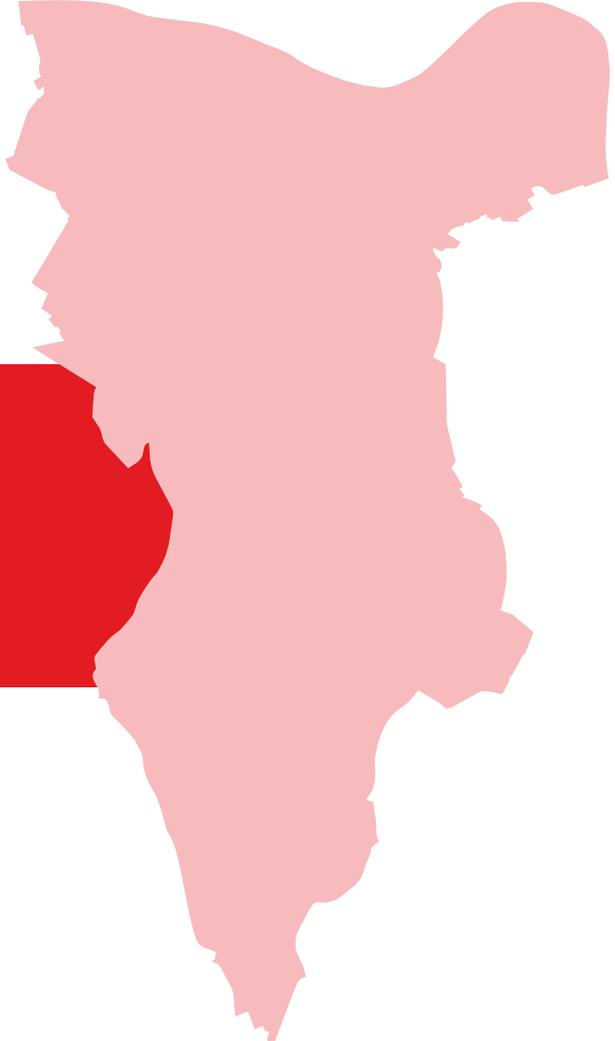


Uncovering community

Chinese and Latin Americans in Southwark



Executive Summary

Evidence collected from electoral registers and from schools suggested that both the Latin American and Chinese populations in Southwark had been growing significantly in recent years, due to recent waves of migration. This report presents the findings of an ambitious study that aimed to uncover and map these burgeoning populations, in order to explore the best ways of approaching community engagement and encouraging participation in the coming 2011 Census. ESRO was commissioned by Southwark to carry out a multi-phased research study using different research techniques in order to create a baseline understanding of each community; collecting statistics and looking at the daily realities of life in the borough. A survey was carried out which garnered over 100 responses from each population and this data was complemented and contextualised using evidence collected using immersive, ethnographic techniques and focus groups.

This study is timely since it explores the issue of hidden and hard-to-reach migrant populations in time for the Census 2011, and seeks to offer recommendations in terms of how best to engage with them and encourage participation. The findings however have far reaching implications that have significance for service delivery across several different departments within the council.

In the interests of keeping this summary short, we have excluded much of the detail and urge readers to look at the relevant parts of the report for further information.

Key findings summary:

Housing

- A high proportion of both Latin American and Chinese migrants make use of shared accommodation in informally divided buildings, and unlicensed HMOs
- Average household sizes are high in both communities (Chinese 7, Latin Americans 4.8)
- Overcrowding is common, and people move often due to substandard living conditions, fear of detection and to secure low rents
- Most Latin Americans and Chinese who have arrived recently, live with people other than family or friends
- Longer-term, more settled migrants are more likely to use social housing
- Individual rents paid by Latin American and Chinese migrants are low in Southwark, making it an attractive destination. However overall rents can remain high as landlords can collect rent based on individual bed spaces

Health and Social Care

- Many migrants are unclear about their entitlements to seek health and social care services
- Some undocumented migrants will avoid seeking healthcare and other services for fear of legal repercussion
- Healthcare services (mostly GPs) are the most commonly used services in both Latin American and Chinese populations. This is also true for the undocumented migrants. Women are the more frequent users. Nonetheless, 25% of respondents had not accessed any services at all.
- Trends suggest that as the two populations become more settled in Southwark their use of health and social care services will increase

Education

- A significant number of Latin Americans and Chinese have children in Southwark schools. Our survey of 225 adults (which included approximately 60 university students), revealed that there were 66 children attending Southwark schools.
- 16 of the children identified as attending Southwark's schools came from parents who were undocumented migrants

- There are a large number of Chinese students studying at Universities and colleges in Southwark
- A significant proportion of the Latin American students surveyed were mature students
- Trends suggest that, over time, the Latin American and Chinese populations settle and start or introduce families in(to) Southwark, meaning that more Latin American and Chinese children are likely to appear in Southwark schools in the future

Employment

- A high proportion of the Chinese (73%) and Latin Americans (79%) surveyed were employed
- A large proportion of those employed were in part-time work, though would have preferred to be employed full-time
- 40% of those in work were paid in cash, suggesting informal employment
- Demand for employment advice and services is very high in both populations
- Fear of, and experience of, exploitation by employers is very prevalent amongst undocumented workers. They cite low-wages and lack of job security along with the threat of deportation, as being commonplace.
- Undocumented workers are sometimes pushed into black market employment (e.g. selling illegally produced DVDs)

Community and safety

- Neither the Latin Americans nor the Chinese made much use of dedicated third sector services that are under-resourced to be able to reach out to the harder-to-reach members of each community
- A number of respondents, and especially undocumented respondents, expressed concern that they could not call the police for fear of deportation or because of lack of language skills
- Fear of, and experience of, employer exploitation among undocumented migrants is commonplace
- Latin Americans felt that they were largely ignored by local government and that latent skills within the community were under-recognised due to lack of recognition of Latin American qualifications
- Increasingly, Elephant and Castle is a hub for the Latin American population in London
- Chinese respondents said that they had little time to integrate into British life and often found the language barrier insurmountable
- The Chinese population is more widely dispersed than the Latin American population. For Latin Americans, the hub is Elephant and Castle. For Chinese, there are different centres for different parts of the population e.g. students in Surrey Quays and Elephant and Castle, undocumented migrants in Peckham etc.

Census

The report highlights a number of factors that could lead to both Latin American and Chinese populations being missed during the Census 2011. It also highlights a number of significant barriers to community engagement and participation in formal, large-scale government surveys.

Census barriers (summary):

- *Language barriers* (especially significant for the Chinese population): 57% of Chinese and 41% of Latin American respondents said they would need help to fill in a Census form. 25% of Latin Americans and 11% of Chinese said they would ignore forms received in the post, rising to 40% and 18% amongst those whose English was poor.
- *Informal accommodation patterns*: A large number of respondents were living in temporary accommodation, unlicensed HMOs and overcrowded conditions. Often respondents relied on others to take care of bureaucratic responsibilities such as paying bills, filling in forms and collecting rent.
- Sub-divided households mean it is unclear which 'household' a census form applies to.
- *Fear of repercussions*: A number of respondents expressed concern that filling in a Census form could lead to them being deported or evicted from unlicensed accommodation

- *No perceived benefits*: The census was seen as an important exercise, but respondents indicated that there would be no direct benefit from filling in the form. This was especially true of undocumented migrants whose primary concern was with gaining legal status to stay and work in the UK.

Census recommendations

Census participation

The report makes a number of recommendations in terms of encouraging greater participation among Latin Americans and Chinese in the coming Census 2011. These recommendations come with a note of warning that the scale of the task of effectively disseminating the census message (especially into the Chinese population) is significant, and should be seen as part of an ongoing community engagement strategy rather than hoping for large-scale participation in the census.

Generic recommendations

- Ensure sufficient translation resources
- Deliver community-specific involvement campaigns, not just generic census messages

Latin American population:

- Target three specific entry-points to deliver information and engagement plans: Latin American (Spanish language) media, Latin American businesses and church leaders, encargados (Latin American cultural brokers)
- Utilise Spanish speaking, Latin American staff and volunteers who are aware of cultural sensitivities and can express information in a non-threatening way
- Focus and organise messages around 4 key themes: Active participation in British civic life, Emphasis on confidentiality, emphasis inclusivity and goal of recognising Latin American community, emphasis on impact of census participation on the recognition of specifically Latin American needs and concerns
- Provide partnership opportunities to Latin American residents to to deliver messages.
- If possible, employ Latin American census enumerators

Chinese population

- Partner with census and engagement teams in Westminster to make sure messages delivered in Chinatown are made relevant to Chinese visitors from Southwark
- Utilise the large population of willing, engaged and educated Chinese students living in Southwark, as volunteers or staff during census awareness campaigns and enumeration
- Target Chinese employers as a way of pushing messages more deeply into the Chinese communities
- Target Chinese 'nodes' as information brokers: e.g. Chinese landlords and employers
- Create opportunities for ongoing relationships between Chinese businessman and entrepreneurs and the council
- Focus and organise messages around 3 key themes: Emphasis on confidentiality and inclusivity, emphasise current lack of recognition of the Chinese community and explode myths about the Chinese population, emphasis on a fair-exchange e.g. participation in return for recognition and support

Policy and strategy

The report's findings raise a number of questions for future policy and community engagement strategy. The first, and perhaps most difficult question raised, is the issue of whether council and welfare resources can and should be used to address needs amongst the particularly vulnerable population of undocumented Chinese and Latin American migrants.

More broadly, this question could also be addressed in terms of how, in a climate of cuts and limited resources, resources might be better allocated to engage with and get the most from the two populations as a whole. For example, could the existing Latin American micro-

businesses in Elephant and Castle be protected during the regeneration process and perhaps turned into a business and cultural centre much like Chinatown in Westminster? And are there opportunities to build an employers network with Chinese business people and entrepreneurs in Southwark, in order to encourage better employment practices and support efforts such as language training in the workplace? What can the council do to increase awareness of professional and educational qualifications from overseas amongst employers? How can third sector organisations be supported and encouraged to focus their efforts on engaging with the harder-to-reach parts of the population?

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Part I

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

London is an increasingly complex city. Population fluctuations since the last Census in 2001 have been well documented, and the diversity and range of different lives now being lived in the capital is astounding. As this demographic landscape changes and complicates, there is a greater pressure on local authorities to gain richer and more nuanced understandings of the populations they serve. In straitened times, it is only with sophisticated knowledge of local populations, that policy-makers and administrators will be able to target services intelligently and cost-effectively. Yet, at the time of writing, the Census 2011 is approaching fast, and many local decision-makers have realised that certain populations will be difficult to count; potentially leaving them invisible to official statistics and therefore to high-level policy-making for another decade.

It is in this context that Southwark commissioned the research presented here, which seeks to illuminate two of the many growing communities in this central London Borough: the Chinese and the Latin Americans. Southwark is by no means the only part of London to see a rise in their resident Chinese and Latin American populations; but data collected on languages spoken in Southwark's schools and from the electoral register suggest that both populations have increased significantly in the borough. Both populations can be difficult to track and count formally however. Both communities have a large number of undocumented migrants in their midst and both have a large number who cannot speak English. We must praise Southwark council for having commissioned a piece of research that will allow us to take some tentative steps in the difficult task of mapping, quantifying and demystifying them.

There are several reasons for a local authority like Southwark to undertake work like this. In the first place, there are practical financial considerations. Financial settlements for local authorities from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) depend in part on the Census and the sense that can be made of the population figures it produces. Southwark has estimated that 86% (£199m) of its £231m 2010/11 formula grant is driven by population. This figure represents 62% of the council's total budget requirement. A council that is confident in its knowledge of the local population will be able to better understand and seek the financial resources it needs to meet needs. Second, better understanding of local populations allows for strategic allocations of increasingly scarce resources. And third, there are hopes that uncovering and unlocking the economic potential within certain 'hard to find' populations could have positive financial consequences, even if it is simply a more effective method of council tax collection.

Perhaps most importantly, utilising research that leaves a legacy of understanding and connection between certain communities and the local authority, can also be used to enhance the democratic dialogue. Ultimately, better community engagement can be promoted simply by demonstrating shared understanding.

2.0 A new kind of community engagement research

Traditionally, community engagement and community research has taken place in two ways: 1) Local community engagement teams liaising and working with third sector organisations that can represent different parts of the population, and 2) longer-term, in-depth, academic research within communities. Both approaches have their problems.

Traditional community engagement activities carried out within local authorities can valorise the third sector, seeing community organisations as the best means to engage with hard-to-reach communities. However, this assumption may be misplaced. ‘community organisations’ vary in their ability to adequately reach out to different groups of people. And, through no fault of their own, they are often being asked to represent large swathes of people with whom they have little or no relation or contact. It is well known in the Chinese community, for example, that newly arrived Mandarin-speaking Chinese migrants have little representation in, and make little use of, the Chinese third sector infrastructure, which was largely set up by the first wave of Chinese immigrants coming from Hong Kong, and who largely speak Cantonese¹

In contrast, academic research often goes further into communities and population groups, exploring deeply the different kinds of lives that people lead within the capital and going beyond the traditional ‘community gatekeepers’. This kind of research involves more immersive research techniques and is conducted over longer periods of time². However, academic research is not always easy for local policy-makers and administrators to use. It takes a long time to produce and does not necessarily address the practical challenges of service delivery and population management. Often the concepts used and the challenges raised are not of practical use to local authority staff on a day-to-day basis. Furthermore, much of the quality of academic work derives from academic independence and the desire of researchers to be free from constraints such as the recognition of the borders of, say, a particular borough.

Research for *this* project aimed to combine the best of both of these types of community engagement research. We aimed to go beyond the ‘usual suspects’ and look at Chinese and Latin American people living in Southwark from the inside out, rather than having to go through third-sector community gatekeepers. But we also aimed to keep the research focused on issues and outcomes that would be useful to local policy and decision makers, with especial reference to the challenges of collecting Census data.

¹ *Migration, Integration and Cohesion: New Chinese migrants to London* (ESRO and CIBF, 2009)

² See for example, excellent work by Dr. Cathy McIlwaine at Queen Mary’s university London (e.g. *Challenging displacement: livelihood practices among Colombian migrants in London*, McIlwaine: 2008)

2.1 ESRO and ‘community webbing’

ESRO first developed the ‘community webbing’ technique in 2007 whilst conducting research in Belfast. The method was devised to explore the complexities and challenges for Catholics and Protestants living in and around a contested space in East Belfast. Our researchers used a mixed methodology that made use of participant observation and ethnographic research techniques as well as community audit and focus groups. Perhaps most importantly, ESRO’s researchers also trained and employed local young people to carry out research into their own communities. In this way we were able to inform local people of the redevelopment plans being implemented in the area and involve them in the planning process.

Since this initial project we have developed and enhanced the method to explore a number of different ‘hard to reach’ communities and challenging populations. Using in-house expertise and knowledge we have been able to conduct a number of ‘community webbing’ studies with different migrant communities in and around London, and a similar methodology was used during the research presented here.

2.2 Methods

The research that forms the basis of this report had three clear strands: ethnographic exploration and observation, focus groups and a community survey.

In the first place, Researchers spent 10 days in the field, exploring and investigating the infrastructure and institutions of the two different communities in Southwark. This meant visits to community centres of course, and informal interviews with third-sector representatives, but it also meant locating shops and services where Chinese and Latin Americans bought food and picked up the local gossip. Immersing ourselves in local life, we were not only able to map the physical centres of community life, but also to make connections, chat informally and generally gain a feel for the day-to-day rhythms of the two populations.

During this first phase of research we had two goals: to understand the landscape of the two populations we were investigating and to identify 10 people from each population whom we considered to be ‘nodes’. These people were invited to take part in the latter stages of our research as community researchers. (We explain more fully what ‘nodes’ are, below.)

This ethnographic immersion was followed by focus groups with the people we had found during the ethnographic field research. The respondents were diverse. There were business owners, waiters, landlords, mothers, fathers, undocumented migrants, multi-linguists, students etc. They were also chosen to represent the different locations in Southwark that had been identified during the first phase of research.

The focus groups aimed to elucidate the changes in the community and the patterns of that change. Were there more undocumented migrants? What had the economic downturn

meant for those seeking employment? How do people feel about immigration policy? Policing etc. In this way we hoped to gain trust and understanding between researchers and respondents.

These expert/node respondents were then asked to carry out research for us within their own communities. They were trained to administer a survey with friends, family, acquaintances and people they met in shopping-centres, cafes etc. In this way we were able to conduct surveys deep inside the two populations. Rather than limiting ourselves only to those who would respond to formal researchers, we expanded our sample to include those who would speak only to those they already knew and trusted.

Finally, our community researchers returned for follow-up focus groups to explore the specific issue of engagement, with their knew-found knowledge of data-collection from within their own communities. We used this to explore the more difficult questions around how to improve Census data and to encourage these populations to fill in Census forms.

Method	Outcome
Ethnographic immersion	10 days of fieldwork 40 informal interviews
Focus groups	Community mapping 20 respondents
Surveys	200+ returns

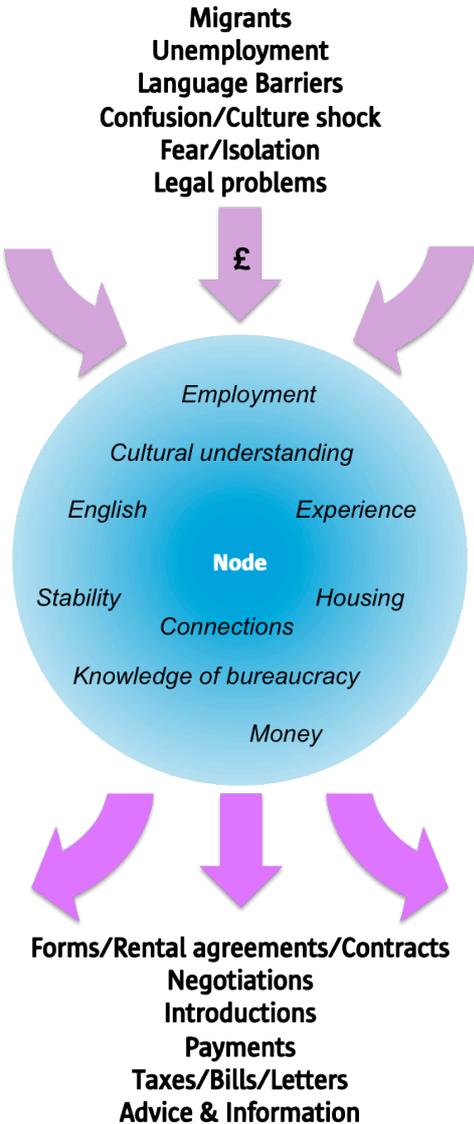
2.3 “Nodes”

Working with migrant populations elsewhere in London, ESRO’s researchers learned that migrant populations and communities often pivoted around ‘nodes’. Essentially, nodes are informal cultural brokers. ‘Nodes’ are the people to whom migrants will often turn to for advice on housing, or employment for example. Often, nodes will be migrants themselves, but who speak English and who are more familiar with British bureaucracy. Or they may have some kind of physical asset; a house with rooms to rent, for example. In terms of dealing with local bureaucracies and institutions such as paying council tax, filling in forms, sorting out bills etc. it is more often than not nodes who will be representing a large number of people who cannot or do not wish to represent themselves. Such people *can* be of great help to migrants who are vulnerable and need a guide to get on in the UK.

Nodes do not necessarily choose to become nodes, sometimes the role is thrust upon them by requests for help. In many cases, nodes are simply kindly people who feel a sense of duty to help their fellow countrymen. Others, such as informal sub-letters or landlords, may have a more direct financial stake in the choices that migrants make. In this context, it is worth remembering that nodes are of course also in a position to exploit, as in the tragic case of the Chinese cockle-pickers who died at Morecombe bay, after trusting one such node acting as an employment broker who introduced them to the infamous gang-masters.

