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Unveiling the struggle, Microaggressions and Colonial Legacies in the Lives of Spanish-Speaking Latin American Migrants in Spain.

Camila Simone Pico Erazo

Master in psychology of Intercultural Relations,

Supervisor:

Dr. Christin-Melanie Vauclair, Assistant Professor, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), CIS-IUL, Lisboa

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Department of Psychology

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For those who resist, we are the echo of what was laid to rest but refused to die.

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Firstly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who came before me, to all the brave women and men who worked for generations so that I can enjoy the opportunities I have today. Courage is individual, but support is collective.

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Resumo

Desde a sua introdução, o conceito de microagressões inspirou uma extensa investigação sobre como formas subtis de discriminação emergem em contextos quotidianos e moldam as experiências de grupos minoritários. No entanto, a literatura sobre microagressões continua fortemente centrada no contexto norte-americano, deixando os contextos europeus pós-coloniais comparativamente pouco estudados. Além disso, há uma falta de investigação que examine as experiências dos migrantes latino-americanos de língua espanhola em Espanha. Este estudo adota uma abordagem qualitativa, com base em teorias pós-coloniais, a fim de identificar, categorizar e compreender os tipos de microagressões vividas pelos migrantes latino-americanos de língua espanhola de primeira geração em Espanha, num contexto moldado pelas dinâmicas de poder pós-coloniais. Foram realizadas 12 entrevistas centradas na Técnica de Incidentes Críticos. Os dados foram analisados através de uma abordagem de análise temática (TA) em duas etapas. Inicialmente, foi utilizada uma forma de análise temática do tipo livro de códigos para identificar dez temas e três subtemas alinhados com taxonomias estabelecidas de microagressões. Seguiu-se uma análise temática reflexiva relacionada com discursos pós-coloniais, resultando em quatro temas abrangentes que refletiam narrativas de rejeição, ambivalência, exotização e negação histórica. O estudo demonstra como a natureza subtil das microagressões funciona como um mecanismo diário de opressão social e injustiça, promovendo o diálogo na intersecção entre migração, colonialidade e microagressões.

Palavras-chave: microagressões, teoria pós-colonial, migrantes latino-americanos de língua espanhola, migração

Abstract

Since its introduction, the concept of microaggressions has inspired extensive research into how subtle forms of discrimination emerge in everyday contexts and shape the experiences of minority groups. Yet, the microaggressions literature remains strongly centered in the North American context, leaving postcolonial European contexts comparatively understudied. Furthermore, there is a lack of research that examine the experiences of Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain. To address this gap, this study adopts a qualitative approach, drawing on insights from postcolonial theory in order to identify, categorize and understand the types of microaggressions experienced by first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain within a context shaped by postcolonial power dynamics. A total of 12 interviews centered around the Critical Incident Technique were conducted. Data were analyzed via a two-step process thematic analysis (TA) approach. Initially, a codebook form of thematic analysis was employed to identify ten themes and three sub themes aligned with established taxonomies of microaggressions. This was followed by a reflexive thematic analysis related to post-colonial discourses, resulting in four overarching themes that reflected narratives of rejection, ambivalence, exoticization, and historical negation. This study amplifies the voices of an often-overlooked minority group and demonstrates how the subtle nature of microaggressions functions as a daily mechanism of social oppression and injustice, advancing dialogue at the intersection of migration, coloniality, and microaggressions.

Keywords: microaggressions, post – colonial theory, Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants, migration

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Introduction

> "In their eyes we are not their brothers. No, we are their children. Spain is still the mother country that has us as her children". (CARG1 – Argentina).

Although frequently portrayed as a closed chapter, the legacies of colonialism continue to shape structures, discourses, and everyday practices in contemporary Europe. In Spain, the cultural, social, and economic systems forged during centuries of colonization persist due to the narrative that continues to be broadly socialized within this society. These dynamics exert a powerful influence on social hierarchies and relational interactions in Spanish society, and they are likely to impact the lived experiences of migrants from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries.

In contemporary times Spain occupies a unique position as a former colonial power and contemporary destination for migrants from its former colonies. Reports from the INE (National Institute of Statistics, 2023) show that the population born in Latin America accounts for approximately 46% of the foreign population residing in the country. Spanish-speaking Latin American migrant population choose Spain for several reasons, with the economic factor undeniably playing a role (García, Jimenez & Redondo, 2009), as well as perceived markers of proximity (e.g. language, religion, shared cultural reference points). However, these supposed commonalities do not necessarily translate to equality. Instead, these commonalities coexist with social hierarchies and practices as a postcolonial legacy that frame Latin American migrants as culturally similar yet socially inferior.

Several studies conducted with diverse minority groups suggest that discrimination in modern times has shifted from overt expressions to more subtle attitudes and slights (e.g. DeVos & Banaji, 2005; Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Sue et al., 2007). Initially proposed by Pierce in 1970, and later refined by Sue (2010) the term microaggressions refer to "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile derogatory or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation and religious slights or insults to the target person or group" (p. 5). The term racial microaggressions initially emerged as a concept to describe the experiences of Black Americans (Pierce, 1970), but subsequent research has shown that other ethnic and racial groups frequently experience microaggressions.

Since the concept of microaggressions was first introduced, scholars have put significant attention to examining how these subtle forms of discrimination manifest across

diverse social contexts and affect different racial and ethnic minority groups, such as African Americans (Sue et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2020), Muslim Americans (Nadal, Griffin, et al., 2012), Asian Americans (Wang et al., 2011), foreign-born immigrant women in Portugal (Piccinelli et al., 2024), and Latin American population in the U.S. (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009; Torres & Taknint, 2015).

Furthermore, numerous studies have examined the stereotypical themes and narratives that underlie the enactment of microaggressions (Sue et al., 2008; Nadal et al., 2013; Wiliams et al., 2021; Piccinelli et al., 2024). However, it is important to note that the majority of the existing research on microaggressions that has been conducted is largely centered on the United States, leaving postcolonial European contexts comparatively understudied. In particular, there remains a lack of qualitative research that examine the experiences of Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain approaching this subject through the lens of colonial discourse, leaving unexplored how historical power relations continue to inform and reproduce everyday forms of exclusion.

This research was aimed to conduct a qualitative analysis in order to identify, categorize and understand the types of microaggressions experienced by first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain within a context shaped by postcolonial power dynamics. This research sought to create a link between the pre-existing literature on microaggressions and broader discourses of migration, race, and colonial legacies in contemporary Europe, aiming to contribute to critical debates on discrimination and social justice by answering the following research questions: a) What type of microaggressions do first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain encounter? and b) How are these microaggressive incidents situated within the context of postcolonial power dynamics and relations?

This study seeks to make both a theoretical and practical contribution to the understanding of how colonial legacies shape the everyday experiences of Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain. At the theoretical level, it brings together two bodies of literature that have rarely been connected: the literature on microaggressions, which has largely developed within psychology and North American contexts, and postcolonial theory, which provides the critical tools to interrogate how historical power dynamics continue to structure present day interactions. Practically, the findings could be applied in organizations that work with migrant populations, helping NGOs, schools, and social services to develop culturally

aware practices that address not only blatant discrimination but also the more subtle forms of exclusion that affect minorities.

CHAPTER I

Theoretical Framework

1.1 Microaggressions: A conceptual overview

Initially proposed by Pierce in 1970, the concept of microaggression has since been subject of numerous postulates and definitions; in this context, the conceptualization suggested by Sue (2010) has been particularly influential. According to this author, microaggressions are defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile derogatory or negative racial, gender, sexual orientation and religious slights or insults to the target person or group" (p. 5). This definition contributes to the study of discrimination and aligns with the findings of several studies that suggest that, over the years, its manifestations have shifted from overt acts and messages to subtle and implicit expressions (DeVos & Banaji, 2005; Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002).

Rooted in stereotypical beliefs acquired over the course of socialization, microaggressions may be perpetrated by a variety of actors in interactions with members of dominant social groups, members of other marginalized groups, or those who share the same marginalized identity (Nadal, Whitman, Davis, Erazo, & Davidoff, 2016). Additionally, due to their subtle and covert nature, microaggressions are often dismissed as mere cultural misunderstandings. However, the cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggressions may be more stressful than the blatant discriminatory experiences that are easily recognized and clearly attributable to certain group biases (Williams & Mohammed, 2009).

It is agreed that microaggressions do not have a singular form of manifestation and rather can take different shapes to communicate the distinct themes behind them. Prejudiced and stereotypical beliefs determine the contents and themes of microaggressions. According to Williams (2020) these incidents may take many forms, not only on a verbal level (negative statements, and seemingly positive statements) but also as actions (e.g., crossing the street to avoid a person of color), inaction (e.g., failing to offer help or assistance) and being unseen or ignored (e.g., not being noticed by a server in a restaurant).

In order to conceptualize the construct in a more applicable way, Sue (2010) presented a classification based on three forms: microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults. Microinsults refer to subtle communications that carry stereotypes, rudeness, or insensitivity toward an individual based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or identity, often occurring unconsciously. Microinvalidations are cues that, often unconsciously, invalidate, exclude, or

dismiss the target's thoughts, emotions, or lived reality. Finally, microassaults can include conscious, deliberated, and either subtle or explicit communications that are perpetuated with the intent to hurt, harm, or attack the target's identity (Sue D. W., 2010). This last form is considered controversial since it encompasses incidents that do not occur in a purely "low-key" way. However, this category becomes useful when identifying incidents that do not seem subtle at first sight, but that are still socially accepted among members of the advantaged group. Several scholars have criticized the applicability of this classification (e.g., Lilienfeld, 2017) and have instead shifted attention toward the underlying messages conveyed through the perpetration of microaggressions. In line with this perspective, the present study also centers its analysis on these messages

Microaggressions can also manifest at various levels (interpersonal, environmental, and institutional), contributing to the maintenance of dominant group privilege and the sociocultural structures that reinforce it. People of color and other disadvantaged groups experience discrimination in many forms and levels, including covert acts that go unseen and unacknowledged by offenders (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). Microaggressive incidents at the interpersonal level can include verbal and nonverbal exchanges. Microaggressions manifested at the verbal level can be delivered through comments made openly to the person or through remarks made in ways that the person still overhears or is made aware of, while nonverbal/behavioral microaggressions include the use of body language or physical actions.

Environmental microaggressions are defined as "the numerous demeaning and threatening social, educational, political or economic cues that are communicated individually, or societally to marginalized groups" (Sue D. W., 2010, p. 25). Microaggressions on the environmental level can communicate discriminatory messages through the immediate physical and social surroundings (e.g., poor infrastructure, uncomfortable settings) and through symbolic and cultural forms (e.g., street names and monuments, public art, historical narratives and chronicles).

Subtle discrimination also persists in institutional mechanisms and processes that can lead to differential access to a broad range of societal resources and opportunities (Williams & Mohammed, 2013). Institutions can create environments of inequality through rules and policies that contribute with the marginalization and unfair/differential treatment of disadvantaged groups, what social psychologist Claude Steele (1997) calls ´threat in the air´. These policies may interfere with access to the healthcare system, living spaces, education, regularized migration statues, among others. Research shows that interpersonal and non-

interpersonal discrimination can be distinguished from each other, and they can exert different effects on physical and mental health (Lui & Quezada, 2019).

1.1.2 Targets and Contents

Microaggressions are directed at marginalized and minority populations. Members of these groups find themselves in constant disadvantage since they are confined to the margins of social desirability, are forced to live at the edge of the cultural, social, political, and economic systems, and may experience exclusion, inequality, and social injustice (Sue D. W., 2010). Although there are various marginalized groups (e.g., women, religious minorities, etc.) a great portion of scientific research has focused on ethnic and racial groups that tend to be targets of these incidents. The term racial microaggressions initially emerged as a concept to describe the experiences of Black Americans (Pierce, 1970), but subsequent research has shown that other ethnic and racial groups frequently experience microaggressions, including Latin American populations in the U.S. (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009; Torres & Taknint, 2015).

To capture the complexity of the experiences of ethnic and racial minorities, several studies have emerged exploring the messages communicated through the microaggressions perpetuated against these groups. In simple terms, according to Sue and colleagues (2007), microaggressions, in their various forms, imply that people of color are inferior and hence should be treated differently or marginalized. Considering that unique identities and intersectional stressors come at play for each underrepresented group, various taxonomies have been proposed describing the content of the messages directed to specific groups, –such as Black American population (Sue et al., 2007), foreign-born immigrant women in Portugal (Piccinelli, Vauclair & Madeira, 2025), -Mexican American females (Huber & Cueva, 2012), and Latino/Latina undergraduates in the U.S. (Minikel- Lacocque, 2013), among others.

A thematic taxonomy presented by Williams et al (2021) was developed through the review of 32 published articles that focused on qualitative and quantitative findings of microaggressions taxonomies applied to a wide range of populations. According to this taxonomy racial microaggressions on the individual level could contain the following themes: a) Not a true citizen (statements or behaviors suggesting that a person of color is not a legitimate citizen), b) Racial categorization and sameness (assumptions that all people from a particular group are alike), c) Assumptions about intelligence, competence, or status (statements based on assumptions about a person´s education, competence or income based on race or ethnicity), d) False color blindness/ invalidating racial or ethnic identity (expressions suggesting that individual's racial or ethnic identity should not be acknowledged, e) Criminality or

dangerousness (demonstrations of agreeance with stereotypes about people of color being dangerous, untrustworthy, and likely to commit crimes), f) Denial of individual racism (denial of personal racism or one's role in its perpetrations), g) Myth of meritocracy (belief that ethnicity plays a minor role in life success), h) Reverse racism – hostility (expressions of jealousy or hostility surrounding the notion that people of color get unfair advantages), i) Pathologizing minority culture or appearance (criticism on the basis of perceived or real cultural differences in appearance and traditions), j) Second-class citizen/ignored and invisible (treatment with less respect or care than normally expected due to race or ethnicity), k) Tokenism (false inclusion to fit an agenda), l) Connecting via stereotypes (attempts of communication with a person through the use of stereotyped speech or behavior), m) Exotization and erotization (differential treatment according to sexualized stereotypes or attention to differences that are characterized as exotic), n) Avoidance and distancing (measurement taking to prevent physical contact or close proximity with people of color).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Piccinelli, Vauclair, and Madeira (2025) expanded the existing literature by proposing a taxonomy that specifically describes the experiences of migrant women from Portuguese-speaking countries in the postcolonial European context. By providing a taxonomy grounded in this unique sociocultural and historical context, Piccinelli and colleagues (2025) make visible patterns of discrimination and microaggressions that might otherwise remain overlooked in cultural contexts other than the U.S. where most microaggression research has been conducted (Bettache, 2023) This taxonomy conceptualizes racial microaggressions at the interpersonal level as encompassing the following recurrent themes: a) Second-class citizenship rejection, and invisibility (treatment with less respect or care than normally expected due to race or ethnicity), b) Assumptions of criminality or dangerousness (stereotypical perception of criminality and danger based on ethnicity), c) Assumptions of inferiority (statements based on assumptions about a person´s lower education, competence or income based on race or ethnicity), d) Cultural generalization and pathologizing (assumptions that members of a certain country/ethnicity share the same physical and cultural characteristics), e) Language and communication stereotypes and pathologizing (valuing as abnormal the language and communication styles of people of color), f) Erotization and hyper-sexualization (statements that show subscription to the belief that people of color are exotic, or hyper-sexualized objects), g) Assumptions of beauty and exotization (comments or behaviors related to physical appearance judgments and pressures, including the idea that immigrant women look "exotic"), h) Denial of individual or systemic bias (statements in which people from the receiving society deny the existence of bias and discrimination), and i) The good

colonizer myth (beliefs related to the fact that the advantaged group were “good colonizers”).

1.1.3 Consequences of microaggressions

Both overt discrimination and microaggressions can evoke a range of emotional reactions in those who experience them. What distinguishes microaggressions, however, is that their subtle and ambiguous nature often leads others to underestimate their emotional impact (Lui & Quezada, 2019). Yet, research shows that the cumulative, everyday stress of microaggressions is reliably linked to negative physical and psychological health outcomes.

Previous research supports that microaggressions are predictors of depressive symptoms (e.g., Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014; Sue, 2007); anxiety (Williams et al., 2018); physical health issues (Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Davidoff, & Davis, 2014; Walls, Gonzalez, Gladney, & Onello, 2015); suicidal ideation (O’keefe, Wingate, Cole, Hollingsworth, & Tucker, 2015); and decreased self-esteem (Donovan et al., 2013; Nadal, Wong, et al., 2014).

