

**MA in Education, Health Promotion and International
Development**

**Diaspora groups, wellbeing and development: exploring the
Latin American community in London**

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Abstract

Across the globe, disadvantaged people who face insecurity and poverty struggle to survive and migration is sometimes the only way to escape from it and have a better life. However, opportunities for migrants in cities like London are not straightforward, especially for communities like the Latin American, with a high percentage of the community being unskilled (McIlwaine et al, 2011).

From the development sector, international agencies as well as national governmental bodies like the Department for International Development (DfID) show their interest to engage with diaspora groups to improve the development of their home countries, however programmes and policies are limited in number and significant challenges need to be addressed to make migration more development-friendly (House of Commons International Development Committee, 2003; Van Hear, et al, 2004.) This study engages with the wellbeing of Latin American migrants who live in London and aims to outline the implications that poor wellbeing has on efforts to increase the impact of migration for poverty reduction.

Findings from this study suggest that more needs to be done to address social inequality in London for the Latin American community. Additionally, policies and programmes trying to engage diaspora groups for their home countries' development need to have greater understanding of the challenges that people face and offer greater support to migrant organisations who work directly with such communities.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The link between migration and development sector is more relevant than ever, as we see the number of people risking their lives to escape from poverty and war increasing rapidly (IOM, 2013a; IOM, 2013b). The negative effects of migration in developing countries increase the risk of losing their opportunity to build their human capital, therefore positive effects of migration need to be effectively enhanced by both host and sending countries. From a development perspective migration is generally understood as a lack of development, however it also represents a great opportunity for the personal development of the migrants. Both perspectives should be considered to achieve a better understanding of the challenges that migration poses for both host and sending countries. In London, a great number of organisations work to advocate for the rights of migrants and support people's wellbeing.

This study shows the reality for unskilled Latin American migrants living in London. Their wellbeing and their perception about their role in development is explored and the study outlines the challenges that international agencies and the UK government should take into account when trying to incorporate diaspora groups in development.

The framing of this study was established from my previous contact with Indioamerican Refugee and Migrant Organisation (IRMO). This organisation is one of the most well known organisations in London, advocating for the rights of Latin American migrants supporting their wellbeing, and it has been used as for this study. My previous experiences talking with Latin American migrants and being involved in activities to promote the community in London brought about my interest in connecting the topic of migration with my development studies. I decided then to use the following questions to guide the study:

1. What is already known about the role of diaspora communities in the development of their own and other people's capabilities and wellbeing?
2. Do members of a Latin American Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in London consider they have a role in development? If so, what helps and hinders them in this role?

3. What are the implications of the study findings for 'sustainable development'.

To address these questions, this study will be guided through the following theoretical framework: the concept of wellbeing promoted in Ottawa Charter (1986) and the Capability Approach. Furthermore the study will follow an interpretative, qualitative approach. The data will be collected in the form of semi-structured interviews to five beneficiaries and one worker from IRMO.

Finally, the report is organised as follows: In Chapter 1, I present the rationale and the research questions. In Chapter 2, I described the context of the Latin American Community in London and IRMO. In Chapter 3, I discuss the conceptual framework to guide the study. Chapter 4 demonstrates the methodology approach for the study. Chapter 5 and 6, analyse the data from the findings using the conceptual framework and draws conclusions.

Chapter 2: Context

In this study, the term 'Latin American' is taken to mean people native-born in any of the countries of the 21 countries of the Latin American region, and whose mother tongues is Spanish or Portuguese.

2.1 The Latin American Community in London

The literature found of the Latin American community in London is very limited. Having said this, the only report that actually focuses on this community and offers a robust analysis the community and its characteristics is the report 'No longer visible' (McIlwaine et al, 2011). The report claims that this community has been overlooked by national governments and public services. The limited amount of research of the Latin American community in London is already an important sign of its abandonment. Considering the Latina American population four-fold growth since 2001, the current estimated population is a total of 186,000 people in the UK, which of 113,500 are in London (McIlwaine et al, 2011). Its size justifies then the need to know more about the people's realities, struggles, needs, etc., and have more evidence of

what are the areas that need improvement to achieve a better quality of life and wellbeing for the Latin American population.

The migration of Latin Americans to the UK started in the 1970s with the social and political crisis of countries such Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. In the 1980s migrant organisations were actively campaigning to raise awareness of the violation of human rights in Latin American countries and related conflicts. Since the 2000s, a second migration from Europe increased the controls in the borders and the migration policies. The main flow was from Spain to UK. Spain was the first host country due to a similar culture and the share of same language. With the recent economic recession the Spanish economy was devastated and Latin American moved to the UK searching for greater job opportunities.

Globally, the main reason of why people left their Latin American country was for economic reasons (McIlwaine et al, 2011; Pellegrino, 2004). However, there were other important factors explaining this, such as: searching for a better education, political stability, and some of them hoping to get close to relatives and have a safer social life. Generally, Latin Americans are fairly well educated, however, in London they generally perform low-skilled jobs with really poor salaries and work conditions. The main reason for this is due to the lack of knowledge of English, which make almost impossible to progress professionally and the migration status. (McIlwaine et al, 2011).

2.2 Indoamerican Refugee and Migrant Organization (IRMO)

IRMO was one of the first organisations supporting the Latin American community on London. This one was started when the Chilean coup d'état between 1974 and 1979 and the consequence arrive of approximately 3000 families to the UK. In the 1980 is when most of the organisations supporting the Latin American community were established in London (McIlwaine et al, 2011) . The organisation was first called as Chile Democratico (Democratic Chile) and then changed to IRMO to include all the communities across the Latin American region.

Currently IRMO has 220 members, and 70 volunteers, serving more than 5000 users per year. Its mission is to: “defend our community members’ human rights and combat poverty, empower our community members to enable them to build a stable life in the UK, raise awareness of poverty and human rights abuses faced by our community, promote harmony and cooperation in our community and celebrate our culture and identity, promote cultural exchange and cooperation between our community and others and raise awareness about human rights abuse and poverty in Latin America which cause and work towards the resolution of these problems.” IRMO supports the Latin American community through social projects and services. The social projects they offer are focused on the following areas: English for work, young people, children and families, wellbeing and ‘el costurero’ which addresses issues of gender inequality and promotes the empowerment of women in society. Furthermore, the services are mainly divided in three categories: interpreters and translators, immigration advice and housing and social welfare.