For the purposes of trying to understand community and population however, it is clear that nodes have a uniquely nuanced overview. They learn of the problems people face, and of the ways in which they negotiate through them. They see the changing populations and they shape, in many ways, the living patterns of new arrivals. For a local authority, there is one other aspect of nodes that makes them perhaps even more necessary to understand than even the best of third sector community organisations, and that is that it is often nodes who act as go-betweens between migrants and the state. It will be nodes for example, who will fill in Census forms in migrant houses. It is nodes that will respond to the electoral roll and to council tax forms. And it is the nodes that will make phone calls and contact the council on behalf of other migrants.

Figure 1: Nodes



2.4 Communities and divisions

The aim of the research presented here was to study two communities in Southwark (Chinese and Latin American) and to explore the living patterns and livelihoods of both newer and more settled populations. In practise these ‘migrant communities’ are often inventions of outsiders (often policy makers and service providers) rather than having any real meaning to those that we are trying to study. To refer to ‘the Chinese community’ for example, is slightly misleading. It conjures images of an interconnected network of people with a common culture and a shared set of resources that could theoretically be identified and mapped into a coherent whole. In practise, as we have written elsewhere³, the Chinese community is divided.

At the very least it is worth distinguishing between three groups: the ‘settled’ Chinese community, those who have arrived in the past 10 years, and the rising population of Chinese students studying in UK universities. The same is also true of Latin Americans. Different people have come from different countries, for different reasons. “Latin America” refers to a continent containing 20 different countries. There are shared cultures of course, and there is some commonality in the experiences of Latin American migrants coming to the UK, but there are differences too. When looking to map and understand populations, we must be mindful of these differences and understand how they may affect the things we are trying to study.

Chinese: Simplistically, the ‘settled’ Chinese tend to be Cantonese-speaking, from the Southern part of China or Hong Kong and came to the UK more than a decade ago. Those who have arrived more recently are more likely to be Mandarin-speaking, come from provinces on the Chinese mainland, and be, in general, less well educated and resourced than their Cantonese-speaking counterparts. Among these newer Chinese migrants, the most significant single group are the ‘Fujianese’⁴⁵. In fact, so many Fujianese have come to the UK in the last ten years, mainly settling in London, that it may be worth considering them as a separate group in themselves. Like the settled Cantonese-speaking migrants before them, the Fujianese bring their own local dialects and it is common to hear Fujianese migrants using their own dialects when speaking to each other in Southwark. Increasingly, businesses and organisations in London are identifying themselves as Fujianese in origin or focus, and the population is beginning to have a distinctive and significant impact on the landscape of the Chinese in Britain. The Dragon Castle restaurant near Elephant and Castle in Southwark is one of the more famous Fujianese-owned landmarks.

Having said this, as in China itself, Mandarin is becoming the lingua franca for the Chinese in London, and students, often coming from affluent families in Chinese cities, will almost all speak Mandarin, no matter which part of China they come from.

³ *Migration, Integration and Cohesion: New Chinese migrants to London* (ESRO and CIBF, 2009)

⁴ Fujian is a province in the South East of the Chinese mainland.

⁵ *Transnational Chinese: Fujianese migrants in Europe* (Pieke, 2004)

And despite demographic and linguistic differences, Chinese do see themselves as culturally united⁶.

Latin Americans: As with the Chinese, there is also a simplistic distinction among Latin Americans in London that can be used as a starting point for trying to understand the population: the division of Portuguese speakers (mainly Brazilians) and Spanish speakers. ESRO has written several reports that have argued that ‘linguistic’ migrant communities are more salient than ones presumed to exist because of the geographical locations of the ‘sending’ countries. For example, while Peruvians in Peru watch Venezuelan soap operas, listen to Colombian ‘Cumbia’ music and Argentinean rock, wear Ecuadorean clothing and eat Mexican tacos, they do not tend to dance to Brazilian Samba. Simply put, it is easier for cultural institutions, goods and ideas to flow to-and-fro between people who speak the same language than it is for those same ideas and goods to cross linguistic boundaries. In the context of Southwark, this has meant that cafes, restaurants, money-transfer businesses, landlords etc. are likely to deliver services to those who speak the same language (Spanish or Portuguese) before delivering services to, say, Brazilians and Columbians, in two different languages. Being a very large country and having a significant migrant community in the UK (and in Southwark), Brazilians have self-sustaining community resources that are often branded specifically as Brazilian (such as by hanging out their distinctive flag).

As one prominent analyst and blogger of the Latin American community in the UK puts it, in one of his recent newsletters:

“In the United Kingdom, the only country beside Japan where Brazilians make up the majority of Latin American migrants, Brazilians always create their own institutions, churches and newspaper media in counterposition to the so-called Latin Americans. As a result this concept (Latin American) is increasingly used to refer only to those South and Central Americans who speak Spanish.”⁷ – Isaac Bigio 2010

For these reasons, and in order to practically administer the focus groups and surveys, we have chosen to see Brazilians as a separate community in Southwark and confine our research to Spanish speaking Latin Americans.

⁶ ESRO’s research team spoke both Mandarin and Cantonese allowing us to conduct research with all Chinese that we came across in Southwark and all have been included in the data collection.

⁷*Cuántos países conforman América Latina?* (Análisis Global, 13th September 2010)

3.0 Structure of the report

Two kinds of data were collected during research: qualitative community mapping & case studies and quantitative community audit data collected through surveys.

In the second part of the report we present the quantitative data. Much of the data collected for the two populations has similar findings and it makes sense to present the two data sets side-by-side. This also allows us to make some contextualised comparative analyses. The analysis of this data is also backed by the findings from the focus groups and ethnographic research.

In the third part of the report we go behind these headline figures. The qualitative data looks deeper into the specific nature of the two populations and the lives of those living within them. It includes a mapping of resources and a deeper sense of the problems and attitudes facing people in their daily lives.

In conclusion, we provide some practical suggestions for those administering the Census in Southwark and look ahead at ways in which both populations could be brought into more productive relationships with Southwark council in the future.

Part II

Community audit

TIENDAS DEL SUR SOLIMAN TRAVEL Since 1979 TELEGIROS TELE



4.0 Community audit

In the sections that follow, we look at the features of the two populations that took part in our community audit survey. More than 100 Chinese and Latin Americans took part in our survey, giving more than 200 responses in total.

This data should not be seen as giving a definitive demographic outline of the overall populations in the borough, but rather as features of those who took part in the survey. Having said this, efforts were made to be as representative as possible within the sample, and headline figures can be seen as, at the very least, indicative of the wider populations. It is also worth remembering that here we were specifically trying to reach and include people who would not normally respond to more formal or official surveys or the Census. In this sense, our sample is likely to include data and trends that are often missed by larger-scale, randomly sampled surveys, and even by the Census itself.

4.1 Community research rules

One of the problems when administering a survey like this, is that we do not have reliable baseline population figures to start with. This makes random sampling impossible. Instead, we aimed to capture responses from all parts of the Chinese and Latin American populations in Southwark by using community researchers from a diverse range of backgrounds and living in the different parts of the borough that had been identified as particular centres for each population during the first stage of research.

The community researchers were roughly evenly male and female; all spoke either Spanish, Mandarin Chinese or Cantonese Chinese as their first language; they were both employed and unemployed, documented and undocumented; came from different regions of China and different countries in Latin America; there were two students in each of the Chinese and Latin American research teams and they spanned different ages from 19 to 60+.

Some basic rules were laid down for each of the researchers when looking for survey respondents. First, all respondents had to actually be living within Southwark, and not just working in it, visiting or passing through. Second, all of the respondents had to identify themselves as either Chinese or Latin American. Third, all respondents had to be over 18. And finally, each respondent had to come from a different household, so as to eliminate the possibility of double-counting when looking at household data.

The surveys were carried out face-to-face in shopping centres, streets, restaurants, bars, homes, lecture halls and offices.

5.0 Who did we find in Southwark?

The primary purpose of outlining the features of our survey sample is to understand who we were asking questions of and the different types of people who we encountered during research. The demographics represented in the data match well with what we expected to find, given the in-depth qualitative research which preceded it. We have every reason to believe that the samples are broadly representative of the wider Chinese and Latin American populations living in Southwark.

5.1 Gender

Table 1: Sample size and gender balance

	Chinese	Latin American
Total number	115	110
Male	74 (64.3%)	58 (52.7%)
Female	40 (34.8%)	51 (46.4%)

It is commonly assumed that young men coming to the UK to find work, either single or leaving families in other countries, dominate migrant populations. Whilst, of course, we cannot conduct a Census of migrant populations to know the true proportions of men and women, there is some reason to believe that this assumption is not correct for certain populations; or rather, that the male bias is not as strong as is assumed.

First, family will often join migrants after a relatively short period of time (if they did not originally travel together), bringing a gender balance to UK migrant populations. Almost half of those surveyed were married for example, but only a fifth of these lived separately from their spouse. Second, amongst certain migrant groups, like the Chinese, the practicalities of working life mean that women also migrate to look for employment.

Whilst single Chinese and Latin American migrants coming to look for work in the UK may be more likely to be male, it should not be assumed that they 'nearly all' are.

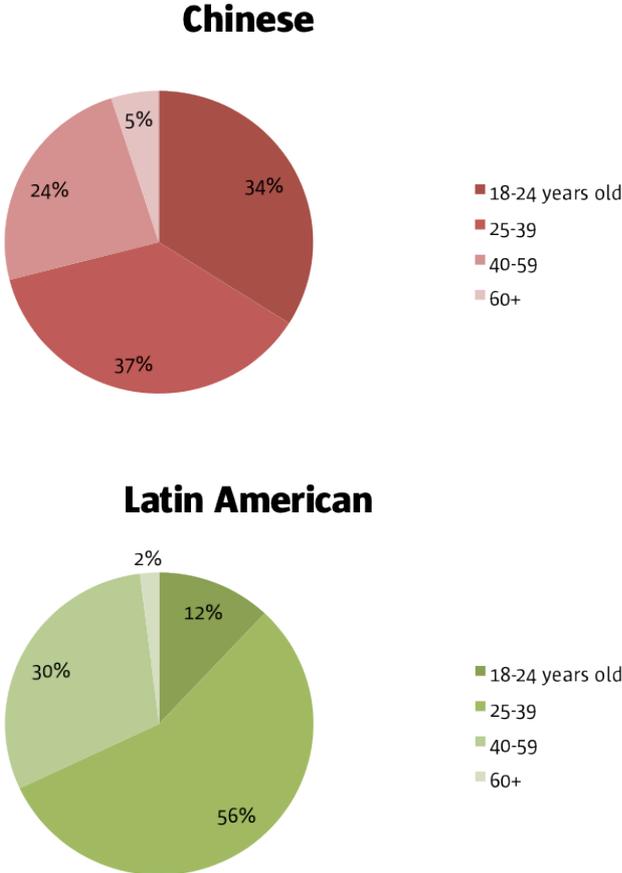
Of the 24 Latin American students surveyed, 16 were female, which also rebalances the figures slightly and suggests that

among the working population, the gender balance is similar to the Chinese, with a slightly larger male population⁸.

5.2 Age

In both populations, the vast majority were of working age, rather than in retirement years and the larger proportion were between 25 and 39.

Figure 2: Age profiles



At first glance it looks as if the Chinese population is significantly younger than the Latin American, with a far larger group aged between 18 and 24 years old. Looking into the data however, the difference reveals an interesting finding. In our sample, there are 24 Latin American students and 31 Chinese students (who make almost all of the 18-24 age bracket among the Chinese respondents). 18 of the 24 Latin American students are older than 25, whereas almost all of the Chinese students are under 25. This partly reflects the recent rise in the population of undergraduate Chinese students in the UK, a fact widely reported in the media. As we will see below, there are at least two Chinese student population centres in Southwark. It also reflects the fact that in China the wealthier students that can afford to come to the UK to study are encouraged to do so while they are young, by typically

⁸ The Chinese student gender balance was exactly 50:50.

ambitious parents. It is common for Chinese to associate being young with studying.

The significant differences in the age spread of the two populations then, are almost all accounted for by this difference in the age-profile of the student populations.

5.3 Legal status

The question of how to capture legal status in surveys of migrant populations is a tricky one. Our researchers were very clear in feedback that many people had refused to take part in the survey precisely because they did not want their legal status recorded (in spite of the fact that they were not asked to give real names or addresses). In this sense, the proportion of undocumented migrants in our survey is certainly lower than the number of undocumented migrants encountered by our research team. Our researchers also indicated that in some cases they knew the respondents personally, and knew that they had false documents or no documents, but still responded that they did in fact have legal status within the UK⁹.

Our survey was specifically designed to get around the problem of false documentation by first asking the simple question of whether or not someone considered themselves to be 'documented' or 'undocumented' and then going on to ask what kind of documents they held including whether or not such documents were false. Nonetheless the research team were adamant that some people had not answered these questions honestly.

The most common problem arose where Latin American respondents held Spanish passports that they had obtained in Spain during their migration to the UK. Some of these respondents, our researchers said, described themselves as fully documented, with EU citizen status. No matter that these passports would not be considered 'real'.

For the purposes of reporting, we have not tried to account for these discrepancies and leave the data as it is found in the surveys. Tables 2 and 3 show some inconsistency, and we assume that this is precisely because of the factors outlined above. Moving forward, we chose to use the answer to the straight question 'are you documented or undocumented' to define a respondent's legal status, for the simple reason that unravelling the complexities of a person's documentation and the answers they provided about it, would have led to us making too many guesses and assumptions to be comfortable with.

The translations into Spanish and Chinese of the question used to generate Table 2 however, have no ambiguity at all. All respondents knew perfectly well their legal status in the UK; whether they were what is most commonly called 'illegal' or not.

The proportion of undocumented migrants in our survey is certainly lower than the number of undocumented migrants encountered by our research team.

⁹ In these cases, researchers recorded the answers of the respondents and did not second-guess the truth of the answers given.

Table 2: Legal status

	Chinese	Latin American
Total number	115	110
Undocumented*	31 (27%)	31 (28%)

*It is pure coincidence that we found 31 people in each sample that were willing to state that they were undocumented.

Table 3 shows the different ways in which people understood or described their legal status in the UK. As we have said, there are some possible inconsistencies between tables 2 and 3. For example, more than 31 Latin Americans identify different ways in which they would properly be described as ‘undocumented’ but since categories are not mutually exclusive, we cannot be sure if there is double counting. Furthermore, since we cannot be sure whether answers were true throughout the questions about legal status, we cannot be sure in which way people might have been concealing the true nature of their status.

There are a number of questions and points that could be raised looking at this data. For the Chinese for example, the majority of those who had been granted refugee status, had arrived more than 5 years ago. This is consistent with the fact that very few Chinese are granted asylum in the UK anymore. It is also worth noting that many Chinese respondents describe themselves as having a student visa (35%). This figure is actually higher than the number who, later on in the survey, indicated that they were currently studying. Again, this is consistent with anecdotal evidence that some Chinese migrants coming to the UK intending to work, now find it easier to obtain student visas than to make a successful asylum claim.

For the Latin Americans it is interesting to note that as many as 1 in 10 said they were using false documents. Again this is consistent with the anecdotal evidence we heard about the use of European passports. This immediately raises questions of whether the number of ‘Spanish’ people recorded in the Census in Southwark is actually reflecting a Latin American migrant population. A large proportion of Latin American respondents also said that they had been granted ‘Indefinite Leave to Remain’. This may reflect the fact that many had come to the UK seeking escape from political persecution or fears of violence. Their claims are often considered more legitimate than, say, the Chinese. It is also probably this fear of going back home that has led such a high proportion to ‘overstay’ visas.

Table 3: Status in the UK

	Chinese	Latin American
British citizen	14% (16)	12% (13)
Indefinite Leave to remain (ILR)	5% (6)	16% (18)
Visitor's visa	1% (1)	3% (3)
Student visa	35% (40)	19% (21)
Work permit/visa	9% (10)	5% (5)
Seeking asylum	11% (13)	1% (1)
Refugee	14% (16)	1% (1)
Overstayed visa	4% (4)	22% (24)
No legal documentation	8% (9)	6% (7)
Using false documents	4% (4)	11% (12)
Not stated	3% (3)	16% (17)

5.4 Marital status

Marital status is an important statistic as it affects a person or couple's legal standing in relation to the state, and in some cases the rights they may or may not have to stay in the UK over the long-term. The statistic can also give some indication as to the likelihood of a family unit growing when children are born. Marriage data also offers some measure of the kinds of people living in the UK and the lifestyles that they might be leading.

Table 4: Marital status

	Chinese	Latin American
Married	49%	51%
Single	44%	35%
Spouse living overseas	10%	6%
Living with a partner (unmarried)	1%	6%

The categories shown in table 4 are not mutually exclusive. Someone can be both married and have a spouse living overseas. Again, figures for the two populations are similar. Roughly half of each group is married. Latin Americans are more likely to be living with a partner who is not a spouse than the Chinese, but this is likely to simply be a reflection of cultural values. In fact, a Chinese person who lives with a partner may well simply say that they are in fact married to that person.

This last point also highlights a fact that shows how difficult the Chinese population can be to track and measure. We included a question in our survey which allowed respondents to indicate that they *“got married in the UK, but the British government does not know about it.”* Fully 10% of all the Chinese surveyed said that this was the case.

During ethnographic research it was made clear that some Chinese are genuinely confused about their marital status. We met several Chinese people who said that they were married in China, but had been in the UK for so long that they had simply remarried, at least in the eyes of friends, family and community.

Similarly, those who had arrived single, but had been in the UK for a long time, may also want to get married but understanding little of British bureaucracy and the relative meaninglessness of a British marriage ceremony in cultural terms, not to mention difficulties over legal status, means that some simply get married ‘within the community’. The marriage will be recognised by friends, family and/or community but not by the state. This situation was not just confusing for us, it also confused the people we spoke to. They understood that there was no official recognition of their marriage but also did not know how to solve that problem. State recognition of marriage is by no means an alien concept to Chinese people, marriages must be officially recognised in China too, it is the fact of being in the UK that has caused the anomaly.

This situation highlights the inherent difficulties of using official statistics and registers to understand a diverse population containing people with many different cultural backgrounds. It is plain that those whose marriages were not registered had no

legal recognition of their marital status in the UK (unless they had already stated they were married elsewhere), but the problem comes in how the question of how we do try to understand these populations resident within Southwark.

Legal status and marriage: As we have said, there are problems inherent in the collection of data relating to legal status in the UK. However, among those who consider themselves to be ‘undocumented’ and indicated such in our survey, the findings on marital status are significantly different to the populations as a whole.

It is worth bearing in mind, that the sample size represented in the Table 5 is relatively small (36 Latin Americans and 37 Chinese).

Table 5: Marital status of ‘undocumented’ migrants

	Undocumented Chinese	Undocumented Latin American
Married	73%	19%
Single	27%	58%
Spouse living overseas	16%	14%

For the Chinese, the proportion of undocumented migrants that are married is also very high. This perhaps reflects the different ‘push’ factors that lead to migration in the first place. For the undocumented Chinese, the primary reason for coming to the UK is an economic imperative, which becomes acute when someone has a family to take care of. For undocumented Latin Americans on the other hand, it may be the very lack of familial ties that makes risky migration a plausible option. Amongst both Latin American and Chinese populations, the likelihood of being apart from a spouse is greater amongst the undocumented population than the documented. Ideally, respondents in both populations told us, families will be reunited, either in the UK or back at home. This is borne out by figures we collected about those who had stayed longer in the UK, which show that the longer people stayed in the UK, the more likely they were to be living with family.

