obtained in Barcelona, London and Oxford, in relation to both contexts.

This is a qualitative research exploration whose methodology is based on the biographical accounts. The approach is humanistic and it takes into account the holistic view of the young, recognizing that the context has a decisive influence on personal

settings and in their biographies. The study population is *Latino young adults*, children of families who have migrated to Catalonia and England, particularly in the cities of Barcelona, London and Oxford. The sample is strategic, not random. Inclusion criteria were: residence in the three cities; Latino background of both parents; a minimum residence time of 5 years; between 18 and 30 years of age; and differentiated socioeconomic indicators. A total of eleven males and females were interviewed in Barcelona, eight males and females in London, and two females in Oxford.

All young participants were previously informed about the nature of the research, its purpose and use. All agreed to have their interviews recorded. The results of the research are based solely on the biographical accounts of the young people interviewed. The names used are fictional to preserve anonymity and data confidentiality. Research in Barcelona took place during the years 2007-2009, and in the cities of London and Oxford, in the months of May and June 2011

## **CATALONIA AND ENGLAND: DIFFERENT CONTEXTS, SIMILAR DISCRIMINATION?**

England and Catalonia (and Spain) have different dynamics concerning the welcome of migrants but with some similarities in relation to Latin American immigration. In both countries, the first migration flows were largely political in nature, while more recent ones have been economic. The most significant increases have been recorded in the last 15 years, as a result of the economic crises that hit most countries in South America. Although the *Human Development Report 2011* puts both countries in the category of very high Human Development Index (HDI)<sup>4</sup>, with sustained economic growth in recent decades, there are serious inequalities, which are aggravated in times of crisis particularly for the most vulnerable. According to the OECD (March 2012), the percentage of youth unemployment in the UK stood at 21.9% and 51.1% in Spain, when the average of the OECD countries is 17.1%. Since December 2007, the increase was 8.3% and 31.4% respectively.

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<sup>4</sup> Spain is located in the 23<sup>rd</sup> position in the ranking, with a HDI of 0.799 inequality and a HDI of 0.878. The UK is the 28th in the ranking, with a HDI of 0.791 inequality and a HDI of 0.863.

Inequalities by social class, ethnicity, national origin, age and gender interact to increase the precariousness of the sons and daughters of non-EU immigrant families in Europe. In both societies, non-EU immigrant families suffer unequal treatment and face unfavourable structural conditions caused by poorly inclusive legal provisions, segregation and ethnification of labour market, poor working conditions, poor access to housing, tendency to residential exclusion and situations of racism and stigmatization. Such factors are aggravated by the lack of projects and cultural practices. The result is a link between non-EU immigration and poverty which in times of economic and social crisis reaches highly concerning levels (Roca i Caparà, 2009).

### **Latin American Immigration in Spain and Barcelona**

Latin American immigration to Spain has a long history marked by similar cultural elements, mainly the Spanish language. Within some groups, migration starts by the arrival of a female member of the household and once economic stability has been achieved the rest of the family migrates. Much of this population concentrates in Catalonia and Barcelona, a city of immigration for decades. According to Institut d'Estadística de la Generalitat de Catalunya, in January 2012, a total of 282,178 of the residents registered in the city of Barcelona were foreigners, which represents 17.4% of the total population. Foreigners of Latin American origin in Barcelona represent around 39.6% of the total foreign population, with a mean age of 33 years. Training affects the employment status but we need to highlight that most employment takes place in the secondary labour market, in subordinate occupations, which are non-qualified and lower in category than the level of education, as a result of strong occupational segregation.<sup>5</sup>

In general, the image of young Latin American revolves around ideas of personal deficit, school failure, gang violence and adjustment problems, among others. Their image rarely recognises their capabilities and skills to adapt, accommodate, and integrate socially and culturally.

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<sup>5</sup> Most are employed, with a significant number of self-employed and entrepreneurs. Men work in the fields of construction and services, working on care and support of the elderly and on hotel or catering business. Women suffer more precarious, occupational segregation and are located in the productive sectors and activities of a more 'womanly' nature, more undervalued and underpaid, especially focusing

## **Latin American Immigration in the UK and London**

The Latin American population in the UK<sup>6</sup> is relatively recent, not numerous (McIlwaine, 2008a, 2009; McIlwaine et al, 2011) and distinct from the one coming from former colonies. It is a young family population mostly living in London. Despite social, national, economic and cultural diversity, they are developing a sense of common identity, since they first identify themselves as Latin Americans and then as the other nationality (Però, 2008). Opportunities, hardship and survival are the mosaic that depicts their daily lives. Only a few are successful and most live in conditions of vulnerability (McIlwaine, 2005; McIlwaine and Velasquez, 2007; McIlwaine et al, 2011).

As for the sons and daughters of Latin American families, a high percentage have British Nationality and identify themselves as British-Latino, though they feel more Latin American. They speak English and Spanish and are friends with young Latinos and people from other backgrounds. They have a high level of training, with a significant percentage of college studies. Many of them suffer discrimination situations continuously, both at work and at school, and also from the police (McIlwaine et al, 2011). They constitute an almost invisible social group of which there are not specific studies or literature.