The harmful effects of microaggressions are related to their ambiguous and chronic nature. One of the main challenges in recognizing microaggressions is that they are frequently carried out without the perpetrator’s awareness or deliberate intent. This lack of awareness facilitates their frequent repetition, often occurring on a daily basis. According to Sue (2010), as individuals tend to perceive themselves as non-prejudiced, perpetrators of microaggressions often tend to deny that they are discriminating.

As Pierce (1995) manifested, “The most baffling task for victims of racism and sexism is to defend against microaggressions. Knowing how and when to defend requires time and energy that oppressors cannot appreciate” (p. 282). Indeed, due to their confusing and disorienting nature, microaggressions can cause psychological disturbance for minority groups who must constantly question the intention and message of perpetrators (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007).

1.1.4 Ethnic microaggressions as perpetuators of colonial power

Microaggressions are not isolated micro-interactions. They are the most subtle reflection of macrostructures of power, such as White supremacy and colonial power (Piccinelli, Vauclair & Madeira, 2025; (Strand & Cohen, 2022). In order to understand the role of microaggressions in sustaining the macro systems of oppression and structural injustice, it is necessary to consider the relationship between the ‘micro’ and the ‘macro’ and how they constantly shape each other. It is widely known that social systems are structured through formalized rules and norms intended to regulate collective behavior structures of inequality

manifest and are reinforced not only by laws and norms but also by billions of everyday interactions and micro-interactions between individuals (Strand & Cohen, 2022).

Microaggressions in their subtle nature constitute the everyday enforcement of social oppression and injustice. They are micro-reinforcements of social structures of power that remind individuals of 'their place' and the roles they are called to play in society. The continual perpetuation of microaggressions stems from centuries-long socialization of pathological stereotypes. When referring to post-colonial relationships, these stereotypes are generally shaped under legitimizing myths that serve the dominant group to justify the systems and social structures that benefits them (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). Stereotypes and schemas that society promotes about members of targeted groups have powerful consequences since these schemas, provide an internal image with which our actions seek to align (Strand & Cohen, 2022).

An illustrative example is the stereotype broadly communicated among members of the advantaged group that portrait colonized subjects as inferior intellectually due to their 'savage and uncultured nature'. This notion is communicated on a macro level through art, chronicles/narratives and media, then processed and internalized by individuals who perpetuate microaggressions that communicate assumption of inferiority and remind the members of the targeted group that they do not belong in intellectual settings. These micro – level interactions, in turn, reinforce and legitimize the macro-level discourse, sustaining its influence.

According to Strand and Cohen (2022), microaggressions place the burden of unfair macro systems on individuals, resulting on profound psychological impact from a lifetime exposure to them. When telling the recipients to 'not be so sensitive' or 'get over it' members of the dominant group reveal a lack of awareness about the oppressive social structures they perpetuate. This obliviousness, particularly among those with the greatest privilege, allows the dominant group´s version of reality to operate without being questioned as if it holds undisputed authority. This dynamic reinforces the argument presented by Sue et al. (2008), that a group's power resides in its ability to define reality.

Understanding ethnic microaggressions as perpetuators of colonial power aligns with colonial discourse theory, viewing microaggressions through this lens reveals how everyday interactions subtly reproduce colonial hierarchies and sustain contemporary inequalities. The following section outlines the key points of the theory.

1.2 Colonial discourse theory

Built upon the ideas proposed by thinkers like Said (1978), Spivak (1988), and Bhabha (1983), colonial discourse theory seeks to examine how language, narratives, and systems of

knowledge established during colonial times continue to shape power relations and structures in the present. The theory highlights concepts as ´Othering´, ´Ambivalence´ and 'The Subaltern', each of which will be unpacked in the following paragraphs.

For Foucault (1971) discourse is a system of statements that shapes how the world can be seen and understood. It is through discourse that dominant groups in society constitute what counts as truth by imposing specific knowledge, disciplines, and values upon dominated groups. Consequently, "colonial discourse is the complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationships" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2013, p.37). It is therefore a system of statements about colonial people (colonizers and colonized), colonial powers and the relationship and dynamics between these subjects. These core messages shape institutional and structural systems that benefit a dominant group and disadvantage marginalized groups.

Early anti-colonial thinkers laid the foundations for colonial discourse theory; however, Said's Orientalism (1978) is widely considered its definitive starting point. Fundamentally, Said frames Orientalism as the process through which Western discourse has historically constructed, and continues to construct the 'Orient'. As stated by Praveen (2016), it refers to the discourse produced by the West about the East, in all areas, such as history, geography, literature, among others. As such, in its discursive mode, Orientalism can model an extensive range of institutional constructions of the colonial power (Ashcroft et al., 2013).

Said´s base argument is that Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of the world, whose structure promoted the notion of an opposition between the dichotomy of the familiar 'West' and the strange 'East' (Praveen,2016). According to Said (1978), Orientalism creates fabricated constructs that portray the East or Orient dichotomous opposites to the West. Therefore, if in the Western narrative, the West and its subjects are represented as rational, sensible, and developed, its counterpart, 'The East' and its subjects must respond to the contrary: strange, bizarre, and primitive. Based on this notion, it is proposed that Orientalism functions as a mechanism to justify the superiority of Western colonial rule over Eastern lands. Building on Said's analysis, Spivak (1988) extends postcolonial theory by introducing the following explained concepts of 'Othering' and 'the Subaltern.

Othering as quoted by (Ashcroft et al., 2013) refers to the process by which colonial discourse produces it subject. These authors argue that the *Other* represents the source of desire or power (the Empire) that shapes the subject, while the *others* are the marginalized or dominated subjects produced by this discourse of power. Spivak (1988) argues that the process of Othering is inherently dialectical, simultaneously shaping the image of the colonizer and the

colonized. Moreover, she maintains that recognizing the ´other´ is vital for defining what counts as ´normal´ and for determining the Other's place in the world.

Spivak (1988) borrowed the term *Subaltern* from Antonio Gramsci according to whom the term refers to someone who is considered of 'low rank'. In her essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', Spivak joins Said in criticizing Western discourse on the East, or the subalterns/ 'Third World'. She also points to the marginalization of subalterns, highlighting their limited ability to control their representation and their restricted access to social and cultural institutions (Ashcroft et al., 2013). In conclusion, Spivak asserts that "the subaltern cannot speak." Scholars such as Praveen (2016) interpret this to mean that the mechanisms of dominant discourse prevent the subaltern from expressing resistance in a voice wholly independent of that discourse and its conceptual categories.

While Spivak focused on the silenced position of the subaltern, Bhabha emphasized the spaces where colonial power is both reinforced and contested. His work is considered a major contribution to the development of colonial discourse theory. In his text "The other question" (1983) he agrees with what had been proposed, stating that the aim of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a group of degenerate types on the base of racial/ethnic origin to use this as a justification for conquest and the establishment of systems of instruction. Furthermore, Bhabha adds an additional level of analysis by highlighting ambivalence, the complex combination of attraction and repulsion that shapes interactions between colonized subjects and colonizers. He argues that ambivalence is problematic in power discourse because it disrupts the authority of those who construct it. Opening space for conflicts such as pleasure versus unpleasure, mastery versus defense, knowledge versus disavowal, and absence versus presence, that ultimately generate attraction and fetishism for the ones who are supposed to be rejected (the subaltern, the other).

1.3 Historical context between Spain and Spanish-speaking Latin American countries

Understanding the colonial relationship between Spain and Latin-America provides important context for analyzing contemporary social structures, group identities, and modern group dynamics and relationships. Following the arrival of Columbus in 1492, the conquest of the Aztec Confederation by Hernán Cortés between 1519 and 1522, and of the Inca Empire by Francisco Pizarro from 1532 to 1533, were the two great moments of the conquest (Diaz, 2004). Following these events, an expansive movement of late feudalism began, with the interest of the Spanish crown and minor nobility as the main protagonists of the conquest and colonization

(Guerra, 1997). This process led to large scale extermination of indigenous populations, the slow assimilation of surviving communities, and the persistence of marginalized groups.

Over the course of more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule in Central and South America, extensive processes of cultural and biological miscegenation unfolded. Guerra (1997) argues that, while widespread miscegenation contributed to ethnic homogenization, growing class differentiation and the caste system reinforced social heterogeneity in the colonial society. The systems of exploitation imposed by the Spanish colonial regime, such as "encomiendas", and "mandamientos" were driven primarily by the existence of abundant deposits of precious minerals. Despite these exploitative conditions, numerous indigenous communities managed to preserve themselves, conserving their traditions and cultures. As a result, the indigenous and Spanish society coexisted with emerging Criollo and Mestizo social groups (Guerra, 1997).

During the last decades of the 18th century, there was a considerable increase in agricultural production in the region (Diaz, 2004). As a consequence of this transformation there were significant changes in the class composition of colonial society. Until then, the social structure had been dominated by European officials, the high clergy, and landowners linked to entailed estates. This agricultural expansion created a ´criollo[1´] sector composed of planters who were not linked to entailed estates. Which, according to Guerra (1997) created middle and upper-middle classes of artisans and intellectuals with a progressive bent.

The liberation of Latin America was part of the revolutionary cycle that began worldwide at the end of the 18th century. Emerging social elements accentuated the struggles between the American population as a whole in particular within its new social spheres, and the Spanish crown representatives. In this context, the first newspapers were introduced bringing with them Americanist convictions, while economic societies were established and the study of pre-Columbian roots and cultures gained increasing prominence (Breña, 2006). This strengthened anti-feudal and egalitarian ideals, and the support of the large, oppressed masses, made up of slaves, laborers, indebted peasants, and indigenous peoples. As stated by Guerra (1997) this resulted in the start of liberation campaigns that ultimately culminated in Latin America's emancipation from Spanish rule during the 19th century.

1.3.1 Migration Flows

Due to the historical context mentioned above, migratory relations between Spain and Latin America have been constant since 1492 and throughout history. Migration flows have been shaped by political and economic factors, with the main change occurring in the late 1990s

and early 21st century with the so-called “migration boom”. According to the research carried out by Izquierdo (2009) in the early 1990s Latin American immigrants from Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay dominated, representing more than a third of the total, while in the first decade of this century immigrants from Ecuador and Colombia became the dominant group.

At the turn of the 21st century, Spain's socioeconomic context positioned the country as an appealing destination for migrant populations, primarily due to the availability of employment opportunities. However, it is essential to note that the working conditions offered to this population were frequently characterized by significant levels of precariousness. In general terms, it can be said that Latin American immigrants in Spain mainly occupied low-skilled jobs in domestic service, hospitality, and the informal sector (García, Jimenez & Redondo, 2009).

The 2008 onset of the economic crisis brought about a change in the migration cycle that affected not only the already settled population but also potential immigrants (Domingo & Recaño, 2009). Significant changes were seen in migration flows, with particular emphasis on the number of arrivals in the country, the number of returns, and the predominant nationalities of origin. Authors suggest that the switch of predominant nationalities of origin was due to the worsening of the economic situation in Latin America and the Caribbean and the redirection of flows that had previously been destined for the United States (Castillo-Castro & Reguant, 2017; Guarnizo & Chaudhary 2014). Around all the phenomena produced by the 2008 economic crisis Dominguez-Mujica et al. (2020) argue that the migration flows from Latin America towards Spain were not broken, rather, they became more complex, reflecting the existence of a stable migration system between the two regions.

Currently, reports from the INE (National Institute of Statistics, 2023) show that the population born in Latin America already accounts for 46% of the foreign population residing in Spain. According to census data from 2023, nine of the fifteen countries with the highest migration flows to Spain originated from Latin America, with Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Argentina, and Bolivia among the most numerous. In 2025, Colombia and Venezuela emerged as two of the principal countries of origin for immigrants in Spain, with each exceeding 20,000 arrivals in the first quarter of the year. This trend reflects the non-stop influence and growing importance of Latin America in Spain´s current migration system.

1.4 This study

In recent years, many studies have examined microaggressions and its impact on the target's wellbeing addressing different populations and contexts. However, very little or no

analysis has been carried out on microaggressions directed at Latino migrants in the Spanish context, and how these interactions are situated in a postcolonial context.

The primary purpose of this study was to conduct a qualitative analysis in order to identify, categorize and understand the types of microaggressions experienced by first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain within a context shaped by postcolonial power dynamics. This research sought to create a link between the pre-existing literature on microaggressions and broader discourses of migration, race, and colonial legacies in contemporary Europe, aiming to contribute to critical debates on discrimination and social justice by answering the following research questions: a) What type of microaggressions do first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain encounter? and b) How are these microaggressive incidents situated within the context of postcolonial power dynamics and relations?

The analysis of how the various microaggressive messages are communicated and perpetuated at different levels (individual, environmental and institutional) may also represent a significant contribution of this study. This layer of analysis could help to better understand the relationship between the "micro" and the "macro" and how this relationship shapes and sustains systems of oppression and injustice (Strand & Cohen, 2022).

CHAPTER II
Methods

2.1 Research design overview

The present research aims to explore first, the type of microaggressions first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants encounter in Spain, and secondly, how these microagressive incidents are situated within the context of postcolonial power dynamics and relations. To address both research questions, this exploratory qualitative study, framed by post-colonial theories (Said 1978; Spivak, 1988; Bhabha,1983), aimed to understand the subjective meaning of the lived experiences of exposure to ethnic microaggressions and how the postcolonial context shapes them. Data were collected through semi-structured one-on-one interviews based on the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954; Spencer Oatey, 2013; Viergever, 2019). Interviews were transcribed, translated, and later analyzed in a two-step process conducting codebook thematic analysis, and reflexive thematic analysis, alternating between deductive and inductive approaches throughout the process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

2.2 Study Participants

A total of 12 participants were interviewed in Spain (both in person and online) between March and May 2025. To be included in the study, participants had to be first-generation adults (>18) migrants from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries (i.e., Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay Perú, Puerto Rico, República Dominicana, Uruguay, or Venezuela) -that, at the time the interview had been living in Spain for three months or more. Eight participants self-identified as male, while four participants self – identified as women. Six individuals were born in Ecuador, 2 individuals were born in México, 1 in Argentina, 1 in Chile, 1 in El Salvador, and 1 in Venezuela. All of them voluntarily accepted to participate in the study.

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

		N	%
Gender	Male	8	66.66%
	Female	4	33.33%
Country of Origin	Argentina	1	8.33%
	Chile	1	8.33%
	Ecuador	6	50%
	El Salvador	1	8.33%
	Mexico	2	16.66%
	Venezuela	1	8.33%
Occupation	Worker	6	50%
	Student	5	41.66%
	Other	1	8.33%

2.2.1 Recruitment and Selection

Participants were recruited through convenience sampling methods, such as snowball recruitment via social media and word of mouth between members of NGOs in Madrid (e.g., Organization (Madrid for Refugees). Despite contacting potential participants through organizations working with refugee populations, all participants in this study were economic migrants or international students with legal status or in the process of regularization. Once the participants got in touch with the researcher, they were sent a pre–registration form (see Appendix D) in order to determine that they would fit the study eligibility criteria and to gather key sociodemographic information (e.g., country of origin). Only individuals that fit the criteria were chosen to participate in the round of interviews and were sent the informed consent form (see Appendix A and B) with information about the study objectives, treatment of personal data, and the general conditions of their participation. Informed consent forms were obtained from participants before interview appointments were scheduled.

2.3 Data Collection

2.3.1 The Critical Incident Technique (CIT)

To capture the unique experiences of participants, this research was conducted through interviews based on the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), first presented and defined by Flanagan (1954) as ‘a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behavior

in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles ‘ (p. 327). This technique has been widely used in qualitative research and especially for the development of cultural competence trainings (Spencer Oatey & Harsch, 2015). However, Piccinelli et al. (2024) were the first to apply it to the study of microaggressive experiences, as it helps identify significant occurrences such as events, incidents, processes, or issues detected by the interviewed individual and the outcomes of these occurrences in terms of perceived effects. The technique seeks to understand incidents from the individual's perspective, considering cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors (Chell & Pittaway, 1998).

Additionally, this technique is particularly useful in the current study because, as defined by Tripp (1994), critical incidents are mostly straightforward accounts of everyday events that occur routinely, but they are 'critical' in the sense that they reveal underlying trends, motives, and structures. This aligns with the definitions of colonial and ethnic microaggressions mentioned in the above chapter.