5.5 Children

Respondents to our survey were asked to indicate the number of children living with them in Southwark and the number living overseas, that were under 18. The question format was very similar to that used in the Census 2001. The following tables should come with a warning that a great many respondents left this question blank (uniquely amongst the responses to our questions). We have treated non-responses as an indication that the respondent has no children. However, it should be noted that some respondents may not have wanted to reveal that they had

children living in the UK or elsewhere, in order either to conceal the fact that they were in schools under different names, or to conceal a shame at being apart from them.

Table 6: Children

	Chinese	Latin American
With at least one child under 18 living in Southwark	17%	32%
With at least one child under 18 living overseas	9%	17%
Total number of children under 18 living in Southwark	29	56
Number of children attending school in Southwark	21	44

Given that there were a significant number of students in both survey samples, the number of children under 18 living in Southwark is quite high. Certainly the figure in the Chinese sample is higher than was the case during our own recent London-wide surveys.

A third of the Latin American respondents had children living in Southwark indicating that the population is increasingly a settled one. The presence of children is, of course, an indication of the length of time that people have been in the UK, and the vast majority of those who had children (over 90% in each sample) had been in the UK for more than 5 years.

We look at the issue of children attending schools in Southwark in more detail below (see “Use of services”).

5.6 Household size

One of the most important questions addressed by this research is the average household size of the Chinese and Latin American populations living in Southwark. We suspect that in large part recent migrant populations are under-represented in Census data and that there are more people living in the borough than Census figures suggest. One key piece of evidence for this is that when a targeted and in-depth study of migrant populations is done (as here) the average household sizes do not match those given by the Census and similar large-scale surveys. For example, the Labour Force survey gives an average household size for the Chinese population in London as being under 3. ESRO’s survey of 177 Chinese in London (a larger sample size than that used in the Labour Force Survey) gave a figure above 5.

One of the reasons for this is that those who are most likely to be missed by Census type surveys are often those who live in large households – the most significant of which are migrant workers

Average household size for Chinese and Latin American populations in Southwark:

Chinese – 7.0

Latin American – 4.8

living in unlicensed HMOs¹⁰. There are number of reasons why such people are missed by surveys and we tackle that issue in more detail in Part III of this report. Here, it suffices to say, that the issue is of particular relevance in Southwark which has a complex housing mix and which has attracted a large number of migrants, documented and undocumented, from China and Latin America in recent years.

Table 7: Average household size

	Chinese	Latin American
Average household size	7.0	4.8
Median household size	6	5

Table 7 shows the average household sizes for the Chinese and Latin American populations sampled in our survey. We have included the ‘median’ figure as well to show that outliers are not distorting the figures.

It is clear that these average household sizes are very large. As we have already seen and as will become clear as we go on, our samples were not particularly biased towards parts of the population that were likely to live in larger households. Rather our sample includes recent migrants and undocumented migrants who are the most likely to be missing from official statistics.

Exploring this household data in more detail reveals some interesting patterns. Table 8 takes shows a more granular analysis of the household size data.

It is surprising that average household sizes do not change depending on whether people have been in the UK for more or less than 5 years. This perhaps suggests that large households (often a sign of housing being shared by more than one family or by fellow migrants) do not decrease in prevalence over time. In turn this may suggest that for those in the Chinese and Latin American communities that have settled in Southwark, there hasn’t necessarily been a sharp rise in living standards. Of course these numbers are only indicative and they do not tell us about the size of the properties that people live in, or the level of rent being paid.

More significantly in terms of the Census and large-scale surveys however, it suggests that even those who have been living in the UK for some time may not have been counted.

It is also interesting to note, as an indication of living standards, that for both Chinese and Latin American populations, the household size for students is lower than the average for the population as a whole. We would expect students to be living in

Average household size figures remain high even among those who are more settled. This conflicts with official data-sets, suggesting that even relatively settled migrants may not be included in Census and large-scale survey data.

¹⁰ “Houses of Multiple Occupation”

larger, shared types of accommodation and therefore have a higher average household size, but this is not in fact the case. In fact, students seem to enjoy less of an overcrowded living environment than others.

Table 8: Average Household Size - data

Household type	Chinese	Latin American
Living in the UK less than 5 years	7	5.1
Living in the UK more than 5 years	7	4.6
Students	5.5	4.5
Employed full-time	4.9	4.6
Undocumented	10.8	5.8

Finally, the data clearly shows that undocumented migrants live in the most crowded conditions of all. In fact, amongst the Chinese surveys, ten undocumented respondents reported living in households with more than 16 people living in them. During field research we discovered that it was not uncommon for undocumented migrants to be living in rooms in houses that had been divided into self-contained flats. The rooms would have bunk-bed spaces for between 4 and 6 people to sleep. These informally sub-letted flats allow for undocumented migrants (often living on very low wages or who are unemployed) to pay very small rents whilst living in London but also provide opportunity for landlords to increase the rental yield on each room.

5.7 Household composition

More clues as to the kinds of conditions that people live in and of the relatively crowded nature of housing for many, came from the questions we asked about household composition. Anecdotally we knew that a lot of people were sharing accommodation with other families and other migrant workers. But the proportion of people indicating this was nonetheless surprisingly high.

Table 9 shows some of the most significant findings in this regard.

Table 9: Household composition

Living with...	Chinese	Latin American
Other families	4% (4)	6% (13)
Other people who are not families	43% (49)	55% (60)
“The people change all the time”	13% (15)	8% (9)

For both Chinese and Latin Americans, the majority of respondents lived in accommodation that included people who were not family. This is consistent with the large overall average household sizes noted above. A high proportion (1 in 10 across both populations) also describe a constant a flow of different residents. This reflects the mobile nature of a migrant workforce, which was often described to us during ethnographic research. Informal renting also often works on a week-by-week basis so as to allow migrant workers to move at short notice if employment becomes available elsewhere (we discuss this in more depth in part III). This is borne out by the figures obtained for the undocumented migrants (the most mobile in terms of needing to take work when it is available). Amongst the undocumented Chinese 27% said that the people in their house change all the time and the figure was 19% for undocumented Latin Americans.

Data like this also presents a challenge for the Census. Although Census forms aim to capture all who are resident at any given address, the practical challenge of collecting information about two or more different families or from migrants who may not know a lot about each other, may be insurmountable. In these kinds of living situation often the only person who would have full knowledge of all the occupants at an address may be the landlord, or relevant ‘node’. But these may not be the people who receive and respond to Census forms.

Beyond the challenge of accounting for households with these kinds of composition, other interesting patterns emerged from the data. Most significantly, the likelihood of living with people who were not family dropped markedly for those who had been in the UK for longer than 5 years. For the Chinese the figure drops from 59% for those who have been here for less than 5 years, to 29% for those who have been here for longer than 5 years. And for the Latin Americans the same figures show a drop from 72% to 40%.

Some of this change can be accounted for by students who are likely to live with people other than family while they study, but may not stay for longer than 5 years in the UK. However, even when students are removed from the sample, there is still some drop in the number of people who are living with people other than family, after 5 years. When we consider that average household sizes for those who have been living here for less than and more than 5 years do not show any difference, we can

A significant proportion of respondents in both samples said that they had come to the UK initially to join family members (excluding students, 23% of Chinese respondents and 44% of Latin American respondents).

tentatively conclude that people who stay for longer in the UK are either introducing family to the UK or are consolidating their living arrangements, if they can, to include only family members. This idea is further bolstered by the fact that a significant proportion of respondents in both samples said that they had come to the UK initially to join family members (excluding students, 23% of Chinese respondents and 44% of Latin American respondents). Two thirds of these respondents belonged to the group who had been in the UK for more than 5 years.

6.0 Settlement and movement

One of the key factors when considering how to engage with or measure migrant and BME populations living in an area like Southwark is the frequency with which people move. Mobile populations are always more difficult to account for than static ones. Students for example, who move frequently and may spend time at more than one address, have long presented a challenge to electoral registration managers, demographers and Census takers¹¹. For Chinese and Latin Americans living in Southwark, movement is common. We will see in part III that for some, Southwark is a point of arrival in the UK, and this makes subsequent movement more likely. Accommodation found on arrival is not always suitable for longer-term needs or lifestyles.

For those interested in measuring the movement of migrant populations, there are technical questions to address such as what address to use if people move once or more during a calendar year, as well as worries over double counting. But there are also practical questions. What kinds of relationships do new arrivals have with landlords or sub-letters, for example? Will forms be passed on? Are houses that were once single occupancy, registered as HMOs if the use of the house changes?

Below we present the key findings from our survey that reflect the propensity and intentions of Chinese and Latin Americans living in Southwark, to move home.

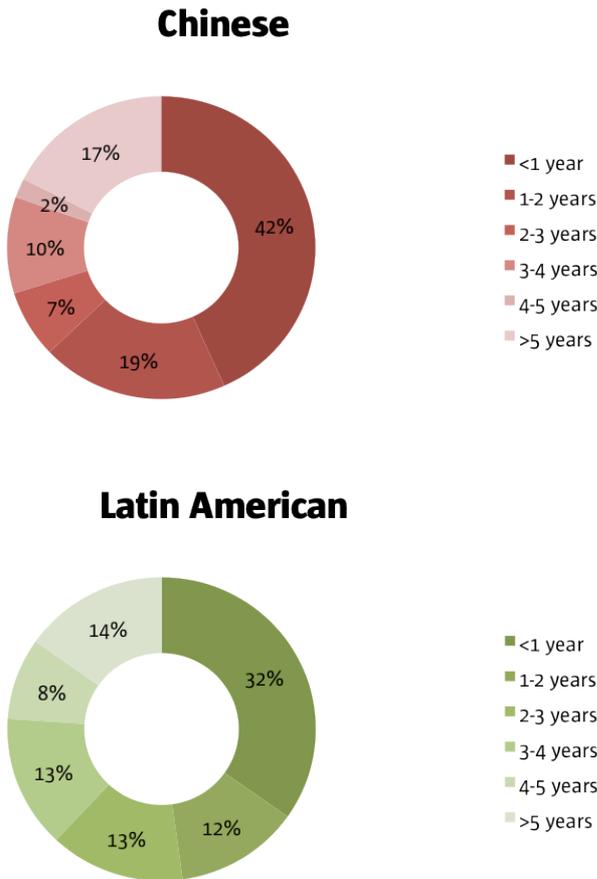
6.1 Current address

As a baseline for information about movement one key question is the length of time that people have spent living at their current address. It gives an indication of how long people have been resident in an area as well as providing a snapshot of populations that may well look the same at the time of the Census. Figure 2 shows the answers to this question provided by our surveys.

In both cases the majority of respondents had lived at their current address for less than or close to 1 year. If the same is true at the time of the Census in 2011, then Census takers will be presented with the challenge of gaining responses from people who may recently have arrived in the UK, or in the borough, may be unfamiliar with the way that post and bureaucracy in the UK works, or may simply not have a sufficient relationship with landlords or their sub-letters to be sure of receiving all of the post which arrives at a property.

¹¹ See for example http://www.statistics.gov.uk/Census2001/onc_qanda_q2.asp
15/11/2010

Figure 2: Length of time at current address



It should not be assumed however, that because so many of the respondents have only been living at their current address for less than a year, they are necessarily new arrivals to the UK. In fact, the figures we obtained for how long people had been in the UK show the opposite. 49% of our Chinese respondents and 48% of the Latin American respondents indicated that they had been living in the UK for more than 5 years. Relatively few (4% and 5% respectively) had only been living in the UK for less than a year.

Assuming that our survey provides a snapshot that would be repeated over time, this suggests a highly mobile population, in line with findings from the English Housing Survey indicating that private renters move more often. The English Housing Survey 2008-09 suggests that the percentage of people who have lived at their current address for less than one year is only 9%, though it notes that amongst private renters (which accounts for most of the people in our surveys) the figure rises to 36.5%¹².

6.2 Future indicators of mobility

A further indication of the relative mobility of the Chinese and Latin American populations in Southwark is given by the

¹² English Household Survey - Household Report 2008-09 (2010: Table 4.1)

willingness of survey respondents to indicate an intention to move in the near future. 27% of Chinese and 29% of Latin Americans said that they already intended to move in the next 12 months. Anecdotally we were told that there are several reasons for this. First, undocumented migrants must be willing to move at short notice. They have few rights as tenants, must take work wherever it comes and they must also sometimes leave an area for fear of being ‘caught’. Second, many migrants live in sub-standard accommodation that is either overcrowded or poorly maintained. They would like to find better accommodation as soon as possible.

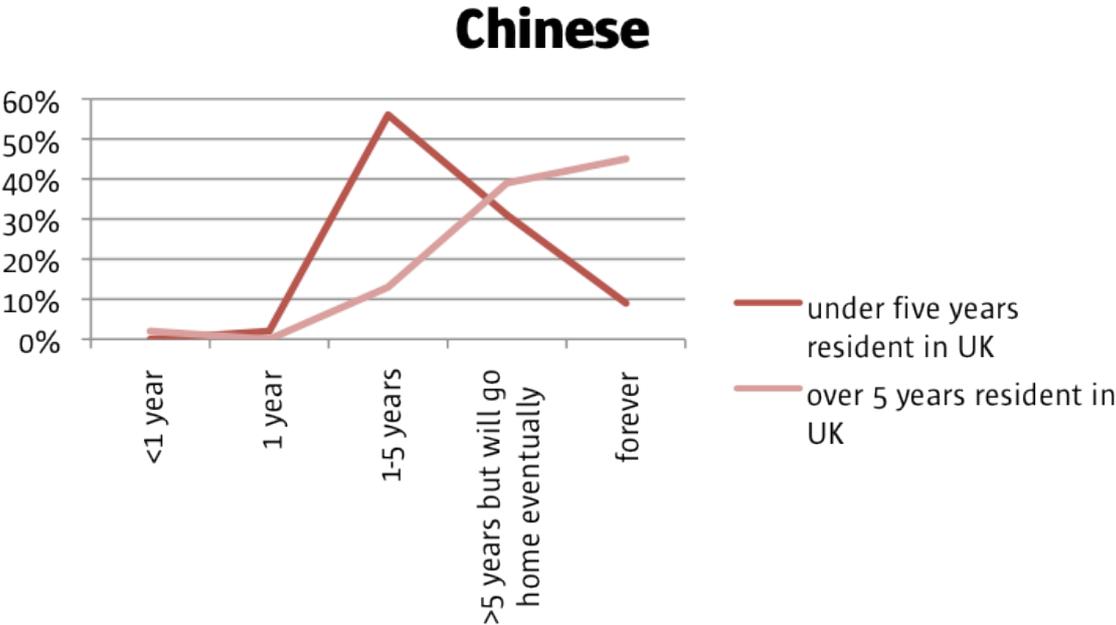
Southwark is not only a point of arrival for migrants but also a place where Chinese and Latin American people are willing to settle more permanently.

Interestingly, a majority of those who indicated that they would move also indicated that they would move to another house within Southwark. This is again inline with findings from the English Household Survey suggesting that most moves are made to within a 5-mile radius of current accommodation. It is interesting to note that these findings hold even within these BME populations, and suggests that Southwark is not only a point of arrival for migrants but also a place where people are willing to settle more permanently.

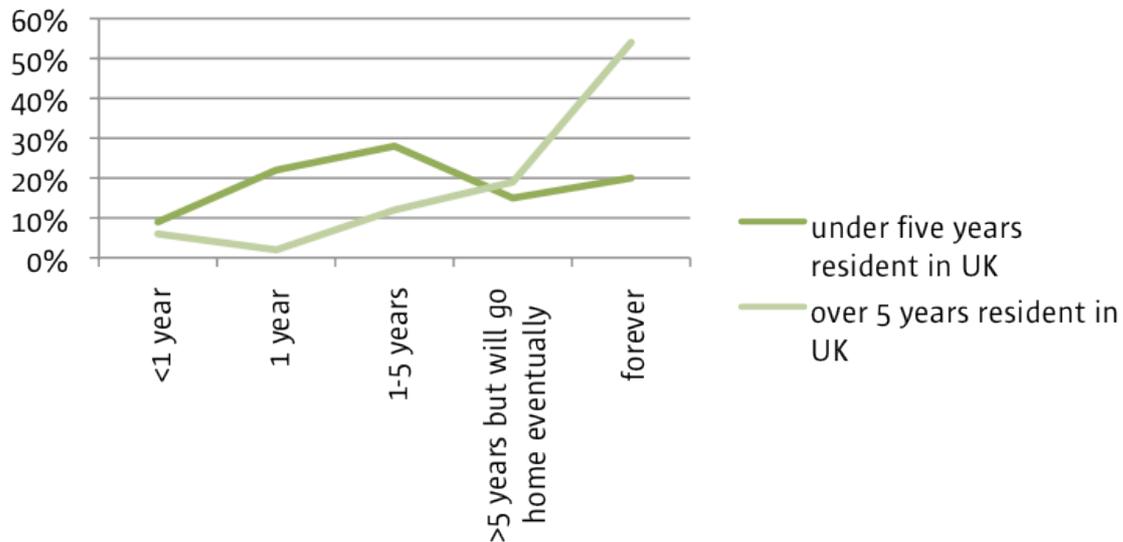
6.3 Long term plans

One interesting finding that emerged during ESRO’s work with the London-wide Chinese population is that the longer people stayed in the UK, the longer they intended to stay. Our surveys in Southwark found that the same was true for Southwark’s Chinese residents and also for the Latin Americans. Figure 3 shows the intended lengths of stay in the UK for the two populations.

Figure 3: Intended length of stay



Latin Americans



In each case the story is similar. The longer that someone has stayed in the UK the longer they intend to stay. To some extent this can be accounted for simply by looking at students. Students usually intend to stay only for the duration of their studies and then go home, never appearing in the figures for those who have stayed for more than 5 years. However, we also asked people if they had stayed for longer than they had originally intended. 55% of Chinese and 69% of Latin Americans said that they had! Looking more deeply we can also see that looking only at those who had been in the UK for more than 5 years, these figures rose to 70% in each case.

In other words, the longer people stayed, the longer they intended stay. And this was true for students too. 50% of the students interviewed across the piece said that they had already stayed for longer than they had originally intended to. To some extent then, the population could be divided into those that have stayed for longer than they originally intended to, and those who had not stayed for longer than they originally intended to yet.

The impact is clear; given that there have been recent rises in both Chinese and Latin American populations in Southwark, there is a clear need to gain a handle on the two populations now, as a significant proportion are likely to settle permanently in the borough. As populations become more settled so too their impact and demand on local services grows.

Given that there have been recent rises in both Chinese and Latin American populations in Southwark, there is a clear need to gain a handle on the two populations now, as a significant proportion are likely to settle permanently in the borough.

7.0 Impact on state and local services

Of primary importance for local policy and decision makers as well as national strategists, is the impact that migrant populations have on local services. What kinds of demands are being placed on local services? And to what extent are people getting by on their own? Also, what contributions are migrants making to local economic life?

7.1 Use of services

Table 10 shows the proportions of the two populations that had made use of various council and state services. Respondents were not asked about the frequency or intensity of use, the kinds of inquiries they had made, or to what extent they had been successful, rather they were simply asked if they had made contact with any of the services during their time living in Southwark.

Table 10: Use of services since arriving in Southwark

	Chinese	Latin American
HAVE YOU EVER USED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING PUBLIC SERVICES WHEN LIVING IN SOUTHWARK?		
Hospital	28%	48%
Doctor (GP)	44%	68%
Council housing	10%	16%
Home-help or day-centres	1%	0%
Legal advice services	15%	7%
Jobcentres	13%	15%
Health centres or community nurses	9%	8%
Schools	13%	22%
University or college	16%	13%
Benefits services	10%	16%
Police	17%	11%
Fire	3%	0%
Ambulance	7%	16%
No service use indicated	27%	24%

The two most striking figures in the table above are those that show that by far the most widely used of public services was healthcare, and the fact that such high proportion of respondents had used no services at all.

