

No Longer Invisible: the Latin American community in London



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Foreword

No Longer Invisible, is the most comprehensive research on London's Latin American community undertaken to date. The research was jointly commissioned by Trust for London and the Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) to advance our respective and complementary interests. Trust for London, the largest independent charitable foundation concerned with poverty and inequality in London, has had a long standing commitment to exploring and tackling wider social justice issues such as vulnerable employment, in-work poverty, as well as promoting the inclusion of recent arrivals to the UK. LAWRS in turn, works at community level to support Latin American migrant women in overcoming poverty, labour abuses, and violence against women and girls.

Increasingly London has become home to people from all corners of the globe, including Latin Americans, a group with no apparent or immediately obvious historical links with the UK. But what is the fate of these men and women who leave families, home and country in search of a living in London? This report produced by Queen Mary, University of London highlights that this community is fast emerging as an important segment of the capital's diverse population. London's Latin Americans are predominately young, highly skilled individuals with large numbers in work, but unable to obtain jobs commensurate with their professional skills. Along with many other newer migrants, large numbers are concentrated in low-paid and low-skilled areas of the economy that often offer little labour protection and frequently expose workers to unacceptable levels of abuse and exploitation.

The findings of *No Longer Invisible* provide a picture of considerable hardship, discrimination and social exclusion. Despite low earnings, and having in their midst a much higher proportion of people earning below the National Minimum Wage than the rest of the population in the UK, take-up of public services is low. Amongst these findings we have learnt that one in five Latin Americans have never been to a GP and 6 out of 10 have never been to a dentist in the UK. The fact that despite their contributions to the economy including as taxpayers, individuals and families are excluded from essential services such as health care, begs some crucial questions for debate on the human and economic rights of migrants in London and the UK.

Many of the findings do not come as a surprise to LAWRS, whose service users are confronted with these issues day in, day out; or the researchers which came to this study with substantial previous knowledge of this community; or to the Trust which has been familiar with the issues as a funder of migrant organisations. Nonetheless, this is a very important document, which for the first time provides hard data and robust evidence on the size and socio-economic features of a community that has long been largely invisible and overlooked. We urge local authorities, central and regional government and all of those concerned about the rights of workers such as unions and civil society organisations, to read this report and step up action to begin to support this community in addressing poverty and obstacles to integration.

Tania Bronstein
Chair, LAWRS

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Chair, Trust for London

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The following organisations have also assisted with the research in some way, mainly though participating in interviews and we would like to thank them: LAWRS - Frances Carlisle and Virginia Cifuentes, IRMO and the Latin American Youth Forum - Laura Villegas, Casa Latinoamericana - Miguel Mercado, Casa do Brasil - Carlos Mellinger, Latin American UK Forum and Community Action Southwark - Lina Usman, Ecuadorian Community Organisation - Miguel Bravo, Naz Latina - Carlos Corredor, Aculco Radio - Gloria Gomez, Alianza Ibero-Americana - Isaac Bigio, Latin American Chaplaincy - Padre Jesus, Carila - Alba Arbelaez, Latin American Workers Association, UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group - Sebastian Rocca and Erin Power, Metropolitan Police Ibero-American Association - Juan Pimienta, Nabas Legal Consultancy - Vitoria Nabas.

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Ed Oliver drew the map of Latin Americans in London for which we are very grateful.

Finally, the most important people whose experiences appear in this report are all the Latin Americans who participated in this research. We hope that this report will provide some first steps for understanding the community better.

Executive Summary

Despite increasing flows of Latin Americans to London in recent years and their important contribution to the functioning of the city economically, socially and culturally, very little is known about this community. Their lack of visibility is largely the result of lack of research and shortcomings in the way official statistics are collected.

This report provides the most comprehensive overview to date of the Latin American population living and working in London. It responds to the lack of existing information on this community. The project on which this report is based is unique in being the first compilation of official statistical data sources on Latin Americans in London in order to provide a robust estimate of the size of the population. This produced an estimated total of 113,500 Latin Americans in London in 2008 that includes regular, irregular and second generation groups. This makes Latin Americans a significant part of the city's population, comparable in size to other large migrant and ethnic groups such as the Polish population which numbers around 122,000. There has also been a nearly four-fold growth in Latin Americans in London since 2001, making it one of the fastest growing migrant groups in the capital. A less robust estimate of the size of the Latin American population in the UK as a whole totalled 186,500. This suggests that 61% of the UK Latin American population resides in London.

The report also outlines the findings of the first large-scale quantitative survey of over 1,000 Latin Americans in the city across a wide range of nationalities and socio-economic groups. It draws on a long questionnaire survey supplemented by qualitative in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as well as interviews with service providers and representatives from migrant community organisations. The research was conducted independently of any organisation working with Latin Americans.

Latin Americans work and live in all walks of life in London. They are a diverse group made-up of Brazilians, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians and Peruvians as the main nationalities. The Latin American population is mainly of working age, growing in size and residentially dispersed throughout the city. Although Latin Americans are well-educated, one-third cannot speak English, which affects their wider integration into London's society and economy.

Migration to London among Latin Americans is motivated by a wide range of factors, but is dominated by economic reasons. Although many entered the UK on temporary visas, more than half of Latin Americans have settled status in London. This includes a quarter with British citizenship, around one-fifth with EU passports, and 11% with permanent residency. They are increasingly arriving in the UK after migrating to Spain first, a phenomenon that has increased since the global economic recession. Irregular immigration status is an important issue for Latin Americans with one-fifth without valid documents (19%), although many have experienced irregularity at some point in their migration trajectory.

Latin Americans have very high employment rates (85%) that are much higher than other foreign born residents and the London population as a whole. However, they are concentrated in low-paid and low-skilled jobs (around half). This is in direct contrast to their jobs back home where more than a third worked in professional and managerial

jobs. The majority of Latin Americans face a dramatic loss of occupational status on arrival in London. While occupational mobility is possible, only a minority are able to recover their status on a similar level to that held back home; for some, mobility is only possible through establishing their own business.

Although Latin Americans are employed in all spheres of London's labour market, many work in poor and exploitative conditions. They work relatively long hours, but more importantly, these hours are often fragmented. Many jobs, especially in cleaning and catering, are only available for 3-4 hours at a time and so people have to combine several part-time jobs in order to make ends meet.

Although Latin Americans earn a median hourly rate of pay of £7.07 per hour which is higher than the National Minimum Wage, it is lower than the London Living Wage. Only 45% earn more than the London Living Wage. With these low wage rates and incomes well below the London average, many Latin Americans have developed a range of mechanisms to deal with their economic vulnerability such as borrowing money in the short-term as well as trying to guard against future economic hardships through savings. These have had to be mobilised even more intensely since the onset of the global financial crisis that has exacerbated economic hardship.

The economic adversities faced by many Latin Americans intersect with their wider living conditions as many cannot afford decent accommodation with 45% reporting living in inadequate housing in London. Two-thirds of Latin Americans live in private rented accommodation which is much higher than the London average and which is often of poor quality. Access to social housing and owner occupancy is also low. Overcrowding is an issue for Latin Americans. Many live in non-family multi-person households in order to cope with living in an expensive city, which again is symptomatic of a recent migrant population.

For women migrants, the move to London can provide opportunities for renegotiating unequal gender practices relating to greater economic freedoms or being able to exercise their rights more effectively. However, the difficult experiences of migration and new roles in the UK often creates stresses in relationships and can lead to increased risks of violence against women in the domestic context.

A significant proportion of Latin Americans do not access some public services. Only a fifth receives state welfare support, primarily tax credits and housing and council tax benefits. A fifth of Latin Americans have never been to a GP, while 40% have used private health services. Migrant community organisations provide important immigration and welfare advice and support with a third of Latin Americans having used their services. Nearly 4 out of 10 Latin Americans had also used the services of private advisors and lawyers. In some cases exclusion from services is associated with immigration status and in others people choose to pay for services in anticipation of receiving a better service. Social networks and the church play important roles in providing support mechanisms for Latin Americans although these can also be exclusionary and put pressure on those on low incomes.

The second generation Latin Americans surveyed were mainly from Colombian backgrounds, with most being British citizens and identifying as “British Latino”. On one hand, the second generation have improved their lives compared with their parents’ generation. Everyone has legal status and can speak English, a high proportion is studying and there is a shift away from working in elementary occupations. On the other hand, a high proportion is in receipt of state benefits and lives in social housing. In addition, two-thirds have experienced discrimination in the workplace, racism in schools and at the hands of the police. It is possible that this discrimination can contribute to their strong sense of being Latin American and their strong ties with their parents’ homeland. This could indicate that integration is limited and that the maintenance of links can provide a counterpoint to feelings of exclusion.

Large sections of the Latin American community in London face extensive obstacles to integration. With almost 70% perceiving discrimination to be an issue, many feel marginalised from wider British society. This marginalisation is exacerbated by widespread problems in speaking English and in the lack of appropriate ESOL provision. This is made even more difficult by the temporary and precarious immigration status of some Latin Americans.

These core concerns feed into the main types of projects identified by Latin Americans themselves that revolve around pathways into citizenship, improved and accessible language training and better immigration advice. Many felt that the community needs to be better integrated into the working, social and cultural life of London.

The picture that emerges is of a young, highly educated community with many people facing significant challenges associated with low paid jobs and multiple barriers to integration. It is clear that Latin Americans make an essential contribution to the city, but they need recognition and support. As Miriam from Ecuador noted:

‘The government needs to recognise that we exist and what we contribute. I should express myself more clearly – “London without Latins would be filthy”. We are an important part of this country and therefore we need to be recognised, we need more English courses, better jobs and more assistance.’

Introduction

Latin Americans are crucial to the functioning of London's economy and society. However, for too long they have been neglected and ignored despite the major contributions they make to the city. Latin Americans work and live in all walks of life in London. Despite many coming from educated and professional backgrounds, most are unable to find the jobs, housing or opportunities that they aspire to. Instead, many end up, at least on first arrival, working in elementary jobs under exploitative conditions, from which it can be difficult to move on because of the lack of opportunities to learn English and the inability to regularise their immigration status. Many live in inadequate housing with little assistance available on the part of the state. Instead, migrant community organisations and the private sector usually end up providing for many of their needs.

This report provides a comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the Latin American population living and working in London¹. It responds to the lack of existing information on this community². The project on which this report is based is unique in being the first compilation of official statistical data sources on Latin Americans in London in order to provide an estimate of the size of the population. The project is also the first large-scale quantitative survey of the Latin American community in the city across a wide range of nationalities and socio-economic groups.

The research had four main tasks:

- To provide an estimate of the size of the Latin American population living and working in London.
- To undertake quantitative research that provides an analysis of some key economic and social features of the Latin American community in London.
- To undertake new qualitative research to explore the meaning and causes of the quantitative findings, including motivations for migration to London, economic choices, and barriers to accessing services and support.
- To identify the key unmet needs of the Latin American community in London.

The research entailed a long questionnaire survey with 453 Latin Americans in order to gather a wide range of migratory, economic and social information, as well as a short questionnaire with a further 509 individuals. A survey of 52 second generation Latin Americans was also carried out. In total, 1,014 people were included in the quantitative research. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 50 people who had already been interviewed in the survey, and 4 focus groups organised with a total of an additional 20 people. Representatives from a range of different organisations working with Latin Americans were also interviewed (15) (see Appendix 1 and Chapter 3 for more details)³.

^[1] London was chosen as the main location for the research for two main reasons; first, because the majority of Latin Americans in the UK are concentrated here and second, because London is the geographical remit of the two organisations who commissioned the research.

^[2] Although there has been some research on Latin Americans, much of this focuses on one nationality group, such as Colombians (Guarnizo, 2008) or Brazilians (Evans et al. 2007), or it is based on small-scale qualitative research (Bermudez, 2003, 2010; Carlisle, 2006; McIlwaine, 2005, 2007; Peró, 2008; Roman-Velasquez, 1999; Sveinsson, 2007; Wright, 2010; see also Sepulveda, 2007).

^[3] People were accessed using networks of the community researchers, as well as various migrant organisations, churches, restaurants and shopping centres around London. The Latin American Women's Rights Service were used only in accessing 1 focus group.

The definition of Latin American used in the project were people who were Spanish or Portuguese first language speakers from the Central and South American geographical regions. It also included those from Spanish-speaking Caribbean islands of Cuba and the Dominican Republic. It excluded non-Spanish and non-Portuguese speaking countries in the region such as Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana, Haiti, Jamaica and the other Caribbean islands. Twenty countries were included in total: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela. Second generation Latin Americans were defined as those who were born in the UK with at least one parent from Latin America or who had come to the UK before they were 7 years old.

Drawing on this large mixed method data set, the current report outlines the main findings in relation to the core characteristics of first and second generation Latin Americans in London, including their migration experiences, their working and social lives as well as the linkages they maintain with their home countries. The report also identifies the services used by Latin Americans as well as their main needs and the types of projects they require to meet these needs. Above all, this report sheds light on what has been a neglected and invisible community that has an increasingly important presence in London today.

Chapter 1:

Historical overview of Latin Americans in London

Key points

- Latin Americans arrived in the UK in relatively large numbers from the 1970s onwards.
- Colombians and Ecuadorians were the most likely to arrive in the 1980s and 1990s. While many claimed asylum, this has declined over the last decade.
- Economic migration is now the main source of Latin Americans arriving to the UK, with large flows of Brazilians arriving since 2000 and it now forms the largest nationality group.
- Latin Americans have established a range of community organisations since the 1980s.
- A wide range of commercial hubs, media outlets and businesses have emerged in London.
- Although Spain is the most important European destination for Latin Americans, the UK is an increasingly significant destination.
- Secondary migration from other European Union countries, especially Spain, is an important route for Latin Americans arriving in the UK.

Despite significant trading and commercial links between the UK and several Latin American countries since independence from Spain and Portugal, it was not until the 1970s that significant numbers of Latin Americans started to arrive in London (Decho and Diamond, 1998).

Many arrived as political refugees, mainly Chileans fleeing after the military overthrow of the Allende government by Augusto Pinochet. Some other politically persecuted Latin Americans, especially from Uruguay and Argentina, also arrived at this time. These people were mostly trade unionists and people affiliated with political parties of the political left. The other major flow of migrants in this decade was the arrival of Latin Americans with work permits. This occurred at a time when work vouchers for people from Commonwealth countries were removed in 1971 and the number of work permits for unskilled jobs was greatly reduced and restricted to quotas only for the hotel and catering industries (Clarke and Salt, 2003). Nevertheless, in the early 1970s, Latin Americans started to arrive in the UK with work permits to work in hotels and restaurants and as cleaners in public buildings. This process was facilitated through Latin Americans already resident in the UK brokering with employers contracts for family and acquaintances in their countries of origin (Cock, 2009). The work permit scheme for unskilled workers was sharply reduced in 1979, effectively closing this route. While it was mainly Colombians who arrived in this period, there are also reports of Ecuadorians and Bolivians who arrived in this way.

In the 1980s, Latin Americans continued to arrive for family reunions, as students and in some cases as refugees. In addition, a number of Latin Americans continued to arrive in search of work. Transport costs had declined and there was already a core community which provided contacts for new arrivals. Employment could be found in the sectors where there were already some Latin Americans working, mostly in restaurants and domestic work (Ardill and Cross, 1988).

During the 1980s, Latin Americans also started forming community organisations undertaking advocacy work. On the one hand, they became actively involved in solidarity and human rights campaigns raising awareness about conflicts in their home continent. On the other hand, several groups were set up with a focus on the Latin American community in the UK. These aimed to help the settlement of migrants in the UK, campaigned for their rights and promoted social, cultural and sporting activities. Those actively involved in the campaign and solidarity groups were often the same people taking part in the welfare and social organisations.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Latin American population in London grew significantly. Some of the major source countries of origin, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia, went through complex political and economic upheavals during this decade at the same time that the United States (US) tightened its border controls (especially after 11 September 2001). Colombia's armed conflict intensified during this period and the introduction of neoliberal economic policies had a negative effect on employment (Moser and McIlwaine, 2004). In Ecuador, 3 presidents were toppled by social movements between 1997 and 2005 and in 2000 its economy had severely deteriorated. Bolivia also had economic difficulties, a government toppled by social movements in 2003 and a tense political and social situation as a consequence of ethnic and class frictions. It is not surprising, therefore, that those arriving in this period were a combination of economic migrants and asylum seekers. Often the economic motives for migrating were inseparable from political reasons and/or direct experiences of violence.

In this period, the routes for immigration from Latin American countries were limited; although work permits still existed, they were extremely difficult to obtain and so most claimed asylum or entered with visitor or student visas. A significant number of people who applied for asylum, especially from Colombia and Ecuador, were eventually granted permanent status through being recognised as in need of protection or through processes of regularisation such as the family amnesty exercise in the UK in 2003. The gradual introduction of visas for visitors from these nations and the toughening of the asylum system eventually led to the decline in numbers of Latin American asylum seekers in the new millennium.

Since 2000, another important flow of migrants from Latin America has been the arrival of Brazilians who have become the largest nationality group. A second trend is that the proportion of students and professional migrants has increased among the Latin American community. This reflects the increase of border controls and the introduction of managed migration policies that favour highly skilled migrants (Wills et al., 2010). Also, secondary migration from other European Union (EU) countries, especially Spain, has become an important dynamic within the Latin American community in London. For these reasons, the community has continued to grow in the 2000s despite increasing immigration restrictions. As a result, the likelihood of Latin Americans becoming irregular has increased since 2000⁴.

As the Latin American population grew so did some of its institutions such as businesses, media and events. Today there are commercial hubs for Brazilians in the Willesden area and for Spanish-speaking Latin Americans in Elephant and Castle and in Seven Sisters. There are several media outlets in the form of newspapers in both Spanish (*Express News*, *Extra*) and Portuguese (*Brazilian News*, *Leros*) and large scale events such as the *Carnaval del Pueblo*, held in Burgess Park in South London, which is reported to be the largest Latin American festival in Europe⁵.

From a wider European perspective, while Spain has the largest Latin American population by a significant margin, London is now home to one of the largest Latin American populations in Europe along with Italy, France, Portugal and Germany. While figures for Latin Americans as a group are difficult to identify (Pellegrino, 2004), statistics from the Ministry of External Relations in Colombia in 2009 can give some clues as to the broader patterns. In 2009, 4 million Colombians lived abroad. Of the 11.2% of Colombians living abroad in Europe, 51.9% were settled in Spain, 19.4% in the UK, 13.8% in Italy, and smaller numbers in other countries, including Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France (Cock, 2009).

[4] The term 'irregular' is used here to denote a situation whereby people enter and/or remain in a country without authority to do so and are potentially open to being deported as a result. It is generally preferred to the terms 'undocumented' or 'illegal' as being less likely to assume that migrants are criminals and to avoid confusions over whether being undocumented means not having legally correct papers or not being officially recorded by the receiving country (McIlwaine, 2009)

[5] Newspaper circulation figures in January 2010 for two of the main Spanish-speaking newspapers (*Latino Times* and *Extra*) were 12,000 per week for each newspaper. The *Carnaval del Pueblo* has been running since 1999 and estimates suggest that 100,000 people attend annually.

Chapter 2:

Estimating the size of the Latin American population in London

Key points

- Estimating the size of the Latin American population using official sources is difficult due to lack of appropriate data sources.
- There are an estimated total of 113,500 Latin Americans in London (central estimate) including 17,100 irregular migrants and 17,200 second generation Latin Americans.
- Population growth has been nearly four-fold amongst Latin Americans in London since 2001, making it one of the fastest growing migrant groups in the capital.
- There are an estimated 186,500 Latin Americans in the UK (acknowledging that this is a less reliable estimate than the London figure). This means that 61% of the UK Latin American population resides in London.

Introduction

Estimating the size of the Latin American community in London has been extremely difficult. This is mainly because Latin Americans have been a growing population in recent years with important sections of this community unlikely to figure in official statistics. Not only have they increased since 2001 when the last census was conducted, but a sizeable proportion will be un- or under-recorded because of their EU status (they will be recorded as being Spanish or Italian, for example) or their irregular migration status. Because of these problems, existing estimates are often based on qualitative measures derived from the opinions of community leaders and range from 50,000 to 1 million. Some of these un-substantiated estimates have become enshrined within official policy documents such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (2007) strategy paper on Latin America that suggests an estimate of between 700,000 and 1 million – a figure which was first suggested by a Latin American oral historian on an online article about the community.

This research addresses these inadequacies and makes the first robust attempt to estimate the size of the Latin American population in London in 2008 on the basis of the most relevant statistical information available. It acknowledges the difficulties of this process in general (Rees and Boden, 2006), and outlines the main population data sources available and assesses their advantages and limitations in making population estimates. Among the most important limitations of making an estimate of Latin Americans in particular is that they comprise differing nationality groups that are not always disaggregated in the data. Also, some data reports nationality rather than country of birth which hides the Latin Americans with Spanish, Italian and Portuguese nationalities.

Bearing these issues in mind, this study provides three population estimates based on the Annual Population Survey (APS) comprising the regular, irregular and second generation Latin Americans living in London (the latter referring to people born in the UK with parents born in a Latin American country - in this case mothers). When added together, these produce an estimate for the Latin American population as a whole in London ⁶. A less robust figure is also suggested for the UK as a whole.

[6] A separate detailed report with more technical specifications on data sources, methods and sensitivities was produced by the project and is available on request.

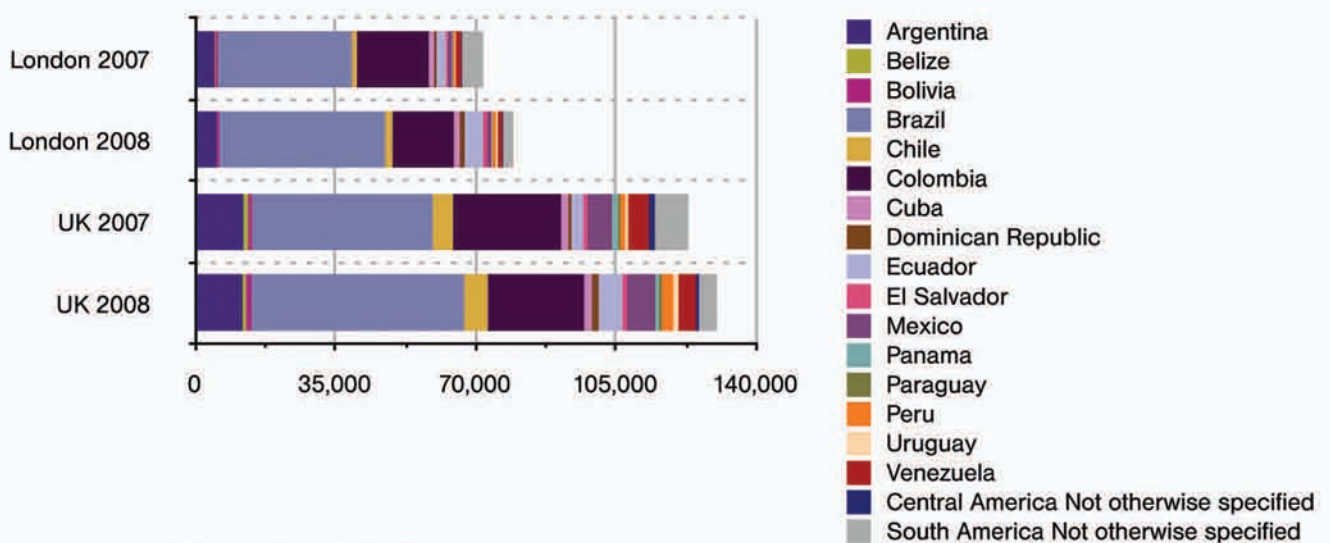
Census and population estimates on Latin Americans in London

There are two main ways of estimating the size of a particular population group in the UK. The first is using the last census conducted in 2001, and updating it for changes in the population since then. The second method involves estimating the size of a population through large scale annual surveys. The surveys are projected to achieve estimates at different geographic levels. However, because the sample sizes for specific populations or for specific geographic areas can be small, surveys have a margin of error and therefore have to be treated with care. In particular, population size estimates below or less than 1,000 should be treated with great caution.

Although the **2001 Census** provides a reliable estimate of the population of the UK, it is now outdated, especially for groups that have had significant changes in recent years, which is the case for Latin Americans. The Latin American population in London enumerated in the 2001 census was 31,211 residents. The largest national groups by country of birth at the time were Colombians (9,035) followed closely by Brazilians (8,162) and then by Argentineans (2,557), Ecuadorians (2,301) and Chileans (2,054).

The **Annual Population Survey** is a survey that uses data from the Labour Force Survey enhanced with a boost sample. It is based on a sample of economically active individuals for each Unitary Authority / Local Authority which is weighted to reflect the wider population. Nationally, the APS uses a sample of approximately 360,000 individuals. Data sets for the annual population survey are produced quarterly and are therefore more up-to-date than the census (Rees and Boden, 2006).