Chapter 3: Conceptual framework: Wellbeing and the Capability Approach

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a: “state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. However, this term is complex and thus very difficult to define (Bury, 2005). Its conceptualization has been changing over history, and the different models present a multifaceted concept; going from a medical model, which considers the pathology of illness and disease, to a sociological perspective that relates health with the social and biological factors.

The latter perspectives let the concept of wellbeing to emerge as a wider and holistic approach to understand health. As Goldberg states, “health is only one of the essential determinants of wellbeing” (Goldberg, 2012).

The complexity of this term however has made its measurement very challenging, and there is still no consensus on how this is identified, measured and achieved (Chavez et al 2005; Dodge et al, 2012).

For the current study, we think that the multifaceted definition proposed by Dodge et al is very appropriate: “stable wellbeing is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge” (Dodge et al, 2012, pp 230). This definition associates the state of wellbeing as a dynamic state rather than static, by acknowledging that levels of wellbeing change depending on the challenges that a person can face in different stages of life and contexts.

The measurement of wellbeing has been divided into subjective and objective measures. With the recent economic global crisis, the limitation of economic indicators to evaluate the wellbeing are more relevant. Subjective indicators of wellbeing thus have been more influencing on the construction of more holistic and sustainable ways to think in development (IOM, 2013b). For the current research, I have chosen the Capability Approach to help me identify how our participants perceive their wellbeing.

The Capability Approach was first developed by Amartya Sen, philosopher and economist, and more recently by Martha Nussbaum. Clark (2006, pp 2) defended that “Capability approach has emerged as the leading alternative to standard economic frameworks for thinking about poverty, inequality and human development generally”. The Capability Approach takes consideration of the plurality of the wellbeing dimensions and the relation of those is investigated, allowing understanding the issues of inequality amongst society (Martinetti, 2000). The economics welfare, which related wellbeing with wealth, is therefore strongly criticized by this approach.

The link between capabilities and wellbeing have been studied, although still quite unexplored (Martinetti, 2000; Anand, et al 2005). Sen uses the term ‘capabilities’ to refer to the available opportunities that individuals have to be whom they want to be and do what they want to do, and so is about the opportunity that people have to achieve wellbeing (Martinetti, 2000). The

difference between functionings and capabilities is that the former concept is the actual achievements or outcomes of the capabilities that a person has.

Furthermore, freedom is understood as the range of options and choices people possess in order to be able to do that, and agency is the ability that a person has to achieve all the capabilities necessary to lead their own life (Nussbaum, 2011). However, the capacity that people have to convert resources into welfare is heterogeneous, known as 'conversion factors', which can be constraining or facilitating people's agency (Anand et al, 2005).

Anand et al (2005) explain "that it is the opportunity to live a good life, rather than the accumulation of resources, that matters most for wellbeing, and that opportunities result from the capabilities that people have (Anand et al, 2005, pp10). The Capabilities Approach thus it is a multidimensional approach to wellbeing focused on the human, and quality of life of individuals such as social relations, health, education, etc., and links very well with the definition of wellbeing given above by Dodge et al to assess the migrants' wellbeing based on the resources available for them to achieve wellbeing.

As stated by the academic Prilleltensky (2008) the migrants' wellbeing is multileveled, from the national and societal level to the interpersonal and individual level. This study advocates for an un understanding and promotion of wellbeing in line with the main principles of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (HP) reflecting the social model of health (WHO, 1986).

HP is part of the public health discourse and recognises the social and ecological determinants of health and wellbeing (WHO, 1986; WHO 2009). Its objective is to build people's capacity to take control over their health. Furthermore HP seeks to remove the obstacles that prevent marginalised communities from living in healthy environments and being able to make healthy choices. This process is promoted through five HP actions: build healthy public policy, create supportive environments, strengthen the community action, develop personal skills and reorient health services. In addition to this five actions, at the very heart, HP promotes three main

methods to improve health: enable people to have control over their health, advocate health as a major resource at all levels and mediate for cross sector involvement.

At the end of this report, I will come back to HP actions to guide my findings discussion and understand the implications of this report in relation to each of the actions.

Chapter 4: Literature Review

4.1 Sustainable Development

In Article 2 of the Declaration on the Right to Development (United Nations, 1986) development is defined as “constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting from”. This report is framed on human wellbeing as the main purpose of development, and more particularly on sustainable development. Briefly, we will now define the terms of sustainable development and wellbeing and their characteristics for this report.

There is no accepted specific definition or set of universal indicators to describe ‘sustainable development’. Its plural characteristics and difficultness of measurement has led to different ways to understand ‘what is to be sustained’ ‘what is to be developed’. Although there is such ambiguity between different perspectives, sustainable development generally involves “some combination of development, environment and equity” (Parris and Kates, 2003, pp 2).

In the current research, the objective is not to provide an in-depth explanation on this term but to make clear in what way this term is used in the current study. Sustainable development is therefore taken in the broadest sense of the term, highlighting its recognition and advocacy on equity and the society wellbeing.

4.2 Migration and development

“Migration is a broad term used to describe the movement of populations from one place to another” (Guo, 2013, pp 10). These movements can be within the same country or from one country to another, called international migration. In this report I will focus on the second type. Furthermore “there is no consensus on a single definition of a ‘migrant’” (Anderson and Blinder, 2014, pp 3). This term is defined in different ways in different contexts, often encountering issues related to asylum, ethnicity and immigration (Anderson and Blinder, 2014). In this report, the term ‘migrant’ will refer to the people who have moved to a new country for a temporal (a year) or long-term period.