More Latin Americans in general had used health services than Chinese, and this may reflect the relative difficulty of overcoming language and cultural barriers.

Healthcare: Ethnographic research confirmed that of all services, healthcare was considered the most vital, especially among women. Further examination of the survey data also showed that by far the most frequent use of healthcare services was among female respondents. For example, 48% of Chinese women indicated that they had used GP services and amongst the Latin American women this figure was as high as 77%. To some extent this reflects the greater need for women to use healthcare services when they are looking after, or pregnant with, children.

Given that there are significant barriers to use of services for anyone whose first language is not English, the figures do indicate that there is demand for state services amongst both populations. Legal services had been used by both populations for example, often to look into questions of immigration and legal status in the UK. Respondents in focus groups told us that if these services were more widely available, they would be used even more and that to some extent these figures should be treated as low, in comparison with the true number of people who wanted to use them. The same was said to be true for the jobcentre. If Chinese or Latin Americans felt that they had full access to the labour market and that the jobcentre was a good source of employment, then usage would increase.

Benefits: Use of benefits services is significantly lower than for the UK population of private renters as a whole, according to the English Household Survey. And many of our respondents told us that this figure includes those who merely enquired about the possibility of receiving benefits rather than being a figure for those who are in receipt of benefits.

Length of time in the UK: Ignoring the use of health services, nearly all of those who indicated that they had used services, of any kind, were those that had been living in the UK for more than 5 years. And of those that had been in the UK for less than 5 years, most if not all were students. In other words, recent migrants tended not to have been using public services of any kind beyond health services. This was true for both Chinese and Latin Americans. Contrary to popular belief for example, only two individual respondents who had been in the UK for less than 5 years indicated that they had made use of council housing. This gives the lie to the idea that recent immigrants are given access to and take advantage of council housing provision.

These findings show the importance of our earlier statement that both the Chinese and Latin American populations looked as if they were more and more likely to become settled populations in Southwark. It indicates that over the next few years – the demand for services from both is likely to increase.

Legal Status: Among those whose legal status in the UK was unclear or who described themselves as ‘undocumented’, use of services was very low, especially once health services were removed from the list. In each case, the actual number of

Nearly all of those who indicated that they had used services of one kind or another, had been living in the UK for more than 5 years.

undocumented Chinese or Latin Americans using services of any kind was in single figures and in most cases amounted to fewer than 5 people. This however, should not be used to suggest that there is no need of services. As was made clear to us in focus groups and ethnographic research, there were clearly needs within the undocumented populations, but the fear of being caught and deported, and the lack of information, meant that people avoided using services, even to the detriment of their own health and safety (e.g. not calling the police after being attacked). In some cases, there was an assumption that they had no entitlements in any case and that making inquiries was pointless.

In particular, undocumented migrants did have need of two things, legal services and employment services. For most, the reason for coming to the UK was to find work. Worries over legal status meant that people did not know if this was possible at all. They also did not know if, for example, they had any recourse to legal assistance in the event of exploitation by unscrupulous employers.

Language: We deal with language barriers in more detail in the next section, but it is worth noting one clear pattern that emerged from the data on use of services. The better the level of English, the more services people used. If we look at the figures for use of the jobcentre and the ambulance services for example, levels of use increased significantly for those who spoke English with some fluency.

Table 11: Use of jobcentre and ambulance by facility with English language

	Chinese		Latin American	
	Poor English	Conversational/ fluent English	Poor English	Conversational/ fluent English
Jobcentre	6%	18%	10%	16%
Ambulance	6%	24%	13%	18%

The significance of choosing the jobcentre and ambulance is to show that language might be a factor to consider when delivering both longer-term services and emergency services alike.

No service use indicated: At first glance it looks as if the majority of our respondents had used some kind of service at some point during their stay in the UK. However, it would be wrong to ignore the fact that a quarter of the Chinese and Latin American populations are not using any services at all. This means that as many as a quarter of the people we surveyed simply would not show on any kind of administrative records. This is a significant proportion of these populations and should be borne in mind when using certain kinds of lists as proxy measures of populations.

Schools: Across the piece a total of 65 children belonging to our respondents were identified as attending schools in Southwark

(21 Chinese and 44 Latin American). For such a small sample, this is a significant number and indicates that schools are amongst the most widely used of public services besides healthcare. 11 Chinese respondents had children in school and 26 Latin American respondents had children in school.

All but 6 of these children came from families that had been in the UK for longer than 5 years, again indicating that schools in the borough will need to prepare for more Chinese and Latin American children in the future, as recent migrants begin to settle more permanently and start families, or bring family members to the UK.

Interestingly, 16 of the children belonged to respondents who had indicated that they were undocumented migrants in the UK. 14 of these came from within the Latin American sample. This is a surprising finding, but again illustrates the intention to stay and settle in the UK, despite legal difficulties. It also suggests a priority being placed on children's education and that people are willing to take significant risks in order to deliver it. There are few ways in which undocumented migrants directly impact on core public services, but these findings suggest that in Southwark at least, there is a significant impact on schools.

Long experience in working with Chinese migrants has suggested that most do not value British education as highly as we might wish – and that many leave children in China to be educated.

Community safety: During focus groups respondents did raise a particular worry about personal safety. Most had had some reason to call the police during their time in the UK, but a more troubling concern was that they did not feel able to. A number of Chinese respondents, for example, felt that they had suffered some form of discrimination during their time living in Southwark, but had been either too worried about their own legal status or their lack of language skills to actually call the police.

Undocumented migrants from both the Latin American and Chinese communities especially spoke of feeling vulnerable. They did not call for any special dispensation but rather said that they felt there was little they could do to protect themselves from exploitation or discrimination.

Schools in the borough will need to prepare for more Chinese and Latin American children in the future as recent migrants begin to settle more permanently and start families, or bring family members to the UK.

8.0 Employment and tax contributions

One of the most significant features of migrant and BME life in the UK and in Southwark in particular, are the ways in which migrant and BME populations appear in economic life. The most obvious feature, for example, of the Chinese population is the seemingly evergreen Chinese catering industry and the presence of one or two of the most famous Chinese restaurants in the capital. Increasingly, Latin American businesses are also becoming a fixed feature of the Southwark landscape. This is not to say, of course, that Chinese and Latin American people are all employed within these ‘ethnic’ industries, but rather that it is through economic activity that populations such as these become a visible and embedded part of the life of the borough.

Added to this, the prime motive for coming to the UK, for many, is the opportunity to take part in what is perceived to be a thriving economy that affords the possibility of great wealth to those who can succeed here. Through employment and economic activity, migrant populations can also be seen to be making a contribution to the UK in terms of wealth creation and tax payments.

In this section we look at the levels of employment among the two populations and the contributions people are making to local economic life.

8.1 Employment

Table 12: Employment

	Chinese	Latin American
Employed	73%	79%
Part-time	N/A	40%

In both populations the majority of people had found employment in the UK. Of those who were unemployed, the majority were students. One of the reasons for the high-level of employment is the imperative to find work in the UK. Quite simply, many of those we interviewed were employed on very low-wages and the need for all members of working-age in a family to find employment was paramount. This was especially true given that most were not entitled to any kind of state benefits. Indeed, for many, the sole reason to be in the UK was to find work.

However, the simple fact of having work does not tell the whole story. For many, the jobs that were available were not high-paying and did not offer much in the way of financial recompense or opportunities for advancement. The most prevalent employment opportunities for the Chinese were in the catering

industry whilst for Latin Americans, cleaning jobs were common. Neither industry offered high-paying jobs. Furthermore, many could only find part-time work, which was not ideal. Whilst more women than men worked part-time and this might be partly explained by the need to take care of childcare, a significant proportion of men (more than a quarter) were also only employed part-time. Respondents told us that full-time work was much more desirable than part-time work as it paid better and was more secure, but such work was not always available.

For many of our Chinese respondents, the distinction between part-time and full-time work was not necessarily easy. Many were employed informally in restaurants and they took hours as they became available. For others there were no formal hours at all, such as for the DVD sellers.

8.2 Formal and informal employment

It is difficult to ask people directly whether or not the work they did was formal or informal. In some cases it is not always clear. In fact, during focus groups, especially with the Chinese, some said that they did not know if their employers were paying PAYE or not, nor whether they had been formally registered as employees in any way.

Our survey asked two questions which attempt to gain some understanding of the level of formal employment and informal employment in the two communities but it should be stressed that answers are not necessarily reliable. Especially for the Chinese, questions about such things as National Insurance numbers were not always fully understood.

Table 13: Formal and Informal employment

	Chinese	Latin American
Paid in cash	54%	33%
Have a National Insurance (NI) number	45%	87%

Figures presented in table 13 are not mutually exclusive. Having an NI number does not necessarily indicate formal employment. National Insurance numbers are sometimes given to employees who are not documented and numbers are sometimes issued on the basis of false documentation. Further, being paid in cash does not necessarily indicate that people are being employed informally. The two figures merely serve as indicators.

In both the Chinese and Latin American samples, a very high proportion of respondents indicated that they are paid in cash, which does suggest that a very large amount of employment in each of these two communities is informal. Of course this is also an indicator that wages are low and that work is insecure. During focus groups and ethnographic work, we were told in no uncertain terms by nearly all respondents, that they would prefer to work in formal employment, with legal documentation and

that they would prefer to be paying taxes. In fact, many said that being employed informally did not benefit them as much as it benefitted employers. Employers could quickly remove staff that had not been registered as employees formally and also avoid making PAYE contributions.

The figures also show the relative unreliability of using NI numbers as a guide even to working populations, with fewer than half of the employed Chinese respondents making use of them. Latin Americans had found that being able to obtain false documents helped in being able to get an NI number; 72% of undocumented Latin Americans said that they had one. This point is brought home by the fact that only 35% of Chinese respondents and only 30% of Latin American respondents said that they had made a formal application for an NI number; a figure significantly lower than the number of people who were using them.

Only 35% of Chinese respondents and only 30% of Latin American respondents said that they had made a formal application for an NI number; a figure significantly lower than the number of people who were using them.

8.3 Paying tax

Again, it is difficult to directly ask migrant populations whether or not they are paying tax. They may not always know. The responsibility for paying tax on wages for example, often falls to an employer rather than an individual. Council tax too, would often be taken care of by a landlord or by a sub-letter or 'node' rather than by individual residents. Respondents would not necessarily know whether or not taxes were being paid on their behalf.

Nonetheless we asked respondents if they knowingly paid taxes. Only 32% of Chinese said that they did. This is not surprising. For many Chinese, language barriers are very hard to break and they rely in many cases on 'nodes' or employers to take care of bureaucratic formalities for them. In actual fact, it is highly likely that some proportion of rent payments was going toward council tax payments.

The figure was higher for Latin American respondents (62%) who are more likely to have some familiarity with British bureaucracy – but who were also more likely to be using documentation of some kind to work and live in more formal jobs and accommodation.

Part III

Community, culture and the Census



9.0 Introduction: Community

Up to this point we have dealt with the data collected from the Chinese and Latin American communities side-by-side. In this section we go behind the numbers to look at the two populations individually and in more detail. We examine the idea of 'community' and what it really means to Chinese and Latin American residents in Southwark. We explore the ways in which people come together and the ways in which they are divided and the strengths and weaknesses therein. Most importantly, we look at the ways in which the two populations (and the communities that they belong to) map on to the geography of Southwark. In doing so, we aim to give policy makers a feel for the life of the two populations within their borough.

Both the Chinese and the Latin American populations have left indelible marks on the landscape and Southwark contains genuine hubs for both populations that have an impact beyond the borders of the borough itself. Businesses adorned with Chinese calligraphy and South American flags can be found in all of the bustling main streets of this South London melting pot; and beneath the seeming chaos there are myriad different stories being lived out in rituals and routines that have a distinctly Chinese and Latin American flavour.

Surveys and statistics can tell us much about a population but they singularly fail to capture the lives and lifestyles, cultures and colours that give rise to them. If we are to truly understand, engage with, and hear the many voices that surround us then we must first spend time on the ground, listening, seeing and exploring, for ourselves. This is exactly what our researchers did.

Certain details and all names have been changed in the following accounts in order to protect identities.

10.0 Latin American Southwark

Juan speaks Spanish that is thickly accented with the sound of the Bolivian highlands, it may not even be his first language (though he wouldn't admit this to other 'more cosmopolitan', Spanish-speaking Bolivians in London). He came to London from Bolivia two years ago. He is reticent in sharing details about his reasons for leaving Bolivia, but they are not only financial. He had paid US\$6000 to a 'guide' in Bolivia who arranged for him to come to London via Spain where he would collect documents allowing him to work in the UK. He insists that these documents are not false.

He didn't know a lot about the geography of Europe, let alone Britain, before he came, and when his plane from Spain landed in Aberdeen he was confused at first. But, he says, there were people in Aberdeen to meet him and help him to find an awaiting coach. The coach was full and Juan heard the language and accents of other Latin Americans around him as it wound its way down the country. When the journey ended, the coach driver ushered everyone off the coach and Juan found himself, laden with heavy bags, in the middle of a cluttered system of roundabouts choked with cars and red double-decker buses and teeming with people: Elephant and Castle.

10.1 Elephant and castle: a hub

Elephant and Castle is the centre of Latin American life in Southwark. Elephant and Castle is also certainly London's most central Latin American hub (especially when compared with other hubs in Brixton and Seven Sisters) making it accessible for Latin Americans living in the area and for those living in other parts of London. The Old Kent road in particular, as well as the immediate surrounds of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre, is home to a number of Latin American 'micro-enterprises', bars, shops, cafes and restaurants. And it is around these businesses that much of the sense of a Spanish-speaking Latin American community is formed.

Latin American businesses are pillars that support the community in multiple ways. They are places where people go to find work, find accommodation, find information, connect with friends, family, and compatriots, access legal (including immigration advice), trade and conduct other business, connect to "home" by speaking their own language and sharing gossip, read Spanish language newspapers (published specifically for Latin American migrants), hear their Latin American music, consume familiar foods and rent the latest soap opera series (a staple of Latin American life) on DVDs. It is also where they expose children and grandchildren born in the UK or brought over as infants, to their home cultures. In many ways, because of their multifaceted role, the busy Latin American shops and businesses should be considered "community organisations" in the same way that explicit welfare charities and associations are; in fact, probably more so.

For many Latin Americans in the UK, Elephant and Castle in particular is a point of entry into British life. Many people are advised while still in their home countries, while on the plane or as soon as they land to go to "Elefan" (as it is known in the

community). They are told that they will find help there. Although many incoming migrants are put up temporarily in hostels in West London (Queensway, Hammersmith, Earl's Court etc.) they will quickly find their way to Southwark. While Lambeth is a more popular for residence for families (so Latin Americans say), Southwark is popular with migrants who come on their own. It is here that they will find opportunities for shared accommodation with other young, single workers and here that they will find and access a network that allows them to manage the initial hardships of migration and the tough London economy.

The significance of this part of Southwark to the Latin American sense of community in London is expressed perhaps most elegantly in a popular myth that the great South American military leader and political visionary, Simon Bolivar, who played a key role in Latin America's struggle for independence, once lived in this part of Southwark during his mission to London in the early 19th century. Other less lofty indicators can be found in a nickname for the Old Kent Road, 'the BolKent Road' (referring to the number of Bolivians living there, and a local joke that the Old Kent Road is the most famous street in La Paz (the capital city of Bolivia).

Figure 4 shows the density of the Latin American population in Southwark as indicated both by our research on the ground and by our surveys¹³.

Figure 4 - right: Distribution of Latin Americans in Southwark
(Darker areas indicate greater population density)

As the map shows, most of the population is concentrated around Elephant and Castle and along the Old Kent Road with spread into Camberwell and Peckham. Even though some remark on the fact that the Latin American community does not have a "barrio" or neighbourhood in London, as it does in other major world cities, they also clearly consider parts of Southwark as pertaining to the community.

10.2 Community and difference

Latin American migrants in Southwark come from many different countries, and can be fiercely patriotic. Many sport jewellery, watches or other accessories which express their patriotism and they will often stress the difference between themselves and other Latin Americans. This stems from old political and historical rivalries back home e.g. Peruvians vs. Ecuadorians, Bolivians vs. Peruvians, Colombians vs. Venezuelans etc.

Despite these national differences there are also deep bonds rooted in sharing the same language (Spanish), intertwined histories, and sharing similar cultural values. For these reasons the community spaces they access are shared. It is also for these reasons that we cannot see Latin American communities clearly segregated by countries.

¹³ We have not included figures, as the information was not conducted using a systematic sampling method by area. However, respondents in our focus groups agreed that in terms of the way they understood the living patterns of Latin Americans in Southwark – the map was accurate.

Clustering does exist however. Colombians dominate for example, in Elephant and Castle and in the businesses in the arches, while Bolivians dominate the businesses on the Old Kent Road.

To try and understand Latin Americans in Southwark then, it is important to have a handle on both a sense of a shared community *and* the differences within. Some kinds of differences are particularly important to stress in the context of community engagement as many of them depend on the particular immigration procedures relevant to each group and therefore the kinds of lives that are being led in the borough.

It would be impossible in the scope of this report to catalogue all of the differences and all of the cultural complexities of Latin America as they are translated into the UK context but we will try to highlight some of the more salient differences that emerged during fieldwork.

Colombians seem to constitute the largest group of Latin Americans in Southwark and certainly they dominate in Elephant and Castle. Earlier waves of Colombian migrants were political refugees and are now considered to be wealthier and “posher” by newer refugees and immigrants. Mostly, we were told, they now reside in North and West London, rarely accessing the Elephant and Castle services. Though it is they who still run many of the businesses there or are the owners and leaseholders of the many business properties that are now subdivided into tiny Latin American micro-businesses.

Newer Colombian migrants are finding it very hard to get political asylum status as it involves providing evidence for serious threats to their wellbeing such as military or para-military threats.

Within the Colombian community people also stress the differences between “paisas” (the nickname for people from Medellin, in the state of Antioquia) and “valluno” (people from Cali and the Valle del Cauca state). Paisas are said to cluster in Seven Sisters, while Vallunos are said to cluster in Southwark and in Lambeth. These differences are perceptual and contradicted by Paisa presence in Southwark and vice versa but the perception remains nonetheless. One self-categorised Paisa who lives in Southwark and manages a fast food stand in the arches said: “the ones up there (gesturing north, toward Seven Sisters) want life easy. But us people down here are hard-working, entrepreneurial people.” To some extent then, the spatial division of Colombians in London is being translated into the language of regional difference in Colombia.

Bolivians, the dominant Latin American presence along the Old Kent Road, are the next most obvious Latin American group in Southwark. Bolivians can occupy a different kind of status and space than the Colombians. Often this comes as a result of their precarious legal status and the population is marked by a very high number of undocumented migrants (much higher it seems than in the other Latin American communities). Most of the Bolivians interviewed for this research were initially highly suspicious and fearful of our approaching them. A recent spate of capture and deportations of undocumented migrants from in front of the TESCO on Old Kent Road, only a few blocks from the Bolivian businesses, meant that many Bolivians we came across were living and moving with the constant fear of deportation.

Some had resigned themselves to the idea that they may be deported at any moment and describe themselves as living “in the moment”, many have already started preparing for the day “someone taps them on the shoulder” by sending their possessions back to Bolivia through dedicated Bolivian owned shipping companies.

Many Bolivians repeatedly stated that the aspiration of Colombians was to remain in the UK and “make a ton of money”, implying a degree of greed, while Bolivians aspired to make what they considered a more “modest” sum before returning to Bolivia to set up a business and better take care of their families there.

Bolivians talk about the difference between Cambas (people from the Eastern part of the country, closer to the indigenous peoples of South America) and Collas (people from the Western part of the country, considered more “European”). They say the Collas would never dream of taking cleaning jobs and that they aspire to setting up businesses and receiving education. The Cambas, in contrast, say that they are the real hard workers, unlike the Collas.