Figure 2.1: APS Latin American population in London and the UK by country of birth 2007-08



Source: APS 2007 and 2008 (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>)

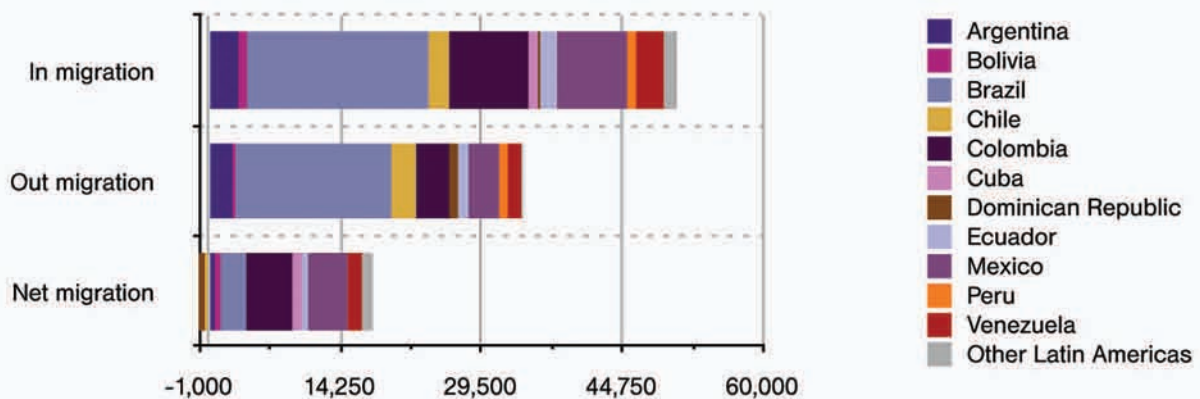
The APS produces reliable data for large national populations but when the population size is small the data is less reliable. Therefore, care must be taken when looking either at small geographical areas or at small populations. The APS contains data on country of birth as well as on other key demographic and socio-economic variables.

APS data for 2008 estimates the number of Latin Americans living in London at 79,296 and for the whole of the UK at 130,186 (see Figure 2.1)⁷.

The **International Passenger Survey (IPS)** can be used to measure flows of people in and out of the UK. Unlike the APS or the census, it does not attempt to estimate the stock of people resident at any point in time but rather the flow of people arriving and leaving the UK each year. It can be used to estimate net migration flows of Latin American nationals into and out of the UK. The migration status of interviewees is estimated based on a question on the intended length of stay of travellers moving their permanent residence for more than 12 months (less than 12 months being classified as visitors). The IPS uses nationality rather than country of birth and can miss out a substantial proportion of people who have naturalised in other countries, such as the EU, or have multiple-citizenship by birth. It also counts trips rather than individuals and the same person can be counted more than once if making more than one trip (Rendall et al, 2003). The Latin American in-migrant component of the overall IPS sample is based on a sample size of approximately 3,000 observations per year within the overall sample.

⁷ The APS 2008 samples 546 people who have a country of birth in Latin America out of a total sample of 348,699 in the UK. The Latin American sample proportion is 0.157%.

Figure 2.2: Latin American UK international migration flows 2001-08



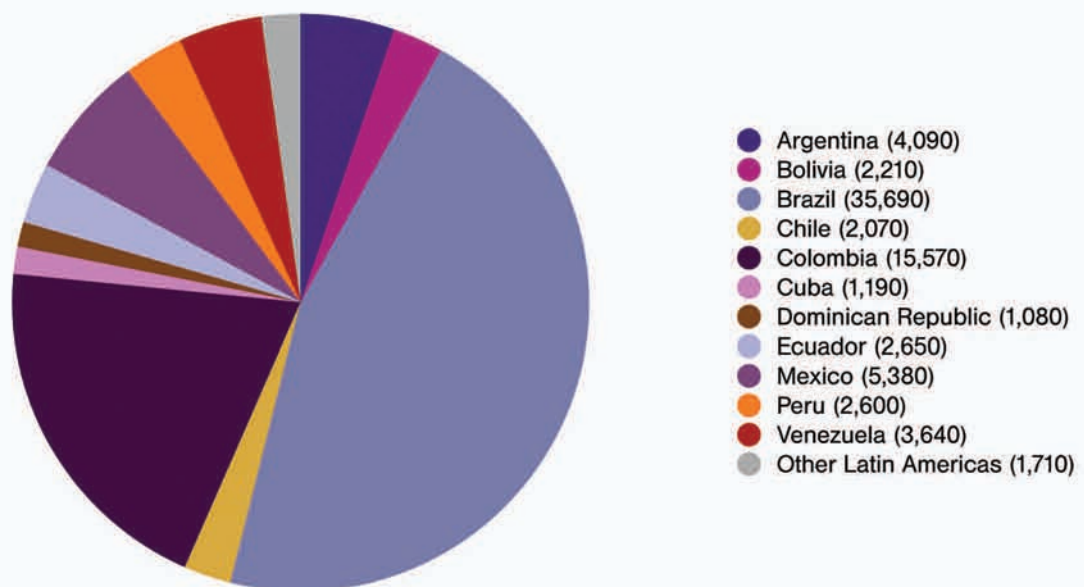
Source: IPS (2001-2008) (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk>)
 Notes: Includes air, sea, tunnel arrivals and departures
 In Migration = Intends to stay for > 12 months
 Out Migration = Intends to Stay for > 12 months
 Latin American In Migration sample size is approximately 3,000 per year
 Weighted by final weight to represent all IPS passenger trips

Between 2001 and 2008, in-migration of Latin American nationals was estimated at 50,656 people and during this same period out-migration (Latin Americans living in the UK who left the country) was estimated at 34,051 giving a positive net migration flow of approximately 16,605 people (see Figure 2.2). These figures do not include people who have changed their intentions after entering, i.e. people who intended to be in the UK for more than a year but left before, or people who intended to stay for less than a year but ended up staying for longer (also known as visitor switchers). There were over 3 million Latin American visitors to the UK between 2001 and 2008. Latin American population estimates based on adding net migration over the period to the 2001 Census population estimate are very sensitive to assumptions concerning visitor switchers and those who change their intentions once in the country and are less reliable than other methods.

Administrative data

The UK does not have a formal universal registration system for its resident population. However, there are a number of administrative systems that can provide some information on migrants. These include the Home Office, the Department for Work and Pensions, the National Health Service and the Department for Education and Skills. These data sources can be good indicators of trends but on their own are not reliable to estimate the size of a population. One problem with much of this data is that it only covers those individuals who use the services for which the data is collected. In addition, such data records access to a particular system. This therefore provides an idea of arrivals of those eligible for or aware of such services at a particular time, but not those leaving the country.

Figure 2.3: Latin American NINo registrations to adult Latin Americans entering the UK 2002-09



Source: DWP (2009)

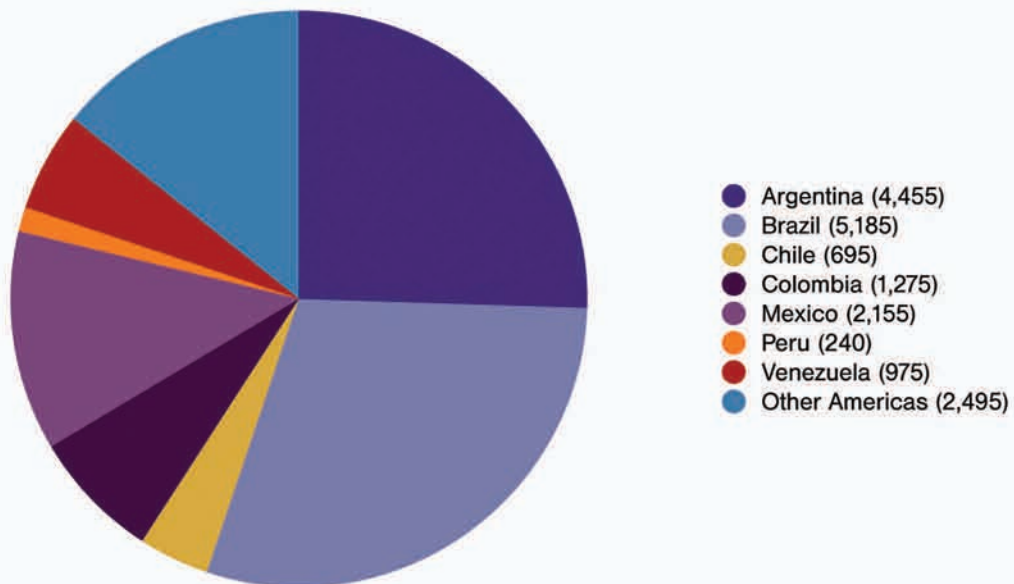
Overseas nationals require a **National Insurance Number** (NINo) if looking for work or claiming benefits and tax credit. This is inclusive of students and self-employed people. It records the nationality of applicants and therefore misses out citizens naturalised in another country. NINOs are allocated to newly arrived people but there is no way of checking how many of these people subsequently leave the UK. This data is therefore indicative of in-migration but not of out-migration. In the period 2002-2009 a total of 77,880 NINOs were allocated to Latin American nationals in the UK. The largest numbers were allocated to Brazilians (35,690) and Colombians (15,570) (see Figure 2.3).

Some 60% of all NINo registrations of Latin American nationals in the UK between 2002 and 2009 were made in London - a total of 46,430 individuals. Within London, the boroughs of Brent (4,150), Lambeth (4,010) and Southwark (4,090) had the highest numbers of registrations.

The **Home Office** produces control of immigration statistics on admissions into the UK of non-EEA nationals. It details purpose of journey and nationality of those allowed into the country. The Home Office also produces data on visas and visa extensions granted to foreign nationals and on people taking up British citizenship. One problem with this data is that some countries, including some Latin American countries, are grouped together under the same heading, therefore making it difficult to differentiate between them. In addition, Home Office entry control data does not indicate where people intend to stay within the UK and therefore people moving into London cannot be identified from those going to other areas. It does provide an indication of the relative weight of different countries of origin of individuals who are coming into the UK through the different immigration routes available.

Work permit data includes numbers of individuals and their dependents who have entered the UK with a work permit or under the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP). Between 2005 and 2008, 17,475 work permits were granted to people from Latin America, with Argentina and Brazil the main countries of origin (see Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4: Latin American Work Permit holders and dependents 2005-08



Source: Home Office (2009)

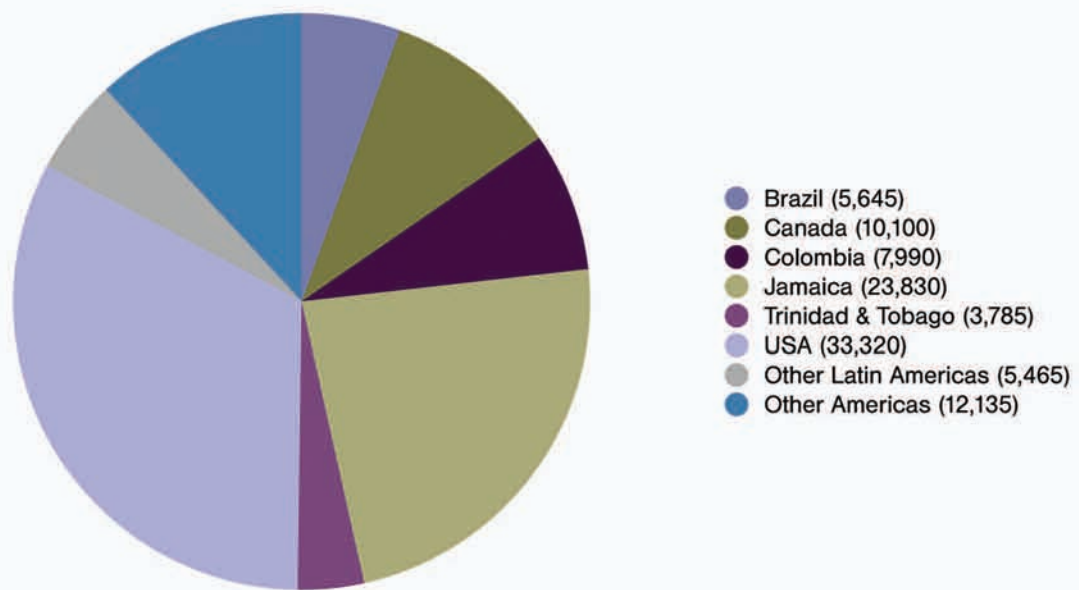
Note:

Includes >12 and < 12 months permits

Includes Caribbean Countries in Other Americas

Grants of settlement data applies to people who are given permission to remain in the UK indefinitely. Published Home Office data is only available for some individual Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela), with the rest grouped with other countries of the Americas. Over the period 2001-08, 19,100 Latin Americans were granted settlement in the UK with the largest numbers coming from Colombia (7,990) followed by Brazil (5,645) (see Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Grants of settlement in the UK by American nationality 2001-08



Source: Home Office (2009)

Of the many official data sources reviewed the Annual Population Survey was identified as the most robust data source on which to estimate the overall regular Latin American population of London, acknowledging also that at local authority and at nationality level this source is less reliable due to the small sample size (see note 7). This means that it is difficult to identify with any degree of accuracy the shares of different Latin American nationalities within the population as a whole.

Estimating the number of Latin American irregular migrants

Estimating the number of irregular migrants is a key part of establishing the size of the Latin American population in London. User data from service providers that work with irregular migrants, such as the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) voluntary return programmes, suggest that there is a significant Latin American irregular population⁸. Home Office statistics also show that Brazil was the second country of origin after India with the largest number of people removed by force or who left voluntarily in 2008 (Gordon et al., 2009).

The best available estimate for the irregular population of the UK and London comes from a report prepared in 2009 by the London School of Economics for the Greater London Authority (Gordon et al, 2009). This report was based on a previous estimate of the irregular population for the census year of 2001 (Woodbridge, 2005) updated with estimated irregular flows since then. The estimate for 2001 was calculated using the Residual Method, comparing administrative data on legal migration to the actual migrant population counted in the census. The difference is assumed to be the number of irregular migrants present in the UK at the time of the census.

The LSE/GLA study updated this figure using data from asylum cases, regularisation exercises, and an estimate of children born from irregular migrants. In the estimate, the size of the irregular population who were overstayers or illegal entrants was assumed to be all those who were not failed asylum seekers. This method of estimating the irregular population is more suitable for the whole migrant population than for specific countries of origin. This is especially the case when there are substantial numbers of overstayers as there is no direct estimate of this group of migrants. Furthermore, for failed asylum seekers, a lot of the data is not disaggregated for all Latin American countries.

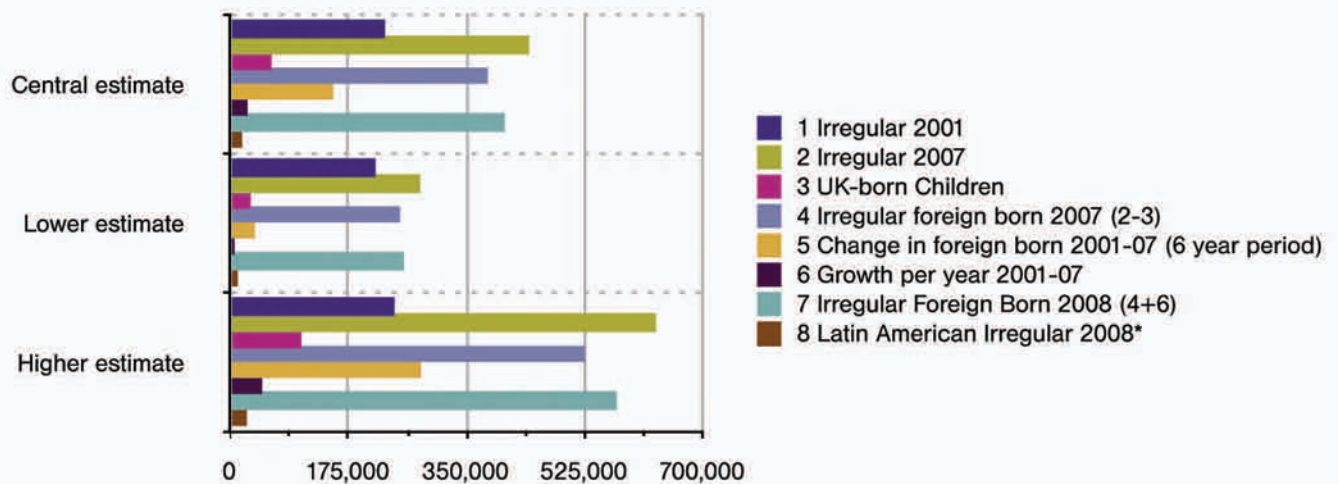
The LSE/GLA study estimated that the irregular population in London in 2007 was between 281,000 and 630,000, with a central estimate of 442,000 (Gordon et al, 2009). If this estimate is updated to 2008 using the central estimate as a base, assuming the same year-to-year growth from previous years, the irregular population in London in 2008 could be estimated to be 477,500. To calculate the number of irregular Latin Americans, the proportion of the irregular population which comes from Latin America needs to be estimated. There are several ways to do this by applying the estimated share of Latin Americans to the LSE/GLA estimate updated for 2008⁹.

The first is to apply to the LSE/GLA estimate the proportion of Londoners who come from Latin America as calculated from official figures such as the APS (1%). A second option is to take the irregular population born in the UK out of the LSE/GLA estimate and apply to it the proportion of Latin Americans as a share of the migrant population in London (foreign born 3.2%, non-EU foreign born 4.2%). Another option is to apply to the LSE/GLA figure the proportion of Latin Americans as a share of the numbers of forced removals and voluntary returns (12%), assuming that these figures reflect the composition of the UK's irregular population. The irregular estimates are highly sensitive to these options and proportions.

^[8] Between April 2008 and September 2009, Brazil (864) was the largest country of origin for the Programme of Assisted Voluntary Return for Irregular Migrants with more than five times more users than the next country of origin. Bolivian was the third most common country of origin for returns (155).

^[9] The LSE/GLA figures relate to 2007 stock. The reference date used here is the 2008 end of year stock point. For this reason the LSE/GLA figures are projected forward one year based on the average growth rate of irregulars given in the GLA report. While it may be open to vagaries in the asylum system for that one year, the 2008 stock projection is consistent with the LSE/GLA 2007 figure, and is also unlikely to be where the main sensitivities in the overall estimates lie.

Figure 2.6: Latin American irregular population 2008 estimate based on non-EU foreign born



Notes:

Based on GLA estimates (Gordon et al, 2009)

Latin American foreign-born proportions derived from APS 2008

*Latin American Irregular total based on Latin American proportion of London Foreign Born Population being 4.2%.

After considering these, the share of Latin Americans as a proportion of all non-EU foreign born people in London was applied to the LSE/GLA updated estimate. Using this method a central estimate of the number of irregular migrants from Latin America in London in 2008 was 17,100 (see Figure 2.6). This central estimate was validated as being near to the proportion of irregulars of 19% identified in our survey (see Chapter 4), applied to the 2008 APS total of 79,296, giving a survey based estimate of 18,600 irregulars (assuming the APS total contained no irregulars).

Estimating the size of the Latin American second generation

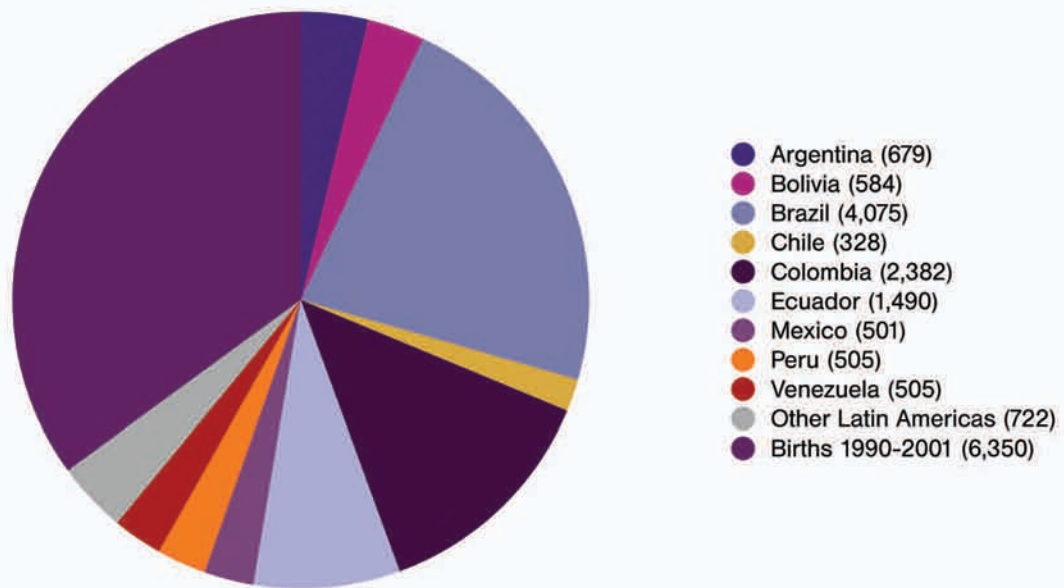
To calculate the size of the British born Latin American community in London several methods were used. The first was to apply age specific fertility rates of foreign born women to Latin American born women in the UK according to age. This produced an estimate of 3,244 UK born people with Latin American mothers, but was difficult to obtain cumulative stock figures to 2008.

The second method used London school pupil data on first language of students aged between 5 and 16. It was assumed that Spanish and Portuguese speakers belonging to the 'Other' ethnic category were of Latin American ascendancy while those of European ascendancy marked the 'Other White' category. This produced an estimate of 5,254. However, this data is problematic because, first, pupils are not necessarily UK born and therefore might not all belong to the second generation; second, pupils of Latin American ascendancy could choose to mark other categories such as White, Black or Mixed; third, it does not include children over the compulsory school age of 16 or those under 5, or in the private schooling system.

The third method uses vital statistics data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to provide information on live births per year by country of birth of mother. Data was acquired for 2002-08 and extrapolated to cover previous years back to 1990 using a linear trend fitted to the 2002-08 data. This estimate does not account for deaths, people leaving the UK or children born of Latin American fathers with non Latin American mothers. Despite this, it was the most robust data set available for estimating the second generation (see Chapter 10 on this group).

Births to Latin American born mothers have been increasing in London from 1,337 in 2002 to 1,913 in 2008, with a peak at 2,109 in 2006. There were 11,771 live births recorded to Latin American born mothers in London between 2002 and 2008. Extrapolation suggests that between 1990 and 2008 there have been approximately 18,100 children born to Latin American mothers. This figure is likely to be an over estimate as not all those born in London over the period will now be living in London. Latin American mothers born in Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador comprised the majority of births from Latin American mothers over the period 2002-08 (see Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7: London live births by Latin American mothers 1990-2008



Source: ONS (2009a) Vital Statistics on Births

Note:

Births 1990-2001 figure is based on linear extrapolations of 2002-08 data

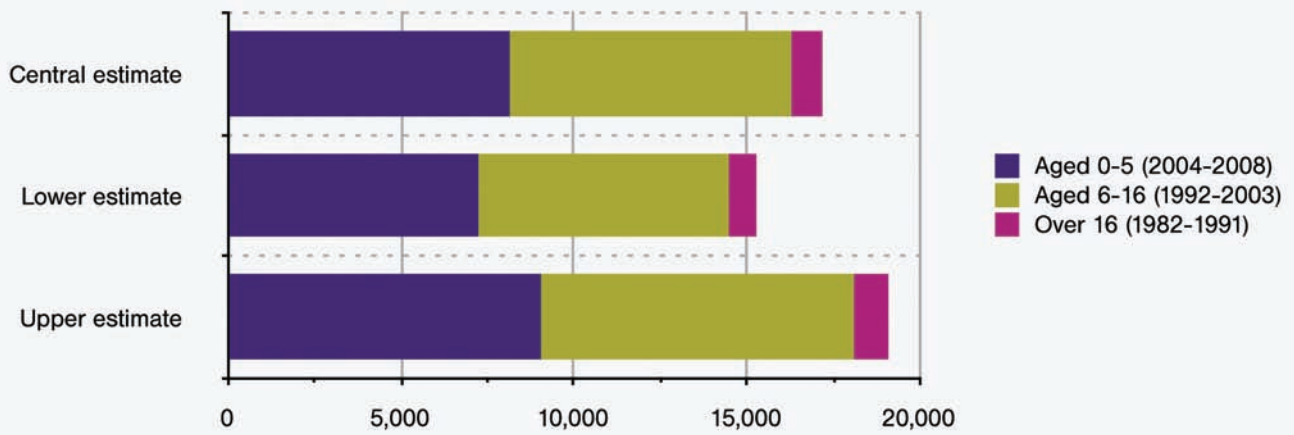
Latin American mothers are those whose country of birth is in one of the 20 countries identified as Latin American

[10] Little information exists on Latin American movement out of London. From the IPS nationality based data over the period 2001-2008 some 34,051 Latin Americans out migrated from the UK, averaging 4,256 per year. Most of these will be from London and as a proportion of the APS 2008 figure only this is 5.4%. However, this average rate will not have continued over the whole period, may be larger based on country of birth, and there may also be in migration from other parts of the UK into London. Parameters of 0%, 10% and 20% were applied to the second generation, as this data also excluded the second generation born to Latin fathers.