2.3.2 The Interview Guide

The design of the interview guide (see Appendix E); structure was based on the guidelines proposed by Flanagan (1954) and the information obtained from several other papers on CIT (Chell & Pittaway, 1998; Edvardsoon & Roos, 2001). Moreover, each question was developed based on the microaggression process model (Sue et al., 2008), which includes the domains of (a) microaggressive incident, (b) perception, (c) reaction, (d) interpretation, and (e) consequence. This framework guided the study in identifying the types of microaggressions experienced by Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain, exploring how participants made sense of these experiences, and examining their psychological responses (e.g., cognitive, behavioral, emotional).

The interview guide included an introduction containing a short conceptualization of microaggressions, coherent with the retrieved literature (Sue et al., 2008; Williams, 2020; Stand & Cohen, 2022; Holtgraves, 2022) though carefully phrased in order to avoid any influence on the respondents' following answers. At the end of the introduction participants were asked to try to remember situations in which they felt treated differently or unfairly in Spain due to their nationality or ethnicity, stating that a) they could refer to situations they experienced themselves as well as in which they were observants of the incident, or situations told by family members and friends; and b) there was no time or quantity limit.

The following battery of open–ended questions was divided into seven parts to facilitate the elicitation of as much information as possible about the experience, the meaning given to the experience by the individual, and the psychological reactions (e.g., cognitive, behavioral, emotional) ; a) retrieval of the critical incident (e.g. Can you think of any subtle situations in which you felt that you were treated differently or unfairly?) ; b) description (e.g. What exactly happened in this incident?) ; c) spectators (e.g. Were there other people present?) ; d) reactions (e.g. What happened immediately after the incident?) ; e) consequences (e.g. Have you thought about the incident again since it happened?) ; f) sharing/facing strategies (e.g. Did you discuss the incident with anyone?) ; and g) explanation (e.g. Why do you think this happened to you?).

Participants were asked to recount one incident at the time, and this set of questions was asked and repeated with each critical incident that the participants remembered. The structure was employed exclusively as a reference tool for the researcher to guide the interview, therefore it was not disclosed to the participants. At the end of the interview the following close-up questions were asked: What were the consequences for how you feel about yourself and your identity? - What do you think about settling in Spain long term?

The interview guide was first written in English to facilitate discussion among the research team. Once consensus was reached between the researcher and subject experts, it was translated into Spanish by the primary researcher and verified with DeepL, the primary language of communication with the participants.

2.3.3. Pilot interview

A pilot interview was conducted to evaluate the clarity and comprehensibility of the interview guide for participants. One subject participated in an online interview with a duration of approximately 40 minutes. The initial interview guide was followed, going through the explanatory introduction followed by the set of questions explained in the above section. It was noticed that the use of terms such as ‘discrimination’ or ‘aggression’ acted as a blocking factor when it came to opening a comfortable space for dialogue with the participant. In addition, it was noted that providing simple examples to the participants helped to enhance a better comprehension of the construct and avoid theoretically complex details. Furthermore, the pilot interview helped to refine and rephrase some questions seeking to make them simpler and more concise. It was concluded that the interview guide did not require any major changes.

2.3.4 Interviews conduction

Data was collected through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with an average duration of 45 minutes. Out of 12 interviews, six were conducted in person, while the remaining six were conducted via Zoom. At the beginning of the interview participants were reminded about the information presented in the informed consent and asked for their agreement to audio record the interview. Two warm-up questions - referring to the participants' country of origin and current occupation - were asked before introducing the concept of microaggressions. Then, the interviews proceeded according to the interview guide.

At the end of the interview, participants were thanked for their availability and reminded that if any question or comment about the study was to be made, they could contact members of the research team. Immediately after the interview, they received a debriefing form (Appendix C). All the interviews were conducted in Spanish and later translated into English for analysis and quotation. The quotes presented in the Results chapter were retrieved from the accurately translated version of the interview's transcripts.

2.4 Data Analysis

2.4.1 Thematic Analysis an overview

Thematic analysis was conducted to identify and interpret participants' experiences and the significance of these within the research context. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method broadly used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) of meaning within a data set. A 'theme' reflects an interpretative idea that helps capture text segments sharing a common point of reference. It represents an underlying thread of meaning identified at the interpretative level and conveys aspects of participants' subjective understandings. (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

This study adopted an iterative inductive-deductive approach. The inductive approach is a bottom-up process whose objective is to form new categories from the data, whereas the deductive approach is a top-down process that aims to link prior categories retrieved from the literature to the data (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Although the course of action required by each approach is different, qualitative analysis can be a dynamic process in which both approaches can be used interchangeably.

The process of analysis required the use of approaches with different methodological orientations. According to Braun & Clarke (2021), the combination of different approaches is permitted by the flexible nature of TA, if a coherent rationale for the choice of such a

combination is provided. Codebook TA seeks to identify broad patterns of meaning and discourse while seeking a structured analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). In this approach themes are conceived as descriptive categories. On the other hand, on Reflexive TA themes are conceived as patterns of shared meanings and its development requires considerable analytic and interpretative work on the part of the researcher. The creation of knowledge is recognized as inherently influenced by individual perspectives and contextual factors (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

2.4.2 Analysis procedures

The analysis was carried out in two steps in order to address each research question raised in the study. After data preparation, the first step was carried out conducting codebook inductive-deductive TA, which is suitable with the first research question of this study, that aims to uncover the type of microaggressions experienced by participants and the messages that they communicate. The second step adopted reflexive TA as the analytic framework since its characteristics align with the second research question raised in this study: How the experiences of participants are situated on the very specific context of postcolonial power dynamics and relations between Spain and Latin American countries? A total of 106 microaggressive incidents were identified as relevant for analysis. Subsequently, data were imported into MAXQDA and analyzed.

2.4.2.1 Unit of analysis

As part of data preparation, defining the unit of analysis provides the researcher with clarity regarding the primary object of focus in the analytic process (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The definition of this object of focus is contingent upon the particular characteristics and objectives of each study. This study defines its unit of analysis around the critical incidents identified in the data set. A critical incident can be defined as observable human activities that deviate significantly from individuals' social and psychological expectations (Edvardsson & Roos, 2001). Building on this definition of a critical incident, the unit of analysis was established by outlining the guidelines and conditions that incidents needed to meet to be included for subsequent examination.

Due to the intricate nature of the construct, identifying microaggressive episodes can become complex when analyzing a data set, especially since several different definitions of microaggressions have been proposed in the literature. Drawing upon the definition of

microaggressions proposed by (Sue, 2010) as well as the dimensions of subtle discrimination suggested by Piccinelli (2024). The unit of analysis in this study was defined as: ´any significant data describing a single microaggressive incident manifested in an interpersonal, environmental or institutional level that must fit at least into one of the following definitions: a) Socially accepted by the dominant group, b) ambiguous regarding perceived intentionality, and c) ambivalent content of the message according to the target´.

2.4.2.2. Codebook analysis - First step

To answer the first research question - i.e., What type of microaggressions do first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain encounter? - the analysis process started by creating an initial set of codes with a deductive approach (see complete codes system in (Appendix G) following pre-existent microaggressive taxonomies (i.e., Piccinelli et al., 2025; Williams et al., 2021) and several rounds of discussion with fellow researchers. Due to the specificity of the studied context, there were segments of data that did not fit into this coding scheme; hence, an inductive TA approach was employed. The result of the first round of inductive - deductive analysis was a thematic outline containing three macro-themes in reference to the levels of manifestation, ten themes and three sub-themes referring to the messages containing the microagressive incidents.

2.4.2.3 Reflexive analysis – Second step

In regard to the second research question - How are these microagressive incidents situated within the context of postcolonial power dynamics and relations? - a hybrid deductive/inductive reflexive TA was considered to be the best course of action. This second round of analysis started by using a pre-existent taxonomy (Piccinelli et al., 2025) as a base framework. While the taxonomy provided an initial structure applicable to some of the themes found in the first round of analysis, reflexive engagement with the data revealed the context complexity and specificity that shaped participants' experiences. This process allowed the reshaping and reconfiguration of the categories for greater contextual relevance.

2.5 Methodological Integrity

2.5.1 Positionality Statement

As a researcher, I acknowledge that my social identity and personal experience influence the way I approached the present study. I identify as a 25-year-old Ecuadorian woman,

first-generation migrant and international student, and member of the Latin-American community. I recognize that these aspects of who I am shape my views and my interactions with participants. With regard to the choices made to design the interview guide and the approach taken to interpret their answers, my academic background in Social and Clinical Psychology also had a strong influence - in aspects such as projection and empathic concern towards the participants' experiences. As a Latin American migrant woman, I connected deeply with the testimonies of the participants in this study, thus making methodological decisions to avoid practices that could dehumanize the participants, turning their testimonies into mere data without voice or identity.

I recognize that the factors that connect me with the participants (e.g. ethnicity, migration status) as well as the factors that distinguish me (e.g. privileges) influenced the research process. To address this, throughout the study I engaged with reflexive practices such as keeping a research journal and discussing the analysis and coding process with my supervisor and peers. By acknowledging my positionality my aim is to recognize the situated nature of knowledge obtained in this study.

2.5.2 Ethical Considerations

To confirm the application of ethical principles, the study was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee at Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon (Process number PSI_67/2024, dated 03/02/2025). Prior to conducting the interviews, participants were informed about the conditions of their participation, as well as the processing and protection of their personal data. This was provided through informed consent (see Appendix A and B). The informed consent also ensured that participation was voluntary and confidential. To guarantee confidentiality, personal names were anonymized and replaced with a code formed by their initials and country of origin. When names appeared in the transcription, they were removed and replaced by pseudonyms.

Considering the sensitivity of the topics examined in this study, at the end of each interview, participants received a debriefing document (Appendix C). The sheet contained scientific references around the topic, the research team contacts, and telephone number and contact email from organizations that could provide psychological, legal, and social support in Spain. Both the informed consent and debriefing documents were designed based on standardized forms ethically approved by ISCTE-IUL, University Institute of Lisbon.

CHAPTER III
Results

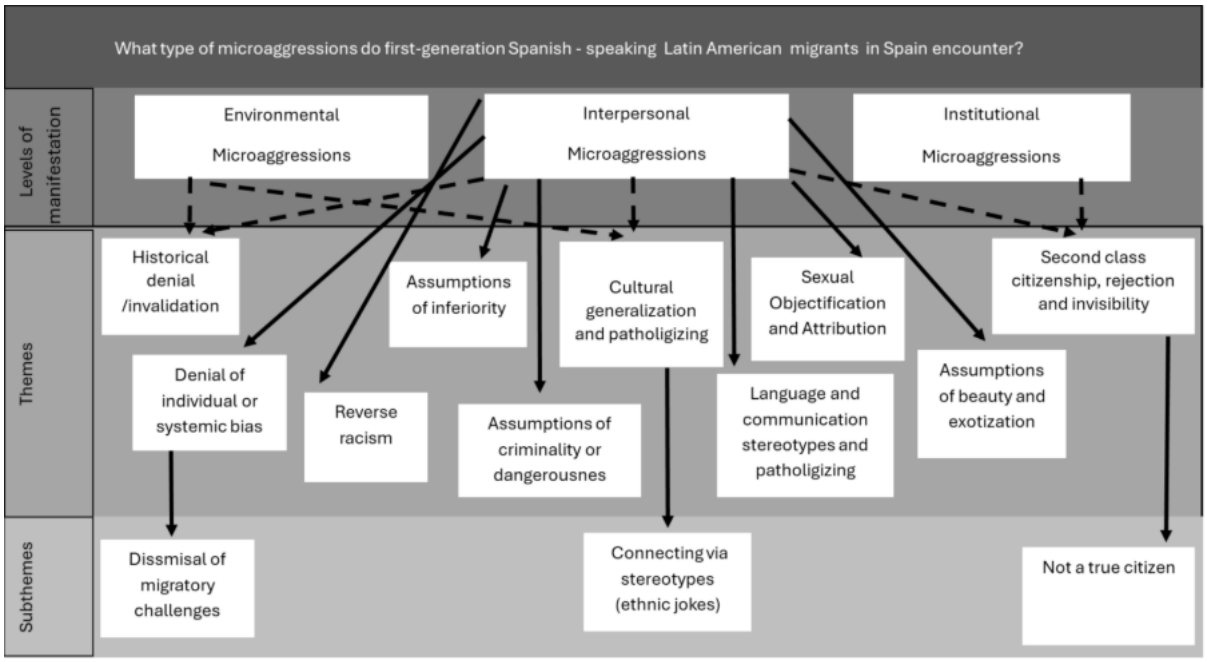
This chapter presents the findings of the conducted qualitative analysis that explored the types of microaggressions experienced by first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain within a context shaped by postcolonial power dynamics. The research was guided by two central questions: a) What type of microaggressions do first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain encounter? and b) How are these microaggressive incidents situated within the context of postcolonial power dynamics and relations? The analysis was conducted in two stages. The first stage identified and categorized recurring microaggressive themes within the data set, while the second examined how participants' experiences reveal the ways colonial hierarchies continue to operate in discourse and shape everyday interactions. The sections that follow present these results in detail

3.1 Codebook Thematic Analysis

To answer the first research question, an inductive-deductive codebook thematic analysis was conducted resulting in a thematic set including: Three levels of manifestation which are connected to ten themes and three subthemes. The sub themes were developed to highlight specific variations in order to deepen understanding of the main themes and explore them in greater detail. The developed thematic structure represents the messages conveyed through each microaggressive incident. Findings indicate that some themes were not confined to one level of manifestation but emerged across different levels. (see Figure 1).

Most of these themes were retrieved from previous taxonomies (i.e. Piccinelli et al., 2024; Williams, 2021) and applied deductively to the current dataset. New themes were created inductively when those present in the literature were not satisfactory. This section explores and elaborates on the themes identified through the analysis of 12 interviews. In total, 106 critical incidents were coded in the dataset, which formed the basis for the development of these themes.

Figure 1.



3.1.1 Interpersonal Microaggressions

This level of manifestation encompasses incidents in which discriminatory messages were conveyed through verbal and nonverbal everyday subtle exchanges, including comments directed to targets, as well as the use of body language or physical actions. A total of 88 incidents (83.01%) were coded at this level, in which the following microaggressive messages were found to be communicated:

Second class citizenship, rejection and invisibility

This theme includes microaggressive incidents in which the targets were treated with less care, or respect than is normally expected in the larger society. It includes reports of being treated as a 'lower class citizen' (Sue et al., 2007), and episodes where participants felt ignored, overlooked, unheard, unseen or made feel invisible (Piccinelli et al., 2024). Participants reported feeling marginalized, not only due to verbal cues but also for the implicit message behind non-verbal behaviors such as physical distancing and eye contact avoidance.

> "Uh, in the news you can see that they have people who are interviewing a black person from the police academy, they interview her, and she says, ‹‹ No, no, here in Spain there is no racism, I'm just another police officer like all the police officers. ›› And then they asked her how she went to enroll, and she said she went to enroll in the police academy and the first thing they answered to her was: ‹‹ Ah, but if you are asking for asylum the office is below. ›› And she said it like it was a joke and then you realize like...

No, you're not from the police, they're not seeing you as an equal, they're not seeing you as a person from here." (HJES1 male – El Salvador).

Not a true citizen: Retrieved from what Williams and colleagues (2021) proposed, this subtheme includes microaggressions perpetuated based on the assumption that the targets will never comply with the necessary 'requirements' to be considered legitimate citizens or a meaningful part of the larger society. Participants reported perceived differential treatment that would emulate feelings of exclusion and lack of belonging.

"I have another colleague who is also a PhD, she is already very stable in Spain with her Spanish husband, she is Argentinean, she is white passing [...] she finished her defence, she graduated, she did everything, she got a university position here in Spain and the person who gave her the position in the congratulations said ‹‹ Well, now you are not going to speak badly of Spain because you already have the position.›› So, she just told me ‹‹ When do I finish validating, I mean, when do I finish validating that I'm also from here? ›› (HJES1 male – El Salvador).

Assumptions of criminality or dangerousness

This theme included situations in which participants were treated differently, avoided or disrespected based on the assumption that Spanish speaking Latin American immigrants are linked to criminal activities, dangerous, untrustworthy, and likely to cause harm or damage (Sue, 2010; Williams et al., 2021; Piccinelli et al., 2024). Men proved to be more likely to be victims of these incidents with greater frequency and severity, sometimes even involving the presence of law enforcement forces. In the sample of. This study no woman reported incidents related to this theme, but several male participants did. Participants described experiencing ethnic and socioeconomic profiling by police, noting that judgments were made solely on the basis of their physical appearance.