Venezuelans, Ecuadoreans, Chileans, Cubans and central Americans can also be found in Southwark, though in smaller numbers. To some extent they latch on to the existing infrastructure built by the Bolivians and Colombians and can be found in the same places. At a more local level they often live together and, though smaller, have the same sense of a shared identity as the larger Colombian and Bolivian communities.

Information is shared more quickly amongst those that share the same background than between. As such, stories and myths can grow about certain communities. For example, the Cubans are seen as largely achieving refugee and eventually citizenship status, something envied by other Latin Americans. And Ecuadoreans are seen as finding it easier to gain access to Spain and gain legal documentation there before coming to the UK.

To some extent recent campaigns in the community calling for Latin Americans to identify themselves as such in order to gain more recognition from central and local government (rather than presenting themselves as individual, small communities from many different countries) have a greater salience in these smaller Latin American populations. They already consume and rely on the same media and they use the same services as the larger groups so supporting the cause of Latin Americans in general is likely to benefit them.

10.3 Church

Although Latin American third sector infrastructure in Southwark is relatively small, one social institution beyond the state, which has power both to unite and to administer to a wide and diverse population, is the church.

Catholicism is still an important unifying faith and provides a unifying set of practices for many Latin Americans. Latin Americans living in Southwark can attend masses in Spanish at St. George’s Cathedral (Sundays at 1pm) or at St. Anne’s Cathedral on Kennington Lane in Vauxhall. Both services draw migrants from all over London but the St. Anne’s service is especially popular as it features live musicians who accompany

the service and is followed by a Bible study group and other activities. Both are run by the Latin American Chapel (Capellania Latinoamericana) who also provide advice services to migrants. Critically, these churches offer a safe space for all migrants including those who are undocumented.

Evangelical churches have been on the rise in Latin America and research has shown that large numbers of Latin American migrants convert in their new countries. Again Southwark is a hub that contains one of the most well known evangelical churches, known as Comunidad Cristiana de Londres (<http://www.cclnewma.org/>), which is led by the charismatic Ravelo family.

Both Catholic and evangelical churches are safe places for migrants to congregate and offer a free way of socialising. Both faiths offer ways to migrants to give meaning to their migration experience, including how to cope with financial hardship and distance from home and family often by emphasising the idea of a “destiny” or calling. At one Spanish Catholic mass we saw, attendance included well over 300 Latin Americans, and at a subsequent bible group, the priest and then the group leader stressed the idea of the Christian community as a unified community of acceptance where individuals from different Latin American countries who had left their home behind could find a new home.

For policy-makers in Southwark it is vitally important to realise that Latin Americans revere their religious leaders, especially within the context of the church location, so any communications endorsed by the priest or pastor would be given serious and careful consideration (e.g. about a Census). However, some Latin American evangelical churches are based on a worldview that is a-political and world-renouncing (often explicitly discouraging community action) such that Latin American migrants who are also evangelical are less likely to respond to campaigns such as the one calling for recognition of the Latin American “ethnic” community). This contrasts with the relatively politicised nature of the Catholic Church which is still seen by many to be the natural defender of the poor.

10.4 Business and shopping centres

Mini Latin American shopping centres are a feature of life in Southwark (They are often called Centro Comercial, followed by a name e.g. Pascana, Amazonas, San Andresito, Naranjo or more simply “Galerias”).

Located in the arches underneath Elephant and Castle train station and in the arches under the train tracks next to the Strata building, often they look from the outside like just one shop, with a small door into the arch but inside the space is subdivided into micro businesses. Some of these businesses may be no larger than a small cupboard. On the whole the centres only have one of each type of business (e.g. one DVD rental, one café, one seamstress, one money transfer business, one barber etc.) Therefore each centre is self-contained and can meet several needs in a one place.

Customers have their favourite centres but they might still go to one centre for a snack and another to send their money. The ones

around Elephant and Castle are mainly Colombian-owned, those on the Old Kent Road mainly Bolivian, but Bolivians will access Colombian shops and vice versa. Foods like Pandebono (Colombia) or Cuñapes (Bolivia), a cassava and cheese bread type snack, are popular, giving a taste of home and, along with the DVD's, language and decoration provide familiarity in the middle of London.

These businesses are central to the community in multiple ways providing employment, opportunities for socialising, formal and informal support and shared information on the availability of housing, benefits and of course, the latest gossip in the community. When asked where their favourite places were in London, nearly all respondents agreed that it was under the arches of Elephant and Castle.

These spaces are also safe spaces. One Colombian student said "you just feel at home somehow, its that warmth of our people, that's the warmth I miss most. It's our space; we are invisible so it's important to have that space. I go to this one place – La Vida Loca, they have these Pandebonos straight from the oven, just like back in Colombia. I go there all the time, I mean it, like I can't go for more than two days without getting my Pandebono fix"

The president of the Latin American Development Association (a Latin American business support organisation¹⁴), Jorge Mella, estimated that there were around 450-500 Latin American businesses in London, 80-120 of these in Southwark. A couple of years ago, he says, as many as 9 out of 10 of these were Colombian owned, though increasingly there are others. Many of these businesses are "invisible" or have no specific premises from which they operate, especially cleaning and construction companies. Instead they operate mainly by word of mouth and an exchange of a name and number. The oldest of these businesses in Southwark include Inara Travel (20 years), the Naranjo Brothers Corporation (mini shopping centres, 20 years), and La Bodeguita restaurant (15 years). The main problem for Latin American businesses, Mella suggested, was that they reach a glass ceiling. Most target an exclusively Latino clientele and they are inhibited from expanding both by the language barrier and their inability to obtain capital. Most businesses start with the entrepreneurs' own money or with money borrowed from friends and family, in the absence of bank loans.

Others told us independently that there was a lack of recognition of Latin American diplomas and professional certifications in the UK too. This, they said, was holding them back from expanding businesses and obtaining jobs. Several people asked for advice on this. And one Cuban migrant suggested forming a Local Authority organisation to oversee an accreditation program and to open dialogue with other organisations, jobcentres and employers to give recognition to highly qualified Latin Americans. For some, the problem was felt to be as simple as the fact that certificates were often in Spanish but that to obtain officially recognised translations was costly.

The entrepreneurial spirit in the community is clear however and the barriers to ambition were a primary concern expressed during research. To give an idea of the variety of Latin American micro-

¹⁴ www.ladauk.org

businesses and entrepreneurial efforts in the borough, we catalogued the different economic activities we came across during field research. They included: Foodstuffs (and selling miscellaneous other items, e.g. piñatas for children's parties, special Colombian black ceramic pots for cooking beans, souvenirs from different countries, restaurants, cafes, bars, discos, catering for cafes (from home) or ambulatory food vendors (man selling baked goods from a basket inside an internet café/money wire place), newspapers, printing services, IT services, computer repairs in Spanish, DVD rentals, money wire and shipping companies (ship and air), barbers, beauty salons, Legal advice services, travel agents, car repair workshops, clothing repairs and alterations, clothing (imported from Latin America and Brazil), dentists, construction and carpentry, cleaning, internet cafés and phone calling places, traditional medicine: e.g. shamans, working in home and advertising in newspapers, van hire, estate agents (often selling property in home countries like Colombia and Ecuador), childcare and even miracle workers (advertising in newspapers).

10.5 Housing and living

The visibly vibrant life of Southwark's Latin American population found in the businesses and activities in Elephant and Castle and the Old Kent Road often conceals a more complex set of living situations beneath. For many, housing is tenuous and people struggle to find suitable accommodation within meagre budgets.

Most people find their housing through informal adverts at the newsagents or through word of mouth and connections. Some also use the Gumtree website, in Spanish, or English if they can. During the fieldwork, we encountered several people of all ages gathering in front of various newsagents and Internet Cafes on the Old Kent Road. These adverts are usually handwritten in Spanish and some of them reveal the lack of educational attainment of their authors or their lack of familiarity with English. The location of the accommodation is most often given by proximity to landmarks, e.g. "behind the Tesco". The adverts stress transport links and specify whether the room is suitable for one or two people to share.

Some adverts are from people already in a room and who are looking to share the room in order to bring the rental costs down. We met one Ecuadorean man in his late 50s taking down numbers to call. He said that he had been living with his niece and her family in Streatham for two months since he moved out of his last place but it was uncomfortable living with a young family and young children around "Sometimes I just want to go to sleep you know, instead of sitting awkwardly on the sofa, I feel like I am imposing myself". Now he wants to find cheap housing in Southwark where he has more of a space to himself.

Many of the people we spoke to also knew of council housing that was being sub-letted to Latin American migrants. Most stressed that this was unethical and that this form of shared housing is much more common in the private sector. In the cases they did know of it was always other Latin Americans who had managed to get British citizenship and gain council housing who administrated these homes.

10.6 Nodes: “Encargados”

At the beginning of this report we outlined the phenomenon in migrant communities of ‘nodes’; people who acted as cultural brokers helping migrant communities to navigate the complexities of living in London. In the Latin American community nodes who arrange housing are specifically identified and given the name “encargado”.

Almost all of the accommodation advertised in newspapers and news agents’ windows is shared and subletted. Most of the landlords are English or Asian but not Latin American. Encargados (or “ones in charge”) are the people who arrange the subletting contracts (formally or informally) for Latin Americans. Usually, the encargado is a Spanish speaker who is more competent in English or more settled in the country. They may or may not reside in the flat themselves. The encargado is “in charge” of collecting rent from the subletters (usually weekly) and paying a lump sum to the landlord. The encargado, of course, may or may not skim off a profit for him/herself. Sometimes the landlord is aware of this, sometimes not.

One group of migrants living in shared accommodation said that they couldn’t be sure whether or not encargados were making their living from the role but suggested that some encargados were probably managing several properties. They told us, for example, about two Ecuadorean brothers who almost certainly made a living like this, managing several properties.

A young Bolivian man we spoke to also seemed to be a successful encargado. He held the lease for one of the Bolivian mini shopping centres and rented out spaces to 8 micro-businesses. He said he was also “helping an English friend take care” of two properties. The man believed greater economic prosperity lay in this activity than in continuing to rent space to Bolivian businesses. The Bolivian population, he said, is dwindling and Bolivian businesses have no way of expanding or growing. Managing properties however, was always in demand.

Encargados also make it possible for undocumented migrants to find housing. Their week-to-week management of rents means that there is little accountability and they can take rent from whoever is willing to pay. The landlords never need to know what or how many people live in their property.

At the focus groups, respondents suggested that many of the subletters would be wholly dependent on the encargado and would not know the landlord and may be unaware of whether their flat was privately owned or owned by the council. The encargado would take care of everything.

10.7 Gallery



Columbian items for sale in Elephant and Castle



Latin Americans in our focus groups



Housing and accommodation ads in Colombian travel agent window in Elephant and Castle



Typical accommodation for Latin Americans in Southwark



La Bodeguita – central hub for Latin American community in Southwark



Latin American micro and infrastructure businesses in Elephant and Castle

10.8 Real lives

Juan

The “restaurant” only had 3 tables and Juan was lucky to still find food at this time of day - a plate of rice, beef and beans served up by a Bolivian woman who runs the stall. Juan is also Bolivian, from Cochabamba. He is 30 years old but speaks and looks as if he is about 25. He is very thin and pale. Juan says he comes here 3 or 4 times a week. He does not have friends or family and he is very lonely. What he really wants is to meet his future wife – she could be Bolivian or English or Spanish. Juan lives just a few doors down in a flat over one of the shops, found for him by a man he had met in a café on the same day he arrived in London. On his day off or after work (he cleans usually from 10 pm to 6 am in a hotel in central London) he comes down here just to get out of the house and do something. Juan says he has a student visa but it is clear that he cleans for 8 hours a day and has no time to visit an English school. He reassures us that he has permission to work full time. He has been living here like this for two years now.

We visit the flat where he lives. Entering a narrow hallway and climbing the stairs, we pass at least 4 locked doors where there may be other independent flats (he says the landlord, who he thinks is English, owns the whole building). He says the people in the other flats are “scared” of them, the Bolivians, but he doesn’t know why. As we enter the flat, Juan starts apologising about the state of it. It smells bad, the paint is peeling, the carpet is dirty and the rooms are full of suitcases and clothing stuffed into bags, it looks like property that has been abandoned here by previous tenants. There are four more locked doors inside the flat, rooms occupied by Polish men, Juan says. Behind one of the doors is the room he shares with 2 other Bolivians.

We hear people come into the flat and into one of the other rooms but no one says hello. Clothes and suitcases cover every inch of floor and falling-apart cupboards spill more of the same. There are three single beds, one along each wall and one under the window. The windows are covered with blankets and towels as makeshift curtains. The back of the door is covered with cut-out pinups from newspapers. There are no photographs of family.

They have a fridge in the room and share the bathroom and kitchen with the other tenants. Juan pays £40 a week in rent and one of the other Bolivians pays the rent for their room to the landlord. Juan says he never sees the two other Bolivians apart from on their day off. Most days they come home at midnight.

As a cockroach crawls across the table, Juan says he is embarrassed and that he is planning on finding a new place to live, it’s too dirty here. But he also says he is thinking of going back to Bolivia, maybe in a month or two. He has plans to set up his own poultry farm there. After all, he says, he doesn’t have a girlfriend or family here. He sends money to his mother who is raising the three youngest of his 5 siblings. He asks her to set aside money for him for when he returns. He has already sent back some of his possessions.

Juan’s story is not atypical. He is one of many young single Latin American migrants trying to make their way in London and finding the economic realities hard. Cleaning jobs are a common occupation for Latin American migrants. And although he says he

has a legal right to work in the UK, it is unlikely that he receives as much as the minimum wage. Employers know well who will work for less.

Hernan and Carmen

We find Hernan and Carmen, two undocumented migrants, at the Bible study group after a Spanish mass in St. Anne's church. While they are singing and praying, their two young sons play Nintendo DS with other boys in the Parish church stairway teasing each other in perfect British English. They invite me to their home and though Carmen is a little apprehensive at first, they both warm up very fast. We eat Polish liverwurst on bread in their shared house in Camberwell. Hernan and Carmen live in the living room with their two boys, 10 and 12. An adult daughter lives in Bolivia and another daughter is pregnant and lives in Lambeth, but is moving to Southwark to be with them.

Hernan was a chemist in Bolivia and even has a postgraduate degree from a Belgian university where he had a scholarship. He had paid a 'guide' for his tickets to London, having been told that he would receive a work visa when he got here. When he got to London he was put up in a hostel in West London for a couple of nights. From there he was taken to a town near Cambridge where work had been set up for him. He says the guide made sure he never heard about or went to Elephant and Castle because there he would have found out about other options for work and would have been made aware of workers rights.

Instead of a work visa he was handed a fake Italian ID card. Hernan refused to take it and asked for his money back but the guide said it was already paid for and they would both get in trouble if he didn't take it. Hernan said "I don't even speak Italian", he remembers how ashamed he was when he handed it to his new employer, covering his face as the boss asked "you're Italian?" and he had to reply "yes". The boss knew it wasn't true but Hernan felt he had already lost his dignity.

Hernan worked for two years in that town. Then he found out about EC and the community in Southwark. He went back to Bolivia and wanted to bring his whole family over to the UK. But two nights before they were supposed to fly out, his teenaged daughter refused to go. Worried that she might throw a scene at the border controls, he decided they would leave her behind. This was a hard decision and both Hernan and Carmen have spent years since, worried about her growing up cared for by other family.

In the end, Hernan, his wife and two sons 9 and 11 came on a student visa with dependents. At this point they said to themselves "There are so many undocumented families like us. Let's try our luck". Eventually Hernan bought a fake Spanish passport (for about 300 pounds). By this time his attitude had changed, he saw false documentation as a necessary evil. Now he works in a restaurant.

Hernan is well informed. He pays council tax but he knows that the council is not allowed to share information with immigration unless there is suspicion of terrorist activity. The same is true of the schools, he says, they are not allowed to communicate information about their students and their families. Hernan and Carmen have heard that if their children study in the UK for 10 years before they turn 18, they will have the opportunity to become British citizens and by extension their parents will too,

but with the current change in government this looks likely to change. Nonetheless the only solution they see to their current situation, is via their children.

Hernan, Carmen and the boys live in a private flat in Camberwell. They occupy the living room where two sofas serve as beds at night. They frequently receive visitors and when we are with them a Honduran woman and her daughter are visiting. We share English tea and milk and eat little sandwiches Carmen has made with Polish liverwurst. Hernan is an “encargado” and they rent the two other bedrooms in the house to another Bolivian woman and her husband and a pair of single Bolivian women.

Last year the recalcitrant daughter finally came to London and is about to give birth to her first child. The father is a Colombian. She is about to move to Southwark from Lambeth and Carmen is glad she will be close by. Carmen has a physical disability and cannot work so she will probably be involved in her grandchild’s childcare.

But times have changed. And the family are scared. Carmen describes the deportation of a friend. “This older lady came up to him. She was dressed nicely, she looked very nice, just normal, and she asked him ‘do you work here?’ and he thought she was just being friendly, you know, talking to him. And he said yes. And then this woman said, ‘show me your papers!’. And so he was discovered. He was in shock, she looked so friendly”. A similar thing happened to Carmen herself, but she managed to escape. “I was crossing a street and this woman comes to me and she looks very friendly, an older woman, a Señora (a respectable older woman) and she says “Do you work in the UK?” and then I knew and I just said no, I’m a student. And I just kept walking. So I have learned that you can’t trust anyone. I just say, no I don’t work. I am a student. I’m studying English.”

Hernan and Carmen are undocumented migrants who have chosen to try and live permanently in the UK. Hernan works, though not utilising his education, and their children are doing well in school. Their choice to live on in Southwark despite not having a legal right to live and work in the UK, means that they are particularly affected by recent stories of deportation. They live in constant fear of being caught. They are not the only ones, they told us.

As one respondent told us, “It’s like living in a cage and the walls are closing in... but things would have to get a lot worse here before I would consider going home.” The reality is that despite the hardships of living in London, many still believe that it is safer and that there are more opportunities in the long-term for those who aspire to achieve in the UK.

There is also a sense in which the community will pull together to help when things get difficult. Hernan and Carmen are not unusual in that they have provided temporary homes to other undocumented migrants down on their luck. When one Bolivian man was caught and set for deportation, a group of Bolivians held a fundraising party in a house near the Old Kent Road to raise money for him to take home. And another mixed group of women from the church have taken it upon themselves to visit a young Latin American man who is in a coma in hospital but who seems to have no family or friends.

Paolo

Paolo first left Cuba for Sweden where he had qualified as a refugee, but when his refugee status expired he had to make new plans. He went from there to Oslo with a plan to go to Miami and meet up with family. He bought a fake Spanish passport and hoped to go through London to Miami. But he was caught in London and went to a detention Centre near the Isle of Wight for 10 months. When he came out, he stayed with a Spanish friend near Earls Court. Then he was taken in by the Salvation Army in Southwark and they put him up in a B&B for 1 1/2 years where he worked for his rent. All of the others in the B&B were young British men, he says. "It was a cool time".

His application for asylum in the UK was declined 2 times but approved on the third occasion, otherwise he says, his case would have gone to the High Court - "you know the one with the wigs" he says to me. Now, he has had British nationality for 5 years. I ask why he never went to Miami later and he says: "In Miami you can live your whole life and never speak a word of English. I don't like the way of life there. There, everyone looks at you and your clothes. You can't get a girlfriend if you don't have a car. And health care is so expensive. I know a lot of Cubans who go to a clandestine dentist - and the risk is huge". This echoes what other Cubans said comparing life in the US to the UK: "Here living is cheap. In Miami forget it, you don't just have a coffee like we are having. You have your nice sandwich, and a little beer. And then another one. It's the entertainment there, the bars, the things to do. Here we don't even have a car".