## **MIGRATING PROCESSES, IDENTITIES AND DISCRIMINATIONS**

Identity construction is a constantly changing process (Maalouf, 1999), in which socially assigned identity (Bauman, 2005) and social inequalities acquire an important role since, as shown by Barth (1976), ethnic and cultural identity has a strong contextual component. The identity of the young in a family migration process is dynamic, interactive, multidimensional, structural and diachronic, with identity strategies of inclusion and recognition in the host society (Camilleri et al, 1990). However, the sons

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on the domestic sector, cleaning and caring for dependents. Their main access to the labour market is family or relational networks.

<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to obtain accurate figures on the number of residents. According to data from 2008 (Annual Population Survey), 130,186 of the people living in the UK were born in Latin America, of which 79,300 live in London. According to the National Insurance Number, between 2002 and 2009, 77,880 people were registered; 35,690 from Brazil and 15,570 from Colombia. Of this total, 60% live in London. It is estimated that around 17,200 children have been born in the London Latino community since 1990. The first migration flows took place around 1970 when Colombians and Chileans arrived. The most significant increase occurred after 2000, with the arrival of Bolivian and Brazilian groups (McIlwaine et al, 2011).

and daughters of immigrant families are attached to ethnicity and family culture, obviating the fact that processes of enculturation, socialization and acculturation on arrival transform identities and belongings. Classifying people according to only religion, ethnicity or culture is wrong and dangerous (Sen, 2007), because individual and collective identities are plural and diverse, ambivalent and changing.

In highly diverse societies, ethnic differentiation is still present, as in the case of many young French (Lepoutre, 2001), through mechanisms of concealment, denial and discrimination that (re)produce social exclusion (Castel, 2007). When the boundaries between the host society and the immigrant population are clear, it is excluded; when they are blurry, paths to social integration are greater. According to Alba (2005) and Alba and Waters (2011) these boundaries are constructed in relation to religion, language and 'race'.

In this complex process of identity construction, structural inequalities determine hierarchies of belonging and reduce opportunities in different areas of life, as a recent study by Fangen et al (2012) indicates. In many cases, discrimination starts in educational pathways and later develops in the labour market. In both environments, discrimination acts as a barrier to full social inclusion and may affect young people's identities. Although the objectives of the education system provide equal opportunities, sociocultural hierarchies are reproduced as well as ethno-socio-centric interpretation of the perceived differences in terms of abilities and interests (Carrasco, 2005; Carrasco et al, 2009). From the perspective of deficit, maintaining visible ethnic boundaries and hidden barriers in the education system, appears to be incompatible with academic success and social integration for some groups (Carrasco et al, 2011a). Similarly, entry into a highly segmented labour market is characterized by high rates of youth unemployment, mostly affecting young people of immigrant origin. The opportunities for these young people are scarce and mainly present in the underground economy, precarious and poorly paid jobs, with high ethnification and sectorization (Fangen et al, 2012).



## **YOUNG PEOPLE FROM A LATIN AMERICAN BACKGROUND IN BARCELONA, LONDON AND OXFORD**

In the **Barcelona** sample (see Table 1) there are eleven young, five males and six females. All have suffered or witnessed situations of discrimination and discrimination is part of their daily lives. Informants in **London** and **Oxford** (see Table 2) include seven females and three males who claim not to have suffered serious situations of discrimination that have affected their life trajectories. On the contrary, they greatly appreciate the opportunities that British society has brought them. However, when they do report any other type of discrimination, they state they take it badly and it affects them emotionally, whether the sufferers are themselves or the people around them.

In general, all the young people interviewed have much in common with their peers of similar age but family migration is an important aspect of their lives. They are young adults with successful school and / or academic careers, with professional future expectations and with a standard social integration, but threatened by the risk of social inequalities, in particular inequalities by class and origin. Their narratives show that they have great human, social and cultural capital, and make major efforts to overcome situations of discrimination and xenophobic and/or assimilationist tendencies. In general, though with different experiences, they have adapted better than their parents. These findings match those from previous studies in Australia, Finland, Sweden and the U.S. (Berry et al, 2006).

The statements of the young people interviewed allow us to classify them into four categories in order to analyze and understand the relationships between identity and discrimination. It is not a static classification because their flexible identities shows their dynamic nature (Roca i Caparà, 2009).

### **Identities and belongings in discrimination contexts**

❖ ***Youth with flexible cultural and ethnic identity, more linked with the mainstream social and cultural context (associated with long socialization and acculturation on the host society ) and little sense of belonging to the culture of origin related to successful school and / or work trajectories:***

This typology includes two young people from Barcelona with a long process of enculturation and socialization in the host society, with additive and implicative acculturation and enculturation, who have made successful school careers culminated with college studies. Social relations established with the native youth and rarely with Latino youth. Neither has experienced discrimination, although it should be noted that they are still studying and have not entered the labour market in a stable manner. They feel fortunate for their parents' decision to migrate. Despite living their adaptation and inclusion positively, they are critical about situations of discrimination that affect other people and groups because of their status as migrants. Both believe that society hierarchizes groups according to origin and say that people from Morocco suffer the most in this regard. They show an adaptive dynamics with two cultural references and believe their identity is in the midst of a cross though their culture is Catalan-Spanish.

❖ ***Youth with flexible cultural and ethnic identity, more linked with the mainstream social and cultural context (associated with long socialization and acculturation on the host society ) and little sense of belonging to the culture of origin related to experiences of social and / or labour discrimination, despite having good academic trajectories:***

In this group we also have two young people from Barcelona with a process of socialization and enculturation in the host society in early childhood. They show a strong sense of belonging to the host society without losing the loyalty of origin and ethnic affiliation. They feel well treated by society despite experiences of discrimination.