"I was walking down one of these streets and uh normally here the sideways are very big, but it was a very busy street [...] I was getting very close to a lady, and the lady was maybe 36, 38 years old more or less. And well, nothing, she turned around, I mean, the lady started walking and she saw me out of the corner of her eye a little diagonal towards her, she grabbed her purse a little bit, I mean, she made the gesture of grabbing her purse harder and all I did was to pass by her and go on my way faster to avoid an uncomfortable moment, you know?" (APEC1 male – Ecuador).

Assumptions of inferiority

This theme referred to the incidents in which participants reported receiving comments made under the belief that Spanish speaking Latin American migrants are inferior, less competent, less educated, or of lower social status and income (Capodilupo et al., 2010; Piccinelli et al., 2024; Sue, 2010; Williams et al., 2021). Many participants reported that they faced surprise or disbelief when they exhibited characteristics contrary to what had previously been assumed about them.

> "Yes, for example, she always remembers when she came here to Spain to work, she worked as an intern, right? Cleaning as an intern. And she says that one of the ladies that she was cleaning for was talking on the phone with another woman or with someone [...] And she was cleaning, my mom that is, listening to everything and that lady was telling the other lady something like, ‹‹Here's a Latina working, I don't think she even knows what a TV is. ›› Because when she walks across, she's surprised by the TV". (EFEC1 female – Ecuador).

Participants also described experiences where, upon mentioning that they lived in certain neighborhoods, they faced comments of surprise or assumptions that they worked in service jobs in the given neighborhood.

> "And then the professor says, ‹‹but in the Salamanca neighborhood I don't think that so many Hispanic Americans live there. ›› And then he said, ‹‹ There are Hispanic Americans, but only during working hours ›› Okay. What does that mean? That according to him they are domestic employees." (NMEC2 male – Ecuador).

Reverse Racism

Retrieved from the taxonomy proposed by Williams et al (2021) this theme refers to the incidents where participants perceived hostile behavior and jealousy based on the idea that Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants receive undeserved advantages due to their ethnicity or migration status. Participants also described comments suggesting that Spaniards are treated unfairly because resources are allocated to support these alleged benefits. The theme also encompasses attempts to invalidate the achievements of Spanish-speaking Latin American individuals by framing their success as unearned.

> "I also remember that I had comments like ‹‹ they help immigrants, they pay everything for them ›› [...] things like that, and all of that is actually very far from what actually happens. And even today this keeps happening, I'm talking about 24 years ago when I first received comments like this". (LZEC1 male – Ecuador).

Cultural Generalization and Pathologizing

This theme was retrieved from the taxonomy proposed by Piccinelli and colleagues (2024). It is based on the belief that individuals from the same nation or ethnic group possess identical cultural traits and physical features (e.g. All Latin Americans like loud music / Every Latin American have the same skin tone).

> "And, for example, a friend of mine and a roommate of mine told me that this has nothing to do with Ecuador, but then we developed the conversation, because she said, ‹‹I don't understand how two of my roommates are from Peru and one is white and the other one is brown. How can this be? ››". (NMEC1 male - Ecuador).

This often leads to reactions of surprise when people from those backgrounds do not conform to such expectations or stereotypes. This theme also includes incidents in which references to

both physical and cultural 'non-belonging' were made as a compliment (e.g. lighter skin tone, Western musical taste).

> "A Spaniard, for example, who would say to me, ‹‹but you must have European roots because you don't look Ecuadorian›› [...] ‹‹You are handsome, you must have the race of Europeans because the Ecuadorian part doesn't show››". (NMEC1 male - Ecuador).

Participants also described situations where they were instantly assigned a nationality more recognizable within the Spanish context, revealing how Spanish-speaking Latin Americans are often reduced to a single identity shaped by the mainstream representation in media.

> "And then a Spaniard [...] He came back to me and said, ‹‹What, Mexican? Do you like the bullfight? ›› Right. And there are two important things. I felt two things. First, that every Latin American is Mexican. That bothers me. Because it's not like that, is it?". (NMEC2 male – Ecuador).

Connecting via Stereotypes: Participants reported situations where they felt that Spaniards approached with the intention to connect with them through the use of stereotyped behaviours or comments. This category also includes the use of racial jokes or even racist epitaphs to try to fit in or as terms of endearment (Nadal, et al., 2012). The distinction of this specific subtheme was made due to the undeniable intentionality of racial jokes that distinguish them from incidents contained in the Cultural Generalization and Pathologizing theme.

> "Other situations eh Well, the ‹‹No mames, güey››, or the ‹‹pinche güey›› (Expressions commonly associated to Mexico). And all my colleagues' little jokes, I know they say it as a joke, but there are things that they generalize about Mexico, I take it as a joke because I think güey it is what it is". (BPMX1 female – Mexico).

Language and communication stereotypes and pathologizing

As stated priorly, the sample of this research was composed by migrants from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries, therefore all participants were native Spanish speakers, however, due to the evolution and adaptation of the language to each cultural setting each country holds a specific accent that marked the participants as foreigners in Spain. This theme contains all the reported microaggressive incidents that communicate the idea that the Spanish spoken in their countries is grammatically incorrect, inferior, unacceptable, or undesirable (Piccinelli et al., 2024), and incidents where language was used as marker of ingroups vs outgroup.

> "As soon as I open my mouth and speak, they notice that I am not Spaniard and then they say, ‹‹Oh, if you didn't speak, eh you would pass for one of us›› ‹‹You speak and you screw up››". (LZEC1 male - Ecuador).

Sexual Objectification and Attribution

This theme includes microaggressions mainly experienced by Spanish-speaking Latin American women that communicate sexual objectification, erotization, and hyper-

sexualization (Lewis et al., 2016; Piccinelli et al., 2024). In the sample of this study only female participants reported receiving comments alluding that they are naturally prompted for sexual relations as well as attributed characteristics of promiscuity. Participants also mentioned experiences in which they felt they were treated as objects of entertainment whose purpose was the sexual gratification of Spanish and European men. Adjectives such as hot, spicy or sexy are commonly used to describe the Latin American female figure.

> "And he said something like, ‹‹No, it's just that you move so well, Latinas move so much better›› [...] ‹‹Can I record you so I can show my friends that I was with a Latina and stuff? ›› [...] I mean, I thought something like This guy is bad. [...] So, that's when I realized how they exoticize the hell out of us Latinx women". (PVMX1 female – Mexico).

This theme also encompasses microaggressions characterized by the assumption that Spanish speaking Latin American women are constantly seeking relationships with Spaniards to get economic and social benefits. Participants reported having the authenticity of their romantic relationships questioned, often under the stereotypical belief that Spanish speaking Latin American women are gold diggers.

> “He said to me, ‹‹It's the truth, it's a reality, there are a lot of Latin women who are interested in money›› And I asked why? And he said to me, ‹‹It's not your case, because you came well with your papers in order and such›› [...] And he also said to me, ‹‹Well, yes, but if they come with nothing, they are obviously looking for someone to do their papers for them. The truth is that I as a Spaniard, if I have my house, if I have my car, if I have my job, why do I get involved with a Latina if I am going to have to support her? ››”. (PVMX1 female – Mexico).

Assumptions of beauty and Exotization

As the theme described above, this theme also refers to microaggressions mainly experienced by Spanish-speaking Latin American women. These incidents reflected the judgments and pressures placed on Spanish speaking Latin American women regarding their appearance (Lewis et al., 2016; Piccinelli et al., 2024). Participants reported being labelled as attractive or unattractive according to appearance standards tied to specific ethnic features. Some participants noted that particular nationalities tend to be socially perceived as more attractive than others. For instance, countries with Caribbean influences, such as Colombia and Venezuela, showed to be frequently associated with desirable beauty standards, whereas phenotypic traits linked to nations with stronger Andean influences, such as Peru and Ecuador, were often devalued or regarded as less desirable.

> "Or they always ask me if I'm Colombian. Because I have an accent, I don't know where they get my Colombian accent from, but I receive comments like ‹‹You are from Colombia, right? ›› Like they have identified that Colombian women are prettier. I don't know, that's something that gives me perspective.

Because there were previous comments like ‹‹Oh how beautiful you are, are you from Colombia? ›› and I always proudly answer that I'm from Mexico". (BPMX1 female – Mexico).

Denial of individual or systemic bias

This theme includes the incidents related to statements in which Spaniards overlooked the ways in which ethnicity, and immigrant status shaped participants' experiences, and denied their prejudiced nature, as well as the existence of discrimination at a systemic level (Piccinelli et al., 2024; Sue, 2010). The participants reported that this denial often occurred in response to questioning about discriminatory actions or comments. This denial was usually accompanied by justifications based on friendship or social relationships with Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants, or by explaining the anti-racist actions that the person has taken in the past (Williams et al., 2021) which, left the participants feeling hopeless and frustrated by the invalidation of their perception of the incidents.

"And when I have told this to Spaniards, the first thing they say to me is, ‹‹Oh (name) but we are like that too. The government employees are like that with us too›› And it's like, no, it's not the same because you have everything in order. I mean, you understand, it's not the same". (PVMX1female - Mexico).

This theme also includes incidents related to the denial of the existence of discrimination on individual and systemic levels. Specifically, regarding personal achievements, where the myth of meritocracy assumes that success is determined solely by personal effort (Williams et al., 2021).

Dismissal of migratory challenges: This inductively generated sub-theme refers to cues that trivialize, invalidate or minimize the unique difficulties associated with migration, suggesting that such difficulties are exaggerated, unimportant or illegitimate. Participants reported receiving comments emphasizing how 'fortunate' they were to be in Spain, where conditions were supposedly undeniably better. Such statements served to invalidate emotions such as sadness or nostalgia.

"Yes, I have told this to some people a few times and the reaction is always one of indignation, as if to say what can you expect from a donkey more than a kick, things like that, even though it is clear that the institutions work in that way, the response is always ‹‹well, at least you got something, or at least you were not deported or at least...›› I mean, there is always an incentive of ‹‹well, but at least you are here››". (RRV1 male – Venezuela).

In some cases, participants reported receiving comments explicitly telling them that they had no right to complain about their situation. Such comments made them feel that they were being denied the ability to decide when and how they could express their emotions.

"Back then he used to make comments about my migrant situation, saying that it was no big deal, that it would have a solution, that I was complaining about nothing, if as I had everything solved when it wasn't true. Whenever I shared my situation with Spaniards, their response was often to invalidate my

> experiences [...] So, my Spaniard ex-partner was telling me something like ‹‹stop playing the victim. You have no right to complain››". (PVMX1 female – Mexico).

Additionally, participants described incidents in which their migration was assumed to be entirely voluntary, with the option to return at will, disregarding the complex socio-economic factors underlying migratory processes.

> "It's like I get comments like ‹‹You can go back›› [...] I can go back because we are living the premium migration experience so far, God forbid that things go from bad to worse. But one does not migrate because one wants to. In other words, most of us who leave... we leave because we have to". (NMEC2 male – Ecuador).

Historical denial/invalidation

At the interpersonal level, participants frequently reported comments referencing the historical relationship between Spain and Spanish-speaking Latin American countries. These statements often alluded both to the colonial past and to its enduring influence on contemporary social and systemic issues. Inductively generated, this theme contains incidents of erasure, distortion, or minimization of historical injustices experienced by Spanish-speaking Latin American population. Participants described feeling invalidated and dismissed when attempting to discuss experiences of discrimination due to comments like 'It happened too long ago' which suggested that raising these issues is unnecessary or exaggerated.

> "I asked, how do you feel about having Latino classmates or what is your position regarding the whole colonization issue and everything that happened? And he was very open and told me, ‹‹well the truth is that it is not an issue that is really affecting me. I respect you as a human being and that´s that, the truth is that it was something they did, I mean, it was something that was done many years ago, the truth is, recent generations shouldn´t be to blame for that [...] I cannot change history and I cannot repent for what others did and I cannot carry a debt that has nothing to do with me now››". (APEC1 male - Ecuador).

Participants also recounted incidents in which their identity was questioned and invalidated through terms that established the Spanish conquest as a defining historical event, leaving them with the feeling that the resistance, legacy, and existence of their people were not recognized.

> "Uh, talking to a Spaniard, I think he said something about Hispanic America, no, lie. I was saying something about Latin American countries, and he said, ‹‹you mean Hispanic America›› And I said, ‹‹No, Latin America›› And he tried to correct me again saying ‹‹No, no, Hispanic America›› then I again answered ‹‹No, Latin America, I have more to do with a Brazilian than with you›› [...] Then I realized that the word Hispanic America is very established and it's like, stop it, stop reinforcing it". (CARG1 female – Argentina).

3.1.2 Environmental Microaggressions

This level of manifestation encompasses incidents in which discriminatory messages were conveyed through both the immediate physical and social environment (e.g., inadequate infrastructure, uncomfortable settings) and symbolic or cultural forms (e.g., street names, monuments, public art, historical narratives, and chronicles). A total of seven incidents (6.60%) were coded at this level, in which the following microaggressive messages were found to be communicated:

Cultural generalization and pathologizing

This theme manifested also on the environmental level refers to the incidents in which institutions, the media, or social systems portrayed Latin America as a group in simplified, or stereotypical ways. Additionally, it also contains the experiences in which participants reported that institutions, the media, or social systems framed their cultural behaviors and practices as 'abnormal,' 'wrong,' or 'less advanced.'

> "They kind of have the idea that everything is super dangerous, but as I said, I imagine that it is due to the fact that all the information they receive from the news or from social media is a bit alarmist, because I remember that I saw the news here and they always focus on the ugly part. I mean, when everything happened in Ecuador, when the riots happened, when TC (Ecuadorean television channel) was assaulted, they only put the ugly part, I mean, JUST the ugly". (CVEC1 male - Ecuador).

Historical denial/invalidation

This theme manifested also on the environmental level and refers to the incidents in which the participants felt the erasure or distortion of their history through their immediate surroundings (public transport, monuments, street names).

> "Yes, I would think that the best example I can give you is the Plaza de Cervantes. In the Plaza de Cervantes upstairs, there is a monument of a conqueror teaching a person with a plume to read. And I mean, that's problematic". (HJES1 male – El Salvador).

Participants also described feeling that societal rituals, such as national holidays celebrating events that represented oppression, invalidated or erased their own history. It was reported that participants perceived that these events would present only the dominant Spaniard narrative while excluding the voices and perspectives of the Spanish speaking Latin American population.

> "October 12 (Columbus Day) here, is a general problem. All the people come out as fascists, all the people come up with these ideas, they say things like ‹‹You know? The colony was good. Latin Americans coming out of the colony was good too›› All of this comes out [...] lots of banners, lots of things [...] last year I don't know who paid for it, but there is a book called ‹‹What Spain Left to Latin America›› Well, last year for the 12th it was in all the subway ads". (HJES1 male – El Salvador).

3.1.3 Institutional Microaggressions

This level of manifestation encompasses incidents in which discriminatory messages were conveyed through processes, rules and policies that led to differential access to societal resources and opportunities such as the healthcare system, living spaces, education, regularized migration statues, and others. A total of eleven incidents (10.37%) were coded at this level, in which the following microaggressive message was found to be communicated:

Second class citizenship, rejection and invisibility

This theme includes microaggressive incidents where the targets felt that they were being treated with less care or respect than is normally expected when institutions granted them unequal access to societal resources and rights. As stated priorly, the sample of this research was composed of migrants from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries. Therefore, incidents related to immigration policies that restricted benefits or services to Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants were also included.

> "I think there is an issue that happened to me recently, less than a month ago, which is that all foreigners, migrants, have been called to bring our valid documents to the health centre. And in the event that you do not have a valid document, whatever the circumstance is, you will be dropped from the health care system, and since you are forcedly dropped off, you cannot use the health system, you cannot go to the doctor, etcetera [...] So of course, that has been the most recent thing that has happened to me and I think that in theory it is not discriminatory from an individual point of view because they are doing it to many people in general who are migrants and not only to me and not only to Latinos, but it is discriminatory because as far as I understand, Spanish people do not go through this process". (RRV2 male – Venezuela).

Several participants reported incidents in which, at the policy and regulatory level, they were denied access to housing, employment opportunities, and faced bureaucratic obstacles in their immigration regularization processes.

> "I think another issue that I also realized is related to getting the papers, well, you won't let me lie, it's super difficult. I came with a job seeker visa, which is a non-profit residency for 2 years and to be able to work a company must do the paperwork for me. So, I finally got a company that hires me and does the paperwork for me, but it has been 7 months since the immigration office has given me the resolution. They asked us for an injunction a month ago. I went to the immigration office, and the company told me that the process shouldn't be denied because everything is perfect. But I have not received an answer yet. And I have the feeling that sometimes the immigration office does it on purpose to make us leave". (PVMX1 female – Mexico).