Looking globally, migration’ numbers are increasing. The High Level Dialogue on International migration and development in 2013 showed that although migrants make up 3% of the total population, in reality migration affects more people than only migrants themselves, such as family members; and numbers will continue increasing (IOM, 2013a). The last World Migrant Report, informs that 40% of the total migration pathways are from south to north, compared to the 5% of people migrating from north to south (IOM, 2013b), therefore, focus has been primarily on South-North migration. This increase has also been observed in the UK context, where the migrant population has gone from 2.8 million to 7.7 million between 1993 and 2012 (Cinzia and Vargas-Silva, 2012).

The World Migrant Report (IOM, 2013b) identified six most important factors that motivate people to migrate: economic factors, governance and public services, demographic imbalances, conflict, environmental factors and transnational networks. Apart from the factors influencing migration it is important to make consideration of what is its impact. In this way, migration has an impact on both home and host countries. Throughout this research, although with certain limitations due to the size of this report, I will be referring to both home and host countries and the impact of migration, to have a complete picture of the reality I am researching. Moreover, attention will be paid on how diaspora could have a greater impact for the development

of Latin American countries, thus the impact of migration in the host country will not be our interest.

4.3 Does migration improves migrants' lives?

As studied in depth by the World Migration Report of 2013 (IOM, 2013b), the effects of migration are both positive and negative in different dimensions of wellbeing (economy, security, health, social relations, etc.). Focusing on the migration South to North some general trends can be identified of the impact of migration on people's lives.

In comparison with North-North migrants, migrants from South to North have more difficulties to adapt themselves in the new context (IOM, 2013b). Although they think they are better positioned than people in their home countries, they 'survive' with little income in expensive cities like London. The longer they stay the less satisfied migrants are with their life in the host country and seeing their future not improving. Therefore, although they might be better positioned comparing to their home country, migrants tend to think that their quality of life, in terms of fulfilment of life, is not better than the one they would have in their origin countries.

In relation to the financial situation, migration generally shows a positive effect. On the same direction, personal security and the trust with institutions for migrants improves, nevertheless other studies show that migrants are likely to be robbed in developed countries, probably because they tend to live in more deprived areas of cities like London. Furthermore, health seems to improve in relation to access and quality of services. However, the most negative impact is observed in the social and affective life. Migrants tend to loose social contacts, having a very limited social network to get support from, experiencing sadness, disgust and concern.

4.4 Migrants' contribution to their home countries

Migrants contribute to their home countries in various ways, however the most common and widely researched are the economic remittances sent by individuals to their home countries. Studies show that remittances sent by

migrants to their home countries increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of those, while also increasing household income and reducing poverty (IOM, 2013a; Van Hear et al, 2004). Data shows that remittances were a total of 406 billion United State Dollars (USD) in 2012, an increase of 6.5 times over the previous year (IOM, 2013a). Though, because the informal remittances are more difficult to measure, numbers are not totally representative. Furthermore, economic remittances are not stable because the migrants' employment instability and also because remittances are often unevenly distributed in the developing country, only benefiting the wealthy population (Van Hear et al, 2004). Therefore there is a strong critique to remittances-led development because its tendency to create dependency of less developed countries on emigration and economic remittances (IOM, 2007).

Although this occurs on the individual level, the World Migrant Report (IOM, 2013b) acknowledges its positive implications in the country level, by increasing investment and enabling employment. However, despite the economic impact being the most widely researched, the transfer of social remittances play an important role on the migrants' contribution (AFFORD, 2000; IOM, 2007; Brinkerhoff, 2008). New ideas, attitudes, and behaviours can really change the values of a society towards education, gender relations - for example the recognition of women's rights and girls' education - and therefore contributing to the wellbeing of society. Thus, the social capital can really contribute to peace building and the construction of societies where human rights are equally recognized. Nevertheless, Newland and Patrick (2004) contend that, whereas it is easy to measure the economic impact by the migrant communities, the social and political influences are much more difficult to assess. In this way, little literature has been found on social remittances.

Although social impact of migrants in their home countries is generally seen as having a positive impact they can also have a negative impact. This will depend on the benefits of the remittances compensating the costs derived of migration like the separation of families (IOM, 2013b) and factors like "circumstances in the countries of origin and destination; the reason for

leaving and, critically, whether the move was voluntary; and the pattern of migration (Global Migration Group, 2010, in IOM, 2013b).

4.5 The debate

“For many years politicians and officials in labour–importing countries have seen South-North migrants as a problem for national identity and social cohesion, and more recently even as threat to national security” (IOM, 2007; pp 3). However, a big shift in the debate about migration and development has been taken, which can be observed through the research being done and policy initiatives that address related issues. The new debate puts emphasis on the positive effects and potential of migration to development and more specifically for the countries of origin (IOM, 2007). As stated in (IOM, 2013a, pp 20), “today, there is a much greater recognition that migration can contribute to poverty reduction and development, both in origin and destination countries, as well as within regions, and that these benefits can be enhanced by policy”. In the current era of globalization, the movement of people from south to north has never been greater. The transnational feature of the current globalized society and the importance to pay attention to the impact of migration more now than ever. In the same direction, IOM (2007) agrees that is crucial to understand globalization for the migration and development debate. “The new emphasis on the positive potential of the migration –development nexus is a result of the current legitimization crisis of globalization as both economic and political project. Globalization has clearly failed to deliver economic inclusion and greater equality for the South. The Washington Consensus claim that liberalization, privatization and structural adjustment would, in the long run, improve incomes and livelihoods in the South cannot be sustained.” (IOM, 2007, pp7).

The lead by northern governments and international bodies of the new debate in migration and development has been criticized for overlooking major changes that exists on this topic and for the minor involvement by governments of the South and civil society (IOM, 2007). The International Organization of Migration (IOM) suggests the adoption of Southern

perspectives to understand the current issues of migration and development, taking a more comprehensive view of migration. This would imply taking into account the power relationships between North and South, but also “questioning the dominant understanding of “development”, which implies that southern countries must necessarily repeat the past trajectories of today’s rich countries” (IOM, 2007, pp 9). If the interest is to reduce inequality and poverty and increase social and political change, wider participation is need by civil society organizations from North and South.