In relation to these two types, it is noteworthy that no young person from London and Oxford claims to have English identity, although they have a sense of belonging. A cause that may explain this is cultural differences because, with few exceptions, most express greater links with the culture of origin, but conversely, the English language does not appear to be a barrier as it is generally used and positively valued. On the other hand, four of Barcelona's youth identify primarily with the host society, especially at a cultural level. None of the four identifies with young newly migrated co-ethnics, building relationships with young people from both native and other origins and backgrounds, as a strategy of social inclusion and integration, as

shown Camillieri et al (1990), not closing within the limits of their own group but neither denying their origin. Agreeing with the findings of Back et al (2012) all of them identify a hierarchy of recognition towards different groups of immigrant population, according to their origin, being critical of the social structure and inequality, and adopting a position of objective neutrality. The situations of discrimination experienced by two young people are not described as serious and took place mainly during their school years and not their careers. Both of them, despite claiming to have a closer link with their host society, define themselves as stateless or citizens of the world without national or ethnic affiliations.

❖ ***Youth with flexible cultural and ethnic identity, linked with the mainstream social and cultural context but with greater sense of belonging to the culture of origin without perception of school and/or labour discrimination in their trajectories:***

In this category we have four young people from Barcelona and four from London. This is a heterogeneous group in terms of residence time, with the presence of young people with socialization and enculturation in origin, migrated during adolescence and youth, still largely tied to the land of birth and the myth of return being present. All agree that they have not experienced discrimination in their life trajectories. The definition of these young people's identities is the example of the mixture of a strong feeling of affection and emotional connection with the origin and belonging to the host society. All of them – though expressing it in a different way – believe they have a 'fusion-of-cultures identity'.

❖ ***Youth with flexible cultural and ethnic identity, linked with the mainstream social and cultural context but with greater sense of belonging to the culture of origin with perception of school and/or labour discrimination in their trajectories:***

In this group we have three youth from Barcelona and six from London and Oxford. They have different academic backgrounds with higher levels of training for the young English people and careers dominated by precariousness and temporariness in most cases. All of them have in common their identity link with origin and the personal experiences of discrimination. Young people in England feel integrated and adapted to

the society, of which they also appreciate having had more opportunities – supposedly – than the ones in origin. They agree with Catalans in the fact that every one of them think that family migration changed their lives forever.

None of the young Catalan and English in these two typologies claims to have suffered situations of serious discrimination, but they do refer to existing discrimination and –in the case of young people living in England– to situations their families have lived. These young immigrants in England state that there is a class component of discriminatory attitude from the English middle class towards them. The Catalan and the English believe that the view of immigration from outside the EU is largely determined by the prevailing rhetoric. However, agreeing with the results provided by Fangen et al (2012), despite contextual differences, there are great similarities in the feelings of belonging and identity of the young people interviewed. This fact shows that the connections are stronger than structural inequalities and that these young people develop skills, competencies and strategies that help them overcome disadvantages and inferiorizing categorizations. The feeling of belonging to the host society dampens their disadvantaged position and makes them active social actors of their own social integration. It is the host society that continues to be the one which – through otherness, inequalities and exclusions – creates barriers to their young (Roca i Caparà, 2009, 2011) and problematizes their identities. All of them, whether with experiences of discrimination or not, show a cultural, ethnic and national identity more linked to family origin, thus it is clear that they do not deny their national and ethnic origin, although they connect it with a disadvantaged position and consequently, as a basis for discrimination. While some young people use the words *fusion* and *mixture* to define their identity, they are characterized by a strong connection to origin and a sense of *latinidad* expressed as a connection to the ethnic group, and related to the personal way of being. However, they also show a great adaptation to Catalan and British society, which are specified in the acceptance and practice of values, ideology, social rights, gender equality, youth culture and social relations and practices. A significant aspect is the appreciation of Britain as a land of opportunity and multiculturalism. Spain does not generate this view although young people expressed positive feelings toward Spain and Catalonia, identifying more with Spain than Catalonia, a fact that can be associated with the historical view of Spain as

the mother country and the use of the Spanish language, maximum link connection between origin and destination. Both sides agree that the two societies are more open, tolerant and respectful of human rights to their home countries, emphasizing the feeling of greater freedom, development, tolerance and order; an opinion that contrasts with the critique of the social situation in the countries where they come from. In contrast, they emphasize the greater individualism and the loss of collective feeling that affects European societies.

Summing up, we can say that living with bicultural references allows the young people interviewed to build **flexible identities** as a result of the incorporation of shared complementary values and practices, and that, in his stories, emotionally bind them to the society and culture of origin and integrate them in the society and culture of destination despite the structural barriers described. There are limits to full assimilation (Eriksen, 1993) because the values and emotional bonding transmitted by parents help them develop a strong ethnic capital (MODOOB in Alba and Waters, 2011). Unlike the theses by Berry et al (2006),<sup>7</sup> the ethnic profile shows a good psychological and sociocultural adaptation without significant effect on the discrimination suffered. These are young people with a profile of **integration without assimilation, with ethnic and cultural adherence to origin, and functional behaviour fitting into the social and cultural complexity of destination, resulting in a feeling of transnationality**. From this perspective, it is understood that for the English young people, multicultural reality is a facilitator of identification with the host society, while for the Catalan young people engagement is achieved by the persistence of historical ties and cultural similarities. Although in some cases the difficulties of adaptation and accommodation are obvious, there is no rejection of mainstream

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<sup>7</sup>For Berry et al (2006), the ethnic profile characteristics are good psychological adjustment but sociocultural maladaptation.

society, or idealization of origin. Nor is inferred from their biographical accounts that discrimination directly and unavoidably determines negative identities or feelings of belonging but we cannot forget that none of the youth is at risk of social exclusion.