The live UK births from Latin American born mothers are probably the best base stock data to estimate the second generation. However, another problem with this data is that not all those born within London over the period considered will remain in London. Assumptions need to be made concerning the proportion of those born in London over the period that had subsequently moved by 2008, either outside London and/or outside the UK. Yet little is known about the extent of this movement among the second generation or about those born to Latin American fathers and mothers of non-Latin American origins and so different assumptions were made regarding this varying from zero to 20% out migration from London over the period¹⁰. Figure 2.8 estimates the stock of second generation Latin Americans in London in 2008 assuming that 10% (central), 20% (lower) and 0% (upper) moved out of London after birth.

Due to lack of data for earlier years, those born before 1992 is estimated at less than 100 per year from extrapolation of 2002-08 data back to 1982, and produces an estimate of those aged over 16 in 2008 to be approximately 1,000. Again, a 10% and 20% rate of out movement from London is applied, as not all will remain in London.

Figure 2.8: Estimate of the second generation Latin Americans in London 2008



Note:
 ONS (2009a) Vital Statistics
 2002, 2003 ONS Vital Statistics 1992-2001 extrapolation

Estimates of London births to Latin American born mothers since 1990 suggest there to be a possible cumulative stock of 18,100 UK born members of the Latin American community in London. However, not all these will have remained in London (producing an over estimate). This figure also excludes second generation births before 1990, so could be regarded as an upper limit. The 2008 London stock estimate of second generation Latin Americans has a central estimate of 17,200 (lower 15,300 and upper 19,100) and assumes 10% of each cohort component of these births are no longer resident in London.

The size of the Latin American population in London

Estimates of the size of the Latin American population in London, which include irregulars and the second generation of Latin Americans born in the UK, can be obtained by combining the three main estimate components.

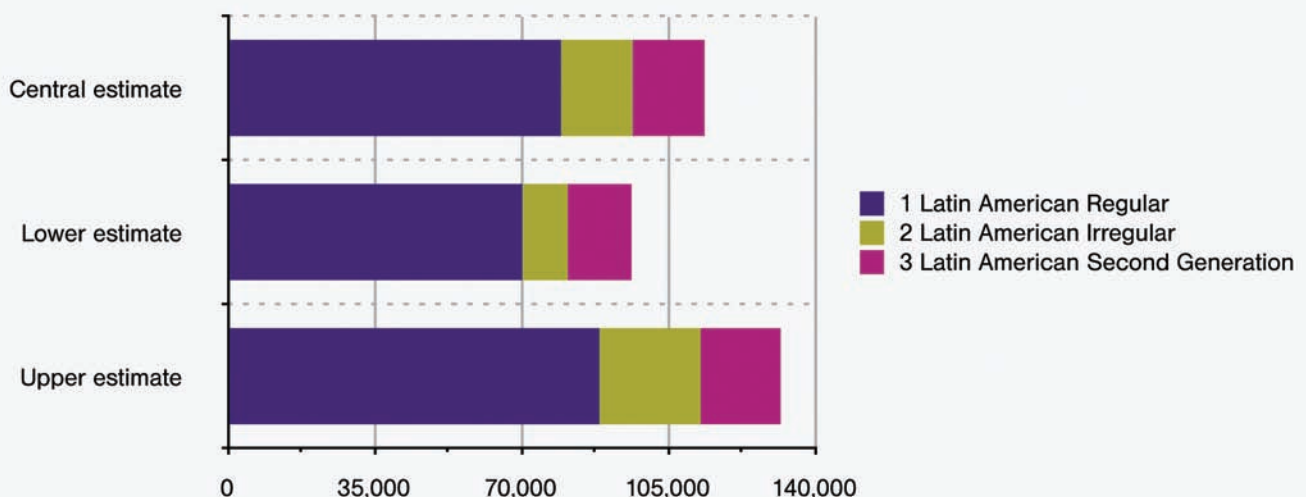
First, the APS 2008 central estimate of 79,296 is drawn from a sample of Latin Americans in London and has a 95 percent confidence interval variation which is used to produce an estimate of the upper and lower limits around this central estimate. It is also assumed irregulars have an incentive to remain hidden and that the APS contains no irregulars in this estimate.

Second, the irregular Latin American migrants are derived as the share of Latin Americans as a proportion of London's non-EU foreign born applied to the GLA/LSE's central, lower and upper estimate of London's irregular population, updated for 2008 and excluding UK-born irregulars (see Figure 2.8 above).

Third, the second generation Latin Americans are derived based on the number of live births to Latin American mothers in London between 2002 and 2008, extrapolated back to 1990, with an added component for before 1990 births. The central estimate assumes 10% have left London or the UK, the upper estimate assumed no migration, while the lower estimate assumes 20% migration from London and the UK.

Figure 2.9 shows these estimates for 2008 combining the above three components and gives a central estimate of the size of the 2008 Latin American community in London of 113,500. Compared to the 2001 Census estimate the growth in the Latin American population of London has more than tripled over the period to 2008.

Figure 2.9: Estimates of the size of the Latin American population in London 2008



Notes:

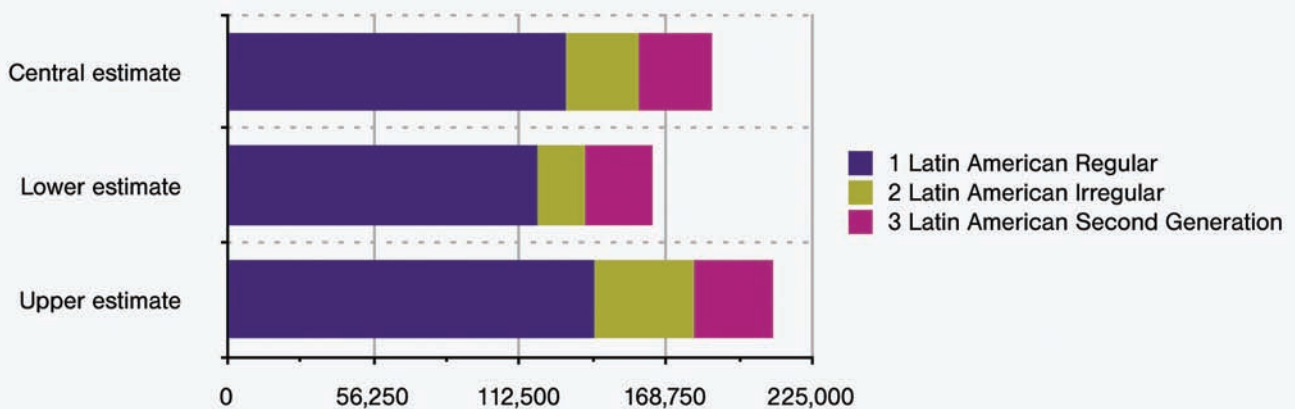
1. APS 2008 using 95% confidence interval for lower and upper estimates
2. APS 2008 Latin Share of Non EU Foreign Born 4.2% applied to updated GLA central, lower and upper irregular estimates

The Latin American population of London is currently a significant part of the city's population as a whole, comparable in size to other large migrant and ethnic groups. For example, in 2009, the Polish population living in London was 122,000^[1]. However, the estimate for Latin Americans used here not only brings together people of different countries of origin but it also includes second generation Latin Americans. It is therefore more relevant to compare it to ethnic groups as these include migrants and British born people. The problem with this approach is that Latin Americans will already be included within the ethnic group count in categories such as Other White and Other Black. Bearing this in mind, the central estimate of 113,500 Latin Americans in London compares with the proportion of Chinese ethnic group of 111,500 and is around two-thirds the estimated size of the Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnic groups, both at around 170,000 (GLA, 2008) (though it is worth noting all of these nationalities are also likely to have significant irregular populations and therefore larger population sizes than officially recorded).

A less statistically robust estimate of the size of the Latin American population in the UK was also derived. A London to UK shift share analysis method was used based on the assumption that irregular and the second generation estimates for London are in the same relative proportions as the London to UK APS figures. This may overestimate the size of the UK Latin American population as the London/UK proportions of irregulars and second generation may differ from the overall London/UK APS population proportions. Bearing in mind these caveats and acknowledging that the margins of error cannot be calculated, the central estimate for the UK Latin American population in 2008 was 186,500 (see Figure 2.10). This suggests that 61% of the UK Latin American population resides in London.

[1]
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=2369&Pos=&ColRank=2&Rank=320>
 (accessed 1st September 2010).

Figure 2.10: Estimates of the size of the Latin American population in the UK 2008 based on London proportions



Note:

1. APS 2008 using 95% confidence interval for lower and upper estimates (8.4%)
2. Assumes irregulars are the same share as London proportion of UK APS 2008 estimates
3. Assumes second generation are the same share as London proportion of UK APS 2008

Chapter 3:

Profile of the Latin American population: survey results

Key points

- Latin Americans are a growing population, primarily due to recent migration with two-thirds arriving since 2000 and more than one-third since 2005.
- They are residentially dispersed throughout London but with concentrations in Inner East and South London especially in Lambeth and Southwark.
- They are mainly of working age and are well-educated although almost one-third are unable to speak, read or write more than a little English.
- Most identify as mixed race or white ethnic.
- More than half identify themselves in a lower class position in London than in Latin America.

Introduction

This chapter provides a general profile of the Latin American population based on the first survey of its kind with more than 1,000 people. This new and unique source of data provides information from three surveys with the community. It outlines the findings from the long and short questionnaire surveys, as well as the survey of second generation Latin Americans. Information from the in-depth interviews and focus groups is also discussed (see Appendix 1). The information outlined here provides the context for the other chapters that cover specific aspects of the lives of Latin Americans in London.

The survey aimed to be as representative as possible of the community. The long questionnaire was conducted using purposive sampling that broadly represented the proportions of Latin American nationalities identified in official statistics. It therefore focused on Colombians and Brazilians as the two largest groups, with further concentrations of Ecuadorians, Bolivians and Peruvians and then inclusion of other smaller nationalities (see Figure 3.1). The survey included people aged over 16 from across the socio-economic spectrum. The short questionnaire was conducted in a random manner at carnivals, churches and at various types of meeting places for Latin Americans (although care was taken to include Brazilian churches and carnivals which are usually separate from those for Spanish-speaking Latin Americans). The second generation survey was conducted mainly through youth groups and at churches. All the research was conducted independently of the Latin American Women's Rights Service.

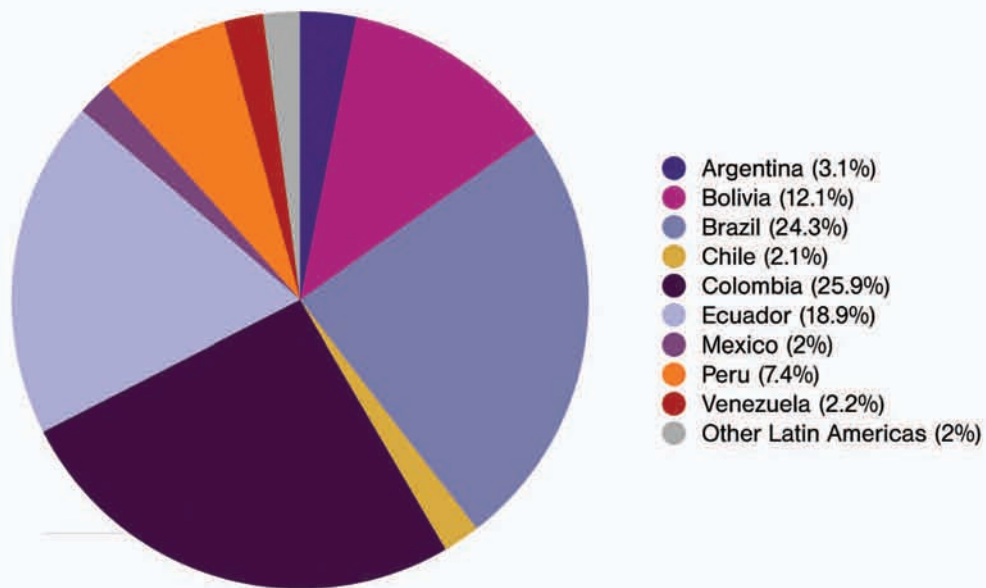
The Latin American population in London has increased rapidly over the last decade

The earliest recorded date of migration among Latin Americans surveyed was a Colombian who arrived in 1964. Early migration in the 1970s in particular was dominated by Colombians and Chileans with some Ecuadorians and Peruvians. Two-thirds of people have arrived since 2000 (66%), especially Bolivians and Brazilians. More than one-third has arrived since 2005¹². This suggests that Latin Americans are one of London's 'new migrant groups'.

[12] Our analysis of the APS (2008) also suggests that 57% of Latin Americans in the UK arrived after 2000, while 79% arrived after 1990. According to the APS, in London, 60% arrived after 2000 and 87% after 1990 (see: <http://tinyurl.com/3wdkc73>).

These broad patterns can be corroborated through the second generation survey. Although the vast majority of second generation people interviewed were born in the UK, the country of birth of their mothers and fathers was dominated by the most established nationalities of Colombians, Peruvians and Ecuadorians (see Chapter 10).

Figure 3.1: Country of birth of Latin Americans surveyed

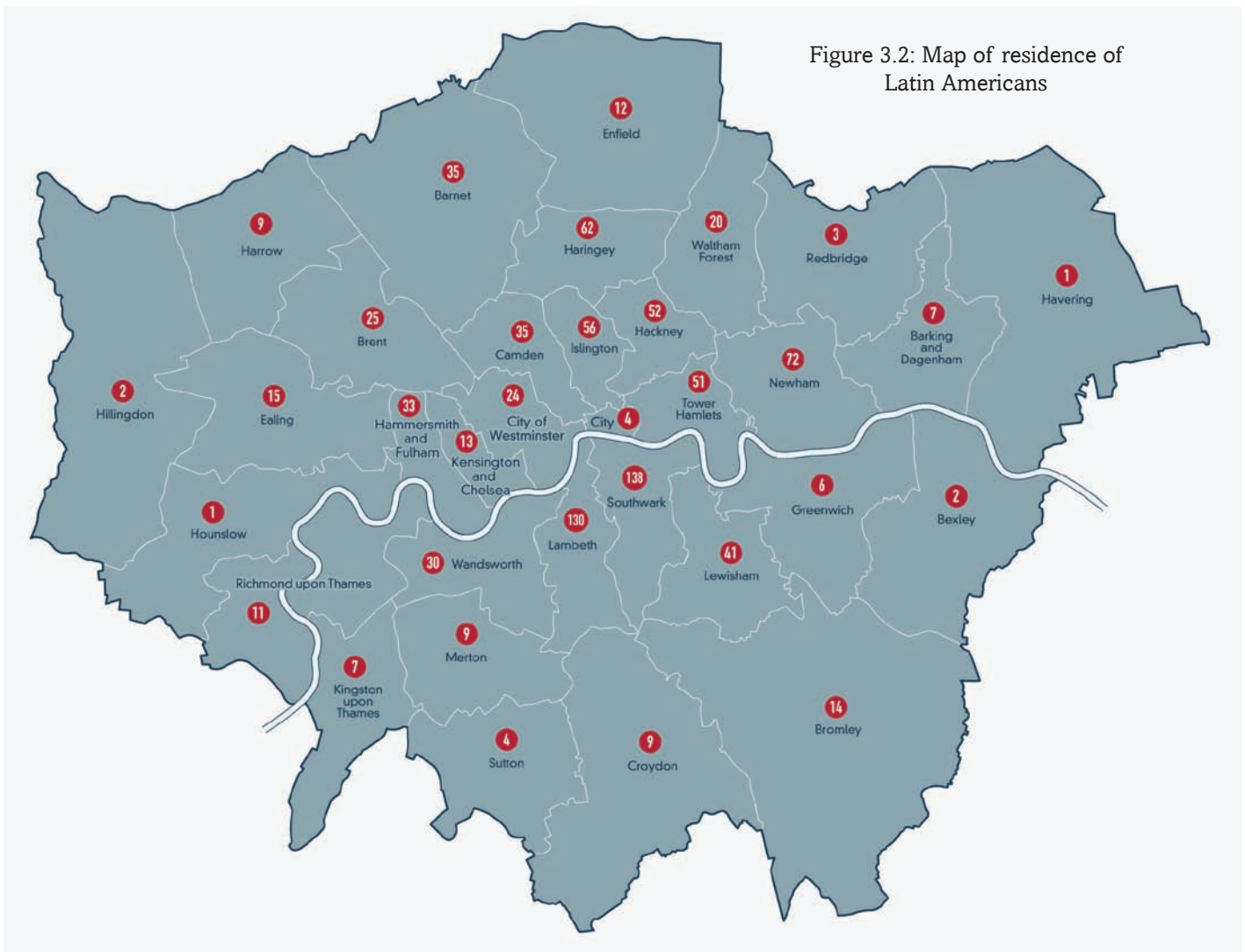


Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=962)

Latin Americans are residentially dispersed throughout the city but with concentrations in Inner East and South London

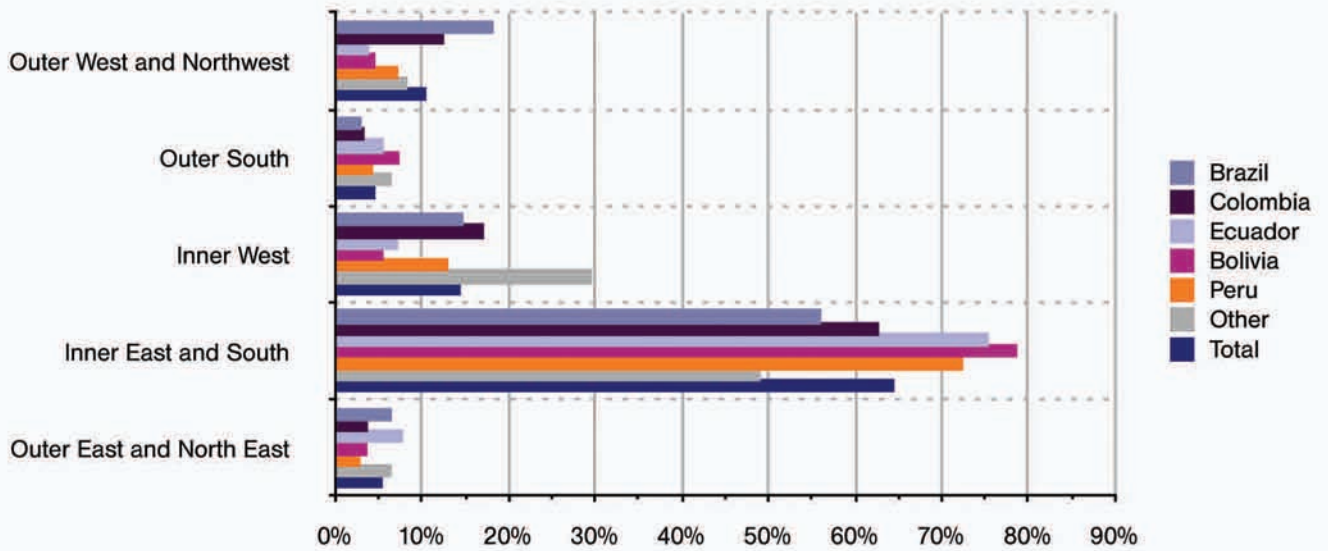
Latin Americans are residentially dispersed throughout London although there are marked concentrations in Inner London and in certain boroughs such as Southwark (15% of respondents), Lambeth (14%), Newham (8%), Haringey (7%), Islington (6%), Hackney (6%) and Tower Hamlets (5.5%) (see Figure 3.2).

Some nationality groups are more concentrated in some boroughs than others. For example, Bolivians are especially concentrated in Lambeth (20% of all Bolivians) and Southwark (43%) along with Peruvians (30% and 13% respectively). While more than a quarter of Ecuadorians live in these two boroughs, a further 16% live in Newham. Brazilians are more evenly dispersed, although there are concentrations in Southwark and Lambeth (16.5%), Barnet and Brent (14%) as well as in Tower Hamlets (13.5%). Colombians also live in a wide range of boroughs, although more than a quarter live in Lambeth and Southwark (26%) (see Appendix 2). The overall concentration of Latin Americans in Lambeth and Southwark is also reflected in the location of a series of Latin American shopping areas in Elephant and Castle and its environs. In the north of the city, there are further concentrations in and around Seven Sisters.



If London is divided into inner and outer areas according to the divisions adopted in the London Poverty Profile (Macinnes and Kenway, 2009), marked concentrations of Latin Americans appear in Inner East and South London (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: Distribution of main Latin American nationality groups by London region



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=933)

Latin Americans in London are mainly of working age and most are well-educated

The survey showed the largest nationality groups as Colombians, Brazilians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians and Peruvians. Slightly more women were interviewed than men (53% and 47%). The average age of those interviewed was 36 years (acknowledging that only those aged 16 and over were included). Latin Americans are concentrated in the economically active age groups with more than one-third (37%) aged between 30 and 39, and more than a quarter (27.5%) aged between 16 and 29¹³. Compared with the wider London population, there are more Latin Americans concentrated in the 16-29 age group than in Inner and Outer London (25% and 19%). In turn, very few Latin Americans in our survey were aged over 60 (3%) compared with wider patterns in London of between 13% and 17% in Inner and Outer London¹⁴.

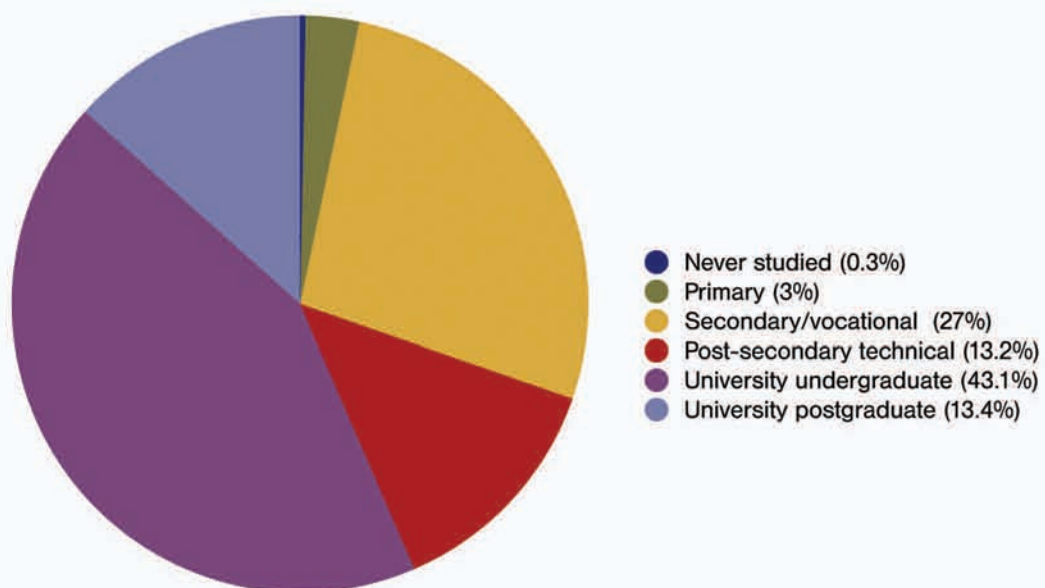
[13] It is important to note that the majority of those in our survey were aged over 16 years of age. However, our analysis of the APS (2008) corroborates a broad pattern of relative youth also showing that the population is becoming more youthful over time. In 2004, Latin Americans aged 0-16 made-up 5% of the total and by 2008, they constituted 7.5%. Those in the 16-25 age group increased from 33% in 2004 to 37% in 2008 (see: <http://tinyurl.com/3wdkc73>).

[14] <http://www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk/london/london-age-structure-1/>

Latin Americans are mostly very well-educated with three-quarters obtaining qualifications in their home countries before they migrated. The majority (70%) had achieved some form of education beyond secondary level, with 13% attaining a technical education while the rest achieved undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications (see Figure 3.4). Ecuadorians had the lowest educational qualifications (45% having only primary or secondary level). Many Latin Americans migrated in order to improve their education level, mainly through learning English, but also to pursue further qualifications (see Chapter 4).

Despite high education levels, the ability to speak, read and write in English is not universal for Latin Americans. Nearly one-third (29%) were able to understand very little English or none at all. Less than half (41%) were able to speak, read and write very well, with a further 30% doing so at an intermediate level.

Figure 3.4: Highest education level attained



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=948)

Almost half of all Latin Americans are married or cohabiting. More than a quarter of all Latin Americans are married to someone from a different nationality

Almost two-thirds of Latin Americans were single on arrival in London (65%) and only 27% were married. This contrasted with current patterns where 40% were married and one-third were single (11% were divorced, 7% were cohabiting and 3% were widowed). Women were more likely to be married (43%) than men (38%). In addition, 28% of all Latin Americans were married to someone from a different nationality group (bearing in mind that nationality can be different from country of birth and so does not always indicate that people have married outside their country group). In terms of specific nationalities, 11% of all Latin Americans were married to a British person, with another 11% married to someone with European nationality. Brazilians and Colombians were the most likely to be married to someone of a different nationality. Women were more likely to marry someone from a different nationality group. For example, 65% of all those married to a British person were women, as were 57% of all of those married to a European.