A brief description has been highlighted of the characteristics of migration and the current framework where development and migration link together. Evidence of the connections between migration and development, and of the positive effects from the former to the latter is increasing, nevertheless “the evidence base for the links between migration and development is still very weak” (Newland, 2007 quoted in IOM, 2007). Migration was not a factor included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), however, it has a direct impact to poverty, economic growth, gender equality, education, health etc., (House of Commons International Development Committee, 2003) and the new debate should be focused on whether migration should be integrated into the development agenda, and more specifically focusing on the Post-2015 agenda (IOM 2013a).

4.6 Diaspora communities and their role in development

When we talk about diaspora we refer to groups of migrants who live in their host country but also maintain solid links with their home countries (Newland and Patrick, 2004). This term also implies the fact that people are actually settled in the host country rather than a temporal status with intention to go back in a short period of time.

The new discourse regarding the positive effects of migration on development, as previously described, have permitted the recognition of the role and potential of diaspora communities to contribute towards sustainable development. In this new scenario, an increased number of developing

countries have been prioritizing initiatives to maintain their linkages with diaspora communities, supporting them before and during migration, but particularly on their return with the voluntary deployment of qualified workers to go back to their home countries. (IOM, 2007; Sinatti and Horst, 2014). As Orozco acknowledges, a better understanding of diaspora groups is crucial to inform governments' initiatives and policies created to enhance the role of diasporas in development (Brinkerhoff, 2008).

The engagement of the diaspora with the original countries is found in a number of different forms. The actors can be from personal/family units to migrants' organisations, NGOs, charitable organisations, religious associations, associations for the preservations of culture, etc. As seen in the previous section, different forms include: money transfers, trade and investments in home countries, creating awareness of the home cultural identity in the host country and politicisation of issues, and social remittances such as knowledge, attitudes, values, etc. (AFFORD, 2000).

House of Commons International Development Committee (2003, pp 66) stated that "the potential contribution of diaspora organisations to making migration more development-friendly is slowly being appreciated, as governments and others begin to work with the diaspora to establish and reinforce the connections between migrants; host societies and homelands".

In 1997, the British government committed to "build the skills and talents of migrants and other members of ethnic minorities within the UK to promote the development of their countries of origin" (November 1997 White paper on International development, quoted in AFFORD, 2000). Although some initiatives have been taken (AFFORD, 2000; Van Hear et al, 2004) acknowledge the failure on supporting development countries of migrants' communities.

DfID should work towards "Securing the rights, cutting the cost of money transfers, and encouraging migrants to invest in community development initiatives in their home countries, and, in particular to engage with pro-poor drivers of change at home" (Van hear et al, 2004, pp 26). The House of

Commons International Development Committee (2003, pp 67) provided a range of ways by which the Government and DfID could engage with diaspora:

- DfID might usefully include diaspora organisations more systematically in consultations on draft Country Assistance Plans, and in consultations on policy areas in relation to which migrants' organisations may have valuable insights;

- DfID and other Departments including the Treasury should explore with diaspora organisations the possibility of developing schemes to enable migrants, if they so wish, to channel remittances so that they have maximum impact on poverty;

- DfID and relevant Departments should examine, alongside diaspora organisations, whether there are initiatives they could take to encourage the temporary return of migrants to their home countries, and, most simply, the Government should encourage initiatives to create migrant associations, promote and publicise their activities, and help them to work effectively.

The examples of above show initiatives and policies for the host country to engage diaspora in development, with the objective to increase the impact of migration in development. Although it will not be looked due to size limitations, the same needs to be considered by the sending countries.

In these complex realities, policy –makers face a lot challenges when trying to cooperate with diaspora communities for various factors. Firstly, *“the notion that migrants, because they come from a given country, will feel a natural urge to help in the development of that country. While this may indeed be the case, it is the assumption of inevitability within this notion that is problematic* (Sinatti and Horst, 2014, pp 147). Secondly, diaspora groups often show fragmentation if coming from different countries and may have a heterogeneous skills and resources (Sinatti and Horst, 2014). In this way, policies often do not make differentiation between high human capital and unskilled workers, thus increasing the ineffectiveness of such policies. A good understanding of such communities thus is needed.

Finally, concluding this current section, it is important to make reference to the fact that not only is it essential for developing countries to recognize their diaspora groups, but also the role of the host state supporting those in the host countries to permit. As stated by IOM (2007, pp 310): “Migrant empowerment is crucial in working towards sustainable development in countries of origin. Empowerment means creating conditions that enable migrants to participate equally in economic, social and political life in their countries of origin and destination.”

4.7 Latin American community diaspora in London

Literature about the Latin American community in London is very limited. The report, ‘No longer Visible’, from 2011, is the most comprehensive review of the Latin American migrant community in the UK.

The migration of Latin Americans to the UK started in the 1970’s. Spain is the most important European country hosting Latin American people, however, due to the economic crisis, a second migration from Spain to UK has increased the Latin American population in this country. Currently, the Latin American population in London is 113,500, representing 61% of the total Latin American population in UK. The growth has been nearly four-fold since 2001 and the largest nationality groups are Brazilians, followed by Colombians and Ecuadorians (McIlwaine and Velasquez, 2007).

The most important factor for migration amongst the community is the lack of economic opportunities in their home countries. Nevertheless, alongside the economic situation, social conflict is the other important factor that Latin American face in their countries.

In regards to employment, rates amongst Latin Americans is 85%. Although these numbers are really high there are important issues in relation to that. 70% of the total population do elementary jobs and only 17% have higher positions in professional and managerial work. However, most of them are well educated, as data shows that 70% have secondary education and beyond, 13% achieved technical education and undergraduate and postgraduate levels for the rest. Not only do they have low-paid jobs but they

often have informal contracts lacking labour rights and therefore are more exposed to the risk of experiencing exploitation and discrimination. Despite the poor employment conditions, around two thirds of Latin American send 12% of their weekly income to their relatives in Latin America. This is recognised by them as a very hard and important sacrifice, having a negative impact on their wellbeing here (McIlwaine et al, 2011).