These are identities of resistance and reaffirmation, with positive evaluation of the Catalan, English and home societies, but critical position. The need to 'belong' and 'be recognized' as an active member of society is evident in each of these young people. From their stories we can say that they demonstrate identity change and cultural adaptation (Barth, 1976), permeability and cultural, national and ethnic mixture and identity mobility (Eriksen, 1993) (It is impossible to have static cultures in a global and multicultural world), but it seems harder to achieve upward social mobility as a result of persistent inequalities, erected in difficult barriers in the different arenas of public life, confirming that social class and ethnicity interact as axes in the dynamics of discrimination and the processes of social inclusion / exclusion on young people, children of immigrant families (Fangen et al, 2012).

### ***Factors interrelated with flexible identities, discrimination and processes of social inclusion-exclusion***

This comparative study attempts to analyze the interconnections between flexible identities, discrimination and social inclusion-exclusion continuum, in one ethno-cultural group, in two different contexts. The purpose is to understand what factors influence and act on individual variations of the processes of adaptation and inclusion in the host society. Here are the main factors identified, and transversely, the most relevant differences and similarities.

- **Migration and family adaptation:**

All young people interviewed in Barcelona, London and Oxford come from families with a strong ethnic and cultural profile. As noted by Coe et al (2011), the children are the centre of their parents' immigration project. The core of the family culture is transmitted from parents to children and displayed in family relationships, norms and values, cooking practices, the use of the Spanish language and the idealization that the parents make of the country of origin. The migration appears as a momentous change, marked by the need to adapt to a world that is completely new, made more than

evident in Britain where the need of learning the English language is a major effort. They are working-class families who have lived a migration path marked by difficulties (work and home, mainly) and the feeling of being 'between two worlds': One is that of their family life, their values and worldview; the other is the outside world, where social norms, relationships and social participation are, at the beginning an unknown whole. During this process, families (except two, one in Barcelona and one in London) have had the support of family or social networks (friends) previously settled. England families have benefited from a multicultural model that – despite its shortcomings and recent changes – has supported and recognized cultural diversity (Fangen et al, 2012). On the other hand, Barcelona families have benefited from a social model of integrative character with emotional ties with Latin America. With time, they have adapted and accommodated without specific problems with a regularized legal status and obtained citizenship. They are positive family models where relationships between parents and children have no significant cultural conflicts.

- **Migration, adaptation and personal accommodation:**

The people interviewed are young people who have matured early. They feel responsible, and with a great sense of debt and gratitude to the parents, of whom they greatly appreciate the effort. For the young people with family reunification during their teenage age, the accommodation and adaptation process has been more difficult. However, the length of residence helps develop skills and competencies for positive social and cultural integration. In spite of the recounted experiences of discrimination and the resulting feeling of rejection and injustice experienced, young people's attitudes toward English and Catalan society include recognition and appreciation for the opportunities experienced; the feeling of being at home; the reaffirmation of values as tolerance, freedom and respect for human rights, intercultural relations and the pride of being a member of society. For them, migration becomes a condition of their own existence. They appear, as indicated by Coe et al (2011), to negotiate their identity with the family background and the mainstream society, showing great agency for autonomy and personal independence and resistance to assimilation, following the model of strength they have received from family migration and the resistance learning that characterizes childhood and adolescence in transit from origin to destination. For them, becoming adults between two cultures stands for enrichment and openness, even negotiating and dodging obstacles and contrarities. Their discourses confirm that

grow with the feeling of being with or between two cultures and between two "places", with many more similarities than differences (Roca i Caparà, 2009). However, those who migrated belatedly do negatively value adjustment difficulties, the coldness in social relationships and the attitudes of rejection towards the foreign population.

The young Catalan women show a stronger gender perspective than their English peers, developing a discourse that rejects reproducing any kind of submission and claiming a woman's identity beyond any other identification. This appreciation is not present among the young English girls interviewed, but even if not explicitly verbalized, contact and "pollution" of the host society will mean a change of mentality and overcoming some traditional patterns that open new horizons of freedom and empowering young women, still having to struggle to overcome much resistance. As Macllwaine (2008b) described, it is a transition from traditional models to new practices characterized by discontinuities, with some successes and failures.

- **Academic trajectories:**

Although schooling and academic success are the first steps in eliminating inequalities, ensuring opportunities and facilitating social integration of young people from different backgrounds, the school itself reproduces inequalities that result in segregation and difficulties of access to higher education for many children of immigrant families (Carrasco et al, 2011a, 2011b). Without showing too different features between English and Catalan education model (Fangen et al, 2012) the young people interviewed in Barcelona, London and Oxford have made or are making successful academic careers, confirming that the priority of the parents was to get a better level of life for their children (Carrasco et al, 2009) and showing that the deficit theory is not always real. Both groups have chosen to attend college or vocational training as a guarantee of social integration. There are no significant differences in terms of the valuation they make of their training. Everyone has expectations of improvement related to their studies.