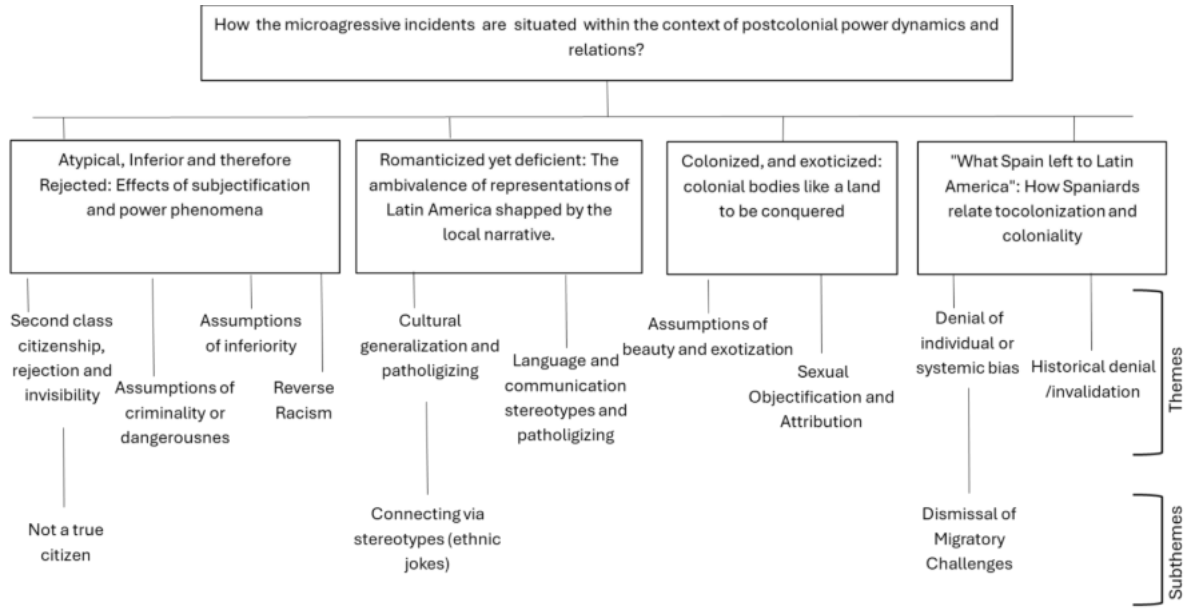
3.2 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

To answer the second research question: How are these microaggressive incidents situated within the context of postcolonial power dynamics and relations? a reflexive thematic analysis was conducted. This second stage of the analysis began deductively, guided by colonial discourse theory and previous taxonomies (e.g. Piccinelli et al., 2024) as an analytical

lens, and subsequently shifted to an inductive orientation, allowing themes to emerge organically from the participants' narratives.

Through this approach, four overarching themes were identified. Each overarching theme integrated the themes and subthemes developed in the earlier codebook analysis stage (see Figure 2), offering a broader conceptual framework that explains how these incidents are shaped and sustained by colonial discourse. The thematic structure that emerged through reflexive engagement was as follows: a) *Atypical, Inferior and therefore Rejected: Effects of subjectification and power phenomena.* Containing the following themes and subtheme: Second class citizenship, rejection, and invisibility; Not a true citizen; Assumption of inferiority; Assumption of criminality and dangerousness; Reverse racism; b) *Romanticized yet deficient: The ambivalence of representations of Latin America shaped by the local narrative.* Containing the following themes and subtheme: Cultural generalization and pathologizing; Connecting via stereotypes (ethnic jokes); Language and communication stereotypes and pathologizing; c) *Objectified, sexualized, and exoticized: colonial bodies like a land to be conquered.* Containing the following themes: Sexual objectification and attribution; Assumptions of beauty and exotization; and d) "*What Spain left to Latin America": How Spaniards relate to colonization and coloniality*. Containing the following themes and subtheme: Denial of individual and systemic bias; Dismissal of migratory challenges; Historical denial/invalidation.

Figure 2.



Atypical, Inferior and therefore Rejected: Effects of subjectification and power phenomena.

This theme captures the experiences where participants described being in positions as 'other', frequently portrayed as inferior, strange and out of place within Spanish society. Participants reported feeling that the components of their individual and collective identity were framed as 'out of the norm' positioning the members of the Spanish society and their cultural practices as the reference of what is consider normal and therefore desirable. This reflects a colonial logic containing cultural and historical components that build the notions and representation of Spanish speaking Latin Americans as "subaltern others" (Spivak, 1988). This colonial logic continues to differentiate between those who belong and those who do not, thus perpetuating the marginalization of the Spanish speaking Latin American community.
Participants frequently described being treated like they were not entitled to full membership in Spanish society despite their efforts (Second class citizenship, rejection, and invisibility).

> "It's never going to be the same. Spaniards have their papers in order, it's not the same. Even if you go to the doctor, I have seen how they treat a Spaniard better than a Latino. They are much nicer to Spaniards". (PVMX1 female – Mexico).

This differential treatment is normalized within Spanish society across multiple levels of manifestation. Such normalization is the outcome of centuries of discourse that has constructed Spanish speaking Latin Americans as a population of 'uncivilized types' a representation that has been communicated, transmitted, and endured over time because it serves as a justification. Centuries ago, it justified the geographical invasion, nowadays it justifies the establishment of systems of oppression.

Some participants also mentioned feeling like they were present in Spain only provisionally or conditionally, regardless of their legal status or length of residence (Not a true citizen). Participants reported that the constant perpetuation of such microaggressions generated a sense that their permanence in Spain was never fully secure, but rather contingent upon the Spanish system and the judgments of its privileged members.

> "When do I finish validating? I mean, when do I finish validating like that I'm from here?" (HJES1 male – El Salvador).

Participants testimonies reveal how they are constantly marked as 'lesser' (Assumptions of inferiority), not because of individual characteristics, but because the discourse has historically constructed Spanish speaking Latin Americans as deficient in several aspects (intellect, competence, education, status).

> "So, imagine, you ask one of them something and they just kind of subtly don't say anything, but their silence is like if they are thinking ‹‹are you stupid or what? ›› Like that, you know, like they don't say it, but I don't know, like they make you feel less in some way they make you feel like you are stupid. (BPMX1 female – Mexico).

The system of statements that has been socialized have imposed a symbolic veil of inferiority on Spanish-speaking Latin Americans, shaping how they are perceived by others; a veil that persists despite the efforts to challenge or disprove it. This finds direct relation with Spivak´s (1988) subaltern theory core idea: "The subaltern cannot speak". Spanish-speaking Latin Americans have historically been denied the access to the means by which they could control their own representations, leaving the power to construct them as symbolic subjects in the hands of those who benefit from a system that keeps them oppressed.

Participant´s accounts illustrate how Spanish speaking Latin Americans are not only positioned as culturally and socially deficient but also marked as potential threats (Assumptions of criminality or dangerousness). These representations function as both justifications for and reinforcements of rejection and marginalization, while simultaneously reproducing deep-rooted colonial stereotypes. Historically, American Indigenous peoples were constructed as uncivilized, volatile, and in need of control; in the contemporary context, similar tropes are projected onto Spanish speaking Latin American migrants.

> "When I opened the door of the building and was entering, a patrol car of the National Police stopped me and asked me for my documents [...] At that moment not only the sermon about me always having to take my papers with me but the treatment, which is a treatment like distrust from the beginning, because these people are asking you for your documents to see if they can catch you in something illegal and arrest you or give you a fine or whatever [...] I remember that at that moment I felt so humiliated (RRV1 male – Venezuela)

Within colonial discourse theory, these narratives can be understood as mechanisms of control over subordinate subjects, which maintain asymmetry in power relations. The discourse rooted in Spanish society continues to portray Latin America as a land that was once savage and needs to be civilized, while simultaneously presenting its current populations as 'savage' individuals who need to be controlled and indoctrinated. This symbolic framework legitimizes socialized stereotypes and, at the same time, gives implicit approval to the discriminatory practices that derive from them.

This overarching theme also contains participants' accounts where expressions of jealousy or hostility toward the notion that Spanish speaking Latin Americans might receive unfair advantages because of their origin, ethnicity, migration status were described (reverse racism). Such expressions are built under narratives that, by presenting Spanish speaking Latin Americans as undeserving beneficiaries, hide the structural inequalities that position them as oppressed.

> "I also remember that I had comments like ‹‹ they help immigrants, they pay everything for them ›› [...] things like that, and all of that is actually very far from what actually happens. And even today this keeps

> happening, I'm talking about 24 years ago when I first received comments like this [...] that is a lie, especially if the migrant does not enter the system, that is, if they do not have papers, they have no rights to anything. (LZEC1 male – Ecuador).

These incidents reflect the persistence of colonial logics of entitlement, in which Spaniards as the dominant group claim ownership of privileges and interpret any advance towards inclusion as an illegitimate intrusion.

Romanticized yet deficient: The ambivalence of representations of Latin America shaped by the local narrative.

This theme includes the experiences where participants described microaggressive incidents in which it became notorious how Latin America is often described in romanticized terms, praised for its music, landscapes, warmth or cultural dynamism, but simultaneously these positive descriptions are systematically accompanied by assumptions of deficiency, backwardness or lack of development. Such "ambivalence" (Bhabha, 1983) reflects persistent colonial imaginaries in which Latin America is constructed as a fascinating and exotic space, but one that is incomplete, in need of guidance or intrinsically inferior. This ambivalent representation of Latin America as a society directly shapes the ways its inhabitants are perceived and consequently influences how they are treated within contemporary relational dynamics.

The testimonies of several participants reveal how they were often reduced to broad cultural stereotypes. This generalization reduces Spanish speaking Latin Americans to a homogenized cultural caricature, erasing individuality and silencing personal identities and voices. This generalization acts as a mechanism of perpetuation of inequal treatment and discrimination, reducing complex social dynamics to essentialist claims such as, 'they are all like that, and therefore they do not fit, they can´t fit'.

> "I don´t see this friend a lot, but we are still in touch. Once we met and caught up and she asked, ‹‹When are you getting married? You have to get yourself a Latina with eyes like this slanted, or something like that›› And I asked ‹‹Why not a Spaniard? ›› She said ‹‹No, no, you guys have to be with your own ››". (LZEC1 male – Ecuador).

The generalizations participants endured were often accompanied by representations of their ethnic, racial, and cultural characteristics that, unless considered exotic or entertaining were portrayed as inherently deficient and undesirable (cultural generalization and pathologizing). The narratives underpinning these incidents often positioned cultural difference not merely as 'other,' but as deficient, problematic, and in need of correction. These incidents highlight two key reasons why the ambivalent historical and contemporary representations of Latin America within Spanish discourse are problematic. First, the dominant group (Spaniards)

retains the power to define which traits are valued and which are pathologized. Second, the Spanish-speaking Latin American subject, as a subordinated other, is never positioned as an equal: when not constructed as deficient, then reduced to the status of exotic.

This dynamic is also evident in the microaggressions participants reported through ethnic jokes (Connecting via stereotypes). In this cases ambivalence is shown clearly since humor functions simultaneously as a form of inclusion and exclusion, Spanish-speaking Latin American subjects are invited to interact and create connections through laughter, but only at the cost of being reduced to stereotypes. These microaggressions can be analyzed as part of a subtle but powerful control mechanism, in which ´joking serves to normalize unequal relationships by masking hostility under humor.

> "Other situations eh Well, the ‹‹No mames, güey››, or the ‹‹pinche güey››. And all my colleagues' little jokes, I know they say it as a joke, but there are things that they generalize about Mexico, I take it as a joke because I think güey it is what it is". (BPMX1 female – Mexico).

Many participants mentioned incidents in which their accents, choice of vocabulary, or communication styles were often ‘rectified’ and dismissed as incorrect (Language and communication stereotypes and pathologizing). These incidents highlight the ambivalent nature of colonial discourses, in which language is perceived simultaneously as an element of similarity and at the same time a characteristic worthy of judgment in the event that it does not comply with what Spanish narrative dictates as correct (Ashcroft et al., 2007).

> “So, there are words that maybe I know that are different, when I say this words, she comes to me and says, ‹‹Why do you talk so strangely? Why do you talk so funny? ›› [...] And then she said ‹‹Mexicans, you do very strange things or are very strange ››”. (BPMX1 female - México).

This ambivalence is portrayed in the belief in the existence of a ‘correct’ (and therefore, superior) versus ‘wrong’ (inferior) Spanish language. Reproducing a hierarchy in which the Spaniard´s linguistic norms are the standard of correctness and authority.

Objectified, sexualized, and exoticized: colonial bodies like a land to be conquered.

This overarching theme contains the microaggressive incidents reported by participants that capture how Latin American bodies (particularly female) are objectified, sexualized, and exoticized in ways that communicate colonial imaginaries of conquest. Participants’ testimonies revealed that their bodies were frequently reduced to objects of desire, fascination, or domination, rather than recognized in their individuality. These incidents show a fixation on colonial narratives that creates a symbolic image of Spanish-speaking Latin American woman as a silent territory awaiting conquest, voiceless, waiting to be possessed.

Microaggressive incidents were reported where the intersection of gender and ethnicity was salient, often expressed through sexual objectification, eroticization, and hyper

sexualization of the Latin American female bodies (Sexual objectification and attribution). Participants mentioned experiences of being conceived as an object at the disposal of Spaniard men. Through constant perpetuation of these microaggressions, Spanish-speaking Latin American women stop being engaged as full human beings and rather as 'just bodies'.

> "And he said something like, ‹‹No, it's just that you move so well, Latinas move so much better›› [...] ‹‹Can I record you so I can show my friends that I was with a Latina and stuff? ›› [...] I mean, I thought something like This guy is bad. [...] So, that's when I realized how they exoticize the hell out of us Latinx women". (PVMX1 female – Mexico).

These incidents reflect the dynamics of subalternity (Spivak, 1988) as participants´ individualities were erased and replaced by colonial representations of desire and domination. These representations can be traced back to the earliest eroticized depictions of Indigenous women, who were often objectified and represented as possessions inherent to the colonized territory (Piccinelli et al., 2024).

This dynamic is also evident in the microaggressions participants reported through the stereotypical assumptions of Spanish speaking Latin American women as seekers of transactional sex/relations These incidents were often characterized by the stereotypical assumption that Spanish speaking Latin American women seek relationships with Spanish men for economic interest or to obtain visa/citizenship, and that the motivations behind their migration are related to sexual work or to ´seduce´ married Spanish men who could provide them with economic wealth.

> And he also said to me, ‹‹Well, yes, but if they come with nothing, they are obviously looking for someone to do their papers for them. The truth is that I as a Spaniard, if I have my house, if I have my car, if I have my job, why do I get involved with a Latina if I am going to have to support her? ››". (PVMX1 female – Mexico).

These conceptions are constructed under a narrative that reflects a modern rethinking of colonial ideas. These narratives reduce women's free will and effective decision-making capacity, as well as their complex migratory trajectories, to an instrumentalized use of sexuality, which reinforces gender and racial hierarchies.

As mentioned before, the microaggressions contained in this overarching theme were exclusively reported by female participants, including the ones related to the judgments and pressures of immigrant women's physical appearance (Assumptions of beauty and exotization). Participants´ experiences reflect how the traits considered 'desirable' by the discourse are intensely linked to ethnic phenotypes that are assumed to be from countries located in the Caribbean or with a prevalence of Caribbean roots (e.g. Colombia or Venezuela), while traits

associated with countries with a prevalence of Andean roots (e.g. Ecuador or Peru) are socialized as unattractive or undesirable.

> "I receive comments like ‹‹You are from Colombia, right? ›› Like they have identified that Colombian women are prettier. I don't know, that's something that gives me perspective. Because there were previous comments like ‹‹Oh how beautiful you are, are you from Colombia? ››" (BPMX1 female – Mexico).

These perpetuations show how colonial narratives are the base for contemporary social constructions. In the colonial period, Indigenous Andean populations were often depicted as backward and unattractive, while Afro-descendant or mixed populations in the Caribbean were sexualized and exoticized. Both of these poles are dehumanizing, because they deny individuality and reduce people to bodily characteristics. The fact that the narrative attributes the characteristic of attractiveness to certain subjects does not make it any less violent.

"*What Spain left to Latin America": How Spaniards relate to colonization and coloniality*.