Many Latin Americans perceive their class status to be higher in their home country than in London

Although class status means different things in different cultures and being middle class in Latin America is not the same as being middle class in the UK, more than half of Latin Americans identified their social class position in London as working class (34.5%) or lower middle class (20.5%) with a further 37% stating they were middle class¹⁵. Brazilians were the most likely to identify as working class (46%). The important point is that many people perceive their class status to be higher in their home country. More than half (52%) of people identified themselves as occupying a lower class in London than in Latin America while 42% placed themselves in the same class position. Only 6% located themselves in a higher class in London than at home.

^[15] People's perception of class in London could also be influenced by their class perception and their material conditions back home.

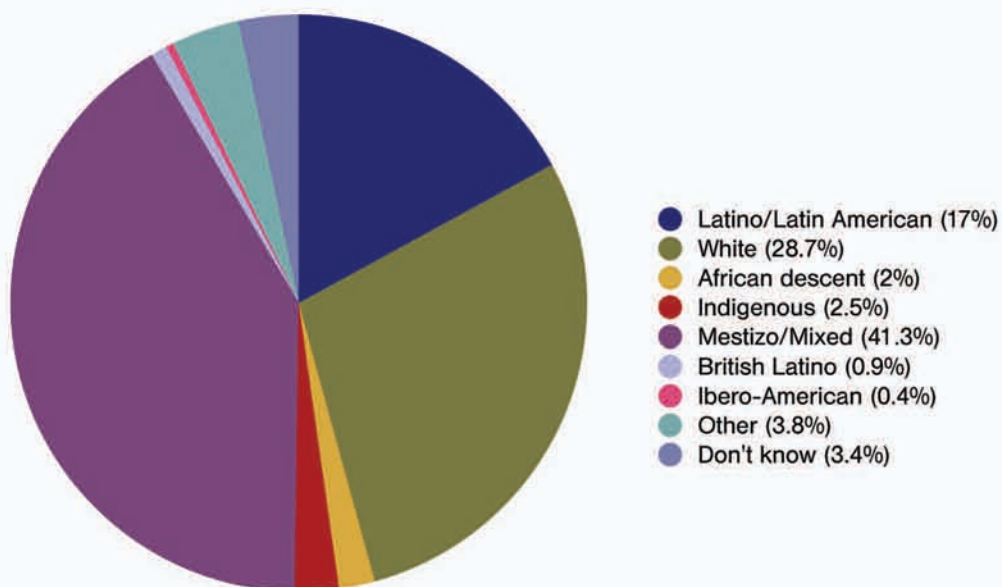
Most Latin Americans identify ethnically as mixed, white or Latin American

Again acknowledging that race and ethnicity are open to wide variations in interpretation between Latin America and the UK and among different Latin American countries, more than 40% of people identified their racial and ethnic origin as *mestizo* (which means mixed race) with white and Latin American emerging as important (see Figure 3.5). Second generation Latin Americans were most likely to identify as British Latino (44%) (see Chapter 10).

In recent years several community groups have campaigned for an official ethnic category that includes Latin Americans. The survey showed that there was overwhelming support for Latin Americans to have their own ethnic classification (77%). However, a significant minority of around a quarter were not in agreement or did not care. In one case, Rodolfo, aged 48 from Quito in Ecuador who had been living in London since 1997 said of ethnic classification: 'this means that people won't integrate into the society' although he also pointed out that if recognition was achieved then it might help Latin Americans get access to credit which was currently very difficult for them. More frequently, people were very keen to be recognised; Alba who was 35 from Lima in Peru echoed many people's views: 'The Latin American community has to be recognised so that we can have our place in the UK, so that people realise that we contribute to the UK'¹⁶.

^[16] All names used in this report are pseudonyms.

Figure 3.5: Ethnic/racial self-identification



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=446)

Chapter 4:

Migration trajectories of Latin Americans in London

Key points

- Economic motivations are the primary reason for Latin Americans migrating to London, particularly for those working in lower skilled and low paid jobs.
- Spain has emerged as an important gateway into the UK for Latin Americans, with 20% of migrants who have arrived in the last five years arriving via this route.
- Latin Americans choose London because of the existence of friends and family.
- Most enter the UK legally with a temporary visa.
- More than half have settled status (25% have British citizenship, 19% have EU passports, and 11% have permanent residency).
- One-fifth has no valid documents (19%).
- Most have changed UK immigration status over time.
- Most do not arrive in London with the intention to settle, although this changes over time.
- 40% arrive in London indebted to family, money lenders or financial institutions in order to pay for their trip.

Introduction

This chapter outlines the reasons why Latin Americans in our survey have migrated to London and why they have left their home countries. It also explores their routes of entry into the UK in terms of the type of immigration papers they used, whether they arrived alone or accompanied and if they migrated via another country first. The discussion also examines the ways in which Latin Americans have negotiated their immigration status and whether they plan to settle in the UK on a temporary or permanent basis.

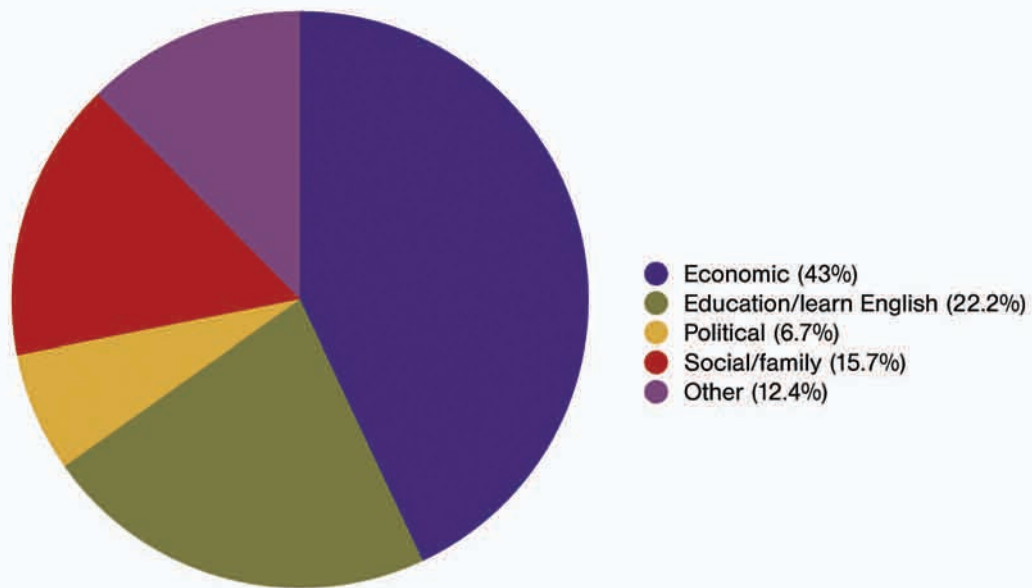
Most Latin Americans leave their home countries for economic reasons

Although the reasons why Latin Americans leave their home countries are diverse and inter-related, economic factors are by far the most important. More than 40% of people identified either lack of economic or professional opportunities at home and/or the prospect of better opportunities abroad as the main reason why they left (see Figure 4.1). Economic motivations were especially important for Brazilians, accounting for more than half (57%). In addition, while a quarter of professional and managerial workers identified economic factors as their primary motive, this contrasts sharply with the fact that 61% of elementary workers migrated for this reason. The main gender difference was that women were more likely to identify social and family factors than men (19% compared with 12%) although economic motivations were still the most important even if these were slightly less likely to be mentioned compared with men (40% and 46%).

Evidence from the qualitative research further highlights the difficulties in securing good jobs in many Latin American countries as a major factor in migrating. Even for those who had managed to obtain decent jobs at home, many complained that salaries were very low and the work was hard meaning that they could barely make ends meet. For example, Viviana, a 47-year-old from Bogotá, Colombia, who had been living in London since 1978 working as a teacher complained that back home where she was also a teacher she could barely get by:

‘I worked three shifts as a teacher. I left my house at 6 in the morning and I got home at 11 at night, every day. The shifts were really hard and we also worked Saturdays. I did this because in every school that I worked they only paid the minimum ... So I said to myself: “with my abilities in another country I will be paid a dignified wage and I’m going to live well and also not have to beg someone for a letter of recommendation”’.

Figure 4.1: Main reason why people left Latin America



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=950)

Also significant is that more than one-fifth left Latin America for educational reasons (22%), either to learn English or to pursue further studies. However, this motivation was more commonly associated with those who worked in professional and managerial jobs where educational motivations were more important than economic factors (34% and 22.5%). By comparison, only 13% of elementary workers were motivated by education compared with 61% who left for economic reasons.

The proportion leaving for political reasons is much lower (7%) and is concentrated among Chileans, Colombians and Ecuadorians. For example, Consuela, who was 61 and retired, had been living in the UK for 34 years. She noted why she left Chile:

'I had a quiet life, I worked, I looked after my girls, I had a normal life until the military coup in Chile in 1973 when everything changed completely. After that my personal life and that of my children and ex-husband changed completely and we had to come to England in 1975 to flee persecution.'

The armed conflict in Colombia was also important in the political motivations for migration among this group. For instance, Fernando was 50 years old, from Quindío in Colombia and had been living in London since 1994. He reported how he had been sent to London by the Colombian army with whom he had been working in military intelligence. He said that he 'knew too much' and as a result was sentenced to 10 years of '*muerte civil*'¹⁷ and asked to leave the country. The army paid for his travel and he claimed asylum on his arrival in the UK.

[17] 'Civil death': withdrawal of all civil rights such as the right to vote, to have a bank account, to buy or sell anything.

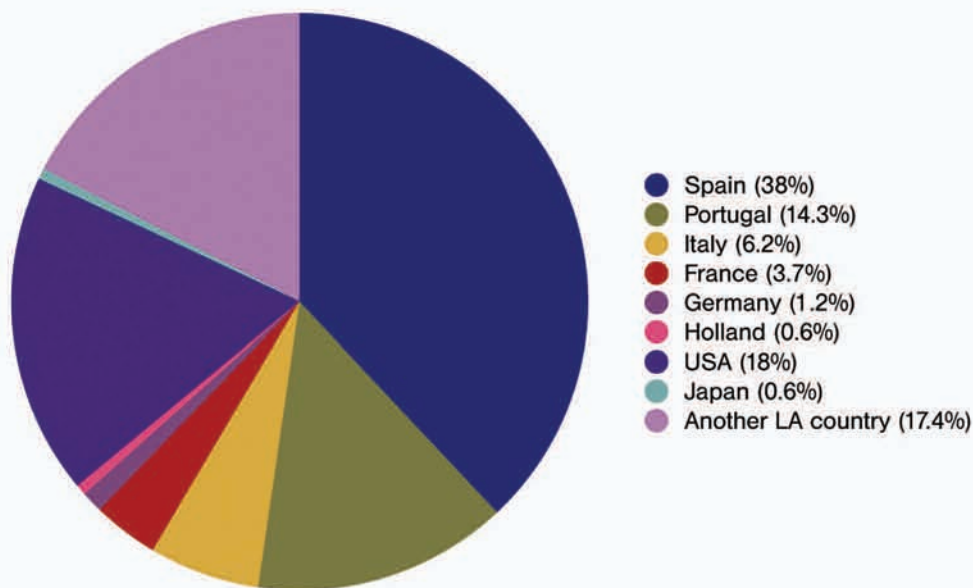
A minority of Ecuadorians had also claimed asylum. For example, Mayra, a 59-year-old from Quito who arrived in the UK in 1993, recounted how her husband had been a socialist in Ecuador and he had been threatened by the police because of his views. They had threatened to kidnap her son at which point they came to the UK.

Social or family reasons prompted 16% to migrate, mainly to join other family members or to join friends or relatives who had already migrated as well as because of family conflict. For example, Serafina, who was 40 years old and from Tungurahua in Ecuador, had been living in London since 1996. Although Serafina's parents had migrated to England in 1990 for economic reasons, she never wanted to leave Ecuador. However, she and her husband began to have marital problems and she saw migration as a way of dealing with their problems by moving to England to start afresh.

Spain is a gateway to the UK for Latin Americans

Secondary movements from other countries, especially Spain, have become an important dimension of the recent migration of Latin Americans to London. More than a third (36.5%) of Latin Americans had previous experience of migration before arriving in the UK. Spain emerged as the most common country identified by those who had lived elsewhere before (38%). Other significant destinations of previous migration included the United States (18%), other Latin American countries (17%) and Portugal (14%) (see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Country lived in before migrating to the UK



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=161)

The link with Spain is especially important for Ecuadorian and Colombian migrants; almost three-quarters of Ecuadorians and half of Colombians who had resided elsewhere before travelling to the UK had previously lived in Spain. Three-quarters had spent less than five years there, with one-third spending less than a year.

Spain has therefore become a gateway country especially for recent arrivals to London. Among a total of 61 people who had previously lived in Spain, 52 of them had moved to the UK since 2000 (85%), with just over half of this group arriving in the past 5 years. From a different perspective, among all migrants who had arrived in the last 5 years, 1 in 5 came via Spain. This phenomenon reflects wider migration patterns in Spain which

has a very large Latin American migrant population, a large proportion of whom have become EU citizens through length of residency as well as a series of regularisation programmes. In 2008, there were 2.3 million Latin Americans living in Spain, and almost half a million (488,000) had Spanish nationality and were therefore EU citizens (García Ballesteros et al., 2009). Indeed, in our survey, among those who held another nationality, more than a quarter were Spanish (26%).

The move from Spain to the UK is linked with a range of factors identified in the qualitative research. One of the most important was disillusionment with the quality of work available in Spain. Among men, this was dissatisfaction with the low pay for long hours and difficult work in construction and agriculture in particular and for women the poor working conditions in care work and domestic service. Many perceived there to be more and higher paid work opportunities in London. This was exacerbated further by the recession from 2008 onwards, which resulted in very high levels of unemployment. Also significant was a perception that levels of racism were higher in Spain than the UK. For example, Ana from Loja in Ecuador moved to London from Spain in 2006 noting:

‘In Spain if you are *latino*, if you are foreign you are excluded a little more; they don’t look at the quality of your work, but rather the appearance of it. I think that there, it’s hard for *latinos* to get on; the majority work in construction and cleaning and it’s very hard to work in an office or a bank. There is too much discrimination.’

It also emerged that Spain was used as a gateway by a small minority of those who entered the UK irregularly. Leon, also from Loja, Ecuador, arrived in London in 2002 leaving his wife and children back home. He had spent 2 weeks in Spain during which time he bought a false Spanish passport and tickets for a bus trip to Belgium via Holland from where he took the Eurostar from Brussels to London.

While Spain was the most common country for most Latin Americans to visit first, visiting Italy and Portugal before coming to the UK was also significant, especially among Brazilians (see Figure 4.2). Indeed, 38% of Brazilians had lived previously in Portugal and 18% had lived in Italy. Yaritza, a 45-year-old woman from Rio Grande do Sul, arrived in London in 2008 after spending 3 months in Italy applying for an Italian passport. She was not keen to stay in Italy as there were few job opportunities and she was not interested in having to learn Italian; instead, she wanted to learn English which she felt was more useful. She had been working as a cleaner earning the minimum wage since she arrived. Migration via Italy and Portugal was also reflected in patterns of those with additional nationalities, with 15% having Italian passports and 7% having Portuguese passports.

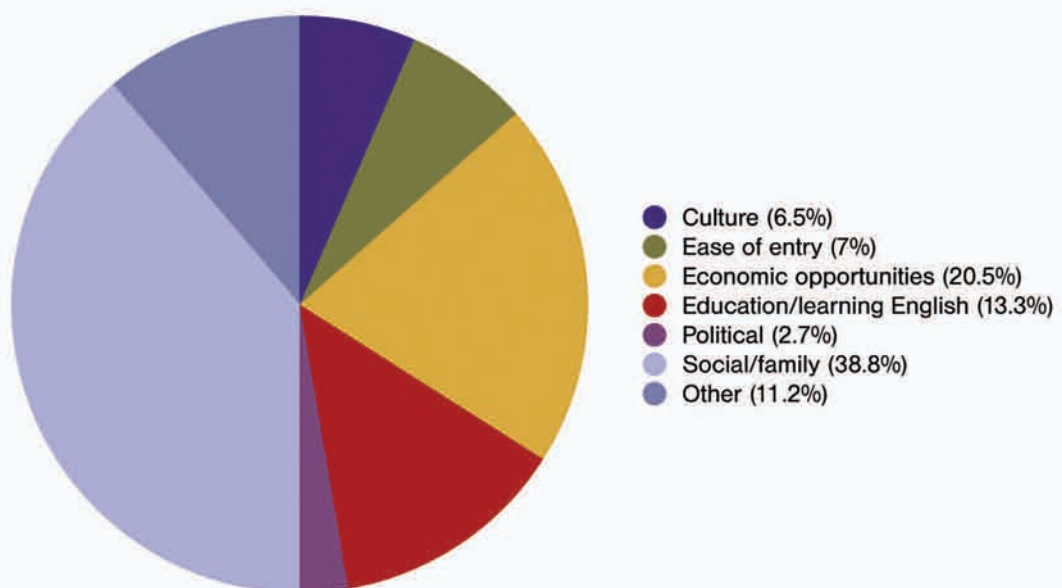
Latin Americans choose London because of the existence of friends and family

The most important reason why Latin Americans choose London as a destination is the existence of family, friends or contacts already living in the city (40%) (see Figure 4.3). This suggests that chain migration where people come to London with the help of networks of friends and families already settled there, has been important for the formation of the Latin American community. These people provide initial accommodation and help with securing jobs for the newly arrived. Occupational background or income level has less bearing on the reasons for choosing London with those in professional and managerial jobs being just as likely to identify social and family reasons as those working in occupational jobs, although the economic opportunities provided by London were more important for those in lower-skilled, lower-paid jobs.

However, economic and social reasons for choosing London were often intertwined with the image of London as a tolerant city with a strong cultural attraction. For example, 47-year-old Adriana from Quindío, Colombia, noted that:

‘Well, since I was 14 years old I realised that England existed when I read a geography book about European countries. From then on a dream was born in me of coming to England. I remember that when I read this book, the River Thames, the city of London seemed fascinating to me. From then on I had a dream to come and live in London, to see the Thames with my own eyes, to speak English with the English. Also I wanted to earn money, to earn pound sterling’.

Figure 4.3: Main reason for choosing London



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=945)

Guilherme's case reinforces this further. He was 39 years old and from Sao Paulo state in Brazil and had been living in London since 2001 working as a special needs teacher. He was openly gay and spoke of the freedom of living in London:

'[There are] no prejudices here, people are open-minded, people talk about everything, it is easier to meet cultured people, with whom you can exchange a lot of information, people who are not small-minded, who keep checking the clothes you are wearing, where you circulate, what you've consumed, if you are gay or married, people don't respect you only if you have money.'

Latin Americans mainly migrate to London alone with 40% incurring debts

Migration to London was an individual enterprise for most Latin Americans with 6 out of 10 having travelled on their own. Men were more likely than women to migrate alone (66% compared with 59%). However, among those who travelled with others, almost one-third were accompanied by their spouse (31%), with a further 27% coming with other relatives, with friends (18%) or with their children alone (14%). Women were more likely to come with their spouse or with their children alone while men were more likely to come with friends.

Just over half paid for their move with personal savings or capital but one-third had to use financial support from their family. A further 1 in 10 borrowed money to pay for their move. Therefore a significant 4 out of 10 people arrive in London indebted to family, money lenders or financial institutions in order to pay for their trip. Many people made substantial sacrifices in order to migrate with some of those who paid for their trip using their own capital through selling off property to avoid having to borrow money. In the case of Jaime, a 54-year-old from Santa Cruz in Bolivia, his migration to London was his second attempt after being duped by an intermediary in Bolivia who had promised to facilitate his migration to Japan. He bought papers and was promised a visa which never materialised (the intermediary and her daughter both went to Japan and never sent the papers or returned the money). In the end, Jaime had to sell his house in Bolivia (for £3,000) in order to finance his trip.

Two-thirds of Latin Americans enter the UK with temporary visas

The vast majority of Latin Americans enter the UK with some sort of valid document with only 3% entering by showing documents that were not valid - usually false EU (Spanish, Portuguese and Italian) passports or visas bought on the black market. Only 4 out of 959 people who answered this question entered without showing any documents at all. Almost two-thirds initially entered with a temporary visa that does not lead to settlement, mainly tourist or short term visitor visas (64%)¹⁸. One-fifth entered with documents that gave them the right to settle in the UK, such as EU passports and settlement visas with another 9% with documents that usually lead to settlement, such as work permits or dependents' visas (see Figure 4.4). The largest share of those arriving with visas leading to settlement were EU citizens (17%) Being able to claim citizenship of an EU country through ancestry or through naturalisation have therefore been important factors in enabling a significant number of Latin Americans to enter the UK.

Variations by country of origin also emerged. For example, three-quarters of Bolivians entered as tourists or visitors, which is much higher than for other countries. Almost one-third of Colombians entered with student visas which is also much higher than other countries. Brazilians and Ecuadorians were the most likely to enter the UK with EU passports (a quarter in each case). Gender differences in entry were minimal with only slightly more women entering on student visas than men.

Entry to the UK via asylum has declined dramatically since the 1990s

One of the most marked shifts in how Latin Americans enter the UK has been the decline in applying for asylum. While the proportion of those applying for asylum at the port of entry was low (6%), in the 1990s it was 17%. Indeed, 8 out of every 10 Latin Americans who applied for asylum on entry arrived in the 1990s. This reflected two turbulent periods in Latin America; the first in the south cone (Chile and Argentina) and the second in the northern Andes (Colombia and Ecuador). The vast majority of those claiming asylum were Colombians and Ecuadorians (46 out of 56). Applying for asylum has also had an important effect on the subsequent ability to claim citizenship. Nearly a third of British citizens in our survey had applied for asylum themselves or through a family member.

Another important shift is the increase in the proportion of Latin Americans arriving as students and with EU passports since 2000. Only 10% of those who arrived before 2000 entered with tourist visas, yet this had increased to a quarter of those who arrived after 2000. Less than 8% of those arriving before 2000 entered as EU citizens compared with 22% of those arriving after 2000.

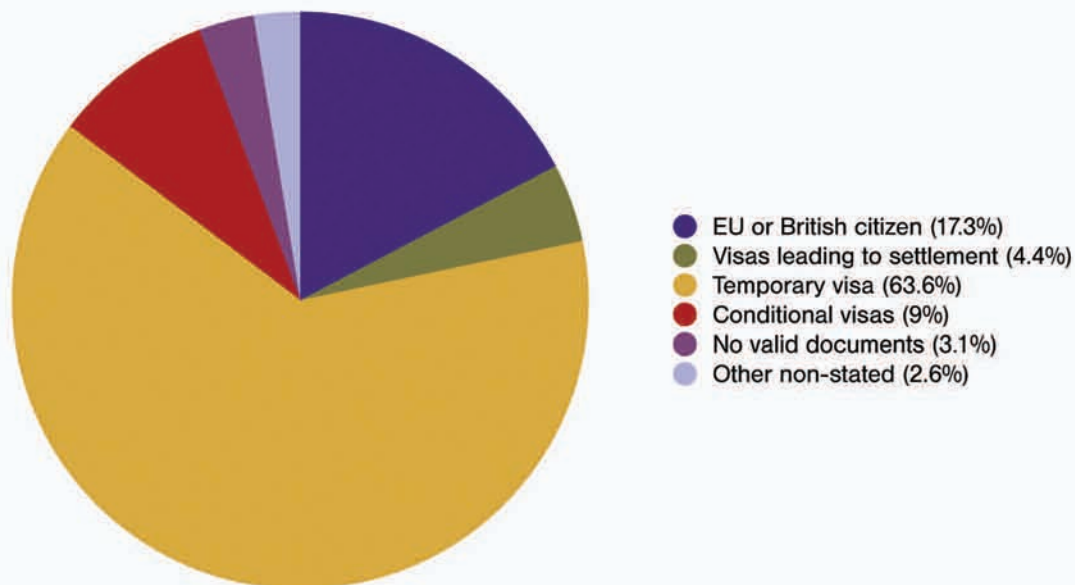
^[18] When entering the UK as visitors, nationals from certain countries have to have a valid visitor visa issued in their country of origin while those from other countries are given leave to enter at the port of entry.

Most Latin Americans change their immigration status after entry to the UK

Most Latin American migrants in London have gone through changes in immigration status since they entered the UK. The current picture shows that the majority reside in London legally. A quarter have British citizenship and 19% hold an EU passport (mainly Spanish, Italian and Portuguese). A further 11% have permanent residency (through Indefinite or Exceptional Leave to Remain). However, another one-fifth have no valid documents (19%) (see Figure 4.5). Overall, this means that more than half (55%) of Latin Americans have settled status with the rest on some form of temporary visas.