- **Work trajectories:**

The stories of the young people confirm that inequality of opportunity takes place more prominently in labour market access. For many of them it is the first problematic experience linked to being children of immigrant families. Despite good school and college results, the reproduction of class and origin inequalities continues to affect



girls, who present the more precarious situations than boys and more upward mobility difficulties, to a greater extent. Although higher education acts preventively against exclusion, labour market slows trajectories of social inclusion, as discrimination is a major barrier in the active standardized participation in labour market (Fangen, 2010; Fangen et al, 2012). Negative discrimination suffered by many of these young people is a repeated practice that is part of a labour market that is irregular in Catalonia and poor in England. Of the twenty-one young people, only six (at the time of the interview) are employed in jobs related to their studies, the rest do not work or work temporarily, without contracts and in distress, no significant differences are observed between one context and the other. However, the difficulties to enter the labour market do not radicalize them, contrary to what Baillet (1999) suggests, but they do become more critical of social inequalities.

- **Relationships and social networks:**

A very important aspect in the process of socialization, a/culturation and identity construction are the experiences of interaction with the peer group. As indicated by Berry et al (2006), the relationships they establish with members of their ethnic group and the host society is an important factor in defining identity. The young people interviewed did not have difficulty relating. The origin of the group of friends is not a condition or priority. Both in England and in Catalonia they are very open to multicultural and multiethnic relations, which contributes to opening cultural, ethnic and identity boundaries, and having flexible and positive identities. In the English young people, outreach to other groups allows them into other social and cultural contexts, and their greater knowledge and sense of belonging to the English society helps them open relationships, acting as a bridge between their parents and it. They have interethnic relations with youth from many backgrounds. An interesting aspect is that young people migrated during adolescence – both English and Catalan – are more interested in establishing intraethnic relationships and often have a small circle of friends.

It is noteworthy that the majority of young Catalans do not establish an ethnically based relational endogamy; even those with many years of residence give alterity discourses to refer to young newcomers. They define them as distant and different, and they do not recognize themselves in them. This view can be understood as a identity strategy (Camillieri et al, 1990) of avoidance and disengagement, which

provides different types of youth and builds alterities ('the other ones are different') in order to achieve social recognition and positioning ('I'm from here'). We also have those who seek proximity and step away from other groups, 'We are like you; the other ones (in this case they refer to the Moroccans) are different'. It is understood that behind these positions there is a need to feel, be seen themselves and identify as a member of society. Obviously, not all young people have this view and some are able to identify as 'equal' to the young newcomers. Also noteworthy is the ability to put in place the recent immigrant, remembering their own difficulties and accepting their aspirations for improvement. The paradox is that the young people who came much later also establish this difference with long residence ones. They consider them to be '*too much from here*' and to have lost roots and origin. Except in one case, this radical position is not observed in young English people, who establish multicultural relations, including Latino youth, without any distinction or differentiation.

In general, young people in England use English with friends and siblings, because they have become accustomed since childhood. They see it –as well as necessary– as a unique chance to learn a universal language and have more opportunities. On the other hand, young Catalans continue with Spanish as the common language, saving Catalan for relationships with friends and in specific areas such as school or college. Only young people who have done most of the schooling in Catalan tend to use it regularly.

With regard to relationships, some prefer their partner to be English or Catalan, showing opposition to emotional relationship with young co-ethnics. Specifically, some girls from Barcelona express their desire not to have a partner from their country of origin, due to sexism issues and feelings of differentiation. Other young people, both in Catalonia and in England, considered having a multicultural couple very unlikely due to cultural reasons, and they prefer to have the same background.

- **Context, living conditions and legal situation:**

The context and position in the social structure, along with ethnic and national origin, are relevant factors of inequality or inclusion in the life trajectories of the young interviewees (Roca i Caparà, 2009; Fangen et al, 2012). Similarly, their living conditions and their legal status are also excellent indicators of the degree of integration into the host society. In order to learn more about their life trajectories I have analyzed the

type of housing, neighbourhood, socioeconomic status, social class self-definition and ideological positioning, as well as the legal status of the young people and their families.

As for the type of housing, the purchase of flats is common in Barcelona families, while social housing is the most common among the families in London and Oxford. Both situations correspond to two distinct realities. While the culture of 'home purchase' is widely established in Catalonia and Spain, housing policies in England favour social housing rental, which benefits many immigrant families with limited resources. Note that the purchase of the home in Barcelona comes after a long process of settlement and economic stability.

Both in London and in Barcelona there is significant geographical concentration. The families live in neighbourhoods with a high percentage of immigration from different countries and continents which, on the one hand, facilitates intercultural and intergroup relations, preventing separation and segregation in the group itself. On the other hand, in some cases full integration is difficult. This situation is more evident in English families.

Socioeconomic status is grouped into two categories, in similar way in both contexts. On the one hand we have dependent employees, father and mother, occupied mainly in domestic service, with permanent contracts but with low salaries. On the other hand, we have small entrepreneurs who over the years have been able to establish their own business, most of which in the service sector.

Most of the young people define themselves as having a left-winged ideology and a few of them 'in the middle of the road', but all of them feel that they belong to the working class. The young adults feel it is important to have their nationality, but appreciate that recognition as a citizen is not synonymous with recognition as a person. They think having the nationality status is not an infallible condition of fair and equal treatment, though it makes it easier.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As noted by Fangen et al (2012), in multicultural and diverse Europe new cultural ethnic and national identities emerge, while stratification and social hierarchies based on ethnicity and origin is a reality that is enhanced as population outside the

community increase. Structural inequalities hold them as citizens without full rights (Andebert and Kamel Dorai, 2010).