This overarching theme examines how participants perceived Spaniards' ways of relating to colonization and coloniality, both in discourse and in everyday interactions. Participants' experiences reveal how the representations of the colonial invasion that are socialized in the Spanish society portray this historical era as a non-violent process of subjugation, extermination and looting, but as a historical episode reinterpreted through narratives of cultural exchange, progress, or even benevolence.

Microaggressive incidents of denial of individual and systemic bias are contained in this overarching theme. The official narrative in Spain justifies the oppressive and marginalizing systems to which the Spanish-speaking Latin American people are subjected by legitimizing the idea that these structural injustices are deserved due to ethnic and racial factors. Participants' testimonies illustrate how a significant portion of contemporary Spanish society endorses and reproduces this narrative, shaping both its behaviour toward the Spanish speaking Latin American population and its interpretation of the social phenomena that surround it.

> "And when I have told this to Spaniards, the first thing they say to me is, ‹‹Oh (name) but we are like that too. They are like that with us too›› And it's like, no, it's not the same because you have everything in order. I mean, you understand, it's not the same". (PVMX1 female - Mexico).

The framing of colonial history that has been socialized in the Spanish society for centuries obscures the enduring legacies of coloniality, normalizing structural inequalities as inevitable rather than as products of historical and ongoing power relations. By emphasizing what Spain 'gave' to Latin America (e.g. language and legal systems) colonial history is reinterpreted in a way that minimizes violence and deflects responsibility.

Incidents in which participants reported the contemporary inequalities that they faced as migrants being trivialized or dismissed as either exaggerated or as their own responsibility (Dismissal of migratory challenges) are also contained in this overarching theme. Their reported experiences reflect how due to the narrative, Spaniards displace attention away from the structural and interpersonal barriers migrants currently face, minimizing or denying discrimination and exclusion.

> "It's like I get comments like ‹‹You can go back›› [...] I can go back because we are living the premium migration experience so far, God forbid that things go from bad to worse. But one does not migrate because one wants to. In other words, most of us who leave... we leave because we have to". (NMEC2 male – Ecuador).

Such remarks trivialize the complexity of migratory trajectories by framing migration as an option freely chosen, rather than as a response to structural conditions that force mobility. By absolving Spain from responsibility for the sociocultural consequences of colonization, this discourse positions the contemporary socio-economic realities of Spanish-speaking Latin American countries that force the migration of its population, as something alien and irrelevant, thus disconnecting current inequalities from their colonial roots.

This overarching theme is closely connected to microaggressions of historical negation and invalidation, participants' remarks showed how these microaggressive incidents manifest themselves in the interpersonal and environmental level. Together, these forms of denial and invalidation reproduce colonial hierarchies by silencing opposing narratives and positioning Spain as absolved of responsibility for past and present inequalities. Additionally, they reflect how the narrative about colonial history shapes the social perception of the image of Latin America and its inhabitants. As one participant manifested, "In their eyes we are not their brothers. No, we are their children. Spain is still the mother country that has us as her children". (CARG1 female – Argentina). It also reveals how Spaniards construct their own identity through these perceptions; a phenomenon directly connected to Spivak's (1988) conceptualization of the process of 'othering 'where she states that the existence of *others* is crucial in defining what is 'normal 'and in locating the *Other* place in the world.

Participants' experiences show how the official narrative uses physical and symbolic public spaces and societal rituals to communicate a version of history that has been conveniently shaped.

> "Here they talk about the black legend in quotation marks as if it were something that was still in question well, starting with the day of Hispanic Heritage, which makes me want to lock myself in my house". (CARG1 female – Argentina).

Due to the use of public and mass media, Spanish speaking Latin American migrants are inevitably exposed to this narrative which, by emphasizing the ‘gifts’ that Spain left to Latin America through the process of colonization, embodies a form of historical negation at the environmental level, while legitimizing interpersonal microaggressions that minimize colonial violence and recast it as a source of pride for Spaniard nationals. This demonstrates how the circle connecting macro and micro levels of violence and discrimination is strongly influenced by the historical narrative of the colonization process.

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

This research examined the types of microaggressions experienced by first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain within a context shaped by postcolonial power dynamics. One of the main contributions of this study is its two-stage analytical design: First, by presenting a taxonomy for ethnic colonialist microaggressions directed at Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in the Spanish context. Throughout the analysis of 12 interviews, participants reported 106 microaggressive incidents that were categorized into ten themes and three subthemes. Nine of these themes, and two subthemes (i.e. *Second class citizenship, rejection and invisibility; Assumptions of criminality or dangerousness; Assumptions of inferiority; Reverse racism; Cultural generalization and pathologizing; Language and communication stereotypes and pathologizing; Assumptions of beauty and exotization; Sexual objectification and attribution; Denial of individual or systemic bias; Not a true citizen; and Connecting via stereotypes*) matched with previous taxonomies taken as a reference for this study (Williams et al., 2021; Piccinelli et al., 2025), most of which aligned with the results obtained in research carried out in a post-colonial context such as Portugal. In addition, one theme and one subtheme (i.e. *Historical denial and invalidation, and dismissal of migratory challenges*) emerged uniquely from the data, reflecting the specificity of the Spanish context. These results emphasize the importance of examining microaggressions beyond the North American setting, suggesting that while the messages conveyed through microaggressive incidents may share similarities across contexts, the Spanish case reveals distinct dynamics and experiences shaped by its particular historical and sociocultural conditions. Some stereotypes, for instance those concerning gender, may be widely shared across different societies, whereas others, particularly those related to skin color, ethnicity or religion, are more likely to reflect culturally specific contexts (Fiske, 2017). While microaggressions related to the denial of individual and systemic bias have been discussed previously (Sue et al., 200; Williams et al., 2021; Piccinelli et al., 2024) the findings of this study reflect the perpetration of microaggressions that specifically communicate the invalidation or dismissal of migratory challenges. Additionally, one completely new theme was identified –*Historical denial or invalidation*- which is likely to be specific to the Spanish context due to its historical and sociocultural particularities, but potentially applicable to other post-colonial contexts (e.g. United Kingdom, Portugal).

Furthermore, results also shows that the microaggressions experienced by first-generation Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain are built upon colonial

narratives that communicate rejection, ambivalence, exoticization, and historical negation. In Spain, microaggressions built upon colonial discourse have the potential to impact the lives of thousands of migrants as well as the relational dynamics with members of the host society (Piccinelli et al., 2024). In alignment with this, participants' testimonies suggest that relational ties and contact with the majority group were limited and relatively poor, as repeated microaggressions reinforced an invisible, symbolic boundary highlighting the subordinate social position of Latin American migrants.

Using insights of post – colonial theory (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1983; Spivak, 1988) four macro themes were generated (Figure 2) a) *Atypical, Inferior and therefore Rejected: Effects of subjectification and power phenomena;* b) *Romanticized yet deficient: The ambivalence of representations of Latin America shaped by the local narrative*; c) *Objectified, sexualized, and exoticized: colonial bodies like a land to be conquered*: and d) "*What Spain left to Latin America": How Spaniards relate to colonization and coloniality.* Taken together, these themes reveal how colonial discourse remains embedded in everyday interactions, shaping microaggressions as both expressions and reinforcements of postcolonial hierarchies. This aligns with Strand and Cohen's (2022) observation that longstanding oppressive social systems perpetuate themselves not only through formal norms, but also through the countless micro-interactions that occur daily between individuals.

The theme -*Historical denial or invalidation*- contained in: "*What Spain left to Latin America": How Spaniards relate to colonization and coloniality,* and manifested both at the interpersonal and environmental level demonstrates the role and weight of social representations of the colonial past and its´ enactors on the construction of group identity and the relational and power dynamics between Spaniards and ´the others´, in this case Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants. The narrative communicated about the colonial past creates 'charters' that serve the function of a foundational myth of the colonial process, legitimizing the past and present social and political arrangements. These 'charters' have defined the essence of the colonization process as a 'discovery era', a narrative that has been passed down through generations and continues to be transmitted to newcomers and migrants via education, media, and public spaces (Liu & Hilton, 2011). The communication of microaggressive messages that refer to historical denial or invalidation at the environmental level helps to shape a consensual social representation of the colonial past, which, as stated by Moscovici (1998), is of great importance to provide 'justifications' to discriminatory interpersonal exchanges. Physical artefacts such as monuments, street names and art pieces are tangible story tellers that strengthen the influence of discourse, both on perpetrators and targets.

Although, previous research has shown that colonial representation from the Spanish narrative refers to this process as an era of discovery and glory (e.g. Carrera, 2003), there is a notable lack of research on this topic, which only reflects the extent to which this discourse has become socially accepted without question. This submissive acceptance of the discourse is reflected not only in members of Spanish society, but also in members of post-colonial Latin American societies. By not questioning the discourse that constructs the systems that oppress them, Spanish-Speaking Latin American migrants may fall into practices that replicate the discourse and reinforce those systems. This is in line with Spivak's (1988) proposal, that knowledge of the Third World is not neutral but is constructed to serve Western political and economic interests. As well as with her conceptualization of ´wording´ which refers to a process through which minorities are ´persuaded' to accept the European version of reality. When dominant discourse is accepted uncritically at the societal level, it not only generates the stereotypes that fuel microaggressions and obscures their nature, leading perpetrators to overlook their discriminatory impact, but also makes it difficult for victims to discern whether they are being treated unfairly. Which ultimately results in psychological consequences. The repercussions of racial microaggression can persist long after it occurs, with victims caught between assessing the perpetrator's intentions and figuring out how to respond, all while maintaining ongoing contact (Yosso et al., 2009)

Interestingly, most of the themes found to be perpetuated in the studied context find relation with processes of *othering* (Spivak, 1988). The experiences described by participants are consistent with the idea that the *othering* process operates through asymmetries of visibility and recognition. As Bhatia (2020) observes, people of color cannot go unseen, they lack the privilege of anonymity, which makes them perpetually vulnerable to public scrutiny and judgment; in contrast, members of the privileged group, in this case Spaniards have the privilege to be anonymous, nameless and unmarked if they so wish, while holding the power to identify and misrecognize Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants as a problem and a threat. This mechanism highlights how Spaniards are treated as the unmarked norm, while migrants are hyper-visible signing their 'otherness'. This asymmetry in visibility reinforces power hierarchies by allowing the dominant group to define the limits of belonging, while the 'others' in this case Spanish-Speaking Latin American migrants, are confined to a space in which they must continually prove their worth and conform to the expectations imposed on them. Thus, being visible is not neutral, but rather becomes a tool through which oppression and marginalization are carried out and reproduced.

While prior research often focuses on interpersonal incidents, this study shows that microaggressions can operate simultaneously on different levels (interpersonal, environmental, and institutional) revealing the complexity of these phenomena and showcasing that interpersonal and non-interpersonal discrimination can be distinguished from each other. In doing so, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex and layered ways in which microaggressions are experienced and reproduced. Previous research has already suggested that both forms can exert different effects on physical and mental health (Lui & Quezada, 2019). Furthermore, research suggests that the source of discrimination, whether from authority figures, peers, or society at large, can further influence individuals' adjustment outcomes and psychological wellbeing (Benner & Graham, 2013). Additionally, these findings highlight the relationship between the 'micro' and the 'macro' and how this relationship shapes and sustains the systems of oppression and injustice (Strand & Cohen, 2022), and how exposure to microaggressions at different levels acts as a constant reminder of not belonging for the targets. This also aligns with the results obtained by Yosso et al (2009) which state that stereotypes of violence, promiscuity, and intellectual inferiority subtly and systematically shape public perception, while constantly reminding the victims of their subordinate status in the social/racial hierarchy.

In this study, the theme '*Second-class citizenship, rejection and invisibility*' and particularly the sub theme '*Not a true citizen*' illustrates how microaggressions perpetuated at the individual level are sustained and legitimized by the existence of the same discourse at the institutional level. According to participants' testimonies, the rules and policies related to naturalization and 'citizenship' in Spain tend to place the burden and responsibility of integration almost entirely on the shoulders of migrants. Through their interactions with institutions, participants repeatedly encountered microaggressive messages implying that until they had done enough to become Spanish 'citizens', differential treatment was justified, considering citizenship purely from a legal and theoretical perspective and ignoring the practice of citizenship as the enactment of legally established rights and obligations (e.g. tax payment) that begins from the moment participants embarked on their journey of migration and acculturation (Andreouli et al., 2025). Because this is the message conveyed at the institutional level, it is reproduced at the interpersonal level, since social recognition as an equal depends largely on the very tangible ways in which boundaries are constructed through naturalization policies and practices (Andreouli, 2019).

4.1 Limitations

This research possesses some methodological limitations. While the sample cannot be considered representative of the broader population of Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain due to the sampling strategy and temporal constraints, the findings provide meaningful insights into their experiences. In addition, the sample reflects a comparatively higher representation of participants from Ecuador. This may have focused a substantial portion of the findings on the experiences of migrants from a single national background, thereby underrepresenting perspectives and experiences associated with other Spanish-speaking Latin American nationalities. This represents a considerable limitation, as the historical and sociocultural relationship between each Spanish-speaking Latin American country and Spain differ considerably. Consequently, the discourses that sustain and perpetuate microaggressions are likely to vary from one nationality to another. Together with the small sample size, this raises important considerations regarding the generalizability of the findings to the broader target population. Furthermore, the gender imbalance in the sample, with less female participants, may mean an underrepresentation of female perspectives, influencing the findings, as experiences of microaggressions are often gendered. This limitation highlights the need for future research that ensures a more balanced gender representation, which would allow for a comprehensive understanding of how microaggressions are experienced across intersecting axes of gender, nationality, and migration context.

The second limitation arises from the lack of analysis of data related to emotional and cognitive consequences of exposure to microaggressive incidents. This stems in part from methodological decisions that prioritized analyzing these experiences through a postcolonial lens, focusing on structural and cultural dynamics rather than individual psychological processes. Additionally, the deductive approach which aimed to understand whether microaggressive themes gathered in this particular context would fit into pre-existing microaggression taxonomies, may have constrained the analysis by emphasizing categories derived from different cultural contexts and populations. As a result, the study may have overlooked unique affective and cognitive responses to microaggressions specific to Latin American migrants in Spain, potentially limiting the depth of insight into how these experiences impact identity negotiation and adaptation.

In addition, although the use of the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) helped to identify significant occurrences, and the outcomes of these occurrences in terms of perceived effects, it may have inadvertently overlooked more abstract reflections or nuanced observations

offered by participants that did not fit the definition of a 'critical incident'. By focusing primarily on discrete events, the analysis may have missed subtler patterns, interpretations, and meaning-making processes that are central to understanding the full impact of microaggressions within the participants' lived experiences.

Lastly, certain patterns were observed in the data of the present study, while noteworthy, were not examined in sufficient depth to allow for definitive conclusions. For example, testimonies suggested that Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants are highly prone to microaggressions, and that people with intersectional marginalized identities (e.g., women, non-white people, LGBTQI+) may encounter such incidents more frequently. Similarly, participants with higher socioeconomic status and greater access to education seemed to report greater awareness of microaggressions. Although these patterns are consistent with previous research showing that multiple marginalized identities can increase vulnerability to discrimination (Calabrese et al., 2015; Lui & Quezada, 2019) and that social position can affect how subtle bias is perceived (Holtgraves, 2023), this study was not specifically designed to examine these factors in depth. Therefore, further research is needed to better understand how intersectionality and socioeconomic status shape both the frequency and perception of microaggressions among Spanish-Speaking Latin American migrants in Spain.4.2 Directions for future research

4.2 Direction for future research

The present study confirms the existence of microaggressions against Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants in Spain, and highlights the way in which these incidents simultaneously, are built upon, and sustain colonial narratives that communicate rejection, ambivalence, exoticization, and historical negation, but leaves some questions open: What is the role of the socioeconomic status in the frequency and intensity of experiences of microaggressions? What role does language proficiency play in shaping the perception of microaggressions, and are such incidents perceived more intensely when individuals share the same language? To what extent does exposure to microaggressions influence the acculturation process and the strategies migrants employ? These questions point towards exploring subjective, context-dependent, and identity-related experiences. Therefore, we suggest the implementation of suitable qualitative approaches to answer them. For example, employing phenomenological or grounded theory approaches would allow us to have a deeper understanding of the lived meanings and underlying mechanisms of microaggressions. Comparative analyses involving migrants from diverse socioeconomic strata, national

backgrounds, and political orientations can also contribute to understanding how the specific postcolonial context of each nation or territory shapes the way discrimination is perceived and processed at the cognitive and emotional levels. In doing so, this line of inquiry could address a central further question that emerged from the data: How do personal, social, and cultural factors shape the ways individuals interpret discrimination and negotiate their sense of identity in response to it?