Brazilians and Bolivians were the most likely to be irregular (38% and 36.5%) while Peruvians and Colombians were most likely to hold British passports (38% and 37%). EU passport ownership was highest among Brazilians (31%). Bolivians were the most likely to hold student visas (23%). These patterns reflect different routes of entry into the UK also linked with the fact that Colombians and Ecuadorians have been living in London for much longer than other nationalities such as Brazilians and Bolivians.

Figure 4.4: Visa or documents used to enter the UK



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=959)

There were some gender differences in immigration status in that women were more likely than men to have British passports (30% and 20%). In turn, men were more likely than women to be irregular (22% and 16%).

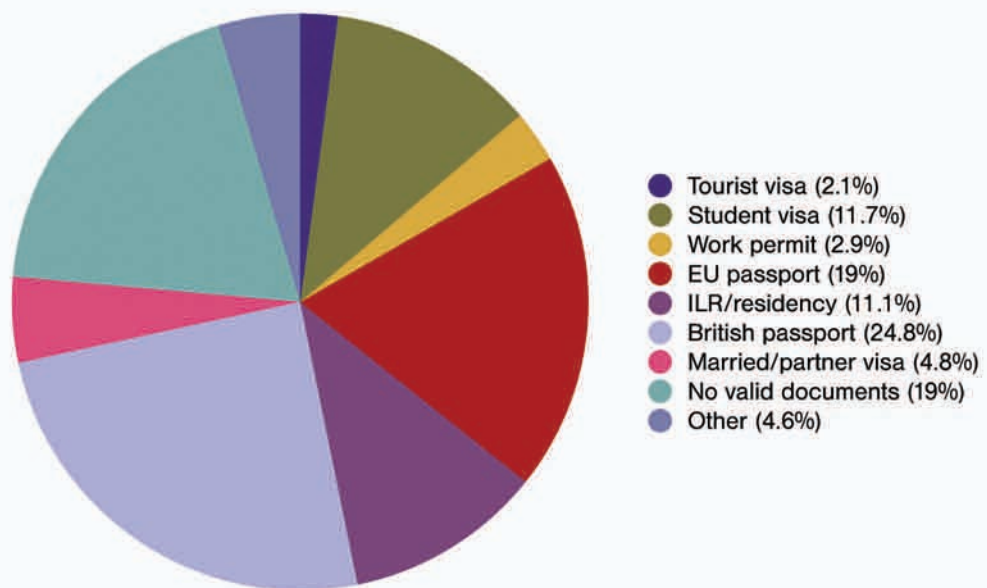
Overall, almost 70% of Latin Americans entered the UK with a different immigration status to their current status. Those with EU passports were the most likely to have entered on the same status - almost 8 out of every 10. Similarly, three quarters of those with student visas had entered on the same status and 15 out of 20 of those with tourist visas.

However, around 93% of those who were irregular had entered the country legally. More than three-quarters did so with tourist/visitor visas and another 10% with student visas and had then overstayed their visas. Most of those who were British citizens also entered with a different status. Almost half entered as tourists/visitors and a further 13% entered as students.

[19] The Family Amnesty programme gave those who had at least one dependent child in the UK and had claimed asylum before 2 October 2002 the right to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain and gave them full rights to remain in the UK and to work (see <http://www.ncadc.org.uk/resources/familyamnesty.html> - accessed 26 November 2010).

Of the 135 people who identified how they attained permanent residence or British citizenship, most obtained this through marriage to someone who was already settled (43%). More than 20% became settled as a direct consequence of applying for asylum. Ten people (7%) had become settled through successful asylum applications and a further 14% had qualified through the family amnesty programme for asylum seekers with young children (the family exercise)¹⁹. 17 people (13%) had qualified for settlement through the long residence rule where people who have been in the UK for a long period of time irrespective of immigration status are granted leave to remain. Most Latin American migrants in London therefore go through multiple immigration statuses, especially those who are irregular and those who have settled (see also McIlwaine, 2009).

Figure 4.5: Current immigration status among Latin Americans



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=960)

A minority of Latin Americans arrive in London with the intention to settle

Only a quarter of respondents reported that they arrived in London with definite plans to settle permanently, with 60% wanting to return home and 15% not sure. This proportion had reduced to 16% at the time of survey. However, almost a third was unsure (32%) with a further 29% stating they planned to stay for between 1 and 5 years only.

Therefore, many arrive as a short term measure to earn money or to improve their education. However, the qualitative research showed that the longer people remained in London, and the more established they became, they often stayed for longer than originally intended. However, uncertainty is also fuelled by the very high cost of living in London which often comes as a surprise to Latin Americans and can severely undermine their economic well-being (see also Chapter 6).

Drawing on the qualitative research, Jairo, who was 34 years old from Lima, Peru, arrived in 2002. Although he was irregular, he didn't want to return home until he sorted out his papers: 'I want to stay another 7 years so that I can get my papers, but I don't know how long I'll be able to cope with being illegal although I do like London'. In another case, Serafina from Quito, Ecuador, initially planned to stay in the UK for a short time: 'we had the idea of coming to this country and staying only for a few years, and returning to Ecuador with good English and then being able to do something more with our lives there'. However, she had been living in London for 13 years and felt that she would probably stay: 'Now London is my home ... until a few years ago I thought I would return, but now with the children, I think we'll stay. To be honest, this year I've realised that I've come to love London'.

Routes into the UK among Latin Americans

Adriana, who was 58 years old and from Qundío, Colombia, arrived in London in 1977. She decided to leave Colombia because she was feeling depressed following the death of her father and because the opportunity of buying a work permit to move to the UK appeared; her mother borrowed the money to buy the permit and her plane ticket. Adriana had been working as a cash till operator before she left and she also thought she could earn more in London. She was directly contracted to work as a waitress in a hotel in Kensington High Street. She worked there for several years until she got pregnant and was sacked from her job. She has been working for the past 10 years as a house cleaner and supporting her 17-year-old son. She had a British passport that she obtained when she married her Colombian partner whom she met in London (he already had a passport).

Eloy was 50 years old from Cusco, Peru. He arrived in London in 2003 after he received a job offer from the owner of a Peruvian restaurant. He had already been working as a chef in Peru but his wife had died and he felt it was a good time to leave. The owner of the restaurant paid for his ticket and arranged his work permit. Leaving his 5 children behind in Huaran with his mother, Eloy had worked in the same job since he arrived in London.

Magarida was 29 years old and came from Goiania, Brazil where she worked in publicity and marketing for TV, radio and newspapers. She arrived in London in 2003 with the aim of learning English in order to help her career: 'you need English for you to be more professional, better prepared in the 'official' language. So I decided to come to London'. She arrived on a tourist visa and her partner joined her a month later. After 6 months she converted her tourist visa into a student visa in 2004 (which she lamented was no longer possible) while she studied English and worked as a chambermaid in a hotel. In 2005, she got married and her husband became a dependent on her student visa, allowing him to work full-time as an administrator in a construction company (she began to do a degree in Management which means that she could extend her visa). Magarida had also managed to get a good job in an estate agency.

José was 37 years old and from Antioquia, Colombia. José fled Colombia in 1996 when the armed conflict was especially difficult; he lived in a farming community where he had a small business selling beer and liquor. However, he kept receiving death threats from both the guerrillas and paramilitaries. Because he feared for his life, José decided to use all his savings to fly to London where he claimed asylum on arrival at the airport. He first worked as a painter when he arrived but then he managed to set-up his own clothes shop.

Chapter 5:

Latin Americans in London's labour market

Key points

- Latin Americans have very high employment rates, with 85% in work.
- More than half of all working Latin Americans are employed in low-skilled jobs, rising to two-thirds if sales occupations are included.
- One-fifth is employed in professional and managerial jobs.
- 22% of employees have no written contract, which implies that basic rights and benefits such as sick pay and annual leave are being denied to many workers.
- Most experience a dramatic decline in occupational status in London, particularly those in professional and managerial jobs.
- Occupational mobility is possible and increases as migrants settle into the UK, but work is often restricted to different jobs from those held back home and the diversity of careers is greatly reduced.

Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which Latin Americans make a living in London in terms of identifying where they are employed in the labour market. It outlines their employment rates and the types of jobs that Latin Americans have. The discussion also highlights the ways in which their occupational status changes on arrival in London compared with their employment back home and the extent to which they have any occupational mobility once they settle.

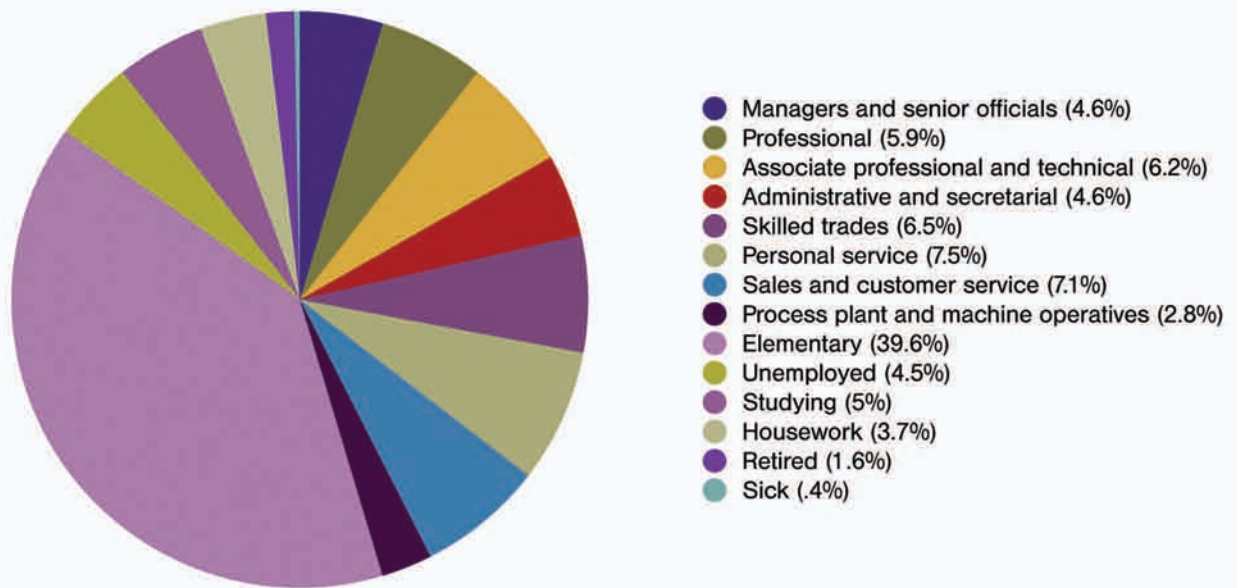
Latin Americans have very high employment rates in London

The employment rate of Latin Americans in London is very high with 85% in work. This is much higher than the overall rate for London residents who were born overseas and for the London population as a whole. Our analysis of the APS shows that the employment rate for adult Latin Americans as a whole in London was 71% in 2008. Our analysis also reveals that Latin Americans have higher employment rates than other foreign born workers in London (55%) and for the London population as a whole (61%). Our analysis of the APS further shows that the employment rate for adult Latin American men was 82% and 60% for women in 2008.

In our survey, among those not in paid work, the largest group were those studying, followed by the unemployed, those dedicated to housework and the sick (see Figure 5.1). The most recently arrived nationality groups have the highest employment rate with 95% of all Brazilians working. Men are more likely to be working than women (92% and 79%). The latter is especially high when compared with APS figures. This could be related with the fact that our survey included a much wider range of people with various types of immigration status including a fifth of irregular migrants who generally have higher employment rates than those with permanent residency and access to benefits. In general, these high rates are linked with the fact that many Latin Americans have migrated for economic reasons, with many responsible for sustaining families back home. Those who had lived in the country for longer and who had legal residency were most likely not to be in work, including those who were retired, sick or disabled. This pattern was most marked among Colombians.

Evidence from the qualitative research showed that even those who identified themselves as not working were often employed for a couple of hours a week, especially those who said they were students or housewives. Malia, who was 60 years old, migrated to London in 1982 from Quito in Ecuador where she had her own small grocery shop. While her first two jobs after she arrived were in factories, most of her working life in London was in a range of different cleaning jobs in offices and houses. Although she identified as a housewife, she also worked around 6 hours a week as a paid house cleaner.

Figure 5.1: Economic activity of Latin Americans ²⁰



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=948)

[20] The occupational classifications used here are the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC 2000) which are maintained by the Occupational Information Unit (OIU) of the Office of National Statistics. They also include additional categories for those who are not in work (studying, unemployed, housework, sick).

Latin Americans are concentrated in low-skilled, low-paid jobs in London

[21] Our analysis of the APS shows that in 2008, 28% of Latin Americans were working in routine and semi-routine jobs (broadly equivalent to elementary jobs), compared with 17% of foreign born people, and 14% of all people living in London (see: <http://tinyurl.com/3wdkc73>).

[22] Some personal service occupations are highly skilled but in the current project, the majority were in caring and cleaning occupations.

[23] For example, our analysis of the APS highlights that 25% of Latin Americans were working in 'higher and lower managerial and professional occupations' (equivalent to managerial, professional and associated), compared with 29% of those born abroad living in London and 34% of the London population as a whole.

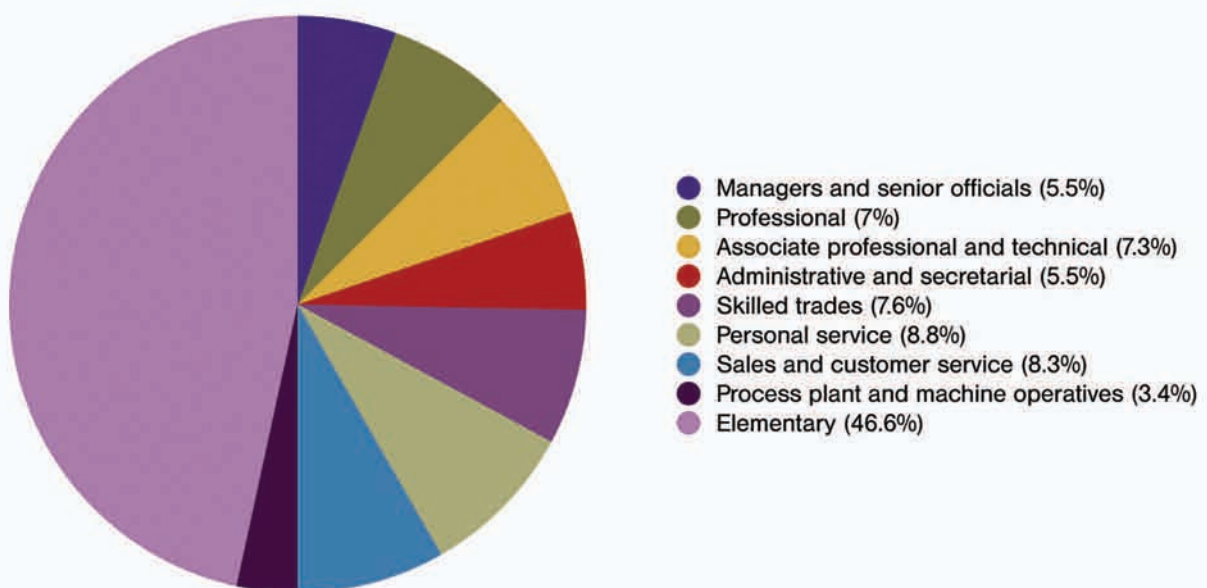
[24] Correlation coefficients were run to assess the strength of the relationships between nationality and occupational category. This produced a result of -0.073 significant at .05 which indicates that a relationship exists but that it is weak. This was also corroborated through chi-square testing.

Latin Americans work in all types of jobs in London. However, almost half of all working Latin Americans are employed in elementary occupations (47%) which include contract cleaners, kitchen assistants, porters, waiters and waitresses, hotel chambermaids and security guards. This is much higher than for the foreign born and the London population as a whole (see Figure 5.2)²¹.

When elementary jobs are added to personal service occupations, which here refer to domestic cleaning and au pairing, over half of working Latin Americans are employed in low-skilled, manual work (55%)²². If sales and customer services jobs are added to this, which generally include shop assistants, almost two-thirds of working Latin Americans are employed in these low-paid, low-skilled jobs. Almost one-third of all jobs carried out by working Latin Americans in London are in cleaning (office and domestic). A further 10% are chefs, kitchen assistants and waiters/waitresses. Although one-fifth of working Latin Americans are employed in managerial, professional and associated professional jobs in the city, this is still significantly lower than the foreign born population or the London population as a whole²³.

There is some variation by nationality in terms of the type of economic activities undertaken by Latin Americans²⁴. Working Bolivians and Brazilians are the most likely to be employed in elementary jobs with over half employed in these jobs (57% and 55%). In contrast, Bolivians are the least likely to work in professional and managerial jobs (9%), with Peruvians being strongly represented (almost one-third). Among some smaller nationality groups such as Argentineans, there are many working in professional occupations (60%).

Figure 5.2: Occupational category of working population



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=805)

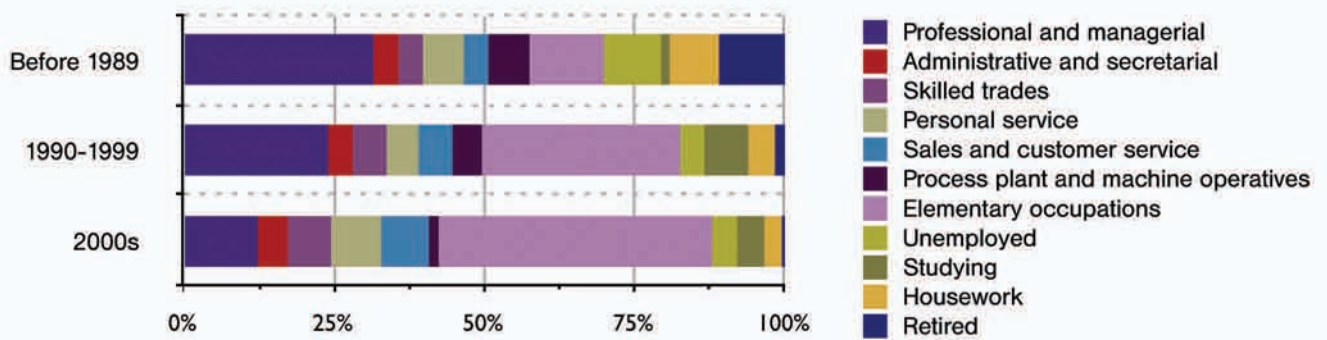
[25] Our analysis of the APS shows a broadly similar trend although the overall concentration in elementary jobs is more marked. For example, 30% of men were concentrated in routine and semi-routine occupations and another 26% in managerial and professional occupations in 2008. Among women, 27% worked in routine and semi-routine occupations with 24% in managerial and professional jobs (see: <http://tinyurl.com/3wdkc73>).

[26] Correlation coefficients were run to assess the strength of the relationships between year of arrival and occupational category. This produced a result of 0.074 significant at .05 which indicates that a relationship exists but that it is

Working women and men are equally likely to be employed in elementary jobs. However, when personal services occupations are added to this, almost two-thirds of women are employed in low-skilled jobs (62%) compared with only half of men. This can be explained by the preponderance of women working in nanny and au pair work. There are no marked gender differences at the upper end of the labour market with women and men working in professional jobs in equal measure²⁵.

The year of arrival also affects the economic activities of Latin Americans²⁶. Those who have arrived since 2000 are much more likely to work in elementary jobs than those who arrived in previous decades. A similar pattern prevails for those who are working in personal services and sales jobs. Conversely, almost one-third of those who arrived before 1989 now work in professional and managerial jobs (see Figure 5.3). When comparing whether nationality or year of arrival have more influence on the types of economic activities people are engaged in, both relationships are statistically significant although there is a slightly stronger relationship between occupation and year of arrival.

Figure 5.3: Occupational category among economically active by year of arrival



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=946)

weak. This was also corroborated through chi-square testing.

The concentration of Latin Americans in the low-skilled sectors of the labour market, at least on first arrival, has important implications for the operation of the points-based immigration system that was introduced in the UK in 2008. This system of 'managed migration' favours highly skilled migrants and is based on the assumption that the demand for unskilled labour in the UK's economy will be met by migrants from within the EU (Wills et al, 2010). This system effectively closes or severely limits possible routes into the UK for unskilled non-EU workers such as Latin Americans.

Most Latin Americans are employed in the formal labour market, but 1 in 5 are employed without a contract

Among Latin American employees (excluding a quarter of the working population who are self-employed) 22% worked informally without the protection of a written contract²⁷. This is partly linked with immigration status with almost 44% of irregular migrants working informally. This implies that a relatively large proportion of Latin Americans have no access to the basic statutory minimum of worker benefits such as sick pay, annual leave, maternity pay or any other workers' rights.

Three-quarters of Latin Americans pay tax and National Insurance contributions. However, this means that almost a quarter are not paying such contributions. This is linked with the fact that almost a quarter are paid in cash, especially Bolivians (one-third). Again, this leaves Latin Americans outside the formal system of labour rights and vulnerable to abuse. More than 40% of those not paying taxes are irregular migrants, although it is significant that many are contributing. This is reflected in the case of Victor, a 29-year-old from Bolivar in Ecuador, who spoke of how he was able to buy a National Insurance number illegally for £300 with his name and date of birth which allowed him to work in his various office cleaning jobs. He therefore made National Insurance contributions without being eligible for contribution-based benefits. Among others not paying tax and National Insurance, many are self-employed. Overall, one-fifth of all Latin Americans in our survey were self-employed, of which more than half worked in elementary and personal service jobs such as cleaning and au pair work with the remainder mainly artisans and builders. The vast majority of these workers had no contract or related employment rights. Brazilians are the most likely to be self-employed with almost a quarter in this position, as cleaners, au pairs, couriers as well as some construction workers. Women are also more likely to be self-employed than men (18% and 12%).

Among the 10% of Latin Americans who run their own businesses, more than 40% owned small shops and retail outlets, with a further 11% involved in skilled trades such as plumbers or electricians as well as personal services such as manicurists. Another 40% worked in various types of businesses as professionals, including an IT consultant and a dentist. More than 80% paid tax and National Insurance. Most small business owners serve the Latin American community.

The more established nationality groups of Peruvians and Colombians were more likely than other nationalities to own their business although numbers are small (11 and 5). Men were also twice as likely to own a business as women (26 and 12). Not surprisingly, those with permanent residency were the most likely to own a business (30 out of 38).

^[27] Informality is defined as: 'The paid production and sale of goods and services that are unregistered by, or hidden from the state for tax, benefit and/or labour law purposes but which are legal in all other respects' (ONS, 2005, 4).

Occupational status of Latin Americans falls dramatically on arrival in London

Migration to London involves a marked decline in occupational status for the vast majority of Latin Americans. An extremely small proportion of Latin Americans worked in elementary jobs in their home countries. On arrival in London, this increased to almost 70% of all migrants. This then fell to 40% at the time of survey²⁸. This is mirrored at the upper end of the labour market. Back home in Latin America, 36% of people worked in professional and managerial jobs. When they arrived in London this declined to only 6%, increasing to 17% currently (see Figure 5.4).

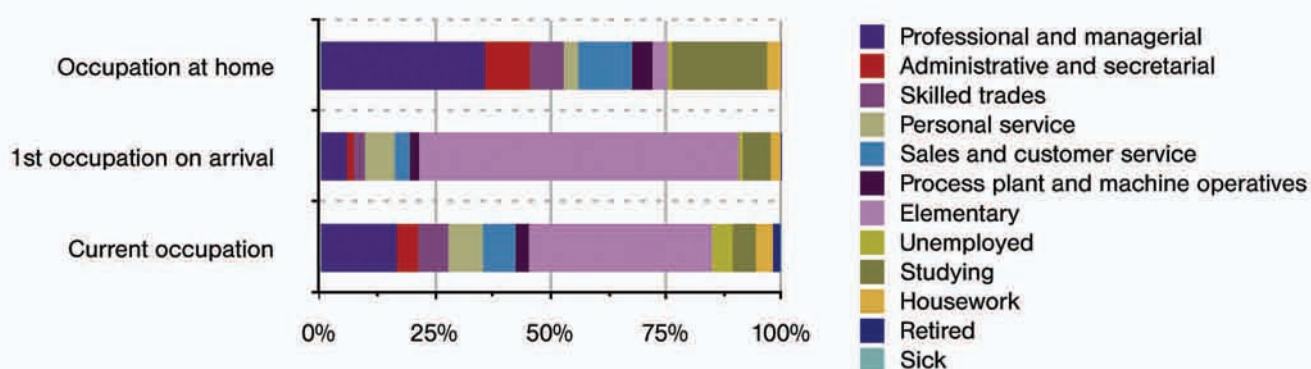
Also important is that many women were working in Latin America before they migrated with a very high employment rate of 72%. One-fifth was studying before migration; only 6% identified their main occupation as housework/housewife. One-third of women were employed in professional and managerial jobs back home (34%). This suggests that the majority of women were accustomed to paid employment before migration. While the employment rate for men before migration was higher at 79%, the difference is not that large.