In this study we wanted to know how integration of children of Latin American immigrant families takes place and to analyze existing inclusion gaps, what the most important problems that interfere with their careers are and what their successes are. The answer is that they are well integrated in that they feel involved and linked to it, but not fully included, despite their contribution as cultural agents. As already indicated by Martiniello and Rath (2010), the biographical accounts of these young people show that society continues to build visible barriers, manifested in the differences in opportunities, and invisible, since they do not recognize their potential, competences and intercultural relations skills. It should be noted that the young interviewees in Barcelona, London and Oxford have necessary human and social capital for social inclusion. With regard to human capital, they have a medium-high level of education serving as key predictor of inclusion, the residence time is at least 5 years (at the time of the interview) in Catalonia and a minimum of 7 in England, most young people having a long history in the host-society and obtaining citizenship. Regarding social capital, they maintain open multicultural social relationships and establish trans-ethnic networks, without confining themselves in their own group. Although they are not youth in social exclusion, they are victims of discrimination, a fact that positions them at a disadvantage to achieve full inclusion in their host societies. Despite being active agents in social change and improvement, they suffer excluding practices at risk of disabling their human social and cultural capital. We find the paradox, already indicated by Martiniello and Rath (2010) that despite their status of citizenship with equal rights, unequal social practices reduce them to a status of residents with semi-exclusion of rights, which is made visible mainly in labour market. However, in agreement with observations by Morales and Gingui (2011), feelings of discrimination have not had an impact in their identities or their feeling of social belonging.

We also wanted to examine what identity the children of non-EU immigrant families in Europe build, in relation to the discrimination suffered, in different contexts, in order to analyze what adaptation and integration strategies they develop. The stories of the young people interviewed confirm the complexity of interrelations between identity and sense of belonging with the processes of social inclusion and exclusion. In any case, the most important aspect to note is that all of them are shown

as active agents and participate in society, building flexible identities, expressing the richness of growing in culturally diverse societies and which are the result of social and cultural capital that these young people acquire in childhood, adolescence and youth. There are certainly problems of adaptation and inclusion, which in most cases are the result of structural conditions of differentiation, segregation and inequality. However, it is important to avoid a problematizing view because it can hide their agency to deal with situations of discrimination.

We have seen that the young people share similar characteristics in different contexts. The major differentiating elements underlie, on the one hand, the greater tradition of multiculturalism and social policies aimed at the immigrant population in England, and, on the other hand, the greater cultural and linguistic proximity in Catalonia. However, instances of discrimination against the immigrant population are similar. The young people from a Latino background, many of whom were born in Catalonia and England, are seen as foreigners in their own country because of their ethnicity, skin colour or physical features, name and class, not being recognized as full members in the society they live. These axes of inequality continue to act as the basis of the processes of discrimination and social exclusion (MODOOB and SALT, 2011). The inferiorizing view and of discrimination practices against groups from Latin America (as with other ethnic minorities), mostly located in the school and the labour market, highlight the tensions present in European societies between the need to immigration and the attitude towards diversity that foreign population brings, which are specified in situations of marginalization and racism (BACK and SINHA, 2010). However, in the discourses which impregnate collective imagination, and generate erroneous and blurred vision of immigrants, these resistant young people react to situations of discrimination, rejection and humiliation without negative positions. Facing their allocated and assigned identities they chose to manage the conflict of loyalties, belongings and cultural references with a flexible, open and multiple identity due to a strong bond with origin and deep roots in destination, showing great personal maturity to reaffirm their identity and overcome difficult situations and circumstances. They are not resentful or victimized, but critically positioned to social reality. They claim their right to be part of society from a position of equality and reject inferiorizing and differentiating ascribed identities.

International migration is a fundamental phenomenon of modern societies and a priority in the formulation of social policies. The future of the social model is not a marginal issue. Its definition is central to the new generations, to which sons and daughters of families with migration process belong (Andebert and Kamel Dorai, 2010). The recognition of these young people with flexible identities, and their cultural and ethnic specificities, as a bridge and link between different cultural groups, is an inescapable social duty to neutralize closed and exclusionary national identities and to enhance the common elements to invalidate the building of differences that oppose and confront groups. The accommodation and inclusion problem is not inevitable (Berry et al, 2006) and can be overcome on the basis of social inclusion policies.

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**Table 1: Sociological and anthropological data. Young immigrants in Barcelona.**

Name	Age / Years in BCN	Origin / Birthplace	Legal situation	Partner/ Preferences	Studies	Occupation	Language	Friends and relationships	Identity/ Belonging	Feelings towards Catalonia / Spain	Discrimination
Abel	21 12	Peru Peru	Dual nationality	No partner / No preferences	University (in progress)	Not-working	Spanish and Catalan	All friends are Catalan.	Somewhere in between. Does not feel Catalan neither Peruvian but his culture is "from here". "My body is from there, but my culture is from here".	Identifies more with Spain than with Catalonia. Does not identify with anyone in particular either from here or there.	No discrimination problems. Considers society hierarchizes immigrants according to their origin
Katy	20 14	Peru Peru	Nationality Spanish. Renounces to Peruvian nationality	No partner. Prefers native partner because of sexism.	University (in progress)	Babysitter at a hotel, waitress, promoter at shopping centre, auxiliary nurse (temporary jobs)	Spanish at home. Catalan with friends	All friends are Catalan (high-school mates)	Catalan / Peruvian but feels more from here than from there Identifies with long-term resident co-ethnics, not with newcomers.	Identifies equally with Catalonia and Spain	Feels well treated. Has never felt discriminated. Considers there is discrimination by origin Moroccans and Pakistanis being the groups in worst situation.
Mercedes	21 18	Peru Peru	Spanish Nationality.	No partner. Prefers a non-Peruvian partner.	4 <sup>th</sup> ESO. High School (in progress) Would like to study INEF (PE)	Shop-assistant at a sport's shoes shop in Ramblas.	Usually Spanish but also Catalan	Friends from around the world: Morocco, Latin America, Catalonia. Does not have Peruvian friends.	Does not identify with anything, just with herself. Does not identify with co-ethnics, she sees them as very different.	Identifies equally with Catalonia and Spain	Discriminated by peers at school as a child.