Paolo lives with Alberto and Alberto's cousin who is visiting from Miami for the first time. They are taking Alberto's cousin all around London beginning each day at a café in Elephant and Castle. When we find them they are engrossed in an in-depth discussion of British benefits and immigration and the phenomenon of Latin Americans with Spanish passports. Alberto says he has listened to the Queens speech and that EU citizens will have to prove that they have work before they come. They discuss the people who live off benefits "It's not just the immigrants, even the British do it. There are some who have never worked a day in their lives. If you have 'council' [housing] and they are helping you then you know you can get work. Well then you should pay for it! I mean if you don't have anything, its ok - you are entitled - but if you can work - you should! The good thing, you know, about Latinos is that, with some exceptions, they work hard."

Alberto says to Paolo who is currently looking for work: you should do "security", there's lots of work. Paolo says "Ill waste my brain, and its night shifts - I prefer to do painting and study English".

Although Paolo has achieved British citizenship, he is still closely involved with the tales of immigration and of how migrants can get ahead in the UK. Paolo and Alberto both have friends who are undocumented and applying for asylum in the UK, with lessening hope. They, like many others we met, were well informed about the current state of British politics and the implications for the Latin Americans with whom they share their lives. Their open political discussion is a common sound at Latin American social events and in bars and cafes in London. Information is shared about governmental and legal changes and the latest state of play with regard to rights, housing, benefits etc. This is, in general, a politicised community.

Figure 5: Key sites in Latin American Southwark



11.0 Latin Americans: engagement and the Census 2011

Throughout this report we have highlighted a number pieces of evidence that suggest that the Latin American population in Southwark may prove difficult to count and to collect returns from in the Census in 2011. But there are also opportunities for engagement with the community and to disseminate information before the forms are finally sent out to homes. In this section we look at some of the barriers to achieving a good Census return from Southwark's Latin Americans, the opportunities that can be built on to achieve a better count and we make some practical community engagement recommendations for those responsible for ensuring that the Census accurately measures the population.

11.1 Barriers

There are a number of reasons (all highlighted within the body of this report) why it may be difficult for a representative sample of Southwark's Latin American population to be captured in the Census. Although each separate barrier listed below is an issue in its own right, for many people, there will be more than one barrier. In order to reach the more hidden parts of the population efforts will have to be made to overcome all of them.

Language: Although Spanish speakers are not entirely unfamiliar with English, language barriers still exist. The ONS has made arrangements to provide support to those who may find Census forms difficult to fill-in in English but there are still issues relating to awareness of the initial marketing campaigns and to the initial reaction of householders to receiving a large form through the post that is ostensibly written in English.

Our survey suggested that 27% of Latin American respondents had no more than very cursory English language skills and that 41% of Latin Americans would need help to fill in an English language form. This suggests that, in Southwark, one indication that the Census has achieved a good return from the Latin American population, will be a relatively high number of requests for help from Spanish speaking Census translation services. Worryingly however, 25% of respondents suggested that when they received forms through the post they outright ignored them and this figure rises to 40% amongst those whose English was limited.

Legal status: The Latin American population of Southwark contains a large number of undocumented migrants. At any time undocumented migrants tend to avoid contact with state services and are particularly fearful of recording personal information in official records. Accounts collected during fieldwork suggest that this fear is currently very acute. Recent deportations and worries about more heavy handed immigration policies coming in with a new government, mean that undocumented Latin American migrants are feeling particularly threatened at the moment. This heightened sense of fear is likely to make attempts to collect Census returns more difficult.

41% of Latin Americans will need help filling in an English language Census form.

25% of Latin Americans would ordinarily ignore forms received in the post. Rising to 40% among those whose English was poor.

Overcoming these fears is made more difficult as they are compounded by the facts that undocumented migrants are also less likely to have good English language skills (42% described their English language skills as cursory or non-existent) and more likely to need help to fill in Census forms (58%). Undocumented migrants are of course far less likely to want to seek formal help to fill in a Census form if they fear that they may be caught.

Undocumented Latin Americans also live in densely packed accommodation. The average household size for undocumented Latin Americans recorded in our survey was 5.8. This suggests that failure to engage with the undocumented Latin American population could mean that many people will be missing from the Census, and that the density of the overall population in particular parts of Southwark may be misrepresented.

Mobile population: As we saw in part II of this report, the Latin American population is quite mobile. The high level of private renters and the tenuous and unsuitable nature of housing means that the population moves around with relative frequency. In itself this may not appear to be a problem, as Census forms go to addresses rather than to people. However, the challenge lies in the necessity for people to be familiar with the ways in which forms may reach them (does the landlord collect all post for example?) in order to engage with them. The mobility of the population also means that people do not feel particularly attached to the places they live in, and may not feel that they are responsible for filling in a Census form that is sent to an address rather than a person.

Dense population: With many living in flat-shares, multiple sub-lets and informal HMOs, Census forms will need to be very clear in their intention to capture everyone living at one address. For many, there may be confusion over exactly what constitutes a single address. As we have seen, even within one single property, different rooms can be home to completely different families or households that have little or no contact with each other.

Housing arrangements: The frequency of sub-letting in the community is very high indeed. Houses are sub-divided and behind one public 'front door' there may be many other 'front doors' that contain different households. It is difficult to know in these situations exactly how many Census forms an address should be receiving and even more difficult to know how such properties can be identified. Many of these properties are subdivided informally and will almost certainly not be registered as HMOs, especially as landlords will incur higher taxes if they do so.

Often the only person who may have good knowledge of everyone that lives within a single address may not live there themselves and may not in fact be the landlord. In these cases, there are several difficult questions to be answered: Who is responsible for filling in the form? Who will receive the form? And if the form is successfully received and filled in, are all the different living units being recorded? These questions are unlikely to be resolved in time for the Census 2011.

No perceived benefit: One of the most common complaints made to us during focus groups was that, for many, there was no perceived benefit to filling in Census forms. The Latin American community, they argue is largely ignored most of the time. And a link between the Census and a direct benefit, in terms of recognition, is not necessarily clear.

Borrowing European identities: As we have already outlined, many Latin Americans carry Spanish or other European identities with them in the UK. Many reported that they used different identities depending on situation. In some contexts they would proudly proclaim their Latin American heritage but in others they would hide behind European identities in order to gain legitimacy. There is some risk that a number of Latin Americans will choose to identify themselves as Spanish, for example, when filling in Census forms, especially if they are worried about being caught as undocumented migrants.

Lack of contact with state and third sector: Our figures above suggest that only a minority of the Latin American population make contact with state and third sector services. This leads to three problems for the Census. First, there is a lack of familiarity with UK bureaucracy. Second, local data sets cannot be used as a guide to the population when formulating engagement strategies. And third, it means that certain traditional outlets for providing information and encouragement with regard to the Census may not reach a large proportion of the population.

11.2 Opportunities

Despite the barriers listed above, there are features of the Latin American population in Southwark that afford opportunities for engagement and for effective dissemination of information.

Concentrated community: The Latin American population in Southwark is fairly concentrated in specific parts of the borough. This means that efforts made in specific places, like Elephant and Castle, could yield good returns in terms of numbers of Census returns

Coherent community: The Latin American population in Southwark is not only concentrated within certain places, it is also a coherent community. People are genuinely connected, using the same shops and services and learning from the same sources of information. The Latin American newspapers for example, are widely read and the news and information in them is widely shared and talked about.

Shared religious convictions, shared political concerns, shared language and shared histories also play a part in making the Spanish speaking Latin American community in Southwark a genuine community.

In terms of the Census this means that targeted efforts at engagement will have a wide impact as information and ideas spread more quickly.

Recognition of the importance of Census: Remarkably, when asked whether it is important to fill in the Census, 100% of Latin American respondents agreed that it is. Many had had experience of Census efforts in their home countries and remember large-scale projects that employed thousands of on-the-ground workers working within communities to encourage mass participation. This high level of goodwill towards Census efforts *per se* may also have come about thanks to recent campaigns within the community for Latin Americans to identify themselves as ‘Latin Americans’ on Census forms.

As the calls to recognise the Latin American community as a distinctive ethnic or cultural group increase (such as by adding a Latin American or Ibero-american category to the Census), activists, advocates and the general population of Latin Americans want to stress the Latin American presence in Southwark and its contribution to local life.

86% of Latin American respondents recognised the Southwark Council logo.

This does not mean that all were convinced that the 2011 Census would necessarily achieve this aim, but rather that, in principle, the Census could be an important political tool.

Recognition of local authority: Despite not using many state provided services, most of our respondents did recognise the importance of Southwark Council and the role it plays in local life. 86% of respondents recognised the council’s logo, for example, and the potential for the council to be a source of help was understood.

Southwark Council both in the sense of it being a distinctive geographic area (though the boundaries with Lambeth are not always clear) and as a local government was understood. They were also aware that many services are offered by the council as opposed to the national government. One of the reasons for this awareness and differentiation is that most Latin Americans have in-depth conversations about council housing (who can obtain it and how to obtain it), with other migrants who have attained British citizenship. Even if they have no prospects of obtaining council housing themselves, they know what it is and by extension gain an understanding of what, where and how the council works.

Political awareness: In general there is a high-level of political awareness in the Latin American community. This was true of both the domestic politics of Latin America and also of UK political life. This engagement means that people might well engage with the political arguments and ideas that surround the Census.

Desire to be legitimate: For many of the undocumented migrants and those who are seeking permanent residence in the UK there is a strong desire for legitimacy. People want to be seen

to be taking part in British civic life and, as a result, to be seen as a valuable part of the community in Southwark and the UK. If filling in the Census was couched in these terms, there is an opportunity to tap into this good will to achieve a good number of Census returns.

11.3 Recommendations

Below we offer a series of recommendations for overcoming the barriers listed above making use of the opportunities that exist for successful engagement.

Three routes in: There are three obvious routes into the community in terms of both engagement and information dissemination: shared media (mainly the Latin newspapers), community infrastructure (shops, bars, restaurants, church etc.) and the community brokers (church leaders and encargados/nodes).

1. **Media:** The ONS has already placed notices in the Latin American papers and as such may already have raised awareness in the community as reflected in our survey findings. However, this awareness needs to be backed by making sure that the messages conveyed are correct. As we have shown, recognition of the Census is already high, but this alone will not necessarily lead to a good number of Census returns. There are still many barriers. (Below we deal with messaging more directly).
2. **Community infrastructure:** Often, community engagement efforts and attempts to disseminate information rely on third sector community organisations. The third sector often carries out important and valuable work within a community but it does so often with meagre resources and might only be able to reach a small segment of the population. The role of businesses in community life and as places where information is shared is often overlooked, despite the fact that shops, bars, cafes etc. come into daily contact with very large numbers of people.

Community engagement efforts need to focus on the micro-businesses, mini shopping centres and entertainment venues concentrated in Elephant and Castle and the Old Kent Road. Shopkeepers and serving staff can be targeted as potential brokers for the dissemination of Census information and materials. There is no better way of doing this than for community engagement officers and staff to literally go out and visit these places and engage with people face-to-face.

The Latin American churches and pastors should also be encouraged to lead on efforts to encourage people to fill in Census forms. Churches and pastors are already providing community leadership and are seen as trusted sources of information. These people are particularly important because they can reach audiences that may be

beyond the reach of normal dissemination methods, such as the undocumented migrant population.

3. **Nodes/Encargados:** Efforts should be made to engage with the informal cultural brokers; the nodes and encargados who provide housing and information to so many Latin American migrants. It will not be possible, of course, to find all of the encargados in Southwark, many are as hard to find as the populations they help. Nonetheless, countless advertisements in shop windows provide names and phone numbers and offer an opportunity to find people relatively easily. Engagement with at least some of these people is important in order to pass information deep into the more hidden parts of the community and also in terms of receiving fully completed Census forms.

Spanish speaking, culturally sensitive, engagement: It is important that those who are charged with engaging with the Latin American community not only have the right language skills but also have some knowledge of the community and the challenges being faced within it. Unfortunately, too 'official' an approach is likely to garner suspicion.

Ideally, engagement would take place in a collaborative way, perhaps by finding local Latin American volunteers to act as 'Census ambassadors', in partnership with the council or the ONS.

Messaging: It is important that the messages being sent out about the Census are meaningful and engaging. It is clear that the community already recognises the importance of Censuses in general and that this is a source of goodwill that can be built upon. There are already existing campaigns and debates around the Census coming from within the Latin American third sector and the community itself over the question of recording an 'Ibero-American' or 'Latin American' ethnicity and identity on Census forms. These campaigns encourage engagement with the Census in general and should be encouraged. The council may wish to consider hosting a debate on the issue to raise the profile of the Census in Latin American media and within the community.

On top of this, we would recommend four approaches that may encourage participation to be considered in messaging and information campaigns:

1. Participating in the Census is a way of being more involved in British civic life
2. The Census is absolutely confidential and will not be used to directly identify undocumented migrants
3. For the first time, the Census is aiming to be all-inclusive and record everyone, even undocumented Latin American migrants, currently living in the UK

4. The Census will be used to assess levels of need within communities and as a starting point for greater local efforts to address these needs

Relevant targeting and recruitment of Latin American

enumerators: Many of our respondents stressed the need for messages about the Census to be couched in terms that were of particular relevance to the Latin American community, rather than being generic messages merely translated into Spanish.

Latin Americans, being politically aware, are sensitive to whether or not they are being addressed specifically. There is great interest in efforts that are made to specifically engage with them. News of Local Authority attempts to engage with the community spread quickly. At the moment, much of this is focussed on recent stories of deportation and disturbance, but more positive stories will spread just as fast and are likely to garner attention from the Latin American media.

This means finding ways of engaging with the community that go beyond generic, translated information. For example, if the local Census team can show that they are concerned with the specific issues of the Latin American community, they are more likely to be taken seriously. Specific Latin American enumerator recruitment campaigns may be one effective way of achieving this.

12.0 Chinese Southwark

We meet Zhou Lei outside a closed down Vietnamese-Chinese supermarket at the Eastern end of Peckham High Street. He is nervous of talking at first, worried that we are looking for undocumented migrants to deport. He walks as we talk to him, forcing us to follow him away from the place where we found him; away from where he and 11 other undocumented Chinese migrants live in a flat above fried chicken shop.

He is Fujianese and speaks Mandarin with a heavy accent. He has been living in the UK for a few years now, spending most of his time with other Fujianese migrants. He takes work when he can as a painter and decorator but has also worked in Chinese restaurants on and off. His nervousness at our questions is made even more apparent when he suddenly tells us that he does not live in the area and had only come to visit friends. Having decided that we cannot be trusted with his own story, he tells us of a building in which many, many Chinese migrants live. It is nearby. He says that there could be as many as 50 people living in the one building, though he has never been in himself. And with that, he is gone.

The building is easy to identify using Zhou Lei's description and we don't have to wait long before we begin to notice the steady stream of Chinese men coming and going. The building is bigger than we had thought it would be, and in a state of disrepair. The windows are high, with sheets and pillowcases strung across as makeshift curtains. There could be as many as 10 or 12 different rooms serving as make-shift dormitories inside.

12.1 Community or communities?

Unlike Southwark's Latin American population, there are no clear focal points for the Chinese population in Southwark. The Chinese population in London as a whole is widely dispersed, and the same is true of the Chinese population in Southwark. The cultural and spiritual heart of the Chinese community in London is Chinatown in Westminster and this is likely to remain the case, at least in the near future.

Finding Chinese populations is also not necessarily as simple as looking for concentrations of Chinese businesses and services. Much of Chinese social life takes place in people's homes rather than in bars and cafes. Chinese restaurants do cater to Chinese people, but the need to serve a broad range of clients means that they can be found even where there are few Chinese people living nearby. Nonetheless, clues to the fact that Southwark has experienced a wave of Chinese immigration in the last decade *can* be found. Restaurants in which staff speak Mandarin is one such sign; more recent Chinese migrants tend to speak Mandarin rather than Cantonese. And shop windows with adverts in Chinese advertising accommodation is another. In fact, once we had begun our field research we quickly learned that there are several pockets of Chinese living in significant number in the borough.

Southwark has some history of Chinese immigration, being home to many of the Vietnamese refugees who came to Britain in the 1960's and 1970's many of whom were ethnically Chinese. Locals remember that a great many of the Vietnamese refugees that came to Britain settled in South East London, especially in and around the North Peckham estate. Even today, there are businesses and restaurants in places like the Walworth Road and Camberwell Road that advertise themselves as being both Vietnamese and Chinese; a legacy of this early wave of 20th century Chinese migration. These Vietnamese Chinese speak Cantonese like the Chinese who came from Hong Kong, and are largely unrelated to the newer migrants who have come from the Chinese mainland. Speaking with a manager at the Chinese-Vietnamese Refugee Community Centre located in the ground floor of the condemned Heygate estate in Elephant and Castle, he says that their clientele is increasingly elderly and each year fewer people are turning up to the day centres or to receive services.

The rest of the settled Chinese population in the borough is more widely dispersed, less constrained by the need to find the very cheapest housing. Most of these long-term UK Chinese came from Hong Kong some decades ago. They speak Cantonese, have been relatively successful and can be quite disdainful of the newer arrivals from the Chinese mainland. Politically, many are critical of the Chinese government (though not publicly so) and that can place them at odds with Chinese migrants from the mainland, or rather, their willingness to speak of Chinese politics at all separates them from the mainlanders. More importantly however, they see themselves as occupying a different class. They see themselves as wealthier, better educated and more 'refined' than the poorer, village and peasant-background Chinese who have come in to the UK more recently. These long-term, settled migrants are the Chinese whose children have done well in British schools, who feel that they have worked hard to gain a reputation as hard workers, who solve problems without making a fuss and who have placed few burdens on national and local government services.

Speaking to Chinese business owners (mainly restaurateurs and Chinese Traditional Medicine doctors) throughout Southwark, it was clear that the older settled Chinese did not want to talk to us about more recent Chinese migration. One Chinese medic, Dr. Zao, told us: "I don't like these new immigrants that cheat the benefits system and manipulate the immigration system – they give us all a bad name." Instead, concerns lay mainly with the domestic economy and their trade with non-Chinese. In fact, many were reluctant to suggest that they had had any involvement at all with the newer migrants, though, as we shall see, it is likely that many had had more contact than they might have liked.

The settled Chinese however, are now almost certainly outnumbered by the newer waves of Chinese immigrants coming from the Chinese mainland. For the past decade Chinese migrants have been coming to London in ever greater numbers, and Southwark, with its relatively low rents, has become home to many.

Perhaps the most visible sign of this influx are the ubiquitous Chinese students that fill Chinese restaurants at lunchtime around the universities, especially in Elephant and Castle. At some point in the last 3 years, Chinese students became the largest single group of foreign students studying in UK universities, and South Bank University in Southwark has seen a particularly large number of Chinese admissions. It has strong links with Chinese universities and has even set up an accredited course in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

During research it also emerged that Surrey Quays has become something of a Chinese student magnet, and the growing infrastructure of Chinese businesses and services in the area attest to the fact that the Chinese population is getting larger. These students do not necessarily study in Southwark, but follow classmate recommendations of cheap housing and nice water-side property in the area.

These Chinese students come largely from the Chinese mainland, speak Mandarin and often come from wealthy backgrounds in comparison with other Chinese in the UK (though there are poorer students as well). The students, through the potential business and legitimate cheap labour they bring to existing Chinese businesses, have perhaps cemented Mandarin as the *lingua franca* for Chinese in London, though they are only continuing a trend that began earlier, with the first arrivals of a new wave of Chinese immigration from the Chinese mainland between 10 and 15 years ago.