The connections that this diaspora community have with their home countries are very strong and solid. First of all, 97% of Latin Americans, regardless of status or nationality, maintain contact with their relatives and friends every day or twice a week, by phone or Internet (McIlwaine et al, 2011).

The sending of remittances is very ingrained among Latin Americans. 64% send money or gifts, but 90% of this is money. Remittances are mainly used to help the survival of relatives back home (60%), and also to contribute towards education expenses and house building. Very little of these remittances are sent for investment towards development through home town organizations funding social and community projects (McIlwaine et al, 2011).

Finally, 32% of the population have used migrants' organisation services. The role of these organisations "is to help migrants to access public services and to get information on mainstream services with most seeking them out for advice on welfare, health and immigration issues" (McIlwaine et al, 2011, pp 102) These organisations in London vary depending on the kinds of services offered, from cultural and sports associations to advice and legal services.

Chapter 5: Methodology

In the following chapter I explain the approach taken in this study and the reasons why I chose it. I will also explain the reasons why I employed specific methods to gather the data, and how I analysed it. In addition, I will give details of the ethical implications of the current research.

5.1 Research Approach

In order to build a methodological framework for the current research study and chose the most adequate methods to collect the data, I needed to look at the theoretical background on migration, development and wellbeing that had informed the research questions. By doing this I found the interpretivist approach, instead of positivist one, to meet best the needs of the research. This approach emphasis the “understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by participants” (Bryman, 2012, pp 266). As it is explained throughout the report, it is the objective of this research to give voice to the Latin American migrants in relation to their perceptions around their connection to development and its effects on their wellbeing. The participants’ interpretations constituted our data, and thus interpretation of words, instead of numbers is needed. Therefore, qualitative methods and the interpretivist approach were found to be the most appropriate tools.

Although I have mentioned the positive aspects of employing qualitative methods for this research, the drawbacks and limitations of this approach have to be mentioned and taken into consideration. Bryman (2012) points out the following characteristics, used for a critique of the qualitative research: subjectivity, problems of replication and generalization, and lack of transparency. I was aware that those factors represented important limitations when carrying out the research. Generalisation was not an objective of the study, but it may nonetheless help generate an understanding of the characteristics of the about the Latin American community in London, and broadly around diaspora group and development.

5.2 Design

The study was informed by a case study design – although, due to constraints of time and word length of the final report, consisted chiefly of a literature review and a qualitative interviews to help illustrate and illuminate key themes.

A “Case study assumes that ‘social reality’ is created through social interaction, albeit situated in particular contexts and histories, and seeks to identify and describe before trying to analyse and theorize” (Stark and Torrance’s, 2005, pp 33).

The current study sought to engage with and explore the realities that a few individuals experienced with regard to wellbeing and development, in the particular context of IRMO and within the Latin American community in London (single community and context). The objective was to study in depth this particular reality. Although generalization was not the purpose of the study, I would like that this particular case might help readers to understand other issues and contexts. Furthermore, as Stark and Torrance (2005) also suggest, it is worth comparing and contrasting across cases. In this sense, the purposive sampling enabled us to gather different individual experiences across the same sampling group. Finally, as mentioned above, qualitative and more particularly interviews meet the needs of this research.

5.3 Methods for the literature review

5.3.1 Literature search

For the literature review I searched for content based on three main sections: Migration and development, Diasporas and Development and Latin American Community in London, and IRMO and migrant organizations. To identify which literature is relevant to the current research I identified the key words within resources. These are the main key words: diaspora, development, migrants, and wellbeing. Moreover, I used the following databases to search the literature: Google, Google scholar, IOE library catalogue, the Sage journals, and ERIC.

5.3.2 Literature analysis

To carry out the literature analysis I used themes and discourse analysis. The first one allowed me identify different themes in the literature that were relevant to the study, and find the relationship between them. In addition, I

also employed discourse analysis by selecting representative segments of the literature that informed the research. Furthermore, I compared themes across different resources to provide a greater perspective of what I am studying.

5.4 Methods for fieldwork

5.4.1 Research methods

This report have used semi-structured interviews to collect the data. Stark and Torrance's explain that "interviews offer an insight into respondents' memories and explanations of why things have come to be what they are, as well as descriptions of current problems and aspirations" (Stark and Torrance's, 2005, pp 35). The reason for using semi-structured interviews instead of structured interviews is that, using the former type allowed the participants to impart what was important about their realities and experiences. This enabled myself as a researcher to access to a greater extent to their ideas and perceptions etc. (Byrman, 2012). Furthermore, as a researcher I got interested in not only focusing on the present moment, but allowing participants to think of their past and future in relation to wellbeing and their perception of development.

5.4.2 Sampling

One the important aspect of the research was to decide how many people to interview and to select the participants. The sample consists of one members of staff of IRMO and five adults who have been involved in different projects or services of IRMO.

Purposive method was employed to decide which individuals were part of the research sample. Unlike random sampling, purposive allowed me to select relevant informants for the interviews. However, the selection of those people was also influenced by 'convenience' depending on the access I had to informants.

The main criteria for the sampling consisted on choosing participants with different levels of comfort. What I wanted to see was some participants whose basic needs were not covered and others who were doing better and

achieving more advanced goals, such as career development. Other general criteria employed were migrants displaying the following characteristics:

- aged above 18 and who have lived in the country for at least a year
- involvement in IRMO for at least 3 months
- Other specific criteria: adults who are parents and live with their children, adults who have their children back home, and adults who are not parents. I also aim to have adults with different levels of education.

5.4.3 Data collection

The adoption of one method instead of combining different ones is justified by the size of the current research. I am aware that by only using semi-structured interviews instead of multiple methods you have a more limited picture of the reality. However, the extent of this report did not allow me to employ more than one method.