The actual jobs that Latin Americans held in their home countries were hugely diverse and included teachers, accountants, pharmacists, designers, bakers, barbers, mechanics, engineers, bus and taxi drivers, hairdressers, musicians, nurses, police officers, secretaries, social workers, and small and large business owners. This diversity declined dramatically when people arrived in London, with the vast majority getting by through working in cleaning, washing-up and as chefs. All these jobs were relatively easy to secure and rarely required English language which many did not speak.

Some nationalities have fared worse than others in terms of occupational mobility. For Bolivians in particular, almost 40% were working in professional and managerial jobs before they migrated. Yet on arrival, almost three-quarters worked in elementary jobs. Soraya was a 28-year-old Bolivian from Santa Cruz, where she had worked as a product promoter for a paper company. In London, her first job was office cleaning for a large contract cleaning company. She currently worked full-time in office cleaning as well as having another cleaning job in the evenings. Soraya recognised the decline in her occupational status, but she was willing to sacrifice this for higher earnings: 'Here you can earn much more than in Bolivia. In Bolivia, you earn very little. You can work all month and still not have enough money to eat'.

^[28] People were asked what job they did before they left Latin America, what their first job in arrival was and what their current job was.

Figure 5.4: Changes in economic activity through migration and settlement



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=935, n=453, n=948)

Although the decline in occupational status is broadly similar for men and women, evidence from the qualitative research showed that women tended to cope better with this transformation than men, mainly because of their changing gender roles. Acknowledging that women's employment rates were already high in Latin America, economic independence was repeatedly mentioned by women as a key aspect of improvements in women's lives. Although participation in the labour market does not automatically engender improvements in women's lives, especially for those working in the lower echelons of the labour market in cleaning and catering, independent access to income can make a tangible difference to women's lives. For example, Rosa Maria who was 48 years old and from Bolivia pointed out that although she had previously worked as a seamstress back home, her cleaning work in London made her feel more valued as a person because she earned enough to be able to support her children – which she was unable to do in Bolivia.

In contrast, men often found it psychologically difficult to work in 'feminised' occupations perceived to be women's work such as cleaning and catering. For those from professional backgrounds in particular where it would have been unheard of them to carry out any domestic labour and where they probably had paid staff to do this work, the decline in status was keenly felt. For example, Patricio was 44 years old and from Lima in Peru. He migrated to London in 1992 and had been irregular for most of this time. In Peru, he was a livestock technician. When he first arrived in London, he got a job cleaning theatres. He said of this job: 'This was a total change for me. I felt terrible; in Peru I was in charge of a livestock centre and I ended up here running around cleaning a theatre'. After four office cleaning jobs and one washing dishes in a restaurant he secured his current work as a taxi-driver which he felt was 'more suitable work for a man'.

Some women noted that men resented their apparent disempowerment in the labour market, including downward occupational mobility, and that this was linked to an intensification of gender inequalities and abuses of power which in some cases

resulted in domestic violence. Ana Maria, who was 43 years old and from Santa Cruz in Bolivia, where she had worked as a journalist, said that her marital problems got worse after arriving in London. Her husband had previously worked in the local municipality but he had to work as a cleaner in London just like Ana Maria. Her husband hated what he called 'women's work' and he also objected to Ana Maria going out to work:

'He was worse in London because he worked at night and I worked during the day. He rarely saw me and so he carried around this ghost of jealousy that made him violent. With his black jealousies he hit me every day. He hated his job and he hated me working in the same type of job.'

Ana Maria did not seek any help because she was irregular and therefore was afraid that she would be deported.

Overall, for some, occupational mobility has been possible, usually reflected in movement out of the elementary sector, usually into sales. However, it was extremely rare for Latin Americans to be able to work in the jobs that they had been trained in or had worked in back home. The case of Luciana, a 39-year-old Brazilian systems analyst from Sao Paulo, illustrates this. She arrived in London in 2004 after living for a year in Italy and a year in Portugal, but the only job she could get on arrival was office cleaning. She hated the unsocial hours, poor pay and not being able to practise her English. She was desperate to get out of cleaning and after a year her English was good enough to get a job as a waitress. Although she noted that this was not as good as her job in Brazil, she said that it was better than cleaning.

In a very small number of cases, professional Latin Americans have been transferred by their companies to London as in the case of a banker from Colombia who worked for a large Dutch bank in Bogotá and had been promoted to vice-president which entailed a move to London.

Another route towards occupational mobility is through entrepreneurial activities. Again for a minority, the only way Latin Americans could secure the type of job that they wanted and that they felt matched their aspirations was to set-up their own business. The case of Alonso, a 48-year-old from Quindío in Colombia illustrates this. Alonso left Colombia in 1998 where he had a small business selling paintings after working for a long time in 5-star hotels as a waiter. He migrated to London in search of a better life and to join his wife and young daughter. When he arrived, he worked in office cleaning. However, after 6 years of cleaning he wanted to be his own boss again. He had two friends who had a restaurant in the Elephant and Castle area who wanted to sell it. Alonso used some savings from his cleaning work to buy them out. He was grateful for the opportunities he had been given in London: 'Here, it's easier to make money and there are many more possibilities than in our country because unfortunately in Colombia after the age of 30 you become elderly'.

Chapter 6:

Economic profile of Latin Americans

Key points

- Many Latin Americans work fragmented and unsociable hours.
- One-third work part-time and another third combine more than one job to make ends meet.
- 11% of Latin American workers earn below the statutory National Minimum Wage – 10 times the UK rate.
- They earn a median hourly rate of pay of £7.07 per hour, higher than the National Minimum Wage but lower than the London Living Wage.
- They have substantially lower household incomes than the UK average.
- Almost 40% of working Latin Americans experience workplace abuses, including having payments withheld (22% of those working) and verbal abuse (14%).
- They cope with economic vulnerability in a range of ways, including borrowing and saving.
- The global financial crisis has exacerbated economic hardships.

Introduction

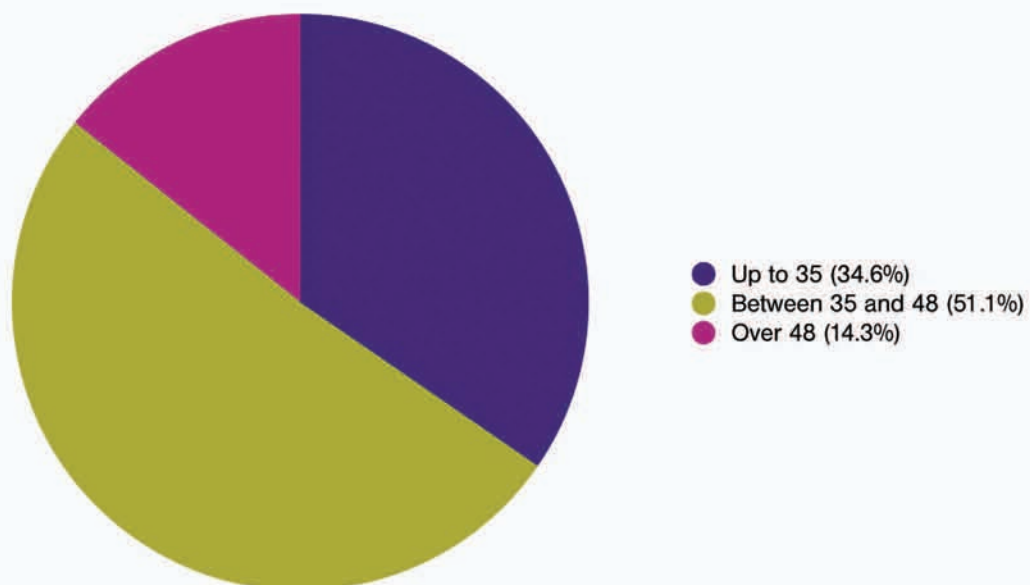
This chapter expands on the previous discussion of the labour market activities of Latin Americans and addresses their working conditions. It outlines their working hours as well as their median earnings compared with the National Minimum Wage and the London Living Wage. The chapter also discusses the nature of labour market exploitation experienced by Latin Americans in relation to workplace abuses. It continues with an analysis of how Latin Americans mobilise economic resources beyond the labour market in relation to borrowing and saving as well as an outline of how the global financial crisis has affected the economic wellbeing of this population.

Latin Americans work fragmented and unsociable hours

Latin Americans work for a median of 38 hours per week. However, almost two-thirds worked more than a basic working week of 35 hours. More than a quarter worked more than 40 hours per week and 14% worked more than 48 hours which is the limit imposed by the European Working Time Directive (see Figure 6.1). Among those working more than 48 hours per week, almost one-third were employed in sales and customer services (32%). Brazilians were the most likely to be working more than 48 hours per week (17.5%) and men worked longer hours outside the home than women (19% and 9%). However, women bear the primary responsibility for domestic and caring responsibilities in the home, especially when they are lone parents with dependent children (who make up 20% of the sample – see Chapter 7).

Especially significant is that many Latin Americans work fragmented hours; this can mean they work part-time and it can also indicate that they work full-time hours but in a range of different jobs. More than one-third worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week), especially those in personal service and elementary jobs (50% and 40%) and women (45%). Brazilians were more likely to work part-time than other nationalities. This is not always by choice, but because of the nature of many cleaning, catering, personal service and sales jobs which are only available for 3-4 hours at a time. These jobs are often part-time jobs and require people to work very unsociable hours, usually for 3-4 hours in the early morning and then again in the evenings. In addition, part-time work is often the only option for those (mainly women) who also have unpaid caring responsibilities. Linked with these types of working practices, one-third of Latin Americans have more than one job. Just over half of those with more than one job worked in the elementary sector. Bolivians were much more likely than any other nationality to have more than one job (44%).

Figure 6.1: Weekly hours of work among Latin Americans



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=366)

Evidence from the qualitative research highlights that combining several jobs in order to make ends meet can be very challenging as people have to travel from one workplace to another, often across large distances within London. For example, 47-year-old Wilson was from Quito, Ecuador, where he had worked as a police officer. After living in Spain for 19 years where he worked as a welder and in road building, he moved to London in 2008. The only work he could find was in cleaning. At the time of interview he had 3 cleaning jobs – one for 3 hours 4-7am, another full-time job 9-5 and another in the evenings 7-10pm, all of them for office cleaning companies. Wilson spoke of having to travel for up to an hour on the bus between jobs although he said that this allowed him to catch up on his sleep.

Latin Americans earn more than the minimum wage on average but less than the London Living Wage

Latin Americans earn a median hourly rate of pay of £7.07 per hour which is higher than the National Minimum Wage (NMW) at the time of survey of £5.73²⁹. However, it is lower than the London Living Wage (LLW) at the time of £7.60 - which is the rate that is required to lift people out of poverty in London.

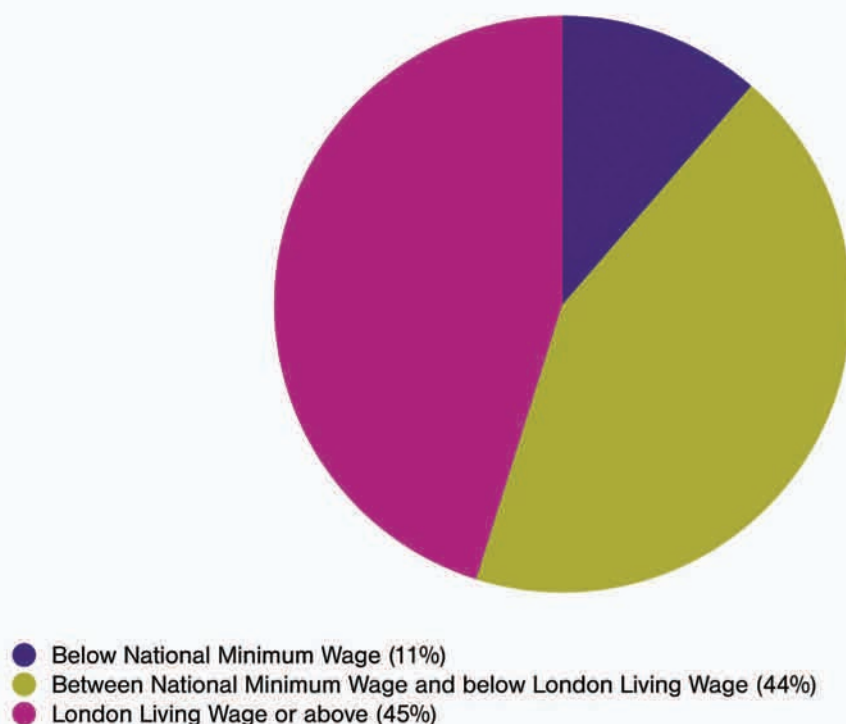
While it is clear that most Latin Americans earn the equivalent or more than the NMW, 44% earn between the NMW and the LLW. Also, less than half earn more than the London Living Wage (see Figure 6.2). There is also evidence of Latin Americans being paid less than the statutory minimum (11%). This is 10 times higher than the UK rate³⁰. The case of 29-year-old Eugenia from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, illustrates this. She arrived in London in 2005 leaving behind her job as an accountant. As well as studying English, and initially working in various cleaning jobs, she managed to get work in a remittance agency that specialised in sending money and parcels to Bolivia. However, she only earned £3.80 per hour which is much less than the NMW and is therefore illegal.

Women have slightly higher median hourly wage rates than men (£7.55 and £7.00). However, women are more likely to earn less than the NMW than men (12% and 10%), although they are also more likely to earn the LLW or above (50% and 40%). People working in elementary jobs and sales and customer services earn the lowest wages with a median of £6.50 per hour. In contrast, those working in professional jobs earn the highest hourly median rate of £15.13 per hour (see Figure 6.3). Again, the vulnerability of Brazilians and Bolivians emerges in that they have the lowest hourly gross median rates of pay of £7.00.

[29] This hourly rate includes those who are paid by the month as well as those earning annual salaries. Their hourly rates of pay are derived using the weekly hours of work they themselves identified in our survey.

[30] The UK rate is 1.1% of all jobs in the labour market (see www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=591 accessed 5 February 2011).

Figure 6.2: Hourly rates of pay



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=662 - includes estimates from monthly and annual income)

Linked with their limited earning power, Latin Americans have substantially lower median household incomes than the UK average. The median gross household income was £425 per week. Bearing in mind that many Latin American households are single people (see Chapter 6), this compares unfavourably with a mean weekly household total income estimate for London of £840 in 2008³¹. Among Latin Americans who identified an annual salary, their earnings were £22,723 which is below the average for the UK as a whole (£25,800 in 2009)³². This is also significant as this group are much more likely to include the professional and managerial workers and it excludes those low wage workers earning on an hourly basis.

^[31] ONS (2010) Income: Model-Based Estimates at MSOA level, 2007/08, Office for National Statistics (www.statistics.gov.uk)

^[32] This figure relates specifically to those who identified an annual salary (n=201).

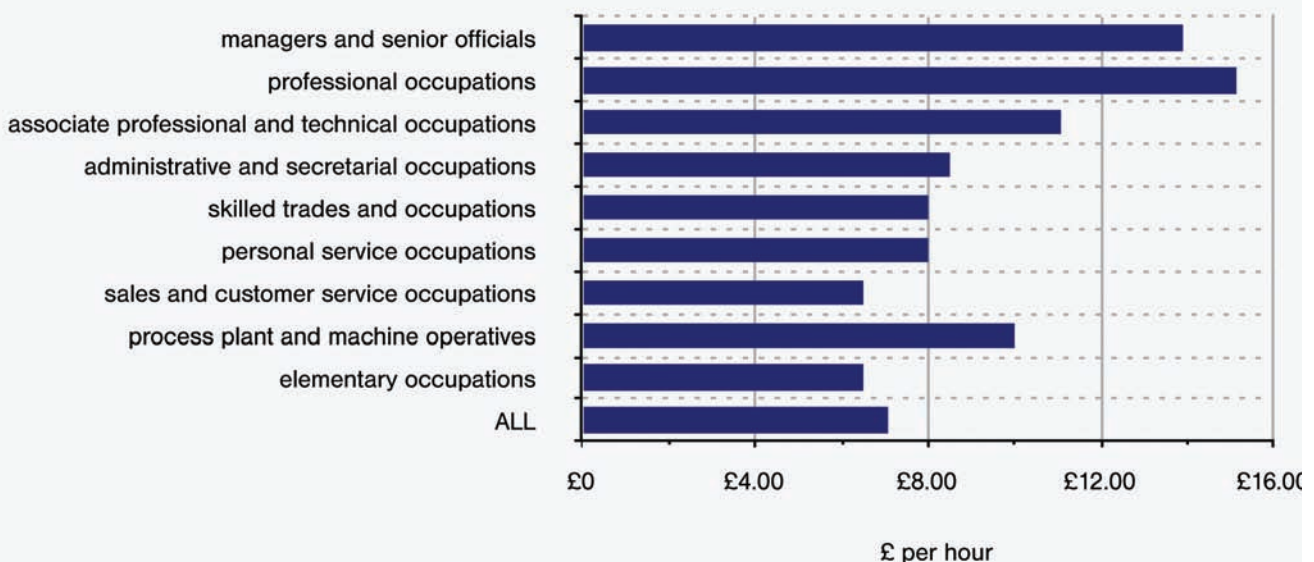
Workplace exploitation is commonplace among Latin Americans

Almost 40% of working Latin Americans reported experiences of problems in the workplace. Among this group, more than half complained of not getting paid for work they had done and more than a third had experienced verbal abuse. Almost a third complained of having to work for longer hours to complete their tasks without additional pay. This means that more than a fifth of the Latin American working population identified not being paid for work done with another 14% experiencing verbal abuse and 13% working longer hours than they were paid for (see Figure 6.4). Complaints of ill-treatment were most common among those working in skilled jobs, as machine operatives and in elementary occupations (with almost half of each occupation reporting problems). Half of those on student visas identified workplace problems as well as 42% of those without valid documents. These patterns indicate that many Latin Americans work in vulnerable employment defined as: 'Precarious work that places people at risk of continuing poverty and injustice resulting from an imbalance in power in the employer-worker relationship' (TUC Commission on Vulnerable Employment 2008, 11).

[33] The Immigration and Asylum Act 2006 increased employers' responsibility for checking their workers immigration documentation. This legislation came into force in February 2008 with the result that employers can now be issued a civil penalty fine of up to £10,000 for each undocumented migrant worker found in their employment (UKBA (MRN, 2008).

The qualitative research revealed that problems among irregular migrants in particular were growing as immigration legislation was getting stricter and the pressure on employers to check immigration papers of their employees intensified and became more punitive. Many irregular migrants spoke of losing their jobs because they did not have the correct documentation³³.

Figure 6.3: Hourly wage rate by economic activity category



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=652)

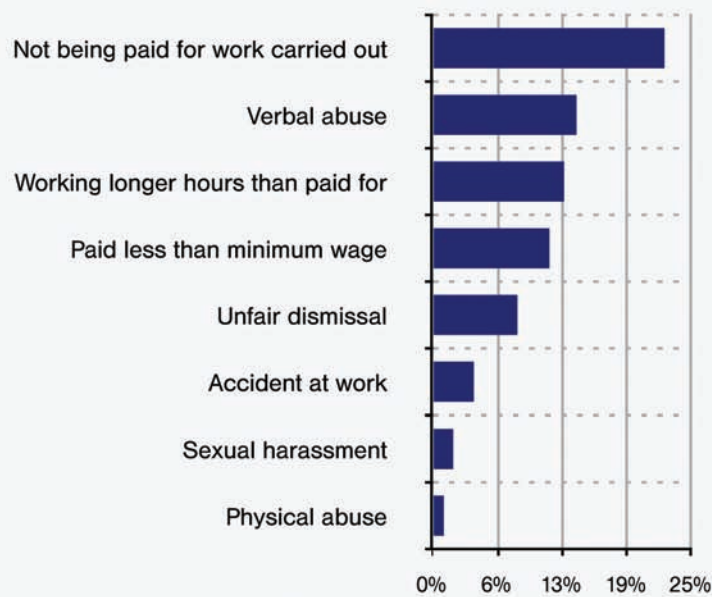
Another dimension of problems in the workplace that emerged from the qualitative research was that exploitation occurred between Latin Americans. For example, Yaneth, a 33-year-old from Narino in Colombia recounted how she had been mistreated at the hands of her Colombian managers in the hotel where she worked as a chambermaid:

‘Another bad experience I had was in a hotel where I worked where they offered us extra hours to do spring cleaning. After I had finished I had earned about £1,000 or nearer to £1500. When they gave me my payslip, they hadn’t paid me the full amount – only £600. I went to complain to the manager who was Colombian. I wasn’t able to recuperate the money. In a similar way, those who were illegal got nothing, they lost more than £1,000’.

In terms of women and men’s experiences, women were more likely to identify verbal abuse and sexual harassment in the workplace than men. Although the survey identified few cases, several women in the interviews complained of sexual harassment at work on the part of supervisors including Latin Americans. Again, for those who were irregular, harassment was worse as superiors took advantage of women’s fear of making claims against them. Mercedes, a 27-year-old irregular from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, discussed how one of her office cleaning jobs was being ruined by the Ecuadorian supervisor who was harassing her:

‘Because he knows about my situation, he thinks he can get away with being over-familiar and cheeky with women. He takes liberties with the women in a sexual way. A week ago we had an argument because of his behaviour; he was grabbing my buttocks, my leg, things like that ... I told him that if I had to leave this job because of his behaviour I would speak to the manager to explain why I was leaving and [he] just said, “if you do that I’ll denounce you for being irregular”. If I wasn’t so desperate for a job I would have left this job by now ... I have to put up with it’.

Figure 6.4: Problems experienced by Latin Americans in the workplace



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=353)

Notes: Frequency is based on those who identified problems. More than one problem was often identified. The working population used here refers to those asked the question about problems experienced in work.

Although the most severe forms of discrimination in work are found among migrants in cleaning, catering and hospitality work, even those working in professional jobs complained of mistreatment or experiences of disadvantage. José was a 37-year-old from Caracas, Venezuela where he was an economist. Although he had worked cleaning toilets in restaurant while he studied, he had secured a good job as a logistics manager for a large multinational company in London. Although he had a British passport he said he always felt excluded at work:

‘You are never going to feel good at work because the British look at you differently. They exclude you from their social groups even though it’s very useful at work. They don’t mean to, but you can feel it ... I feel discrimination despite my qualifications’.

Latin Americans cope with economic adversity through welfare benefits, borrowing and saving

The economic vulnerability experienced by many Latin Americans in London is only ameliorated for a part of the community by accessing welfare benefits with almost 1 in 5 people receiving them (most of which are in-work benefits). The most commonly claimed type of benefit was the working tax credit, followed by housing benefit and council tax relief (see Chapter 9).

For those in need but without recourse to benefits the only other option is to borrow money. Almost 40% of Latin Americans reported having ever borrowed money in the UK. Such borrowing was mainly used for everyday expenditures (40%) such as buying food and education expenses, although a small number borrowed to buy a car or white goods or to buy a home in London or in their home country. Two-thirds of this borrowing was from formal sources (63%), mainly banks, with another quarter turning to friends or family (26%). Ecuadorians were the most likely to ever have borrowed money in the UK (50%), followed by Peruvians (47.5%). In addition, 37% of all Latin American have current debts with Brazilians being the most indebted (46%).

Among those borrowing informally, this was usually small amounts of money from friends to tide people over for a few days. For those who belong to churches, borrowing occurred among church members. Among the elderly, some borrowed from their children. Malia, 60 years old from Ecuador who was a housewife, spoke of her children as 'my little banks, ha ha ... now and again they give me money'.

As well as borrowing money, some Latin Americans manage to get-by through 'renting' bank accounts, especially when they first arrive. For example, 37-year-old Laura, who was Peruvian and who worked as a freelance interpreter, noted how she knew many people who had borrowed bank accounts (often in conjunction with borrowing National Insurance Numbers):

'Imagine that someone else lends you their "national" and their account and then they charge you a percentage. For example, if I lend you my account and you are paid £400 you have to give me £30. As an interpreter I have heard of this many times'.

This practice is most common among Brazilians and Bolivians who were the least likely to have a bank account (8% and 7%), linked with their higher levels of irregularity. Indeed, more than half of those who did not have an account stated that it was because they didn't have papers. Among the small proportion of people without access to a bank in the UK (6%), the only option was to use a cheque cashing service – a service used by 10% of all Latin Americans, especially Brazilians (15%).

Many Latin Americans also developed longer term practices to invest in their futures through saving and sending remittances (see Chapter 8). Almost two-thirds of Latin Americans saved money (62%), amounting to a median of £300 per month. Based on median figures, approximately 23% of weekly personal income was being saved. Generally, those with higher incomes are more likely to save.

The qualitative research highlighted how people make sacrifices in London in order to be able to save for the longer term back home, as 45-year-old Pancho from Antioquia in Colombia noted:

‘I’m not satisfied. Cleaning is not my work. I do it only out of necessity. The job I did back home was very different [a teacher]. I came here to work for money. Anything will do. The jobs here are dirty work, but they will do in order to meet your goals or to save, to have money and to be able to send money home’.

In a similar way, 32-year-old Mateo from Bogotá, Colombia reported that he sacrificed his current situation in order to save money for his future: ‘My strategy is to have as few expenses as possible here so that I can save. There’s no point in wasting money here’.