Additionally, for future research in this and similar subjects, it is recommended to use a more diverse sampling strategy to capture a broad range of experiences of Spanish-speaking Latin American migrants. Also, a more gender-balanced sample could provide insights into possible gender differences in the experience of microaggression beyond what the results of this study reflect. It is also necessary to expand the scope of research on microaggressions beyond western contexts. The dynamics of post-colonial societies in the Global South have been overlooked, to address it is suggested to carry out cultural studies to capture the diverse ways minority groups encounter and navigate microaggressions across different sociocultural settings. For example, Indigenous population in Latin America, African descendant population in Latin America, Dalit population in India, Religious and ethnic minorities in Africa, among others.

Finally, future research should critically analyze how psychology, throughout its history, has reinforced colonial hierarchies. This involves questioning the epistemological assumptions, methods, and norms that consider certain groups as the reference point, while others are marginalized or excluded. In the words of Henrich et al (2010) habitually, psychology draws conclusions about human nature from observations on a privileged few, building those who not fit into the mold as 'ohers' often portrayed as pathological within the discipline.

It is also important to question how the "progressive advances" of psychology focus on constructing the image of psychologists as individuals free of prejudice and discriminatory practices. This self-image often leads to discursive practices that avoid or displace issues that might challenge it. Modern psychology, as Durrheim (2024) describes, is frequently built upon a form of '*conversational silencing'* a mechanism that sustains precisely what it leaves unspoken. When we fail to engage in critical conversations about the pervasive systems of power and social oppression that have shaped the discipline, we inadvertently participate in maintaining them. By reviewing these dynamics, research can move towards approaches that recognize human experience in its context and contribute to reducing inequalities within the discipline. An essential step in this process would involve validating and valuing the

perspectives of researchers from the Global South. This would be an important step towards rebuilding and decolonizing psychology and social sciences. This is not merely about recognizing the existence of scientific perspectives from the Global South, but rather of building a dialogue between equals that serves as a bridge between perspectives.

In the meantime, as we strive for this dialogue, a crucial question remains open: Yes, we the subaltern can speak (Spivak, 1988), but will we be listened to? Our answer must be decisive: yes, we will, because we will continue to speak, to write, to question, and to build and claim spaces where our voices can no longer be ignored. We will advocate to make our presence felt and our knowledge recognized, until listening itself becomes an act of justice.

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Appendix

APPENDIX A - Informed consent Face to Face version

This study is part of an ongoing research project at Iscte – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, this study aims to explore the subtle discrimination experienced by immigrants in Spain. Man and Women over the age of 18, born in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Puerto Rico, República Dominicana, Uruguay and Venezuela, who have been living in Spain for more than three months.

Your participation in the study consists of an individual interview that will last approximately 90 minutes, in which you will be asked to talk about episodes of subtle discrimination (for example, having been ignored, offended or disrespected) that you have experienced first- hand or that you have seen happened to other immigrants. Your participation will be highly valued and will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field of science. Your answers can help us understand how the most invisible forms of discrimination affect the lives of immigrants in Spain and, in the future, may help to ensure that these forms of discrimination will be recognized and combated in Spanish society.

Iscte is responsible for the processing of your personal data, collected and processed exclusively for the purposes of this study, having as a legal basis your consent (as indicated in: article 6, no. 1, a) and / or article 9, no.2, a) of the General Data Protection Regulation, as applicable).

The study is carried out by Camila Simone Pico Erazo (cspeo@iscte-iul.pt) and supervised by Christin – Melanie Vauclair (Melanie.Vauclair@iscte-iul.pt), whom you can contact if you wish to clarify a question, comment or exercise your rights regarding the processing of your personal data. You can use the indicated contact to request access, rectification, erasure or limitation of the processing of your personal data.

For data collection purposes, the interview will be audio recorded. Participation in this study will remain confidential at all times. Your personal data will always be processed by authorized personnel, bound by the duty of secrecy and confidentiality. Iscte ensures that appropriate techniques, organizational and security measures are in place to protect personal information. All personnel involved in the study is required to keep personal data confidential. In addition to being confidential, participation in the study is strictly voluntary: You can freely choose whether, or not, to participate.

If you choose to participate, you may stop participation and revoke your consent for the processing of your personal data at any time, without having to provide any justification. The withdrawal of consent will not affect the legality of any processing carried out prior to the withdrawal based on the consent provided.

Your personal data will be accessible only to the research team and will be kept for a period of 6 months after the end of the study, after which they will be anonymized, ensuring their anonymity in the study results, only disclosed for purposes such as teaching, communication at meetings or scientific publications.

There are no significant expected risks associated with participation in the study. Nevertheless, speaking about experiences of subtle discrimination can possibly cause distress or anxiety. Therefore, you will receive a list of organizations that can provide psychological support. Iscte does not divulge/disclose or share, with third parties, the information relating to your personal data.

Iscte has a Data Protection Officer, who can be contacted at mailto:dpo@iscte-iul.pt. If you consider it necessary, you also have the right to lodge a complaint with the competent supervisory authority – the National Data Protection Commission.

I declare that I have understood the objectives of what was proposed and explained to me by the researcher, that I have been given the opportunity to ask all the questions about this study and have received an enlightening answer to all of them.

I agree to take part in the study and consent to my personal data being used in accordance with the information provided to me.

YES ☐ NO ☐

_____ (place), _____/____/_____ (date) Name: _____ Signature: _____

Appendix B – Informed consent online version

This study is part of an ongoing research project at Iscte – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, this study aims to explore the subtle discrimination experienced by immigrants in Spain. Man, and Women over the age of 18, born in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Puerto Rico, República Dominicana, Uruguay and Venezuela, who have been living in Spain for more than three months.

Your participation in the study consists of an individual interview that will last approximately 90 minutes, in which you will be asked to talk about episodes of subtle discrimination (for example, having been ignored, offended or disrespected) that you have experienced first- hand or that you have seen happened to other immigrants. Your participation will be highly valued and will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field of science. Your answers can help us understand how the most invisible forms of discrimination affect the lives of immigrants in Spain and, in the future, may help to ensure that these forms of discrimination will be recognized and combated in Spanish society.

Iscte is responsible for the processing of your personal data, collected and processed exclusively for the purposes of this study, having as a legal basis your consent (as indicated in: article 6, no. 1, a) and / or article 9, no.2, a) of the General Data Protection Regulation, as applicable).

The study is carried out by Camila Simone Pico Erazo (cspeo@iscte-iul.pt) and supervised by Christin – Melanie Vauclair (Melanie.Vauclair@iscte-iul.pt), whom you can contact if you wish to clarify a question, comment or exercise your rights regarding the processing of your personal data. You can use the indicated contact to request access, rectification, erasure or limitation of the processing of your personal data.

For data collection purposes, the interview will be audio recorded. Participation in this study will remain confidential at all times. Your personal data will always be processed by authorized personnel, bound by the duty of secrecy and confidentiality. Iscte ensures that appropriate techniques, organizational and security measures are in place to protect personal information. All personnel involved in the study is required to keep personal data confidential. In addition to being confidential, participation in the study is strictly voluntary: You can freely choose whether, or not, to participate.

If you choose to participate, you may stop participation and revoke your consent for the processing of your personal data at any time, without having to provide any justification. The withdrawal of consent will not affect the legality of any processing carried out prior to the withdrawal based on the consent provided.

Your personal data will be accessible only to the research team and will be kept for a period of 6 months after the end of the study, after which they will be anonymized, ensuring their anonymity in the study results, only disclosed for purposes such as teaching, communication at meetings or scientific publications.

There are no significant expected risks associated with participation in the study. Nevertheless, speaking about experiences of subtle discrimination can possibly cause distress or anxiety. Therefore, you will receive a list of organizations that can provide psychological support. Iscte does not divulge/disclose or share, with third parties, the information relating to your personal data.

Iscte has a Data Protection Officer, who can be contacted at mailto:dpo@iscte-iul.pt. If you consider it necessary, you also have the right to lodge a complaint with the competent supervisory authority – the National Data Protection Commission.

I declare that I have understood the objectives of what was proposed and explained to me by the researcher, that I have been given the opportunity to ask all the questions about this study and have received an enlightening answer to all of them.

I agree to take part in the study and consent to my personal data being used in accordance with the information provided to me.

YES ☐ NO ☐

Please enter your name and surname in the spaces provided and click on the 'send' button.

Name:
Last name:

SEND ☐

APPENDIX C – Debriefing Form

DEBRIEFING/EXPLANATION OF THE RESEARCH

Thank you for having participated in this study. As indicated at the consent of your participation, the study is about the subtle discrimination and microaggressions experienced by Latin-American migrants in Spain. More specifically, this study aims to explore how and with what frequency Latin-American migrants experience ethnic and colonial microaggressions in Spain and its impact on their life and mental health.

In the context of your participation, if you felt discomfort, stress or anxiety, we remind you that you received a list of resources and organizations that can provide you psychological support. The list also includes the contact of organizations that deal with discrimination and that could be useful for you I case you are in need of social or legal support.

We remind that the following contact details can be used for any questions that you may have, comments that you wish to share, or to indicate your interest in receiving information about the main outcomes and conclusions of the study:

Camila Simone Pico Erazo: cspeo@iscte-iul.pt
Elena Piccinelli elena_piccinelli@iscte-iul.pt
Christin-Melanie Vauclair melanie.vauclair@iscte-iul.pt

If you wish to access further information about the study topic, the following sources can also be consulted:

Anderson, K. F., & Finch, J. K. (2017). The role of racial microaggressions, stress, and acculturation in understanding Latino health outcomes in the USA. Race and Social Problems, 9, 218-233.

Ballesteros, A., Basco, B., & González, Á. (2009). La inmigración latinoamericana en España en el siglo XXI. Investigaciones geográficas, (70), 55-70.

Nadal, K. L. (2008). Preventing racial, ethnic, gender, sexual minority, disability, and religious microaggressions: Recommendations for positive mental health. Prevention in Counseling Psychology: Theory, Research, Practice, and Training, 2, 22–27. Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Wong, Y., Hamit, S., & Rasmus, M. (2014). The impact of racial microaggressions on mental

health: Counseling implications for clients of color. Journal of Counseling & Development, 92(1), 57-66.

Sue, D. W. (2010). Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation. John Wiley & Sons.

Sue, D. W. (Ed.). (2010). Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact. John Wiley & Sons

Once again, thank you for your participation.

RESOURCES LIST

Thank you for agreeing to take part in our study. Sometimes sharing negative can cause feelings of discomfort, stress or anxiety. We have compiled here some organizations and entities that can provide you with various types of support.

If you need psychological, legal or social support after being a victim of discrimination, you can contact:

Psychological Support:

1. Cruz Roja Española – Cruz Roja Te Escucha

Website: https://l1nq.com/VzslV

Telephone Number: +34 900 107 917

2. Amalgama Social

Website: https://www.amalgamasocial.org/
Telephone Number: +34 912 90 71 77

3. Instituto Centta

Website: https://centta.es/

Telephone Number: +34 91 290 71 71

Legal and Social Support

4. Consejo Para la Eliminación de la Discriminación Racial o Étnica:

Website: https://acesse.dev/ZXVBy

Telephone Number: +34 628 860 507

E-mail: asistenciavictimasracismo@igualdad.gob.es

5. Red Acoge

Website: https://redacoge.org/

Telephone Number: +34 91 563 37 79

E-mail: acoge@redacoge.org

6. Fundación APIP-ACAM

Website: https://fundacionapipacam.org/

Telephone Number: +34 93 317 16 14

7. Fundación CEPAIM

Website: https://www.cepaim.org/contacto/

8. Aceem

Website: https://www.accem.es/

Telephone Number: (+34) 915 31 23 12

APPENDIX D – Pre registration form

This study is part of an ongoing research project at Iscte – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, this study aims to explore the subtle discrimination experienced by immigrants in Spain. Man, and Women over the age of 18, born in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Puerto Rico, República Dominicana, Uruguay and Venezuela, who have been living in Spain for more than three months.

Your participation in the study consists of an individual interview that will last approximately 90 minutes, in which you will be asked to talk about episodes of subtle discrimination (for example, having been ignored, offended or disrespected) that you have experienced first- hand or that you have seen happened to other immigrants. Your participation will be highly valued and will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field of science. Your answers can help us understand how the most invisible forms of discrimination affect the lives of immigrants in Spain and, in the future, may help to ensure that these forms of discrimination will be recognized and combated in Spanish society.

Iscte is responsible for the processing of your personal data, collected and processed exclusively for the purposes of this study, having as a legal basis your consent (as indicated in: article 6, no. 1, a) and / or article 9, no.2, a) of the General Data Protection Regulation, as applicable).

The study is carried out by Camila Simone Pico Erazo (cspeo@iscte-iul.pt) and supervised by Christin – Melanie Vauclair (Melanie.Vauclair@iscte-iul.pt), whom you can contact if you wish to clarify a question, comment or exercise your rights regarding the processing of your personal data. You can use the indicated contact to request access, rectification, erasure or limitation of the processing of your personal data.

For data collection purposes, the interview will be audio recorded. Participation in this study will remain confidential at all times. Your personal data will always be processed by authorized personnel, bound by the duty of secrecy and confidentiality. Iscte ensures that appropriate techniques, organizational and security measures are in place to protect personal information. All personnel involved in the study is required to keep personal data confidential. In addition to being confidential, participation in the study is strictly voluntary: You can freely choose whether, or not, to participate.

If you choose to participate, you may stop participation and revoke your consent for the processing of your personal data at any time, without having to provide any justification. The withdrawal of consent will not affect the legality of any processing carried out prior to the withdrawal based on the consent provided.

Your personal data will be accessible only to the research team and will be kept for a period of 6 months after the end of the study, after which they will be anonymized, ensuring their anonymity in the study results, only disclosed for purposes such as teaching, communication at meetings or scientific publication.

There are no significant expected risks associated with participation in the study. Nevertheless, speaking about experiences of subtle discrimination can possibly cause distress or anxiety. Therefore, you will receive a list of organizations that can provide psychological support. Iscte does not divulge/disclose or share, with third parties, the information relating to your personal data.

Iscte has a Data Protection Officer, who can be contacted at mailto:dpo@iscte-iul.pt. If you consider it necessary, you also have the right to lodge a complaint with the competent supervisory authority – the National Data Protection Commission.

If you agree to take part, please click on the "I accept" button, and proceed to the next page. Filling in the form assumes that you have understood and accept the conditions for processing your data, and that you consent us to contact you to arrange your participation in an individual interview.

1.Sociodemographic Questionnaire

• How old are you? Please indicate your age ___

If under 18 - end survey + thank you message* • What is your country of origin?

o Argentina
o Bolivia
o Chile
o Colombia
o Costa Rica

o Cuba
o Ecuador
o El Salvador
o Guatemala
o Honduras
o México
o Nicaragua
o Panamá
o Paraguay
o Perú
o Puerto Rico
o República Dominicana
o Uruguay
o Venezuela
o Other

If "Other" - end survey + thank you message*

Do you currently live in Spain?
Yes ☐ No ☐

If "No" – end survey + thank you message*

For how long have you been living in Spain?
Less than three months
Three months or more (Please, indicate ___)

If "less than three months" – end survey + thank you message*

Please, leave here your contact details the investigator will contact you shortly to schedule an interview slot.

Name:
Email:
Phone Number – Optional*:

Thank you for your availability, you will be contacted by the investigator shortly.

*Thank you message presented to ineligible participants:

‘Thank you for your availability. However, at the moment we are interested in the experiences of adult (> 18) migrants from Hispanic-American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Puerto Rico, República Dominicana, Uruguay and Venezuela) who have been living in Spain for at least 3 months. If you would like to contribute to our study, you can share it with your contacts. If you have the characteristics mentioned above and you think this message has been displayed in error, please contact (cspeo@iscte-iul.pt).

APPENDIX E – Interview guide English version

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am interviewing you to better understand your experience as a Latinx migrant in Spain and your interactions with Spaniards. I am interested in knowing whether there have been any incidents where you have felt that you were treated differently or unfairly because you are a Latinx immigrant in Spain. Do you have any question so far?

Is it okay for me to start recording now?

1. Warm Up Questions

- Can you tell me where you are from? Why did you decide to migrate to Spain?

- What are you currently doing here in Spain?

Instruction

People can be treated differently or unfairly in ways that are explicit and visible to everyone, but sometimes also in ways that are subtler and hidden behind seemingly innocuous behaviours.