As mentioned therefore, I have conducted semi-structured interviews to six adults in total. As the mother language of all the participants was Spanish I carried out the interviews in Spanish, which is also my mother tongue, so that language barriers did not restrict the participants from expressing themselves. For the interviews, I followed an interview guide of approximately 8 questions, and each interview took around 30 minutes or so.

5.5. Data analysis methods

Bryman (2012) explains the difficulties of analysing data using qualitative methods as a lot of information comes up by carrying out qualitative methods. In order to analyse the data of the interviews I used the coding method of grounded theory (Bryman, 2012). Once I had the data, I organised it into different themes that were relevant to the research subject. Although it could have been more efficient to set up the themes before doing the interviews, I wanted to take a bottom up approach and avoid any pre-conceptions that, as a researcher, I might have had of the adults' realities and thoughts.

5.6 Ethics

This study followed the British Educational Research Association guidelines. Respect for the informants is the most important consideration throughout the research process, therefore participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the role of the interviewee and their right to refuse to answer any questions or drop out of the interview process through a Consent Form. In addition, participants were informed of their access to the findings of the research once this is finished. Although consideration is taken about the vulnerability and fragile life of the migrants I was researching, this study did not predict to produce any harmful effects on informants. In addition, the fact that the informants were adults and not children also made the subjects less vulnerable. Finally, anonymity and confidentiality was also taken into account. The participants' names were kept confidential by using numbers. Only the name of the organisation is being used, as authorised by IRMO. While the data was being analysed, this was kept on my personal computer with a secure password and it was destroyed after the research was finished.

Chapter 6: Findings and discussion

Although it would be usual to provide separate chapters on findings from the fieldwork and then discuss these, due to the small number of participants and for reasons of space, I include both within Chapter 5.

First, I provide an analysis and discussion of the data obtained through the six interviews I carried out. The purpose of the interviews was to understand how the migrant participants perceived their opportunities to achieve wellbeing and how they perceived their role in the development of their home countries. The data obtained is used in this chapter to explore the migrants' capabilities surrounding achieving wellbeing and how this is linked with their capacity to have a role as development actors in their home countries. Considering this, I will also try to understand how genuine and feasible is the role that international agencies have given to diaspora groups in the development sector to help their home countries' development.

In order to understand the matters just mentioned and draw connections between them, I will use the Capability Approach presented in Chapter 3 and its understanding of the concepts of wellbeing, capabilities and freedom.

Firstly, I will briefly describe the background and the characteristics that all participants had in common as well as the differences between them. This will help the reader to understand the discussion that follows this section.

6.1 Participants' background

All those who participated in this research were unskilled workers from low social backgrounds. Most of them have only primary education, and some are illiterate. They left their home country for economic factors, and moved to Spain for a few years, where they worked and achieved a good life, in their opinion. With the recent economic crisis, the lack of employment increased and they decided to move to England to find better opportunities.

Four out of five participants are women, and only one man. All the female participants work as cleaners. They reported they were paid the minimum wage or less, and they averagely have two or three hours shifts per day. Often they spend between an hour or two to get to work and spend half of their wage on transport, which leaves them with a very poor income and often with serious problems to look after their children, as they go to school in the morning, and need to be picked up in the afternoon. The male participant works as a driver. He works long shifts and his salary is key for the survival of his family, which is quite common amongst Latin American families, as the key informant explained. All the participants had very little knowledge of English.

Furthermore, participants face problems in relation to: housing, not being able to afford a rent and having to share accommodation with strangers and feeling unsafe; children's education, some have to wait up to a year to enter school; health services, they often struggle to understand doctors and feel poorly supported. Based on these situations, I classified the participants on a scale

going from low to high depending on how the participants' needs are covered. Number 1 shows the participant with greater needs, and number 5 is the best achieving best quality of life. This classification has helped me produce a better analysis of the data, however it must be clear that wellbeing was not measured in this study.

Participant 1: Married woman from Ecuador. Mother of two young children. She migrated from Spain to London with her family less than a year ago.

Participant 2: Married woman from Ecuador. Mother of one child. She migrated from Spain to London with her family.

Participant 3: Married woman from Colombia. Mother of one children. She migrated from Spain to London with her family.

Participant 4: Married woman from Dominican Republic. Mother of one child. She migrated from Spain to London.

Participant 5: Married man from Ecuador. Father of one child. He moved from Spain to London by himself and then the rest of his family.

6.2 Themes from interview

Following the introduction of our participants' background, I will now present the key themes found in the data. I will discuss the concepts and ideas below using the Capability Approach. First of all I want to understand what the migrants' capabilities are in achieving wellbeing, and secondly, what is the capacity for them to be engaged with the diaspora. I will begin with the first question.

These are the key themes: the value of education, looking for work and education opportunities, freedom, helping each other as key for wellbeing, security and migrants' role in their home countries development.

The value of education

Education was not included as a 'theme' when I asked the participants to auto-evaluate their wellbeing based on these four areas: health, economy, security and achieving and enjoying. However, the term education appeared

across these areas in all the interviews, reflecting the high value that participants have towards education.

Participants identified education as the only way to achieve and have a better future. Education is valued, in the first instance for its economic purpose. Participants see it as a way to have better job opportunities and therefore better lives. This is particularly clear in relation to their children's education. As participant 1 noted:

"I need my child to learn English because this will ensure our future".

And in this way, they all were very determined to invest in their children's education. Nevertheless, education is not only valued for its economic benefits but also as a right and for personal development. Participant 3 explained how in Colombia girls' education is very difficult due to the issue of teenage pregnancy and that she wants her daughter to grow up in a different environment in which she can develop herself as an independent woman. Participant 2 said:

"It's very good that the government help us with the benefits, but I also want to study and be able to contribute to this country in other ways... But if they give us money but I cannot study because there is no place for my child at school, then they put me in a box that I don't want to be. Money is good, but it is better if they invest in our education in the long term".