The global financial crisis has exacerbated economic hardships for Latin Americans. The hardships outlined above have been exacerbated in recent years by the global financial crisis. Although the crisis affects everyone in London, the qualitative research highlighted how there are also specific effects experienced by migrants.

In relation to the labour market in London, there was a general perception that although jobs were still available, exploitation in cleaning and catering in particular was thought to be increasing. This was because more people were looking for work and so managers and supervisors could take more advantage. Caetano, a 26-year-old window cleaner from Cochabamba, Bolivia, noted:

‘Now they ask more in work. Before, for example, you would work 3 hours and they paid well; ... The work has increased and the salaries stay the same ... they ask more. The work is harder’.

In addition, many people in the qualitative research spoke of the need to exercise greater care with their finances even more than normal in order to make sure that they had an emergency fund in case they lost their job. Alberto, the 40-year-old cleaner from Ecuador noted: ‘You have to tighten your belt, to eat less, that’s the strategy and to work more’. It is not just people at the lower end of the labour market who have lost jobs. Danilo, a 32-year-old from Antioquia, Colombia, was one of the few Latin Americans in our survey to have a Highly Skilled Migrants Programme (HSMP) visa. After working for a catering agency as well as studying English when he first arrived, he returned to Colombia and applied for the HSMP as an architect. However, not long after he got a job in an architectural practice he lost it due to the crisis and he ended up working as a waiter.

The migrant-specific effects also relate to reductions in remittances sending, with many noting that they sent less money or had to stop altogether in order to make sure they could get by in London (see Chapter 8). As Francisco, a Colombian from Bogotá, noted: ‘Before I sent money, but now I can’t because my situation has changed ... now because I lost my job all my savings are being invested in surviving’. In addition, some migrants spoke of the crisis causing devaluation in their currency affecting remittance sending. Yaneth from Colombia noted: ‘I would like to save more at the moment because of the crisis and to invest in Colombia. But the crisis means I can’t. The exchange rate is so low that I can’t send money at the moment’.

The global crisis has also affected mobility within Europe. As outlined in Chapter 4, there are increasing numbers of Latin Americans migrating from Spain to the UK because the effects of the recession have been felt more acutely there. Ricardo from

Ecuador had been working in Valencia in a factory that manufactured trains. However, because of the recession, production declined and the factory closed and he decided to travel to London in search of work leaving his wife and 2 young children behind. This was mainly because he had a mortgage on his house in Valencia and his children were in school; he didn't want to uproot his family but he needed to find alternative work. He managed to find a job repairing electrical goods through a contact in Spain.

Despite evidence of increasing hardships, however, no-one in the qualitative research reported wanting to return home. Generally, people felt that the economic crisis would be even worse in their home country and it would be better to try and scrape by in London.

Working lives of Latin Americans in London

Josefina was 36 years old and from Santo Domingo in Ecuador. She had been living in London since 1995. Although she had been a housewife in Ecuador, she had always worked in London mainly because she was a single parent (she separated from her husband before she migrated). She worked as a cleaner for many years until she had saved enough money to open a small Ecuadorian restaurant in 2007. She was earning between £2000-3000 per month and managed to save £800 to re-invest into her business.

Carla was 23 years old and from Sao Paulo, Brazil. She arrived in London in 2007 in search of adventure, to learn English and to try and improve her life. She worked as a recruitment analyst back home, but she could only get a cleaning job when she first arrived in London. However, she had been working as a cashier in a Portuguese restaurant for 3 months earning the minimum wage plus tips. Her salary was only £800 per month and so she had to clean offices 3 hours a day to supplement her income. She was saving money to send back to Brazil to pay off a loan.

Mauricio was 24 years from Cochabamba in Bolivia. He had been in London for 2 years and although he had worked as an industrial mechanic back home he now had a job as a chef in an English restaurant. He earned £6.88 per hour and managed to send £800 back home every month in order to buy a house.

Nelson was 41 years old and from Goias, Brazil. He had been living in London since 2002. In Brazil he had worked as a private driver. When he first arrived in London he had worked in a kitchen of a restaurant washing-up until he got his current job as a bicycle courier which he had been doing for 2 years. He liked this job much better as the pay was higher (around £2000 per month) even though he worked 50 hours per week. He liked the freedom of the job although it was difficult in the winter working outside in the rain and snow. It could also be dangerous. He managed to save £1500 per month he sent home to his family and to buy land.

Chapter 7:

The well-being of Latin Americans in London beyond the labour market

Key points

- Almost half of Latin Americans live in inadequate housing (45%).
- Nearly two-thirds live in private rented accommodation, much of which is low quality.
- Latin Americans have limited access to social housing (16%) due to ineligibility because of their immigration status.
- Rates of owner occupancy are low (14%), which is more than three times lower than the London average.
- Almost one-third share their home with other families indicating overcrowding.
- More than a quarter live in multi-person households which is much higher than the national average.
- Numbers living in temporary accommodation (around 1%) is lower than the London average.
- Latin Americans live in large households with an average of 3 people.
- Gender relations change with migration in both positive and negative ways.

Introduction

This chapter outlines how the economic adversities faced by many Latin Americans intersect with their wider living conditions. It examines the types of housing they live in as well as their perceptions of the quality of their accommodation. The chapter also identifies experiences of overcrowding among Latin Americans together with whether they share their living spaces with other families and households. The discussion outlines the nature of household structures among Latin Americans and how gender relations have changed with migration, especially at the household level change.

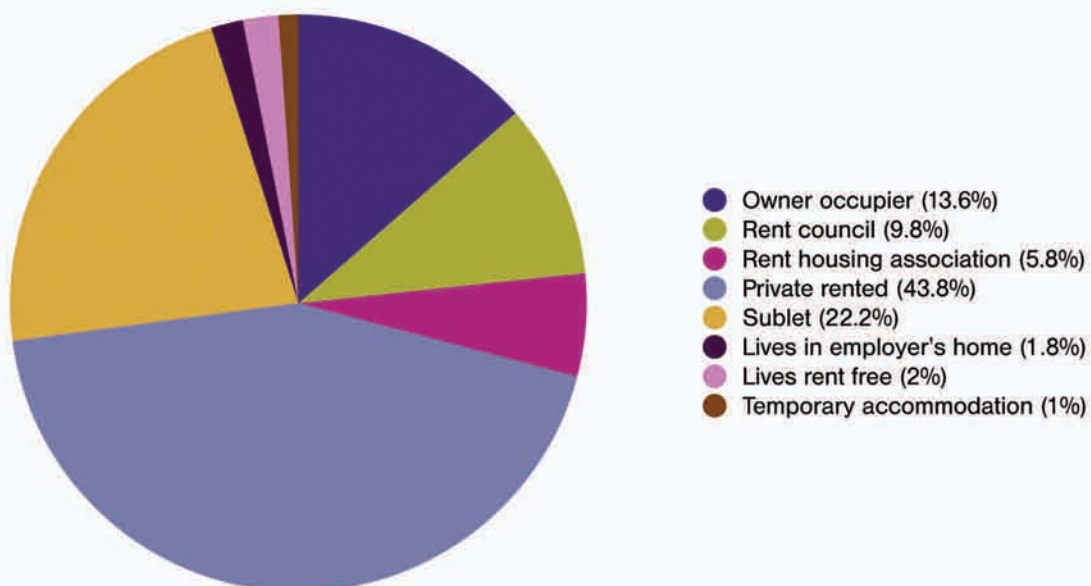
Many Latin Americans live in inadequate housing

Many Latin Americans face pressures in securing adequate housing in London. This is reflected in the fact that 45% of Latin Americans were not satisfied with the quality of the housing they lived in. Bolivians and Ecuadorians were the most dissatisfied (60%). Although those working in sales, elementary and machine operative jobs were the least satisfied with their housing with almost half expressing their concerns, almost a third of people working in professional and managerial occupations were also unhappy, highlighting the extent to which accessing adequate housing represents a problem for the community as a whole.

Latin Americans are concentrated in the private rental housing sector with more than 40% residing in rented accommodation on their own account and another one-fifth living in sub-letting arrangements (which is private rented accommodation even if it can occur within social housing) (see Figure 7.1). Therefore, nearly two-thirds of Latin Americans lived in some form of private rented accommodation. This proportion is more than three times greater than for London as a whole (21%) (DCLG, 2009: 11).

Private rented accommodation is more likely to be used by those who have arrived most recently, and/or who are irregular and who earn the least. Brazilians were the most likely to live in these arrangements (81%) as were irregular migrants (93%). Irregular migrants were the most likely to be subletting, linked with their difficulties in accessing housing by formal means. In terms of monthly income, there was a concentration of people with incomes of less than £1,000 per month in sublet accommodation, accounting for more than half of all people living there. Further reinforcing this, more than three-quarters of those working in elementary jobs lived in private rented housing (54%) or in subletting arrangements (23%).

Figure 7.1: Type of accommodation



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=450)

Wilson, a 47-year-old Ecuadorian who was a cleaner explained that he lived in a small flat with a living room and a small kitchen (and a shared bathroom). There were 6 people sharing the flat with 2 per room including the living room with all of them paying £60 per week. He shared his room with another Ecuadorian:

‘It’s not comfortable. My roommate is not very nice, he’s very bitter, he never speaks, but he won’t leave. I would like to leave but it’s very difficult to find somewhere to live because housing is so expensive in London’.

Bearing in mind the residential patterns outlined in Chapter 3, much of this private rented housing is concentrated in inner-city areas such as Southwark, Lambeth, Haringey, Hackney and Islington where poor quality housing is widespread (Rutter and Latorre, 2009). Latin Americans often look for housing in these inner-city areas as they are close to the West End and the City where many of their jobs are located. Because of their unsociable working hours, they often feel it was preferable to live as close as possible to the centre to reduce travel times late at night and early in the morning as well as lowering their travel costs.

The qualitative research revealed that people were unhappy with the fact that they paid high rents yet lived in small flats or houses that landlords rarely improved. Most people paid a minimum of £50-60 per week to share a room in a flat or a house. Leon, who was 42 and from Ecuador, lived in Stamford Hill in North London in a house that was divided into separate rooms for private rental purposes. He shared a room with a friend from his home town and although he was glad that the rent had not increased in three years, Leon said that the house was in a state of disrepair. It had not been repainted or had any improvements in three years; ‘There is a lot of abuse, neglect. Not in the rent because it hasn’t changed, but they do nothing to the house. It is in a bad state’.

Latin Americans have limited access to social housing (including council and housing associations) with only 16% residing in this type of accommodation (see Figure 7.1). This is lower than for London as a whole (24%) (DCLG, 2009: 11). This type of housing provides a safety net for a number of Latin Americans in that almost half (48.5%) of those living there have personal incomes of less than £1,000 per month. There were also concentrations of the unemployed (30%), retired (71%) and homemakers (48%) living in social housing.

The more established nationalities with British citizenship, such as Ecuadorians and Colombians were the most likely to live in social housing (25% and 24%) linked with their right to make claims on the state. Indeed, just over 40% of those with British citizenship lived in social housing, together with a quarter of those with permanent residency. Also marked is that women were much more likely to have access to social housing than men (22% and 8%) related to women being a priority to house if they have dependent children. Half of all women with British passports lived in social housing compared with a quarter of men.

Rates of owner occupation are also very low (see Figure 7.1) and more people have a mortgage (9%) than own outright (4%). This is much lower than the average owner-occupation (including those with a mortgage and owning outright) for London as a whole (55%) (DCLG, 2009: 11). Not surprisingly, owner occupation was concentrated among those with British or EU citizenship (82% who were owner occupiers) and among professionals and managers (39% who were owner occupiers). Peruvians were

the most likely to own a house (1 in 5). In some instances, people became owner occupiers through buying former council housing. Ramiro, who was a 40-year-old dentist and entrepreneur from Ecuador, had been living in London since 1999 and had British nationality. Although he had lived with his brother when he first arrived, he eventually got a council house which he then bought:

'My brother told me that I could make an application so that the government give us a house which I did and after 6 months they gave me a home and I'm still living there. In this place I began by paying a percentage of the rent, I paid full rent and after that I bought it'.

The proportions of Latin Americans living in temporary accommodation are comparatively low at 1%. Although this is less than the London rate of 2% (Maclnnes and Kenway, 2009: 89), this low rate is probably because councils would not be obliged to house many Latin Americans if they did not have dependent children or if they were irregular³⁴. In addition, 0.7% of Latin Americans are homeless, which is the same proportion as those newly recognised as homeless in London in 2007 (ibid: 87).

One-third of Latin Americans share their home with another family, indicating overcrowding

Almost one-third of Latin Americans share their home with other families (with an average of 2 other families). Although approximately 15% explicitly identified overcrowding as an issue, this is certainly an under-estimate. This is mainly because some people reported living alone because they cooked alone or maintained individual finances yet they lived in larger houses where, for example, the living room was used as a bedroom or where several adults shared bedrooms (both indicators of overcrowding). Even acknowledging this, the rate of 15% is high compared to London as a whole where 6.8% of households are overcrowded (DCLG, 2009: 12)³⁵.

Overcrowded conditions are associated with low incomes, low-skilled work and irregularity. Of those living in overcrowded households, almost 60% had personal incomes of less than £1,000 per month. Of those sharing with other families, more than half had incomes of less than £1,000 per month. Those sharing with other families were most likely to work in personal service occupations (probably linked with the high proportion of au pairs) and in skilled trades (44%). In addition, almost 60% of all Latin Americans living in overcrowded arrangements were elementary workers. Bolivians fared the worst in relation to sharing with other families (57%) and in terms of living in overcrowded conditions (25%). Men were more likely to be living in housing with other families than women (60% and 40%) and in overcrowded conditions (55% and 45%).

The qualitative research revealed widespread overcrowding. Marisol was a 37-year-old from Cochabamba, Bolivia. She had come to London in 2003 in search of a better life for her children (via Spain). She was separated from her former partner and lived with her two children in a shared house with 4 other families in Southwark. There was no living room in the house and every family had one room and had to share 1 bathroom. Marisol cooked on a small stove that was in her room. She paid £50 per week for the room and couldn't afford any more as she only worked 12 hours per week as a cleaner (earning £600 per month).

[34] Also, the survey probably undercounted those in temporary accommodation (and the homeless) due to sampling.

[35] Other estimates suggest overcrowding to be 25% of households in Inner London and 13% in Outer London (Maclnnes and Kenway, 2009: 92).

Many Latin Americans live in large multi-person households

The mean household size among Latin Americans is 3 with the largest household having 11 people (2 cases). This is larger than the UK average of 2.4 persons in 2008 (DCLG, 2009: 12). It is also higher than the local authority with the largest average size in England and Wales of 2.64 – London Borough of Newham³⁶.

More than a quarter of Latin Americans live in multi-person households (27%), which is much higher than the population nationally (8%)³⁷. Another 22% lived in couple households with dependent children, which is slightly lower than the UK average of 28%, with 21% residing in couples with no dependent children, which is also lower than the average of 35%. Another 20% were people living alone, which is lower than the national average of 29%. A further 11% lived in lone parent households, which is higher than the national average of 7% (see Figure 7.2) (DCLG, 2009:25). Although the latter refer mainly to women among Latin Americans, there were 9 men living with their children on their own (of a total of 39)³⁸.

Latin Americans who have arrived more recently are more likely to live in multi-person or single person households, rather than family households. For example, 81% of those living in multi-person households arrived since 2000 and 77% of single person households. In addition, almost half of Brazilians, many who have arrived recently, live in multi-person households.

Multi-person and lone person households are also associated with low incomes and economic vulnerability. Half of those living in lone person households had personal incomes of less than £1,000 per month together with 40% of those living in multi-person households. In addition, 40% of irregular migrants lived in these types of units as did more than half of elementary workers (53%). Lone parents are also associated with economic hardship, with more than half with personal monthly incomes of less than £1,000 per month and 40% working in elementary occupations.

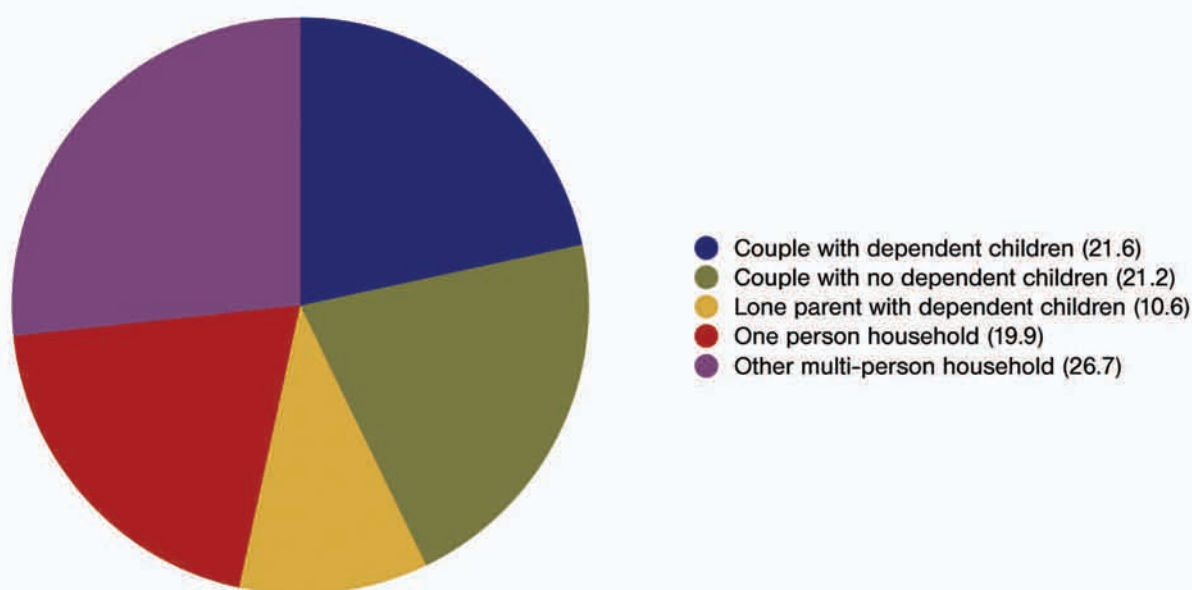
In contrast, those who are settled are more likely to live in households comprising couples and children. As such, more than half of people living in these households arrived before 1999. Ecuadorians were the most likely to live in this household type (26.5%) as were those with British citizenship or residency (38%). These types of households are also the best-off economically, with more than a quarter of people residing in them having personal income of more than £2,000 per month (compared with only 4% of multi-person households).

^[36] Office of National Statistics. Available at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/commentaries/housing.asp> (accessed 1st September 2010).

^[37] A multi-person household refers to 'a group of two or more persons living together who make common provision for food or other essentials for living' (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/techreport/hhChar.pdf> (accessed 10 February 2011)). The definition used here also draws on that used in the English Housing Survey to include 'flat sharers, lone parents with non-dependent children only and households containing more than one couple or lone parent family' (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingsurveys/surveyofenglishhousing/sehlivetables/surveyenglish/224421/> (accessed 10 February 2011)).

^[38] The proportion of male lone parents (23%) is higher than the London average of 9.2% (DMAG, 2006).

Figure 7.2: Household structures among Latin Americans



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=453)

One person lived with his same-sex partner although it is likely that other gay and lesbian couples were living together in multi-person households. Indeed, it is important to emphasise that this does not mean that there are extremely small numbers of Latin American gays and lesbians. Although the research did not ask specifically about sexuality, several people in the qualitative research spoke openly about being gay (2 men and 1 woman). In addition, the Lesbian and Gay Migrants Association have 134 Latin American members, which will be only a fraction of the total³⁹.

Evidence from the qualitative research showed that households are dynamic, changing as people's circumstances changed or when other family members arrived. It was very common for people to put up family members when they first arrived in London even if it was only for a few weeks or months. Beatriz, who was 24 years old and from the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, first lived as an au pair when she arrived in London in 2003. When she met her boyfriend who was British Asian, they moved in together. After several changes of rental properties, they had their first child. Just after this, Beatriz's aunt came to live with them when she arrived from Brazil. She continued to live with them in their spare room, paying rent which provided some extra income.

[39] These figures refer to April 2010 and include 71 Brazilians, 24 Colombians, 13 Mexicans, 6 Cubans and 6 Venezuelans.

Gender relations within households and beyond have changed for better and worse

Gender relations and ideologies (referring to the norms and ideals about expected behaviour between women and men as well as the roles that are deemed appropriate for people because of their gender) among Latin Americans change according to pre- and post-migration experiences with both positive and negative outcomes. Drawing on the qualitative research, many younger migrants felt that changes in gender relations had occurred back home before they migrated. For example, Brazilians were especially likely to say that women were independent before they migrated, as noted by 44-year-old Felicidade: 'Maybe there aren't changes for all Brazilian women, because most of them even in Brazil they are kind of independent. It is just that now, in my case, totally ... I feel more independent here'.

Although women and men's experiences in the labour market influenced how gender relations and ideologies transformed (see Chapter 6), changes at the household level were also identified. On one hand, people spoke of men contributing more to domestic labour in the home than they did in Latin America. This was usually prompted by working practices outside the home; in cases with both partners working often long and irregular hours, people had to share housework such as cooking. Maya, who was 38 years old and from Colombia noted: 'Here, we both have to contribute at home. He [her husband] never used to help in Colombia, not even wash a dish, but here he has no choice, we both work. I don't think he has changed what he really thinks, but he can't complain'.

Maya's last point was reflected in other views that suggested changes reflect transformations in gender practices rather than ideologies which are more resistant. 45-year-old Nuria from Colombia said:

'The majority [of men] are *machistas*⁴⁰. It doesn't matter where they live, they are *machistas*. But opportunities change and women have more independence here. Women change and men change but men only change because they have to, they don't change what they really think'.

Just as some men felt disempowered by having to work in low status, 'feminised' jobs, some also resented having to do housework resulting in tensions in the home which sometimes led to domestic violence (see Figure 7.3).

[40] A '*machista*' is someone who adheres to the norms and ideals of machismo. Machismo refers to a 'cult of exaggerated masculinity' involving 'the assertion of power and control over women, and over other men' (Chant with Craske 2003, 14 cited in McIlwaine, 2010, 287),

Figure 7.3: Changes in gender roles and relations as identified by a focus group of six adults aged between 21 and 46 from Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia

Women	Men
Advantage in labour market – can work in restaurants, houses, elder care	Do more in the home
More independent in everything	Less 'in the street' than in Latin America
Women do 2 roles instead of 1	Men do 2 roles instead of 1
Changes especially in their economic roles	Men lose lots of power – lose machismo
More protection from the state	
<p>Effects for both</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of time for partner ● Lack of time for children ● Lack of respect among young people for elders ● Changes beneficial for women and men in terms of more sharing ● Changes can also lead to separation and violence among couples ● Women tend to benefit more than men in general 	

For women with regular status and who accessed statutory and non-statutory services, there was a perception that women had more legal rights in London and that the state would protect them. For example, 42-year-old Angela from Colombia thought that all men were machista wherever they lived but that in the UK, women were protected by the laws:

'In Colombia if your husband hits you, you have no rights but here you do. Men are afraid to hit women here because they know that women are protected. But men don't really change. The situation changes. In Colombia, if a man hits you, the state doesn't help. If you have no job it's hard to leave. The man is the main breadwinner, he is the centre of the house and the woman is dependent on him and there is lots of pressure from all the families to stay together. There, women are less likely to have an education, women don't work – the only job you can get is as a domestic so she has to depend on a man. He is then the responsible one. The one responsible for working, for putting food on the table. You can't leave as easily. Here, you have more opportunities to leave, to earn your own money. But men are still *machista*'.

However, for women who are irregular or on temporary or dependent visas, or are unable to speak any English, seeking assistance from the police or other public agencies is not an option due to fear and lack of information. In these cases, women respondents reported that they will end-up worse off than back home in Latin America. Not all women were aware of their rights or were willing to report crimes, especially

domestic violence. While organisations such as the Latin American Women's Rights Service provide specialist services to support women experiencing violence against women, lack of information was identified as an issue. For example, in a focus group of Colombian women, one participant said that for her in London:

'The main problem is lack of information. When you arrive, and especially if you don't know anyone, it's really hard. I didn't know about LAWRS. I didn't know where to find a job, to find help when I was in trouble and I couldn't ask because I couldn't speak English'.

Women are less likely to want to return to Latin America than men

Men tend to view migration in more temporary terms while women are more likely to want to settle permanently. According to the survey, almost half (46%) of men wanted to stay in London for 5 years or less compared with less than a third of women (31%). Angela from Colombia spoke about how her husband wanted to return home:

'My husband wants to go back to Colombia, to buy a house, to set up a business. But I don't want to go back. For what? Here I can have more opportunities. My children will speak 2 languages. I have more freedom here. He always talks of going back but I don't want to. I'm worried I'll lose my opportunities and my independence. But he thinks life will be better for him'.