As China began to open up in the 1990's and 2000's so travel for Chinese has become easier and migration has increased. The UK has seen an influx of Chinese migrants from all parts of China and particularly from Fujian province in the South East of China. Many early migrants sought asylum on the grounds of political persecution or because of the one-child policy, though such claims are now largely rejected by British immigration authorities. Others came to work in the burgeoning Chinese catering industry, or simply to take advantage of business opportunities, or even for extended holidays. Still others entered the country by more clandestine methods, arriving with false documents and travel visas, sometimes hidden in shipping containers¹⁵.

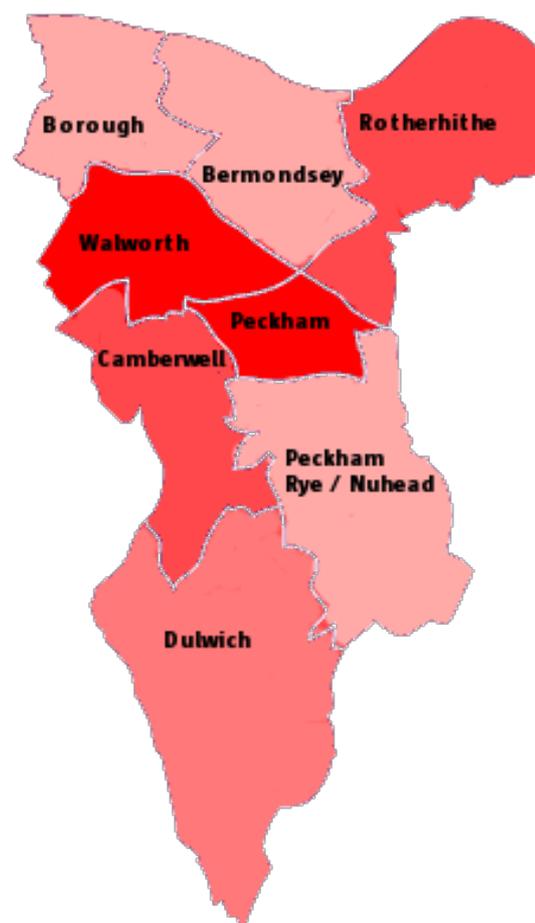
This relatively recent wave of migration has had a significant impact on the Chinese population in Britain turning it from a largely Cantonese speaking population to one that is now largely Mandarin speaking. New kinds of Chinese business are growing and increasingly Mandarin speakers and mainlanders have a voice in Chinese communities. Several Chinese restaurants in Southwark, for example, now deal largely with Mandarin speaking populations and serve different (perhaps better?) kinds of food to those familiar to British consumers. But they have also brought new kinds of challenges. Newer migrants often come from relatively poor backgrounds. Many owe money to the infamous 'snakeheads' ('people traffickers' or 'guides' who arrange for people to come to the UK from China) and many are undocumented in the UK. This means that they can find it

¹⁵ *Transnational Chinese: Fujianese Migrants in Europe* (Pieke, 2004)

difficult to find work and earn a living. They have few protections from exploitative employers and live in constant fear of harassment, exploitation and deportation.

Early on in our research we were told that there were large numbers of poor and undocumented Chinese living in Peckham and Elephant and Castle. A sure sign is the presence of DVD sellers, more often than not undocumented Fujianese migrants, trying to eke out a living in Southwark's largest shopping centres. Indeed it was not difficult to find large numbers of undocumented Chinese migrants living in Peckham and also not hard to find stories of hardship. We were also told that Peckham had become something of a centre for the London-wide trade in illegally produced DVD's and that there had been several DVD 'factories' based in the area.

Figure 6 - right: Distribution of Chinese in Southwark
(Darker areas indicate greater population density)



Above, we have outlined at least 4 separate Chinese communities living in Southwark, and in fact the divisions within each could become more granular if looked at them each in more detail. For now, we will conclude simply that the Chinese population in Southwark is dispersed rather than concentrated and that there are different parts to the Chinese population that have different needs and that demand perhaps different methods and levels of engagement. Figure 6 gives some idea of the dispersal of the population as indicated by both our surveys and by the field research.

It is also worth mentioning that there are also smaller Chinese populations living in Southwark that represent different parts of the Chinese diaspora. We have already spoken about the Vietnamese Chinese population, but there are also populations of Malaysian Chinese, Singaporean Chinese and Taiwanese living in Southwark. Each of these populations are interesting in their own right and could be studied separately. For the purposes of this report however, we recognise that these populations tend to align themselves along with existing Chinese communities depending on which language they speak (Taiwanese speak mandarin, whilst most Malaysian Chinese speak Cantonese, for example).

12.2 Infrastructure

When we began the fieldwork that formed the basis of this community research, we were told about a Mandarin speaking community organisation that had been opened in Southwark (The "Ni hao" Organisation, lit. "Hello" in Mandarin). This is significant because it is well recognised amongst the settled Chinese community that there are few organisations that cater to the newer (but now larger) Mandarin speaking Chinese population in London.

However, the organisation took us some time to find. Its original address turned out to be no more than a name on a buzzer in Hannibal House (Elephant and Castle); the organisation itself had long since moved out. When we did find it, we found that it had

relocated its service delivery to Lambeth and that its headquarters had moved to Woolwich. Struggling to find financial support after an initial BIS (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) grant had run out, and dependent on a small number of volunteers, “Ni hao” has been forced to move to the cheapest available premises, regardless of location.

Initially, the organisation had aimed to deliver valuable skills training and social networking, which would be of great help to the target audience, but the services we observed had instead become more like the traditional Chinese community organisation services, catering largely to elderly, Cantonese-speaking Chinese. The sheer scale of the task of outreach to the more hidden (and more needy) parts of the Chinese population was proving nearly impossible for such a small organisation.

The story of “Ni hao” is indicative of the lack of community and third sector infrastructure within the Chinese ‘community’ in London in general, and this is mirrored in Southwark. Representatives of London’s Chinese third sector are cognisant of the fact that they are ill-equipped to deal with the massive influx of new Chinese migrants, whose needs are greater and whose language is different. In our survey, only 8 of the 115 Chinese respondents said that they had made use of or come into contact with specifically Chinese community organisations.

There is often an explicit and tacit assumption in the media and amongst policy makers in local authorities that *‘the’* Chinese community is a very coherent and insular whole, and that any problems that may arise within that community will be dealt with, for the most part, internally. This image could not be more wrong. There is no single Chinese community. The divisions that exist are increasingly socially divisive, as well as linguistic, age-related and geographic; and many Chinese living in places like Southwark are living with significant hardship, and receiving little or no support from either an imagined Chinese community or anywhere else.

Chinese third sector organisations that attempt to fill the gap can come and go with alarming regularity, unable to secure long-term funding and lacking in support from the settled Chinese community. This makes it harder for organisations to develop a programme of outreach, or to make strong links within specific communities or locations. Without resources, Chinese organisations often have a sense of the ephemeral and transient about them. The Chinese-Vietnamese Refugee Organisation mentioned above, for example, can no longer be found at the address listed on the Southwark council website. It has long since moved to the Heygate estate, and of course will have to move again shortly.

Far from the bright and bold face of the Chinese community given on occasions such as the Chinese New Year celebrations in Soho, many (if not most) Chinese in Southwark, and especially the poorer migrant workers, have few trusted friends and have small social networks. Even some of the students we spoke to complained of living quite limited lives in the capital (a function of their English language abilities). Some had come thinking that

In our survey, only 8 of the 115 Chinese respondents said that they had made use of or come into contact with specifically Chinese community organisations.

they would be able to experience life in the UK, but had instead found that most of their lives revolved around the relatively small number of Chinese students that they had come to know.

Migrant workers too had very little time to build social networks. They frequently worked long hours, for little pay. This meant that their lives often took place on a corridor between home and work, and opportunities for socialising were confined to fellow workers during work hours, and flatmates at home (who they may not have chosen, who may speak different dialects, come from very different backgrounds and may work anti-social hours). For others, marginal forms of employment, such as selling illegally manufactured DVDs, only served to remind of marginal status and isolation from mainstream life.

We spoke to two chefs from North Peckham who were working in a restaurant in Camberwell. They were both undocumented Fujianese, from same village in China. They both said that they had worked in many different jobs in London: “I change jobs frequently,” said the one named Lin, “I need to keep moving. I don’t want to be found and we find that many employers will try and take advantage of us, low wages you know, when they know of your situation. They know they can treat us like dogs if we have no documentation. I have had some hard times.” Lin went on to say that he had little time for socialising and had little in the way of a social network. The people he knew were mainly other chefs and restaurant workers and they all got by on tidbits of information and on informal, ad-hoc solutions to the problems they faced on a daily basis: “I planned to learn English when I arrived, but I have no time. Besides, I cannot read Chinese very well, let alone learn to read English.” As we chatted to him, another migrant came into the shop and dropped off a bag of medication. Lin had been feeling unwell. He hadn’t seen a doctor, and he thought that the illness was no more than a cold, but he had arranged for some anti-biotics to be sent to him from Hong Kong through a waitress at the restaurant. Just in case.

“I planned to learn English when I arrived, but I have no time. Besides, I cannot read Chinese very well, let alone learn to read English.” – Undocumented Chinese migrant worker in Camberwell

Chinatown: During our focus group, we asked respondents to show on a map the places in which they received certain kinds of information, services or socialised. It became clear quickly that the majority indicated that most of their needs were being met in Chinatown in central London. Whilst Chinese community infrastructure is dispersed, Chinatown does still provide a central focal point. Chinese respondents living in Southwark nearly all indicated that they regularly visited Chinatown to go shopping, eat out and generally immerse themselves in a familiar social world with familiar sights and sounds.

It is worth remembering that communities like the Chinese, do not necessarily recognise the borders of boroughs, and see Chinatown as an inherent part of their experience of living in Southwark.

12.3 Linguistic isolation

It can be difficult to adequately express the level of social isolation caused by the language barrier, that Chinese living in Southwark (as elsewhere in the UK) can have.

Figure 7: BBC News website in Chinese 22.11.2010



Figure 7 shows a screenshot of a BBC news webpage, translated into Chinese. To those who cannot understand Chinese, the page is all but meaningless. It is with this same lack of comprehension that many Chinese in Southwark will confront English language media.

The provision of translated versions of, say, council literature, do not successfully cross this language barrier. Chinese would rarely get beyond the front page of either printed or online media. In focus groups, respondents told us in no uncertain terms that they had no idea how to navigate, or even find, online government or council information sources, let alone reach pages that had been translated into Chinese. When presented with council literature not one of our panel of respondents managed to locate the small sections at the back which told them that they could receive the same materials in translation if they so wished.

Where people do find themselves having to use services, they often call on the help of friends (or more often than not, the British-born children of friends) who can act as translators at, for example, a GPs surgery. This kind of ad-hoc solution to the language barrier is not uncommon amongst migrant groups of all kinds of course, but it is not a sustainable solution for the Chinese population. The number of Chinese with no English language skills far outweighs the number of people able to provide translation on a day-to-day basis, and in any case, not everyone has access to anyone who speaks English at all. Unlike many other communities, the Chinese do not come from a country in which speaking English is relatively common, and of course, they are unfamiliar with even the basic units of written English (the Roman lettering) making the chances of deciphering something as simple as an average shop sign or billboard impossible; let alone complex forms and government information materials.

The table below shows the full extent of the problem; namely, that those most in need of services and information are likely to be most affected by the problems associated with a language barrier.

Table 14: Level of English amongst different parts of Southwark’s Chinese population

	Overall	Undocumented	Students
Little or no English	43%	92%	7%
Conversational	34%	8%	65%
Fluent	24%	0%	29%

There is one other interesting finding that came out of the survey relating to levels of English language ability in the Chinese population of Southwark. Amongst those who had been here for less than 5 years, only 33% indicated that they got by with ‘little or no English’, but fully 54% of those who had been in the UK for more than 5 years said that they had ‘little or no English’. This may be accounted for by the fact that students tended to fall into the category of those who had been in the UK for less than 5 years, but it also indicates a worrying trend. Those that stay, and those that are most likely to become permanent Southwark residents, are less (not more) likely to have poor English language skills. These are also the people who are more likely to make demands on local services, or at least be in need of them.

54% of those Chinese in Southwark who had been in the UK for more than 5 years, said that they got by with little or no English language skills.

Ironically, this also means that in terms of engagement with large-scale surveys such as the Census, even the long-term, settled Chinese population is likely to present a challenge to demographers and Census-takers (see section relating to ‘Census’ below’).

In practice, what this linguistic isolation means, is that many Chinese living in Southwark operate in an almost exclusively Chinese world. They buy food from Chinese supermarkets, socialise almost exclusively with other Chinese people and share information through anecdote and rumour with other Chinese. This, in turn, leads to a more generalised and persistent lack of engagement with British bureaucracy, institutions and political and social life. Organisations do exist that are trying to encourage a greater political participation amongst Chinese in Britain, such as the admirable BC Project (Integration of British Chinese into Politics¹⁶) and the Chinese Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat groups; but these efforts still can’t touch the hard-to-reach swathes of Chinese migrants living in places like Southwark, who are simply too disconnected to ever be found.

¹⁶ www.bcproject.org.uk

12.4 Intraconnection and housing

Southwark attracts Chinese migrants because of the abundance of relatively cheap housing options it affords. This low-priced housing stock makes the area appealing regardless of the relative lack of employment opportunities. New Chinese migrants coming to Southwark, like the Latin Americans, often find themselves in hubs like Elephant and Castle and will simply ask other Chinese they see for help and guidance. They may then be directed to owners or staff of restaurants who may have (or know of) employment and housing opportunities. Information about housing options is also shared between migrants living at close quarters.

For undocumented migrants, accommodation will often be in houses that have been converted into dormitories. Bunk beds line walls and several people will share one room, with no more living space than the rectangular cube created by the bed itself. Such accommodation will also be used by documented migrants who are looking to save as much money as possible from meagre wages.

In this sense there is more of an intraconnection between the documented and the undocumented Chinese population than people are prepared to admit. In fact this intraconnection is more widespread than we had initially realised based on our first conversations with settled Chinese. Owners of Chinese businesses told us that new migrants, even undocumented, will often go into their shops or businesses asking for help. Some follow-up research revealed quite quickly that it was those shops and businesses that used Chinese characters on their billboards and shop windows that were highly likely to receive visits from newly arrived Chinese migrants needing help or directions. Where the shop or business also had Mandarin speaking staff, they had often become *de facto* referral services. One waiter in a large Chinese restaurant in Elephant and Castle for example, said he had offered numerous connections to Chinese students and staff that had worked at the restaurant, to help them find cheap, shared accommodation nearby.

Other shop staff were more reluctant to talk to us about the other Chinese that came in. They were worried that we may be looking for undocumented migrants to deport and that they might themselves be targeted. Perhaps because of this, we encountered some Chinese business owners who resented the position they were being put in by migrants coming and asking for help. Others of course, felt they had a duty (if few resources) to help their fellow countrymen.

And yet others, were happy to take advantage of the cheap labour that undocumented migrants offered, and/or provide accommodation at a price. In fact, providers of housing to Chinese migrants, we found, were both documented and undocumented themselves; the important common factor was the housing asset itself, finding people ready to take up the accommodation (provided rents could be shared) was not difficult.

In terms of providing an opportunity for reaching the newer migrants however, the shops and businesses were less forthcoming than their Latin American equivalents. Although there was an awareness amongst settled Chinese of the influx of new Chinese migrants, and encounters were frequent, strong relationships were not present. Unlike the Latin American population, there are not shared social spaces and legal status was not an active topic of conversation between different Chinese groups. Instead an environment of division, suspicion and of not wanting to be held accountable for others pervaded, and presents those wanting to attempt deep community engagement with a challenge.

A stronger connection perhaps, though we are still in the early stages, is to be found between the burgeoning Chinese student population and the existing settled population. In Surrey Quays for example, we found Chinese business owners who had benefitted from the influx of Chinese students choosing to live together in the area. Restaurant owners had found their Chinese custom increasing (even as overall business declined) and some local entrepreneurs had decided to invest in Chinese businesses (such as supermarkets) in the area, sure in the knowledge that there was a ready market.

Unlike the undocumented and poorer Chinese migrant workers found in Elephant and Castle and Peckham, Chinese students were more likely to go out and socialise, spend money and create new business opportunities. One property business in Surrey Quays owned and managed by British born Chinese entrepreneurs, had benefitted greatly from being able to deal with Chinese students looking for accommodation. The owners had already bought property that they planned to develop into a range of different services for Chinese residents in the area.

Some of the students we spoke to also planned to stay in London and set up businesses of their own. Evidence of this can already be found in the increasing number of Mandarin speaking Chinese businesses. Furthermore, many of the Chinese students come from wealthy families in China and there is potential for this wealth to be directed into British business ventures, possibly in partnership with the existing, settled Chinese community.

Guanxi: One of the most important concepts in Chinese culture is 'guanxi'. The word literally means 'connections' or 'relationships'. It can refer to the relationships one has with family members or friends, but also refers to the kinds of networking relationships one must build to get on in life. For the Chinese the phrase 'its who you know' has a special kind of significance. The success or failure of a Chinese migrant living in Southwark will be largely determined by the kinds of relationships he can make with potential employers, housing providers etc.

Many of our respondents and focus group attendees said that in Southwark there were few chances to make good 'guanxi'. They simply did not have the time or resources to network well and

make good relationships with people who might provide good, stable employment or secure housing.

The significance for the purposes of this report, is that although there are some connections between different parts of the Chinese population, these connections are rarely strong relationships and are not often used to create meaningful relationships or to provide a system of support to all parts of the community. Whilst housing and employment can be found, people are often left vulnerable, at the mercy of whimsical landlords and employers.

12.5 Gallery



Chinese/Vietnamese restaurant Camberwell



'Invisible' Chinese 3rd sector (Heygate estate)



Chinese speaking NHS GP (Old Kent Road)



Chinese restaurant serving mainly Mandarin speaking Chinese customers in Rotherhithe



Young Chinese family in Surrey Quays



British-born Chinese entrepreneurs. Estate agent serving Chinese students in Surrey Quays



Young Chinese entrepreneur in new Chinese supermarket - Rotherhithe



Chinese workers in beauty salon in Peckham

12.6 Real Lives

Cao Cao

Cao Cao is 48 years old. He is an undocumented migrant from South Eastern China. He came to London hoping to find work and make money to send home to his family but has not had much success. He lives in an estate on the border of Camberwell and Peckham. He does not have a flat to live in. Instead he 'camps' at the top of a stairwell with little more than a sleeping bag, using public bathrooms to wash and clean when he can.

Cao works part-time as a delivery driver for a local Chinese restaurant. His wages are so low he cannot afford even the very lowest of rents in a flat share. He has little recourse to complain, as he is not formally employed. He says that because he is finding it difficult to look after himself and he has no legal right to work, no one wants to employ him.

He cries constantly as he talks of his loneliness and lack of opportunities and some of the tears are shed in shame for having to take small handouts from friends and for being completely helpless. He no longer knows where to turn for help. Although other Chinese migrants know of his plight, few know how to help. There is little space in houses full of migrants, and without any money he would not be welcome for long. Cao cannot speak English, and knows nothing of any third sector or state services that may be able to help him. Most of all he wants to go home, though he owes money to the snakeheads who arranged for him to come to the UK. Those who know Cao fear for his mental health.

Cao's predicament is extreme, but indicative of the kinds of marginal existence that many undocumented Chinese currently live in Southwark. We heard many stories of people wanting to go home or of friends that had already left, but as one undocumented chef reminded us "there are always more people coming. Nobody goes home and says they failed and that their life was terrible in London. They would lose face. Understand? So more people keep coming."

For undocumented Chinese migrants, work is increasingly hard to find. A perceived tightening of controls means that employers (even Chinese employers) are less willing to take risks with undocumented employees, unless it is the only way they can keep their business alive. Language barriers exclude them from jobs outside of the Chinese ethnic industries as well as from most of British life. Those who do work, work long hours for low pay, and there are few opportunities to build the kinds of active social networks necessary to provide a really sense of a strong community and support to those who are falling through the gaps.