This quote represents very well the eagerness that participants expressed to be able to do more, and more specifically to have more educational opportunities that will enable transformation rather than the accumulation of resources by itself. The Capability Approach suggests that, what matters for wellbeing is not the accumulation of resources but the opportunities that people have to achieve a good life, which was clearly claimed by Participant 2.

Finally, education was evident in all the participants' answers when I asked them about what they would like to do back in their home countries if they had the available resources. Most of the participants said they would like to set up an organisation to give education to the high numbers of street children, who have to work and have no place to live. Participant 5 from Ecuador also explained that he would like to support people opening their businesses.

Looking for work and education opportunities

Generally, participants expressed their frustration at not having more opportunities in relation to work and education. I observed not only feelings of frustration and impotence but also strong eagerness to really do more and be able to achieve more for a better life. They acknowledged that this was highly influenced by the fact that they all wanted a better future for their children, and they need to earn the money to provide their children with the education they did not have the opportunity to pursue.

Regarding the economic sphere, this seems to appear as a positive affect of migration as well as barrier that stops the participants progressing in their lives. They see it as a positive factor because, although having very low-paid jobs with not enough hours, they can earn more money than they would do in their home countries. In addition to this, participants 4 and 5, positioned at top of the scale expressed the freedom that people have here to grow in their careers as another gain in relation to the economic sphere, which I will look into in more detail.

Conversely, the main factors that hinder their economic development is the lack of English and the lack of basic needs' coverage. The second factor is more significant for the participants situated at the bottom of the scale. Participant 1 for example, struggles to find a job because her child is not enrolled in school and she does not have anyone who can look after her child. For Participant 2, housing seems to be an issue as she cannot afford a place and needs to share with strangers, thus she cannot leave her daughter if she needs to work at night or weekends.

Freedom

The participants situated at the top of scale identified freedom of choice as one of the most important gains from living in this country and key for their development. They explained that although real opportunities (to work and study) are not easily achieved, they have at least the choice to try to pursue these opportunities. Participant 4 from Dominican Republic said:

“at least in London people can get in debt and have the opportunity to study, whereas there would be no choice to do this in my home country”.

In addition, participants referred to the opportunity to educate their children as one of the most important freedoms. Participant 3, who has a girl, said:

“there are no opportunities for girls to study in Colombia, as most of them get pregnant when just finishing school and hardly have the chance to get back to their studies after they have the child”.

Differently, participants 1 and 2 did not recognise the concept of freedom of choice. This idea of freedom is particularly relevant when using the Capability Approach to analyse wellbeing. Sen’s theory understands freedom as the range of options and choices that people possess in order to have the capabilities to achieve wellbeing. Interestingly, as I explained, only the people showing better levels of wellbeing were able to identify such concept of freedom. Then, two things should be noted from here. First point is that our data is similar to the Capability Approach idea, which argues that a sense of freedom is required for people to achieve wellbeing. The second thing to reflect on is that although participants recognised the importance of freedom, they also realise that to have a lack of opportunities to achieve what they wanted because their choices are very limited curtails their opportunity to achieve wellbeing. It seems then that freedom it still remains, for our participants, an ideal and something to pursue rather than a present reality.

Helping each other as key for wellbeing

The sense of community and the help that participants had received or given at some point during their stay in London was strongly valued by all participants as key for their survival. Interestingly, this was identified as both a barrier and facilitating factor for the migrants' wellbeing. On the one hand, help between members of the same community helped our participants to find schools, services, places to live, migrant organisations, etc. This is more evident amongst women, who are generally the ones looking after the children and the household, while men work. On the other hand, the key participant explained how this factor also acts against the same migrants:

“Latin American people only trust people who speak the same language and don't deal with problems alone”.

By only trusting people from the same community, people's insecurity increases when they need to find resources outside their community and pursue opportunities, as they will tend to trust better a Latin American person with no experience in a specific matter, than a foreign or English person with good knowledge. In this way, only participant 3 did recognise the strong community cooperation both as a barrier and help.

On a different point, data obtained about migrants helping others in their home countries was very different. Participants are all second migration, and they feel very distant from their home countries. All of them are still in contact with their relatives and half of them send remittances whenever they can. Nevertheless, they all recognised that their motivation is here, and want to achieve a better life. On the same theme, the key informant recognised the lack of capacity to help others was due to basic needs not being fully covered for most of the beneficiaries in IRMO. Only participant 5 supports a non-family member back in his home country through a British charity that supports street children with education. The rest of participants did not know about any charity and explained that they do not have the money or the time to do this, although they would like to do more.

Security

Security was identified as a very positive factor of living in London. Most of them feel secure in London, although some acknowledged to have felt racial discrimination at some point. Participant 2 felt the least secure. She said:

“here you can’t trust anyone, and no one help you”.

Oppositely, participants 4 and 5 showing better quality of live felt the most secure and acknowledge that they would never go back because of the lack of security in their home countries.

Migrants’ role in their home countries development

The key themes presented above have offered a discussion of our participants’ wellbeing and the factors that they identify to be facilitating or hindering the process to achieve wellbeing. Below, I finish by discussing the data to understand what is the capacity for migrants to engage as diaspora community in the development of their home countries.

Data from the interviews show that participants have very little knowledge about development initiatives and feel very disempowered to get involved and contribute to their home countries in a greater extent to what they do. As mentioned, only participant 5 explained to be involved with a charity that support street children in Ecuador, but none of the others had knowledge of any, although they all support their relatives with monetary remittances. Participant 3 said:

“how they think that we could help our home countries, if we are already struggling to survive in this city”.

The disempowerment felt by all participants is due to a lack of resources (time, money, knowledge) and their poor social status in the UK, where rights

are not fully protected and as our participants showed, access to basic services is not ensured. Considering this scenario, one can argue that the ways in which the UK Government and more specifically DfID could work with the diaspora stated in the House of Commons International Development Committee (2003) will not be effective if such initiatives do not understand the insights of the Latin American community and their people's situation. Policies trying to engage the diaspora group in development need to understand what are the challenges of doing it, and have mechanisms in place to overcome those. As Sinatti and Horst (2014, pp 148) state: "diaspora-engagement efforts would benefit from understandings of diasporas and development that do better justice to these complex realities".