Lilian	23 15	Peru Peru	Dual nationality	No partner No preferences	High school. Associate Degree in Pharmacy.	Pharmacy Auxiliary.	Spanish with friends and Catalan at work	Catalan friends with Andalusian parents.	Latina. Somewhere in between Mind and education is from here but she feels Peruvian. Does not identify with co-ethnics at all. Feels strange.	Greater feeling of Spanishness	Discriminated by a teacher at school. Thinks many immigrants are discriminated because of the bad image given.
Dolores	19 19	Peru Peru	Dual nationality	Catalan partner. Prefers native partner.	No primary school graduate. Studied secretarial vocational training and then took entry test to Associate Degree studies. Wants to get primary school degree and study Chiro-Massage.	Looking for any kind of job. Wants to earn money to help pay mortgage	Always Spanish and sometimes Catalan	All native. It is hard to relate to Latinos.	Peruvian identity and nation. Spanish culture. Does not identify with co-ethnics at all. Feeling of her space being invaded.		Has never felt discriminated. Thinks Pakistanis and Moroccans are more discriminated.
Paulina	27 8	Ecuador Ecuador	Permanent residence permit and work permit.	No partner. Prefers a co-ethnic partner <i>"in case one day I return to my country"</i>	Trade and Administration studies in Ecuador (unfinished)	Works in her mother's grocery store.	Spanish and sometimes Catalan with her daughter.	Amigos de from many places, mainly Latinos from the neighbourhood and work.	Her identity is a fusion 50% Spanish (rather than Catalan) and 50% Ecuadorian. Identifies with co-ethnics <i>"We are all the same "</i>		No discrimination. Feels very accepted everywhere.
Juan Pablo	23	Ecuador	Residence and work	Colombian partner. No	High School degree, with A-	Works as a metal polisher at an	Spanish	Friends from everywhere.	Latino Identity <i>"I am</i>	Greater identification with	Discriminated by seniors at work many times. When he had

	5	Ecuador	permit. Has applied for nationality	preferences as long as it is a girl he feels well with.	Levels in Technician in Industrial Electronics (in Ecuador) Wants to study Associate Degree in electronics.	aluminium company. Wants to study to work in something he likes.		Many Colombian and few Ecuadorian friends. Plays in a professional football team mainly formed by Colombians.	<i>the same person and I will go on being it</i> ". Ecuadorian nation, culture from here. Identifies little with co-ethnic youth. Sees them far away.	Catalonia than with Spain	no papers he was exploited. Has also had problems with skinheads.
Carlos	24 22	Chile Chile	Spanish nationality	No partner No preferences	University studies (in progress) Has done Philosophy and currently studying Psychology.	Works as administrative head in an association subsidiary.	Catalan and Spanish	All Catalan. Mainly school mates.	Identifies as Hispanic and stateless with a Latino culture. Does not identify with all co-ethnic youth, sees them very different.		Discrimination in several occasions. At school, in the streets...
Gabriel	25 11	Colombia Colombia	Spanish nationality	Native Partner. No preferences	Associate Degree in Construction. Technical Architecture studies (in progress). Wants to study a Postgraduate to become a civil architect.	Works at an architect's office.	Spanish	All friends are native, mostly form high school. Does not know any foreign youth.	Colombian identity. "From there but a little adapted to <i>here</i> ". Identifies with co-ethnics. Depends on residence time. Sees them different to him.	More identification with Catalonia than with Spain	No discriminating experiences. Sees discrimination against other immigrants on a daily basis.
Virginia	23 6	Ecuador Ecuador	Residence and work permit.	Native Partner. No preferences	High School in Ecuador In Barcelona, she has taken IT and English courses. Wants to study at	Has worked at a cafeteria. Currently working as a babysitter looking after children.	Spanish	Has friends from Ecuador, Chile, Morocco, Colombia and also Catalan	Identifies as Ecuadorian - Spanish Identifies with people from Ecuador but wants to		Has felt discriminated for the colour of her skin and her background, mainly in the streets.

					university when her studies in Ecuador are recognized.				meet people from other countries		
César	24 7	Ecuador Ecuador	Permanent residence permit and work permit Has applied for nationality	Lives with partner and a 2-year-old daughter, born in Barcelona. His partner is from Ecuador and they met in Barcelona. No partner origin preferences.	High School in Physics – maths in Ecuador. Has not continued studying in Barcelona (wanted to study Architecture or Electric Engineering)	Works for a supermarket chain. Permanent contract for 5 years Has projects to start own company, trading with Ecuador.	Spanish	Has friends from Uruguay and native, mainly at work.	Feels <i>"Ecuadorian to death"</i> Identifies with some co-ethnics. Sees long-term residents as if <i>"They have lost it"</i> .	Great identification with Catalonia and Spain. <i>"I would love to live in Barcelona"</i>	Has never felt discriminated. Considers society has preferences among Latin American immigrants and that Ecuadorians are less loved than Argentines or Brazilian.