Another man, Zao Rong, living in another large divided property in Peckham told us that in his house, 4 out of the 10 living there had no work at all. They did not even have enough money to buy the DVD's that he himself sold. Occasionally they would find a day's labouring work or borrow money from other migrants. But

as we walked past a betting shop Zao pointed to one of them inside staring at a screen. Compulsive gambling is a well-known problem within the Chinese community in general, but for these poor undocumented migrants, already living on the edge, problem gambling could have serious consequences very quickly.

Lin Wen Ying - "Tina"

Tina studied at South Bank University. She had lived in the UK for many years completing various university courses. She was older than most of her fellow Chinese students and, during her time in the UK, had become quite politicised. She is currently involved in the BC project that aims to encourage British Chinese participation in the political life of the country. She also saw it as a personal responsibility to be mindful of the injustices that Chinese suffered in the UK thanks to their inability with languages and unwillingness to complain or challenge bureaucracy.

We meet Tina in a coffee shop in Elephant and Castle, and she is soon treating us to a lengthy rant about the failures of university administration. It is clear that she wants to be involved, and laments the more 'traditional' Chinese students who accept their lot without complaint.

Tina is funny and engaging perhaps as a result of having lived more than one life. Originally from a poor part of central China, she had migrated to Hong Kong and become involved with a wealthier man with whom she had a child. Their marriage was brief, but moving to Hong Kong had introduced Tina to a wider set of opportunities. Determined to provide for her child without the need for financial input from the father, she embarked on a course of study that she hoped would allow her to gain fruitful employment. She saved enough money to apply for courses in the UK, thinking that a British degree would further increase her employability, whilst allowing her to see the world. She left her child with her own mother and came to London.

When she first arrived, she knew little about London, but landed on her feet, finding part time work and accommodation in and above a Chinese restaurant in Dulwich. She speaks of Dulwich with a fondness: "I have lived in a lot worse places than that you know!" But the restaurant in Dulwich also introduced her to a different world: "They employed illegal migrants you know. And they lived out in the back. When I went back recently, that restaurant is closed. I am sure they were doing something wrong."

At first Tina had been shocked by her encounter with the hidden part of Southwark's Chinese population, but nowadays she is less naïve: "I have seen it many times now. And some of these employers do not treat their employees well. I have seen it with my own eyes. I worked in a restaurant in Elephant and Castle, and I saw how they treated delivery-men. Sometimes they would hold back pay and threaten to bring the police. But the people... maybe they shouldn't come to England. There are not many jobs here for them."

Tina is eager to be involved in the community and to help to represent the needs of Chinese people in London. She wants them to be more active and to stand up for themselves. She has become involved in the Chinese third sector. The only thing preventing her from becoming more deeply involved is the fact that she knows she must eventually go home. And she does want to reunite with her daughter. For the time being though, she is determined to play a role in the new Chinese community in London.

Tina is not necessarily typical. Her feisty approach to dealing with problems and her bravery in striking out on her own give her a unique set of qualities that make her ideal in terms of learning about and gaining access to the Chinese Southwark. She raises the question of whether Chinese students, especially those that can speak English well and who are particularly interested in engaging with the Chinese community in London, could be used as a resource for community engagement. Students are uniquely able to access all parts of the Chinese population and are well resourced in terms of money and language. They are often also hungry to be involved in UK life, from which they can feel excluded.

Figure 8: Key sites in Chinese Southwark



13.0 Chinese in Southwark: engagement and the Census 2011

Throughout this report we have highlighted just how difficult it is to measure and monitor the Chinese population in London in general and in Southwark in specific. To some extent the barriers to engagement and to successful auditing and counting are intractable; unlikely to be solved by the time of the Census 2011. Although many of the problems are similar to those that face Census takers when dealing with the Latin American population, the opportunities to overcome them are fewer.

In this section we highlight the different barriers to engagement and make some tentative suggestions as to how they might be overcome. However, it should be said that our strong belief, is that Southwark's Chinese population is likely to remain relatively hidden even after the efforts of the Census enumerators and community engagement teams. The need for a stronger community infrastructure and for relationships that are built on trust will not be easy to meet in a short time frame.

13.1 Barriers

The barriers to engagement with Chinese migrant populations and even with the settled Chinese population are great. And they are matched by the barriers that Chinese people meet when trying to engage with British institutions themselves. In other words, attempts to overcome barriers need to work in two directions. First community engagement teams need to know the ways in which they can locate and interact with the Chinese population and second, Chinese people need to be provided with the means or resources to make that interaction meaningful.

Language: We have spoken at great length about the extent of the language barrier between the Chinese population and state services or bureaucratic mechanisms. The problem is also unique in that the existing third-sector infrastructure for the Chinese community operates largely in Cantonese and does not reach much of the Mandarin speaking population who are now almost certainly in the majority. This means that traditional local authority methods of engaging with the third sector in order to contact a population will simply miss a large proportion of the population.

Increasingly, our respondents said, Chinese in London are becoming bilingual, learning to speak either Mandarin or Cantonese whilst in the UK. Migrants living in shared accommodation for example, can quickly learn each others' dialects. But this sharing of languages is largely informal and has not yet filtered into the infrastructure organisations of the community.

In terms of written, printed materials, the majority of the Chinese population is simply not able to engage. Council and government information is not just ignored, it is not recognised in the first

57% of Chinese will need help filling in an English language Census form.

Surprisingly, almost three quarters of the long-term, settled Chinese population in Southwark said that they would need help filling in an English language form.

place; indistinguishable as it is from junk mail or advertising leaflets.

57% of our Chinese respondents said that they would need help filling in an English language form. This figure rises to 89% for the undocumented respondents. Amazingly, 70% of respondents who had been living in the UK for more than 5 years said that they would need help filling in an English language form. This shows just how significant the language barrier is to potential Chinese respondents during the Census. Even the long-term settled population may not recognise the Census form for what it is.

Any attempt at engagement with Southwark's Chinese population will need to pay very careful attention to the problem of language.

NB. There is often confusion over the differences between Chinese languages. Below we offer a very simple explanation to help with community engagement efforts. We do not intend this as a full exploration of the subtleties of Chinese language and dialect differences – but rather a very simple, usable guide for local authority staff.

In Southwark, Chinese dialects fall mainly into three categories: Mandarin, Cantonese and various Fujianese dialects. Most speakers of Fujianese dialects can also speak Mandarin. Traditionally, London's Chinese population has been Cantonese speaking, but recently Mandarin seems to have become the more dominant language. The harder to reach Chinese largely speaks Mandarin. In China itself, Mandarin is now spoken almost everywhere (though less so in Hong Kong). Most Chinese in Southwark will be able speak either Mandarin or Cantonese.

The written form of these languages, for all intents and purposes, is the same. However, Chinese from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan (among others) will use 'full-form' Chinese characters, whilst mainland Chinese will be more familiar with 'simplified' Chinese characters. Where only one written language can be used, 'simplified' characters are preferable, as more people can read them. This situation may change however. As literacy rates in China increase more and more people are now using the 'full-form' characters. Using both is still standard when publishing information aimed at a diverse Chinese population.

Legal status: Undocumented Chinese migrants are perhaps one of the most invisible populations currently living in the UK. Concentrations of undocumented Chinese migrants can be found in Peckham and Elephant and Castle, though we found undocumented Chinese migrants living in all parts of the borough.

Undocumented Chinese migrants are perhaps one of the most invisible populations currently living in the UK.

Undocumented Chinese migrants, as our surveys clearly showed, were very unlikely to have any English language skills, are more likely to ignore forms and are more likely to be living in overcrowded and unlicensed accommodation. They are also very unlikely to engage with state services and are inherently suspicious of forms and surveys. This is not, as is often assumed, a cultural hang-up. Census forms and bureaucratic surveys and applications are commonplace in China and don't *necessarily* hint at any undesirable agenda. This is simply a product of having no legal status in the UK and not wanting to be recorded.

Undocumented Chinese migrants can live in very isolated conditions, barely interacting with British society at all. They live and work almost exclusively with Chinese speakers, and often have very little spare time to socialise. As such, engaging with the undocumented population in any way can be very difficult.

Housing: The average household size for Chinese living in Southwark, according to our survey, is very high indeed (7 across the piece and 10 for undocumented migrants). Many live in informal, shared accommodation that will not be licensed as formal HMOs. Rent and bill payments are often taken care of by a household 'node' and people may not be aware of the administrative duties that are undertaken on their behalf, such as electoral roll registrations, council tax and/or census forms.

Housing like this is often based on short tenures, with rent being paid on a weekly basis. Co-residents may know very little about each other, even when living in very close proximity, and landlords and nodes may know even less, simply collecting rents and asking few questions.

Time: The kinds of employment that many of Southwark's Chinese population are engaged in, mean that people work unsociable or unpredictable hours. Many complain that they spend all of their time working with little time for building a social life or for developing their own skills and interests. The potential impact on the Census is great. Even where language barriers and informal housing arrangements are overcome, Census takers will be faced with a population has little time or energy to complete a complicated Census form.

No perceived benefit: Despite recognising the importance of a Census exercise, many Chinese, especially the undocumented, do not see the benefits of filling in a census form. During focus groups, we were told that the best incentive to filling in the form would be if there were some way in which their participation could be used to gain legal status in the UK that allowed them to work.

Lack of contact with state and third sector: Our figures above suggest that only a minority of the Chinese population make contact with state and third sector services. Only 8 respondents in our survey had made use of a Chinese third sector organisation and all of these were among those who had been in the UK for more than 5 years.

This leads to three problems for the Census. First, there is a lack of familiarity with UK bureaucracy. Second, local data sets cannot be used as a guide to the population when formulating engagement strategies. And third, it means that certain traditional outlets for providing information and encouragement with regard to the Census may not reach a large part of the population.

Lack of political engagement: Lack of engagement with politics is a recognised Chinese trait. In Britain, the trend is marked. There is little Chinese representation in British political life at either a national or local level. Chinese populations are marked by a tendency not to vote and there is no coherent Chinese political voice¹⁷.

In terms of the Census this is likely to mean that traditional means of communication are ineffective. Attempts to engage the Chinese in British civic life, even from within the community, have limited success. During our focus groups, respondents did raise concerns that had a political character such as: lack of community support and resources, the need for legal advice and housing advice, employment and protection against exploitation, but respondents were less able to say how they might bring about change. No one identified engagement in politics as one potential route to achieve these aims. The Census too was not seen as a route to better recognition as the barrier was perceived to be an internal unwillingness to talk about problems rather than an external unwillingness to engage with them.

Dispersed communities: During research it became clear that the Chinese population in Southwark was divided into several micro-communities that were not well connected. As well as the relative disconnection between the settled, Cantonese speaking populations, student populations and undocumented populations, there was a spatial division. Those who lived in Camberwell were not familiar with the burgeoning Chinese hub in Surrey Quays for example. Those who lived and worked in Dulwich were not well connected to those who lived in Elephant and Castle. People mostly used local shops and services, living in relatively small and closely defined social worlds.

In order to engage effectively with the Chinese population, staff and officers will need to be mobile and make significant efforts to reach out across the borough rather than being able to make one concentrated effort in a single community centre.

We found that information did not spread quickly across different parts of the borough. Even valuable information about housing resources for example, did not flow between centres in, say, Elephant and Castle and Surrey Quays.

The common connection between disparate communities, if it all, was Chinatown in central London. In terms of engagement and the Census, this means that in order to engage effectively with the Chinese population, staff and officers will need to be mobile and make significant efforts to reach out across the borough rather than being able to make one concentrated effort in a single community centre. It also means that Census administrators may have to look beyond the borders of the borough in order to effectively engage with the Chinese population that lives in the borough.

¹⁷ *British Chinese Online Identities Research Report* – BC Project 2008

13.2 Opportunities

There are far fewer opportunities for overcoming the barriers listed above for the Chinese population than for the Latin American. Nonetheless, there are some.

Recognition of the importance of Census: As with the Latin American respondents, our Chinese surveys indicated that a majority of respondents (69%) *did* think the Census was important. Given the lack of political engagement described above, this number is reasonably high. On the other hand, awareness of the 2011 Census was low. Only 37% of Chinese respondents knew there was a census coming.

This suggests that a concerted awareness-raising campaign may not fall on deaf ears. However, the messages that are used to raise awareness need to be carefully considered. It is not enough to simply inform people and expect them to fill Census forms in. We make recommendations below about the key messages that need to be addressed.

Desire to be legitimate: For many of the undocumented migrants and those who are seeking permanent residence in the UK there is a strong desire for legitimacy. People want to be seen to be taking part in British civic life and, as a result, to be seen as a valuable part of the community in Southwark and the UK. If filling in the Census was couched in these terms, there is an opportunity to tap into this good will to achieve a good number of Census returns.

Well-educated and motivated student population: Although the Chinese student population is not necessarily currently connected to the population of migrant workers, there is an opportunity to facilitate such connections in the future. Campaigns which utilised the willingness of Chinese students to be involved in British life, in order to spread messages from the council or from the Census may well be effective.

Chinese students are increasingly aware of the problems faced by Chinese migrants in the UK, and many encounter the poverty of their fellow countrymen living in Southwark. Students are more politically aware and may take on board the message of how important the Census is in determining how resources are allocated. They can use this information to encourage greater Chinese participation in the Census.

Chinatown: Although not located in Southwark, partnership with Westminster's Census and community engagement teams, in order to deliver messages about the Census in Chinatown may reach a wider and more diverse audience than efforts targeted within the borough. Chinatown remains a focal point for the Chinese in London and information is shared there more readily than in Southwark – simply because there is a greater social infrastructure there.

Chinatown remains a focal point for the Chinese in London and information is shared there more readily than in Southwark

Nodes: Because of the language barriers for the Chinese, nodes take on a particular significance. The encargados of the Latin American community may be no more than rent-collectors, small business-men and women who make money from renting to Latin American migrants. By contrast, Chinese nodes must do much more. Chinese migrants rely on nodes to take care of everything from rent to bills, making phone calls, finding employment etc.

This means that Chinese nodes have a unique access and knowledge of the Chinese population in Southwark. During research we uncovered several nodes who would be willing to help the council and the Census team with efforts to disseminate information about the Census and encourage participation.

13.3 Recommendations

Below we offer a series of recommendations for overcoming the barriers listed above making use of the opportunities that exist for successful engagement.

Three routes in: Less obvious than in the Latin American community, we would recommend three starting points for engaging with the harder to reach Chinese population in Southwark.

1. **Chinatown partnership:** A partnership with Westminster's engagement strategy should be formed to make sure that messages delivered in Chinatown are delivered in such a way that makes them relevant to visitors from Southwark as well as to Westminster's own resident Chinese population. Strategies should involve spreading information amongst business owners and employers in Chinatown as well as posters in shop windows and advertising in Chinese media that is largely disseminated in Chinatown (e.g. Chinese newspapers).
2. **Targeting students:** An initial campaign to educate Chinese students about the Census should be undertaken in South Bank University and in the universities many of Southwark's Chinese student population attend (e.g. London College of fashion). This campaign should specifically contain the message of passing information more deeply into the Chinese community and the need for the Chinese population to be better represented in British politics and decision making.
3. **Businesses:** Chinese businesses, especially restaurants, are by far the most important players in a Chinese infrastructure (such as there is). These businesses should all be encouraged to display information about the Census, normalising the logo and encouraging people to fill in forms.

Nodes: As far as is possible, Chinese enumerators should be recruited to carry out Census roles. Ideally these Chinese enumerators should qualify as 'nodes'. That is to say, they should

be involved in a Chinese business community, or be multi-lingual and regularly asked to give advice and guidance to Chinese migrants, or they may have a role in providing housing or employment themselves.

Trusting relationships and a fair exchange: An important part of any engagement with the Chinese population is trust. It is not enough to simply deliver cold, official looking materials. Chinese tend to act on information they receive from trusted sources with which they have a personal relationship. To this end, some attempt needs to be made to build relationships on the ground with key community stakeholders (be they business owners or third sector representatives).

These kinds of trusting relationships are best built through some kind of 'fair exchange'. Southwark could hold a Chinese community employment day for example, offering workshops and advice to Chinese people in the borough that could lead to people being able to find concrete work opportunities. These kinds of positive offer help to build a sense of obligation among Chinese to return the favour and engage positively with the council's requests for information and ongoing engagement.

Messaging: It is very important, in the first instance, that attempts to communicate with and engage the Chinese population in Southwark are carried out with appropriate materials designed with Chinese input. They need to be written in the right language and presented in a non-threatening way. Below we outline the key messages that need to accompany any information about the census:

1. The government cannot, by law, use information collected during the Census to capture or deport migrants.
2. The Chinese population is currently under-represented in British life. The needs of Chinese are not being met. One of the most important ways to address this problem is to accurately count the Chinese population living in Southwark.
3. Providing numerical information about the current Chinese population is a very good way of passing messages to Chinese people. Pointing out that the current government believes that the Chinese live in small households and that there are not very many Chinese people – you can then encourage the Chinese population to help the government get these numbers right next time.

Employer's workshop: The council should organise a networking event for Southwark's Chinese restaurant owners. Ideally food should be provided to encourage participation. The event can be used to encourage employers to disseminate information amongst employees about the Census and the need to fill in Census forms.

14.0 Conclusion

The findings presented in this report present a challenge for policy makers going forward.

Whilst it is not clear that Chinese and Latin American migration into the borough will continue at the same pace in coming years, our data strongly suggests that a significant proportion of those that have already come and those that will come in the future, will settle in the borough. Our surveys suggest that those who stay longer are more likely to place demands on local services of all kinds; whether it be through the use of local healthcare providers or through starting families and placing children in schools. Since a large proportion of the existing population is only recently arrived it is fair to assume that service providers will see a greater number of Chinese and Latin American clients over the next few years.

Currently, information collected by service providers about the different types of clients they see, does not recognise the new kinds of Chinese migrants, or the differences between Spanish speakers very well. In the future however, providers may find themselves needing to know more about both.

The fact that such a high number of our respondents are also undocumented, complicates this picture. Policy makers must address the wicked issue of whether or not to devote scarce community and welfare resources to addressing the needs of populations that may contain a large number of people who have 'no recourse to public funds'. Political pressures would tend to suggest that this simply cannot happen, but the reality is that these populations do exist within the borough and place pressures on local services as well as being vulnerable and in need of help. Ironically, the greater needs often arise as a direct result of the lack of resources available to help them in the first place. For example, an undocumented migrant who finds himself struggling to pay rent and turning to gambling, is also the person most likely to be excluded from receiving information and advice, from seeking formal employment and from the existing, under-resourced, third-sector organisations.

On a more positive note, there are strategic questions raised about how to better engage with Latin American and Chinese populations in order to support efforts at securing prosperity and well-being. Latin Americans told us that their skills and qualifications were often not recognised by local employers for example. And it may be that places like Southwark are not getting the most out of the latent wealth, education and enthusiasm of resident Chinese students.

Programmes that raise awareness of Latin American qualifications, connecting employers with potential, motivated employees or forums in which settled Chinese entrepreneurs and businessmen/women can connect with bright and motivated

Chinese students would all be fairly low cost ways for the council to promote the prosperity of both populations.

One more ambitious and imaginative plan might also be to actively recognise the cultural centres of both populations that exist in the borough. Could Surrey Quays be championed as a potential investment hotspot for Chinese entrepreneurs for example? Local property developers suggest that Chinese interest in the area is already growing. And could Elephant and Castle be developed as a cultural and spiritual centre for Latin Americans in the UK attracting tourists and business in much the same way that Chinatown does in Westminster?

Looking ahead then, it is clear that the Latin American and Chinese populations in Southwark present both challenge and opportunity. We hope that this report goes some way toward addressing the former and highlighting the latter.