Amongst other ways to support the community and its engagement in development the key informant said:

"media harms the way migration is understood by society because it only shows the negative side and hides the humanitarian side" "migrants should have greater voice in the international debates. I think they should be asked of the reasons why they migrate and raise awareness of what is their situation".

Here again, a claim is being made, that if a role of migrants in development is sought, there is a need to change the way migration is understood by the host society and to understand the complex reality that people live in. In this way, Sinatti and Horst explain that "Development actors understand migration as a response to lack of development that breaks an otherwise sedentary norm. Meanwhile, migrants and origin communities may view migration as a means to achieve development rather than to escape from the lack of it" (Sinatti and Horst, 2014, pp 146). Whether the second statement is the reality or not, migrants should be play a greater role in how migration is conceptualised and this can then inform development actors and their policies.

Finally it is worth noting that, although our participants did not feel they had the capacity to have a role in development, most of them stated that they would like to have one if they had the opportunity. Participant 2 said:

“I am sure that people would get involved if we were asked to participate on things that would improve our countries although all Latin American countries are corrupted anyway.”

It appeared that although not feeling capable, all participants expressed motivation to get involved in more things, especially to improve the education in their home countries, as mentioned earlier in this section. Participant 2, also recognised the issues of development as political, sowing awareness of the need to address corruption in developing countries. Brinkerhoff acknowledge (2008) the need to address inequality in the developing countries and build fair and democratic socio-political systems that will permit the fair distribution of remittances.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and implications

Through the examination of the Latin American migrants' wellbeing and their role in development, the findings of this study show that although there are some positive gains for our Latin American participants such as freedom and safety, their levels of wellbeing are poor and they face significant challenges in gaining opportunities to develop and improve their wellbeing. The need of service improvement was very evident but what was the most valued by our participants were the educational opportunities. Taking in to consideration the findings described in the previous chapter I will point out the implications of this report in relation with four of the five actions advocated by HP in the Ottawa Charter: develop personal skills, strengthen community action, build healthy public policies and create supportive environments.

Develop personal skills

There is a need for education and training, as mentioned before. Greater educational opportunities should be available for the Latin American community. Not only to improve their career development but for personal development too. The access to information and development of personal

skills is key to enable the migrants to have greater capacity to make healthy choices and improve their health and wellbeing, as HP advocates.

Furthermore, the children's education plays a very important role amongst the Latin American community. Generally parents have very poor levels of education as they did not have the opportunity to study in their home countries, and therefore children are key for the families' development and inclusion into the new host society, as children are educated in the new environments and have a greater understanding of the language, values and other aspects of the English society. Therefore, the government and local authorities should ensure that children from migrant families are not left behind in the English school system.

Strengthen community action

Moving to greater society level, a strong sense of community amongst the Latin American community was observed. However, their integration into the wider fabric of London society should be facilitated by migrant organisations, other community organisations and the government. Community action is at the heart of HP and this is key to take control over resources and strengthen the community public participation on matters that affect people.

Build healthy public policies and create supportive environments

HP recognises that health and wellbeing requires not only action from the health sector but also from political, economic, cultural sectors, amongst others, and at all levels. Findings from this study have shown that access to basic services need to be improved for disadvantage communities like the Latin American. Housing, education and social services are the areas which migrants show greater needs. Public policies should ensure that access to basic services is ensured for disadvantaged people like our participants and promote healthier goods and environments.

Finally, to conclude this chapter, I would like to make reference at the lack of support that migrants' organisations like IRMO receive from programmes and policies that are meant engage diaspora groups in development. As Sinatti

and Horst (2014) explain these programmes tend to exclude many migrant organisations like IRMO because they do not qualify under the term 'development'. However, in fact, IRMO and other migrant organisations are key in supporting the migrants' wellbeing, which has a direct impact on building their capacity as actors of change and their involvement in development initiatives. "A reconceptualization beyond the narrow understanding of development as a Western intervention would allow for the exploration of new aspects of migrant contributions to societal transformations in countries of origin and residence" (Sinatti and Horst, pp 148, 2014). Perhaps it is time that organisations like IRMO are part of the international development discourse and receive greater support from DfID and other international agencies, if the aim is to increase the impact of migration for poverty reduction.

In addition to that, there is evidence that programmes and policies that try to engage with diaspora do not distinguish between migrants with high human capital and the unskilled groups (Sinatti and Horst, 2014). Findings from this study suggest that although Latin American unskilled migrants are supported by organizations like IRMO, their capabilities and wellbeing require further attention. One could argue then, that although inequality is being addressed to some degree, much remains to be done to tackle social inequality for the Latin American community. A need to reduce health inequalities within and between societies was identified during the 1980s to inform the development of the Ottawa Charter. Some 30 to 40 years later, this need is yet to be met, not only for low and middle income countries such as Ecuador and Colombia, but also for migrants in high income countries such as the UK.

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Appendices

Research Consent Form

Name of the researcher: Lola Jover Sala

Title of Study: Diaspora groups, wellbeing and development: exploring the Latin American community in London

Purpose of study:

The purpose of this research is to gain understanding of how the Latin American immigrants living in London see their role in contributing to their home countries' development.

The study wants to give voice to the Latin American immigrants to know about their opinion in issues related to development and migration.

All the interviews will take place at IRMO at a time previously arranged. They will consist of 7 questions and will take around 30 minutes.

Interviews will take place at IRMO and they will be audio recorded, and destroyed once the research is finished.

- I have read and understand the nature of the research
Yes / No
- I understand what my participation will consist of in the research
Yes / No
- I understand that all information will be confidential and that I will not be named in any part of this study
Yes / No
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this research study at any time without having to give any explanation.
Yes / No
- I understand that the audio recordings will be destroyed when the research is completed.
Yes / No

I give my consent to participate in this research study and have been given a copy of this form for my own information.

Signature:.....

Date:.....