**Table 2: Sociological and anthropological data. Young immigrants in England.**

Name	Age / Living in UK for	Origin / Born in	Legal situation	Partner / Preferences	Studies	Occupation	Language	Friends and relationship	Identity / Belongings	Feelings Towards England	Discrimination
Lilian	18 / 14	Ecuador	British Nationality	No partner No preferences	About to finish high school. Wants to study Law and Politics.	No	Spanish with parents. English with friends & siblings	Ecuadorian and multicultural origins.	Mixed cultural background: Ecuadorian Hispanic – British.	Feels good “It’s my home” “I feel I am one more”	No personal discrimination but is aware of discrimination against other immigrants  “Personally, I have not felt rejected by the British society, I have always felt accepted.”
Isabel	21 / 14	Colombia	Permanent residence	Colombian No preferences	Studying a course in legal secretary. Would like to study law in the future.	Part-time Secretary at an attorney’s firm.	Spanish with parents. English with friends & siblings	Multicultural origins	Mixed cultural background: Colombian Hispanic – British.	“What I like best about England is the fact that one feels freer here. One can do whatever they like without being judged. I like that; freedom.”	No personal discrimination  “No, I have never felt discriminated but I believe society does discriminate.”
John	25 / 25	Colombia / England	British Nationality	No partner No preferences	Finished high school. Went to college for two years and studied Spanish, graphic design, computing, French and mathematics.	Museum manager	Spanish with parents. English with friends and siblings	Multicultural origins. Mainly English and Hispanic.	Colombian identity and culture (feels identified with both nations but more Colombian) Ethnic group: Hispanic.	Development, Tolerance, Opportunity  “I’m English with a Colombian heritage”	Sometimes has problems at airport when flying from Colombia. Feels has the same opportunities as English people but requires more effort.
Diego	18 / 18	Colombia / England	British Nationality	Colombian Colombian	Finished high school. At the moment, studying at a private college to be a commercial pilot.	No	Spanish with parents. English friends & siblings	Colombian African English  Multicultural origins	Identity: British from Colombian origin / English nation / Colombian culture /	Proud to be born in England. Opportunities.	No personal discrimination.

									Ethnic group: Latin.		
Verónica	22 / 22	Colombia	British Nationality	No partner No preferences	3 <sup>rd</sup> year studying Accounts at Public University (subsidized)	Cashier at in an American Money Transfer company. (Permanent contract).	Spanish with parents. English friends & siblings	English and Multicultural origins	Identity: Colombian by birth but more English / English nation and culture / Ethnic group: Latin.	Good feelings "I have been brought up in England"	No personal discrimination but sees discrimination against immigrants.  "Not me. Maybe because I speak good English, since I've studied here. I've never had any problem."
Cristina	28 / 7	Colombia	Spanish Nationality	Colombian No preferences	Travel and tourism for three years. Certified Vocational training.	Maintenance company (Permanent contract). On Saturdays at a shipping company.	Spanish with mother, friends & daughter. English with siblings	Colombian	Hispanic and Colombian identity and culture / Colombian nation / Ethnic group: Colombian	"It's another world. It's difficult for me to adapt"	Occupation discrimination, racism and classism in the English society
Alejandra	18 / 7	Colombia	Spanish Nationality	No partner No preferences	At College studying forensic science.	Clothes store (when not studying). Long term contract.	Spanish with parents. English friends & siblings	Multicultural origins Not Latin origin	Hispanic identity, culture and nation Non Colombian / Ethnic group: Colombian "maybe"	Opportunities.	Less opportunities due to language and origin. "My first year at school was very hard. We were not well treated because we didn't speak English... everything was so different."
Julio	28 / 11	Colombia	British Nationality	No partner No preferences	Business Administration, Information and Systems at college.	Partner owner of a Latin Disco in London.	Spanish with parents. English friends & siblings	Latin and multicultural origin	Colombian identity but European mind.	Opportunities, business, open society.	Occupation, work discrimination (promotion is impossible).
Teresa	22 / 11	Colombia	British Nationality	No partner No preferences	Marketing and finance and French at Oxford Brooks University. (just completed)	Shop assistant at a clothes shop (3 days a week, to cover studies).	Spanish with parents and some friends. English with friends	Latin and multicultural origin.	Colombian identity "but English too. It's impossible to say I'm not"  Colombian	Organization, order, more relaxed, more liberal. "People are colder"	Important problems in the airport "Yes, I've felt discriminated, every time I say I am Colombian."  No discrimination at

									nation and culture		work or studies but social discrimination (in the street).
María	23 / 15	Colombia	British Nationality	English No preferences	Sociologist, psychologist, media and art at College and Documental Photography at Wales University.	Shop supervisor in a clothes shop in Oxford.	Spanish with parents. English friends & siblings	English and Latin origin.	English and Ecuadorian identity and culture. English nation. Ethnic group: Ecuadorian.	<i>"I have had bad experiences"</i> <i>"It's like Limbo"</i>	Discrimination at school. Family discrimination.  <i>"I've had problems with day by day living"</i>  "Many immigrants are discriminated. Sometimes it's even hatred..."

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