Sometimes, people may feel that other people are treating them differently or unfairly because their words or actions are explicitly offensive, intense, aggressive, or violent, and intentionally intend to harm you psychologically, or even physically. These types of incidents are often unlawful and when they happen, other people usually agree that they are unfair.

Many times, however, there might be a type of unfair treatment that looks minor because it communicates offensive or negative messages that are hidden behind ambiguous words or actions, such as ignoring or avoiding, jokes, or phrases. Sometimes these messaged can even sound like compliments but you may still find them insulting. These incidents are usually not against the law and might genuinely seem well-intentioned.

Today, I would like to focus on this second type of unfair treatment – not on those situations that are explicitly offensive, violent, or aggressive, but on the ones that look small, ambiguous, and might happen quite often in your life in Spain. I am especially interested in those incidents in which you felt that Spaniards treated you differently because you are a Latinx immigrant.

Do you have any questions about what I just explained to you?

If you do not remember any situation that happened to you, you can try to remember any incident where a Latinx immigrant has been treated unfairly in a subtle way that you witnessed or someone told you about.

During the interview, you can describe all the situations you want there is no limit of number or time. All the situations you will describe will be a great contribution to this study.

2. Ethnic/colonial microaggressions

SITUATION 1:

- RETRIEVAL OF CRICITAL INCIDENT:

Can you think of any of these subtle situations in which you have experienced that you were been treated differently or unfairly by a Spaniard because you are a Latinx Immigrant?

- DESCRIPTION:

Could you give me a detailed description of the situation? What happened exactly in this incident?
Who was involved and who did what?
Where did this situation occur?
When did this situation occur?

- BYSTANDERS:

Were there other people present?
Did someone say anything?

- REACTIONS:

What happened immediately after the incident?
How did you react?
What were your thoughts when the incident occurred? Which were the first emotions that you felt in the situation?

- AFTEREFFECT:

Have you ever thought about the incident again, after it happened?

What were your thoughts?

What were your feelings and emotions at recalling?

If you could go back. Would you do anything differently?

Do you feel this impacted the way you manage your life here, and the way you relate to the Spaniards?

- SHARING/COPING:

Did you talk with someone about the incident? Which feedback did you receive?

- EXPLANATION:

Why do you think this happened to you?

SITUATION 2:

- Have you experienced other incidents/situations of subtle unfair treatment? Can you describe it to me?

If "Yes" repeat all the questions asked above.

3. Concluding questions:

- What were their consequences for how you feel about yourself and your identity?
- What are your thoughts about settling down long term in Spain?

4. Wrap Up

Thank you for sharing. Do you have any questions or comments?

We are going to end he interview now, thank you very much for sharing your testimonies with me today.

APPENDIX F – Interview guide Spanish version

Introducción

Gracias por aceptar participar en esta entrevista. Estoy aquí para entender mejor su experiencia como inmigrante latino en España y sus interacciones con los españoles. Estoy interesada en saber si ha habido algún incidente en el que haya sentido que fue tratado de manera diferente o injusta por ser inmigrante latino en España.

¿Tiene alguna pregunta hasta ahora?

¿Está bien si empiezo a grabar ahora?

1. Preguntas iniciales

- ¿Puede decirme de dónde es? ¿Por qué decidió emigrar a España?

- ¿Qué está haciendo actualmente aquí en España?

Instrucción

Las personas pueden ser tratadas de manera diferente o injusta de formas explícitas y visibles para todos, pero a veces también de formas más sutiles y ocultas detrás de comportamientos aparentemente inofensivos.

A veces, las personas pueden sentir que otras las tratan de manera diferente o injusta porque sus palabras o acciones son explícitamente ofensivas, intensas, agresivas o violentas, y buscan intencionalmente dañarlas psicológica o físicamente. Este tipo de incidentes suelen ser ilegales y, cuando ocurren, otras personas generalmente están de acuerdo en que son injustos.

Sin embargo, muchas veces puede haber un tipo de trato injusto que parece menor porque transmite mensajes ofensivos o negativos ocultos detrás de palabras o acciones ambiguas, como ignorar, evitar, y realizar bromas o comentarios. A veces, estos mensajes incluso pueden sonar como cumplidos, pero aun así resultan insultantes. Estos incidentes generalmente no son ilegales y podrían parecer genuinamente bienintencionados.

Hoy, me gustaría centrarme en este segundo tipo de trato injusto, no en aquellas situaciones que son explícitamente ofensivas, violentas o agresivas, sino en las que parecen pequeñas, ambiguas y pueden ocurrir con frecuencia en su vida en España. Estoy especialmente

interesada en aquellos incidentes en los que sintió que los españoles lo trataron de manera diferente por ser inmigrante latino.

¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre lo que acabo de explicarle?

Si no recuerda ninguna situación que le haya ocurrido a usted, puede intentar recordar cualquier incidente donde un inmigrante latino haya sido tratado injustamente de manera sutil, que usted haya presenciado o del que alguien le haya contado.

Durante la entrevista, puede describir todas las situaciones que desee: no hay límite en cantidad ni tiempo. Todas las situaciones que describa serán una gran contribución para este estudio.

2. Microagresiones étnicas/coloniales

SITUACIÓN 1:

- RECUPERACIÓN DEL INCIDENTE CRÍTICO:
¿Puede pensar en alguna de estas situaciones sutiles en las que haya sentido que fue tratado de manera diferente o injusta por un español por ser inmigrante latino?

- DESCRIPCIÓN:
¿Podría darme una descripción detallada de la situación? ¿Qué ocurrió exactamente en este incidente?
¿Quiénes estuvieron involucrados y qué hicieron? ¿Dónde ocurrió esta situación?
¿Cuándo ocurrió esta situación?

- ESPECTADORES:
¿Había otras personas presentes? ¿Alguien dijo algo?

- REACCIONES:
¿Qué ocurrió inmediatamente después del incidente?
¿Cómo reaccionó?
¿Qué pensó cuando ocurrió el incidente?
¿Cuáles fueron las primeras emociones que sintió en la situación?

- CONSECUENCIAS:

¿Ha vuelto a pensar en el incidente después de que ocurrió?

¿Qué pensó?

¿Qué sintió al recordarlo?

Si pudiera regresar al momento, ¿haría algo diferente?

¿Cree que esto impactó la manera en que maneja su vida aquí y la forma en que se relaciona con los españoles?

- COMPARTIR/ENFRENTAR:

¿Habló con alguien sobre el incidente? ¿Qué comentarios recibió?

-EXPLICACIÓN:

¿Por qué cree que esto le ocurrió?

SITUACIÓN 2:

¿Ha experimentado otros incidentes/situaciones de trato injusto sutil? ¿Puede describírmelo? (Si la respuesta es "Sí", repita todas las preguntas anteriores.)

3. Preguntas finales

¿Cuáles fueron las consecuencias para cómo se siente sobre usted mismo y su identidad?

¿Qué piensa sobre establecerse a largo plazo en España?

4. Conclusión

Gracias por compartir. ¿Tiene alguna pregunta o comentario?

Vamos a terminar la entrevista ahora. Muchas gracias por compartir sus testimonios conmigo hoy.

APPENDIX G – Codebook

Base Theme	Theme Description	Frequency	Examples	Notes
Interpersonal	Direct interactions between individuals. The aggressive message could be communicated through conversations, gestures, tone, or behaviours	88		**Level of manifestation**
Second class citizenship, rejection and invisibility (Piccineli et al.,2025)	Incidents related to differential treatment, including being treated with less respect, consideration or care than is normally expected or customary. Can also take the form of invisibility, avoidance, social rejection, and exclusion.	21	"Well, also because El Salvador is in the news, questions around that, also, well, what happened to me with my thesis director, uh that my thesis director in particular uh said a comment that seemed to me completely out of limits, she said that if I was doing my thesis only for the visa, to which I then told her that, please, the next time she referred to me in any term, first think if she would say this to a Spaniard and if the answer is no, then don't say it to me"	
Not a true citizen (Williams et al., 2021)	Microaggressions that communicate exclusion and lack of belonging that can make people of colour feel like forever outsiders.	3	"Yes, I mean, the one that comes to my mind the most, I have another colleague who is also a PhD, she is already very stable in Spain with her Spanish husband, she is Argentinean, she is white passing, it is like all this, she finishes her defence, she graduates, she does everything, she gets a university	Subtheme

			position here in Spain and the person who gives her the position in the congratulations says, "Well, now you are not going to speak badly of Spain." Because you already have the opposition. So, she just tells me like, "When do I finish validating?" I mean, when do I finish validating like that I'm from here?"	
Assumptions of criminality or dangerousness (Piccineli et al.,2025)	Instances where migrants are treated with less respect, rejected, or avoidance based on the assumption that they are dangerous, criminal, deviant, untrustworthy, and likely to commit crimes or cause harm.	7	"And nothing, well, I was walking down one of these streets and uh normally here the sideways here are very big, but it was a very busy street a little bit. And nothing, I was getting very close to a lady, and the lady was maybe 36, 38 years old more or less. And well, nothing, she turned around, I mean, the lady started walking and she saw me out of the corner of her eye a little diagonal towards her, she grabbed her purse a little bit, I mean, she made the gesture of grabbing her purse harder and all I did was to pass by her and go on my way faster to avoid an uncomfortable moment, you know?"	
Assumptions of inferiority (Piccineli et al.,2025)	Occurs when a migrant is assumed to be inferior to the ethnic majority people, including being less educated, having a lower salary or lower paying job, being less intelligent, etc...	10	"Yes, for example, she always remembers when she came here to Spain to work, she worked as an intern, right? Cleaning as an intern. And she says that one of the ladies where she was cleaning was talking on the phone with another woman or with someone, right? And	

			that she was cleaning, my mom that is, listening to everything and that lady was telling the other lady something like, "Here's a Latina working." And she had told her like, "I don't think she even knows what a TV is." Because when she walks across, she's surprised by the TV".	
Cultural generalization and pathologizing (Piccineli et al.,2025)	Assumptions that migrants from a same country/ethnicity share the same physical and cultural characteristics. Includes behaviours of surprise when they do not share those characteristics or adhere to stereotypes.	18	"And then a Spaniard, a gentleman from there, that, from where I understand it, I think there was no malice or anything like that, but it shocked me. He came back to me and said, "What, Mexican? Do you like it?" Right. And there are two important things. I felt two things. First, that every Latin American is Mexican. That bothers me. Because it's not like that, is it?"	
Connecting via stereotypes (Williams et al., 2021)	Can include racial or ethnical jokes to try to fit in, or as terms of endearment.	2	"Other situations eh Well, the "No mames, güey", or the "pinche güey". And all of my colleagues' little joke that I know they say it as a joke, but there are things that they generalize about Mexico, I take it as a joke because I say, güey, anyway... here it is what it is".	Subtheme
Language and communication stereotypes and pathologizing (Piccineli et al.,2025)	Incidents related to the inferiority or pathologizing of the Spanish spoken in Latin America, which is regarded as grammatically	8	"As soon as I open my mouth and speak, they notice that I am not Spanish and then they say, "Oh, if you didn't speak, eh you would pass for one of us." You	

	incorrect or undesirable.		speak and you screw up".	
Sexual Objectification and Attribution (Inductive)	Incidents in which immigrants (specially women) are treated as exotic, or hyper sexualized objects, it also includes Stereotypical assumptions that women immigrate to Spain to be sex workers or to steal Spanish women's husbands, and that they seek relationships with Spanish men for economic interest or to obtain visa/citizenship.	6	"And it was like, "No, it's just that you move so well, Latinas move so much better." And I'm like... I mean, and he's like, "Can I record you so I can show my friends that I was with a Latina and stuff?" And I'm like, "No, well, I mean, I was like, "This guy is bad." I mean, no." So, that's when I was like, "I realized how they exoticize the hell out of us Latin women".	Inductively reshaped
Denial of individual or systemic bias (Piccineli et al.,2025)	Statements in which people from the receiving society deny the existence of bias and discrimination, both at the individual and systemic level.	2	"And when I have told this to Spaniards, the first thing they say to me is, "Oh (name) but we are like that too. They are like that with us too. And it's like, no, it's not the same because you have everything in order. I mean, you understand, it's not the same".	
Dismissal of Migratory Challenges (Inductive)	Cues that trivialize, invalidate, or downplay the unique difficulties associated with migration, conveying that	3	"Yes, I have told this to some people a few times and the reaction is always one of indignation, as if to say that yes, what can you expect from a donkey more than a kick, things like that, even though it	Subtheme Inductively generated

	such struggles are exaggerated, unimportant, or illegitimate.		is clear that the institutions work in that way, the response is always “well, at least you got something, or at least you were not deported or at least... I mean, there is always an incentive of “well, but at least you are here”.	
Historical denial/invalidation (Inductive)	The erasure, distortion, or minimization of historical injustices experienced by marginalized communities.	4	"Uh, talking to a Spaniard, I don't know where he comes out that he says uh something about Hispanic America, no, lie, I was talking something about Latin American countries and he says, "Hispanic Americans." I said, "No, Latin Americans." No, no, Hispanic Americans. No, I say, "Latin Americans." I have more to do with a Brazilian than with you. And Brazil is not is not is not And then, with time I said, well, it's good that I was there because at the time I said it like that, natural, but then I realized that the word Hispanic America is very established and it's like, stop it, stop reinforcing. Did you realize what you did?"	Inductively generated
Assumptions of beauty and exotization (Piccineli et al.,2025)	Microaggressions related to physical appearance judgments and pressures, including the idea that immigrants look “exotic” and/or devaluation of darker skin darker skin	2	"Or they always ask me if I'm Colombian. Because I have an accent, I don't know where they get my Colombian accent from, but like, "Ay, are you from Colombia?" Like they have identified that Colombian women are prettier. I don't know, that's something that gives me perspective.	

	colour and Andean/Black phenotypical traits as ugly or undesirable.		Because there were comments prior like, "Oh, how cute, are you from Colombia?" and it's like, "No." I'm from Mexico me from that pulling out the flag from that, uh-huh.... "	
Reverse racism (Williams et al., 2021)	Expressions of jealousy or hostility surrounding the notion that people of colour get unfair advantages and benefits because of their origin/ethnicity/race.	2	"I also remember that I had comments like they help immigrants, they pay them everything, they pay them everything, I don't even know how much and all of that is actually very far from what actually happens. And even today this keeps happening, I'm talking about 24 years ago".	
Environmental	Exclusion through art, or literature. It also includes segregated spaces / Decorations or depictions pose a known affront or insult to a person´s cultural group, history or heritage.	7		**Level of manifestation**
Historical denial/invalidation (Inductive)	The erasure, distortion, or minimization of historical injustices experienced by marginalized communities.	6	"Yes, I would think that the best example I can give you is the Plaza de Cervantes. In the Plaza de Cervantes upstairs, there is a conqueror teaching a person to read with a plume. And I mean, that's problematic in both good and bad ways"	Inductively generated
Cultural generalization and pathologizing	Assumptions that migrants from a same country/ethnicity share the same	1	"They kind of have that idea, but as I said, I imagine that it is due to the fact that all the information they receive	

(Piccineli et al.,2025)	physical and cultural characteristics. Includes behaviours of surprise when they do not share those characteristics or adhere to stereotypes.		from the news or from the networks is a bit alarmist, because I remember that I have seen the news here and they always focus on the ugly part. I mean, when everything happened in Ecuador, when the strike happened, when TC (Ecuadorean television channel) was assaulted, they only put the ugly part, I mean, JUST the ugly"	
Institutional	Norms, practices, and policies of organizations, workplaces, schools, or other formal structures.	11		**Level of manifestation**
Second class citizenship, rejection and invisibility (Piccineli et al.,2025)	Incidents related to differential treatment, including being treated with less respect, consideration or care than is normally expected or customary. Can also take the form of invisibility, avoidance, social rejection, and exclusion.	11	"Looking for an apartment and here there is another subtle discrimination, that you have to have a guarantee, that you have to have a blank job, that you have to have a job in white... How do you do this as a migrant? I have no guarantee from anyone, I don't know anyone who owns an apartment in Spain, and you ask me for a salary that first I don't know if all migrants, the first salary they have is a formal job that has a payroll and such. Uh, and second, a minimum payroll. I would like to know the statistics of how much migrants earn the first year from where they live. Where do they live? Because there you also lose a lot of money paying either temporary rents or you lose time in life because you have to go and live	

			on the other side of the country and take the train from another city because you can't live there anymore. In other words, there is another subtle economic issue, isn't there?"	