The qualitative research highlighted that women often thought about the well-being of their children and were willing to put up with poor living and working conditions in their life-time to ensure their children had a better future. For example, Dolores was a 43-year-old from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, who had experienced domestic abuse since her arrival in London with her two small children to join her husband. Although she wanted to leave him, she was dependent on his student visa. Despite her suffering she was adamant that she wanted to stay in London at least until her children finished primary school so that they would be able to speak English and have more opportunities in life.

Chapter 8:

Well-being across borders: connecting Latin America and London

Key points

- Latin Americans maintain strong and regular contact with their friends and family back home.
- Almost two-thirds send money or gifts back home with few variations according to year of arrival, gender, income or occupation.
- They send a median of £2000 per year to Latin America.
- They send 12% of personal weekly income back home.
- They save 23% of their income some of which is also sent back home.
- Those on low incomes and working in elementary jobs send a higher proportion of their income than professional and managerial workers.
- Women send smaller amounts than men, but are more likely to be supporting children here.
- Most remittances are used for family maintenance.
- Remittance sending and maintaining relationships across borders provides a lifeline for many families back home, although it can be very challenging.

Introduction

This chapter outlines the nature of social and economic connections maintained between London and Latin America and how these affect the well-being of Latin Americans in the short and long-term. It identifies the role of social ties in providing support and in ensuring that family bonds are maintained. However, the chapter also highlights the stresses inherent in maintaining relationships across large distances. Economic connections and especially remittances are also examined and shown to be central to the health of economies in Latin America as well as to the survival of individual households. The chapter also highlights how remitters in London have to make substantial economic sacrifices in order to maintain a flow of money back home.

The importance of remittances to Latin America cannot be under-estimated. Research elsewhere has shown that in 2009, remittances to Latin America totalled \$58.8 billion representing a decline from \$69.2 billion in 2008 linked with the global financial crisis. This is comparable with foreign direct investment (FDI) and much larger than overseas development assistance (ODA). On average in Latin America, remittances represent 4.9% of GDP. In 2006, remittances represented 3.3% of GDP in Colombia, 0.3% in Brazil, 7.8% in Ecuador, 8.7% in Bolivia and 3.1% in Peru⁴¹.

[41] See <http://www.ifad.org/remittances/maps/latin.htm> (accessed 23 September 2010). In 2009, Colombia received \$4.13 billion in remittances, Brazil, \$4.75 billion, Ecuador \$4.49 billion, Bolivia \$1.02 billion and Peru \$2.66 billion (http://www.iadb.org/mif/remittances/lac/remesas_co.cfm accessed 23 September 2010).

Latin Americans maintain strong social connections across borders

Latin Americans maintain strong and regular contact with their friends and family back home. The vast majority (97%) keep in touch regardless of country of origin or socio-economic grouping. This contact was maintained through landline telephones (among 79%), email and internet chat (among half in each case) and facilitated by the availability of cheap phone cards. Communication is very regular, with almost a quarter making contact every day, another fifth once every 2-3 days and one-third once a week. Indeed, almost three-quarters maintained contact at least once a week regardless of income level or occupation. Brazilians were much more likely than other nationalities to maintain daily contact (almost 40% compared with 23% of the sample as a whole) which is likely to reflect that this community has a higher proportion of individuals who have arrived in the UK recently.

Evidence from the qualitative research shows that this contact is extremely important for sustaining and supporting people in London, especially for those who are living on their own while their families remain in Latin America. For 43-year-old Dolores from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, her daily Skype calls with her sister back home were her lifeline in helping her deal with her abusive relationship with her husband. 54-year-old Jaime, who had been living in London for 7 years and whose wife and children still lived in Santa Cruz in Bolivia, spoke to his wife every day. He felt this had allowed him to strengthen his relationship: 'Separation has changed our relationship because we now value each other more, for her and me it has been a positive process over 7 years.'

However, while communication by phone or internet is essential in contributing to positive well-being, separation makes it difficult to maintain family relationships across borders. For example, 42-year-old Leon from Loja, Ecuador described how difficult it was to be separated from his wife and children, or in other words, being a transnational father and husband:

'It's very difficult to maintain relationships by telephone or even on the internet where you can see the image but it's not the same. But if you do it enough at least you have some closeness with them ... the trust with my children has decreased a lot. I have noticed with my oldest daughter in particular; she doesn't talk to me like she did as a little girl of 11 which is when I left. Now she's a young woman and is always with her boyfriend. I feel some resentment. I have to do things through their mother instead ... I also see that my son has been affected and has lost self-esteem because I'm here. He is the only man in the house now and he has felt a huge responsibility to be a father to the girls. He has had to grow up quickly. Now he doesn't trust me very much. I'm really trying to sort things out but really the only solution is for me to be there and for things to return to how they used to be and to try and rebuild this trust'.

The majority of Latin Americans send regular remittances

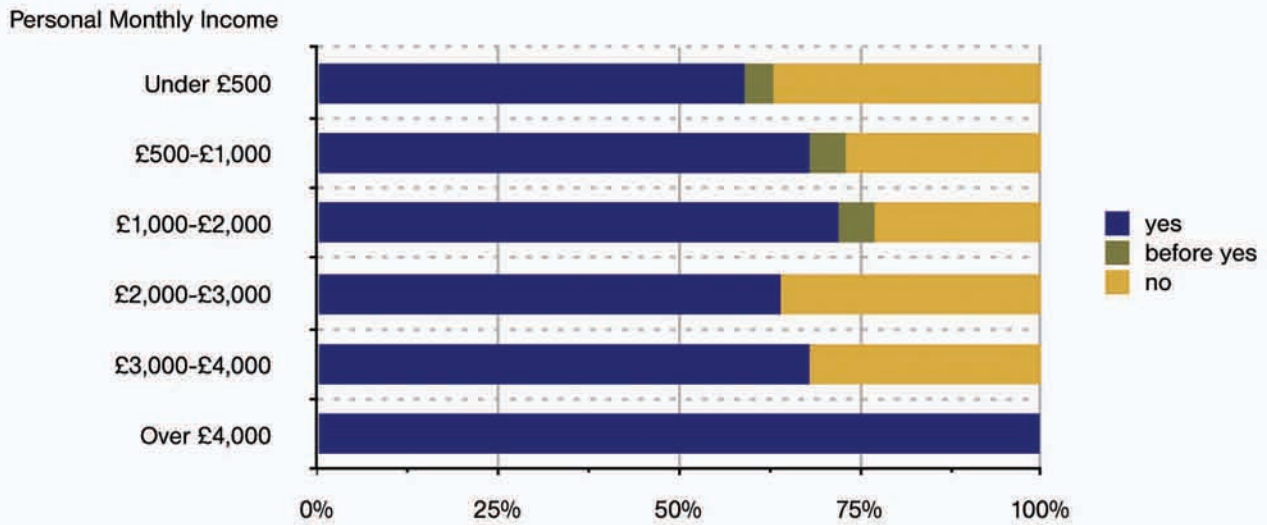
As well as the communication channels developed by migrants between London and Latin America, there are very strong economic connections through sending money and gifts. Almost two-thirds (64%) of Latin Americans sent money or gifts back home with a further 4% having done so in the past. Bolivians were especially likely to send (80%). Among those who sent something back home, more than 90% sent money. However, almost half also sent gifts, usually at Christmas or birthdays, with a few people sending clothes, food and medicine.

More than half of remitters sent on a monthly basis with almost 70% using local Latin American money transfer agencies. In addition, almost half maintained a bank account in their home country (48%). This practice was especially common among Brazilians (79%). For example, 32-year-old Jacó was from Sergipe, Brazil, where he had worked as a chauffeur. He arrived in London in 2005 and had been working as a cleaner ever since. His salary was paid into someone else's account because he was irregular and couldn't open a bank account. He kept his Brazilian account open so that he could send £200 per month home which he was using to save to buy a house. While those who had moved to London recently were more likely to maintain a bank account back home, one-fifth of those who arrived before 1989 still maintained one.

Contrary to what is often assumed, the length of residence in London does not affect whether Latin Americans send money or gifts home. For example, a slightly higher proportion of those who arrived in the 1980s sent remittances than those who arrived in the 1990s (67% and 64). While amounts may reduce over time, this pattern suggests maintaining the flow of money and gifts is deeply ingrained for many migrants.

Remittance sending is also fairly consistent across gender and income levels. Although those with personal monthly incomes of more than £4,000 were less likely to send, those with incomes of between £1,000 and £2,000 sent the most (more than 70%). Only those on low incomes have stopped remitting, and this is only a very small proportion (see Figure 8.1). The qualitative research suggests that ceasing to remit is linked with financial pressures in London (see below).

Figure 8.1: Remittance sending by personal monthly income



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=388)

There are some minor variations according to occupation with professional and managerial Latin Americans less likely to send remittances (61.5%) than those in personal service jobs (77%), skilled trades (76%) or elementary work (70%). Again, it is important that around 40% of those who are unemployed or studying still sent remittances.

Latin Americans remit large amounts of money home

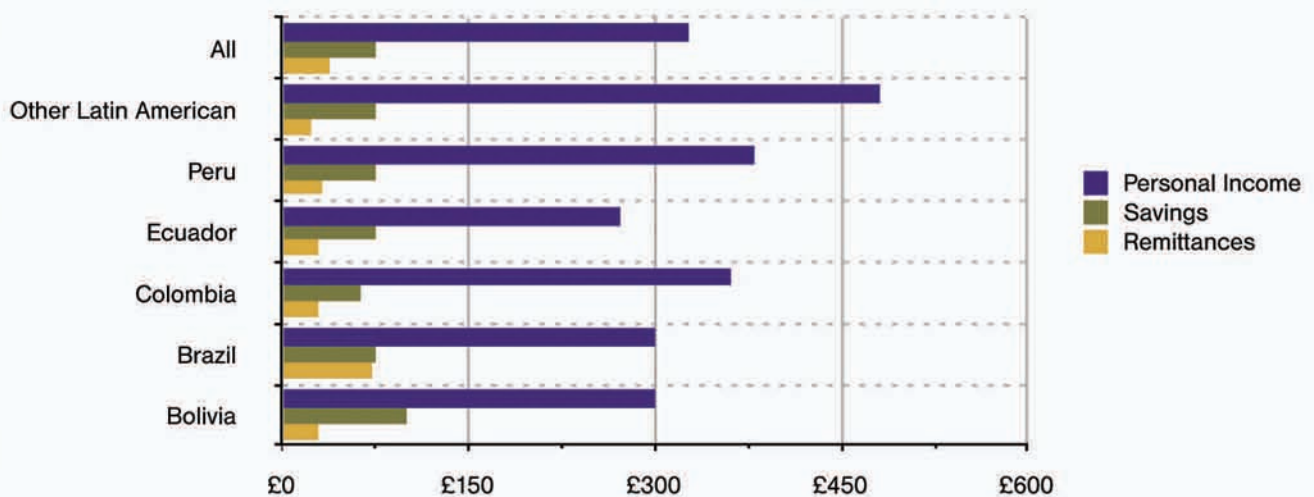
A median of £2,000 is sent home annually by Latin Americans in London which is approximately the same as official figures for the amount remitted per capita for Latin America as a whole⁴². Although a fifth sent less than £500, more than one-third sent more than £3,000. Also significant is that 1 in 5 sent more than £5,000. Latin Americans send 12% of their personal weekly income in remittances. They also save 23% of their personal weekly income, some of which will be remitted at some point (see Figure 8.2).

Brazilians send the most at almost 24% of their personal weekly income (see Figure 8.2). They sent substantially more than other nationalities, with almost one-third sending more than £5,000 per year. Men remit more money than women. Just over a quarter of men sent more than £5,000 per year compared with only 13% of women, while more than 40% of women sent less than £1,000 compared with 27% of men. This is likely to reflect the fact that women are more likely to migrate with their children, while men are more likely to be supporting their families in Latin America.

Evidence from the qualitative research highlighted how the link between savings and remittances was becoming more intertwined as the global economic crisis was affecting exchange rates. For example, Delmar, who was 32 and from Loja, Ecuador, noted: 'I send money to my mother but I also save in an account here. And recently I haven't sent much, it's better to save here, in case a crisis happens and I need the money'.

^[42] See <http://www.ifad.org/remittances/maps/latin.htm> (accessed 23 September 2010).

Figure 8.2: Weekly median remittances, savings and income by country of birth



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=311)

The actual amounts sent vary according to the income of people with those on lower personal monthly incomes sending less and those with higher incomes sending more. However, those with incomes between £1,000 and £3,000 sent the largest amounts of

money home (see Figure 8.3). This reinforces the point that those on lower incomes make major economic sacrifices to send money home. For instance, 22% of professional and managerial workers and 22% of elementary workers sent more than £5,000 even though elementary workers earn considerably less.

Evidence of hardship emerged in the qualitative research with those on low incomes experiencing the most difficulties. For example, 47-year-old Jesus from Bolivia arrived in London in 2003 and had been irregular for most of this time. His wife, his father and his 5 children all lived in Bolivia and depended on him in order to survive. In the previous year he had sent £12,000 back home. Jesus had been a carpenter in La Paz but had worked in menial jobs in London. He worked first washing dishes in a restaurant, then in cleaning through the night sleeping only 2 hours every night. His current job was working from 4 to 10am and 4 to 7pm cleaning offices. He earned £1350 per month and sent home approximately £800 every month to his family which is almost 60% of his income. He said: 'I feel exploited, the work is hard and they now pay us less and we work more'. Yet Jesus felt he had no alternative because his family depended on him to send money home.

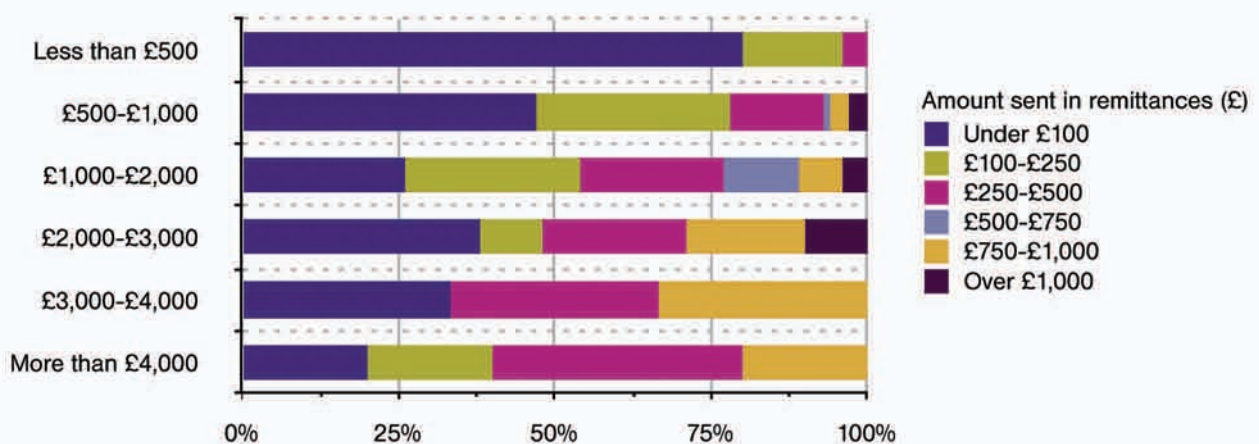
The standard of living in London is often a shock for Latin Americans when they first arrive as they are not prepared for the high cost of rent and transport in particular. Miriam, 37 and from Loja, Ecuador explained the difficulties of making ends meet:

'I think that in our country even the dollar exchange doesn't compensate for what we earn here. If you want to save you have to work more than 12 or 14 hours a day, even up to 16 hours. If not, then you will have nothing left after you pay for your house, the bills, travel, without hoping to include anything else'⁴³.

Therefore, people invariably have to re-assess their goals once they realise how expensive living in London is. For example, 44-year-old Eduardo from Guayas, Ecuador commented: 'I planned to save £15,000 but I thought I could do it in a short time, but I'm still working and I still don't have it. It's all a lie, it's an illusion'.

^[43] The median hours worked was 38 (see Chapter 6).

Figure 8.3: Monthly remittances sent annually by personal monthly income



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=240)

Economic vulnerability in London is also linked with the phenomenon of reverse remittances. This is where migrants in destination countries receive remittances from family and friends back home in order to help them out. This usually occurs during times of specific need such as periods of unemployment (see Datta et al., 2007; Wills et al., 2010). This emerged as an issue for several Latin Americans in relation to the effects of the global recession. For example, 45-year-old Cesario from Risaralda, Colombia, had been living in London since 2008 after living in Spain for 10 years. He had worked as an office cleaner, but had lost his job 3 months before he was interviewed. His wife and 4 children (all aged under 18) lived in Colombia and depended on the remittances sent by Cesario. Before he lost his cleaning job, he sent money home for family maintenance and education expenses of his children, sending an average of £3,000 per year. However, when he lost his job, his wife had to send him some of their savings that had previously accrued so that he could survive until he got another job.

Remittances are used primarily for family maintenance in Latin America

Most people send money to Latin America for family maintenance⁴⁴ (60%) highlighting the importance of remittances for the daily survival of families and individuals. However, while this was the main use of remittances, the most common secondary uses were education expenses and house building (one-fifth in each case). Evidence from the qualitative research showed that people send money for a range of different reasons. For example, Teo, who was 42 years old and from Sao Paulo, Brazil, had been living in London since 1998 and had Indefinite Leave to Remain. Although he started out working in a bakery, he had borrowed money and set-up a money transfer business. In the previous year he had sent £5,000 back home to buy a house, to help with the general bills of his parents and siblings and to pay for 2 other family members to migrate to Europe.

The use of remittances varies according to occupational group. Those working in professional and managerial jobs are much less likely than elementary workers to send money for family expenses (40% and 67%) and more likely to send it for house building or education (26% and 9%). This suggests that professional and managerial people have less economic pressures which allow them to decide how remittances are spent and concentrate on investments in human and physical capital. However, at the same time, remittances for family expenses are still significant. In contrast, elementary workers are making sure that their families have enough to get-by on a daily basis. This is reinforced by the fact that 66% of those with less than £1,000 in monthly income used remittances for family maintenance compared with 55% of those with incomes over £1,000 per month.

As well as some investment in establishing businesses, the qualitative research also revealed several cases of people maintaining businesses back home through the money they earned in London. For example, 45-year-old Esteban from the Bolivian Amazonia arrived in 1997 in order to find out what had happened to his indigenous Inca Indian ancestors (tutuli) who had been massacred by the British Rubber company. He had been a cattle rancher in Bolivia and had worked first as a baker and then as a cleaning supervisor in London. He also had a small business selling chocolate and doughnuts. He earned £1,440 from his cleaning per month, another £1,000 from his business and he sent £1,500 to Bolivia to pay for the running costs of his ranch and to support his daughter and various nephews and nieces. This meant that he sent 61% of his income back to Bolivia.

Only once families back home receive enough to live from, do migrants think about channelling funds into investments or collective remittances. In general, there was little evidence of widespread collective remittance-sending through Home Town Associations (where specific organisations are set-up to channel funds into the home areas of migrants). The few cases that emerged from the qualitative research were informal, such as 54-year-old Jaime from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, who established a small organisation together with 10 countrymen; they collected money to provide food for poor people in their home village as well as to build a church.

^[44] This includes food, rent and household bills.

Flows between London and Latin America: contact and remittances

Raul was 45 years old and from Oruro, Bolivia. He borrowed money to migrate to London and became irregular after his student visa expired. He left his wife and 2 children in Bolivia. In London, he was living in overcrowded conditions (2 people per room in 3 bedrooms) and working as a tailor for £6.50 per hour. He sent home £600 per month and in the previous year he sent £7,000, all of which paid for family maintenance and the education of his children. He said he had to keep a low profile in order to remain in the country so that he could continue to remit home. He had been an agronomist in Bolivia but he didn't make enough money.

Yaneth was 33 years old and from Narino, Colombia. She had been in London since 2000 and worked as a housekeeper for a wealthy Arab family and earned £1,000 per month. Although she was about to have her first baby with her Colombian partner she was still sending money to her mother back home to help her pay her bills. She had sent her £1,000 the previous year but the year before she had also bought land and built a house partly financed with her savings and supplemented with a bank loan she got in London. She also spoke with a family member in Colombia every day either by mobile phone, email or internet chat.

Jonas was 31 years old and from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He arrived in London in 2004 after living in the US between 1997 and 2004. He came to study architecture at postgraduate level. He set up an architectural practice in 2008 and worked as an energy consultant. He earned £41,000 per year and had a household annual income of £70,000. Jonas kept in touch with friends and family in Brazil once every 2-3 days. He maintained contact through letters, phone (landline and mobile), email and through visits. Despite this intense level of contact, Jonas did not send any remittances as he said his family did not need them.

Chapter 9:

Accessing services and the role of migrant community organisations for Latin Americans in London

Key points

- 1 in 5 Latin Americans receive some form of state welfare support with tax credits being the most common.
- There is a high level of exclusion from public health services. 1 in 5 have never been to a GP practice and 6 out of 10 have not used a dentist.
- 40% have used private health services linked with dissatisfaction with the NHS and language barriers.
- The most widely used education service is adult education.
- One-third has used the services of a migrant community organisation with a large proportion (45%) of those with monthly incomes of under £500 using them.
- The use of lawyers and private advisors for support and advice is widespread.
- The church plays an important emotional and spiritual support role.
- Mobilising social networks and participating in cultural activities provide alternative informal support.

Introduction

This chapter outlines the various types of formal and informal services and support that Latin Americans access in London. It examines the extent to which they are eligible and are taking-up state welfare support and how they are accessing public health services especially GPs. The chapter also explores how Latin Americans use non-statutory agencies including migrant community organisations as well as private doctors and private immigration advisors and lawyers. Indeed, it emerges that paying for services is widespread, with those on low-incomes paying more as a proportion of their income. The role of the church is also assessed, highlighting its important role in the lives of many Latin Americans. Finally, the chapter considers informal support networks that include friendships and participation in cultural activities and their role in helping migrants to 'feel at home' in London.

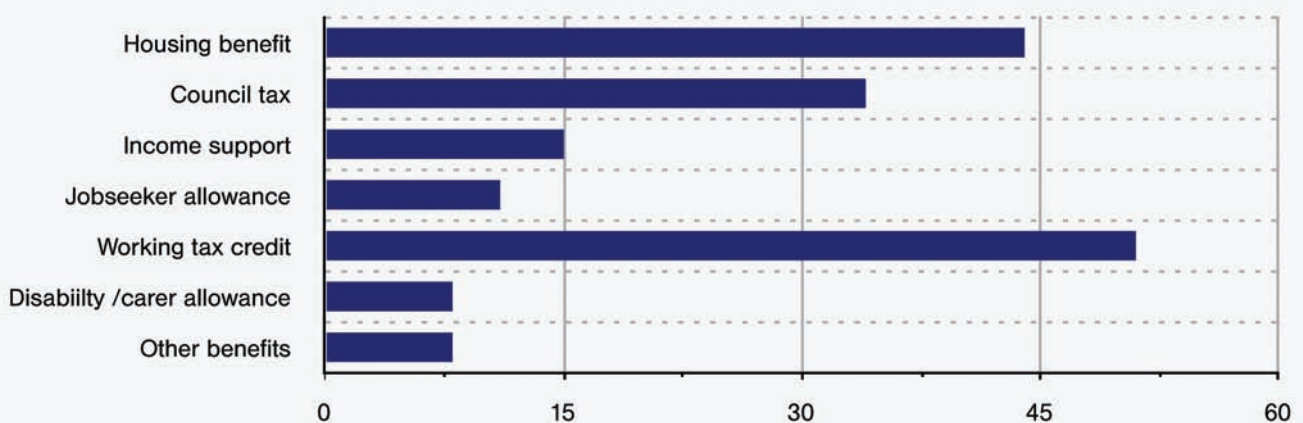
One-fifth of Latin Americans receive some form of state welfare support

Despite the large concentration of Latin Americans in low-paid and temporary jobs, only 1 in 5 received some form of state benefit or assistance (see Chapter 6). Not surprisingly, most of those receiving state support had permanent legal status. 82% of those who received benefits had British or EU citizenship or permanent residency with a further 7% being dependents of settled people. Only 3% had temporary protection or were awaiting a decision on asylum applications.

The most common type of state support claimed by Latin Americans was working tax credit received by around half of those who received state support. Other common benefits were housing and council tax benefit (see Figure 9.1). This reflects the fact that Latin Americans have a high employment rate yet tend to work in low-paid jobs and need assistance to cover basic essentials, including their housing costs.

The proportion of all Latin Americans claiming benefits is low when compared to data for London as a whole. For example, out of work benefits (Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and Carers Allowance) were received by 6%, which is much lower than the London average of 14% and which may reflect the age structure of our sample. In-work benefits (Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit) were received by 10%, a similar proportion to that reported for London (10%) (MacInnes and Kenway, 2009). Less than 7% of Latin Americans who rented in the private sector received housing benefit, compared to 25% for London (GLA, 2009). In England, 62% of people living in council housing and in housing association accommodation received housing benefit (DCLG, 2009). This compared with less than a third of those in council housing (12 out of 44) and less than half of those in housing associations (11 out of 26) in our survey.

Figure 9.1: Type of welfare benefit claimed (among those claiming)



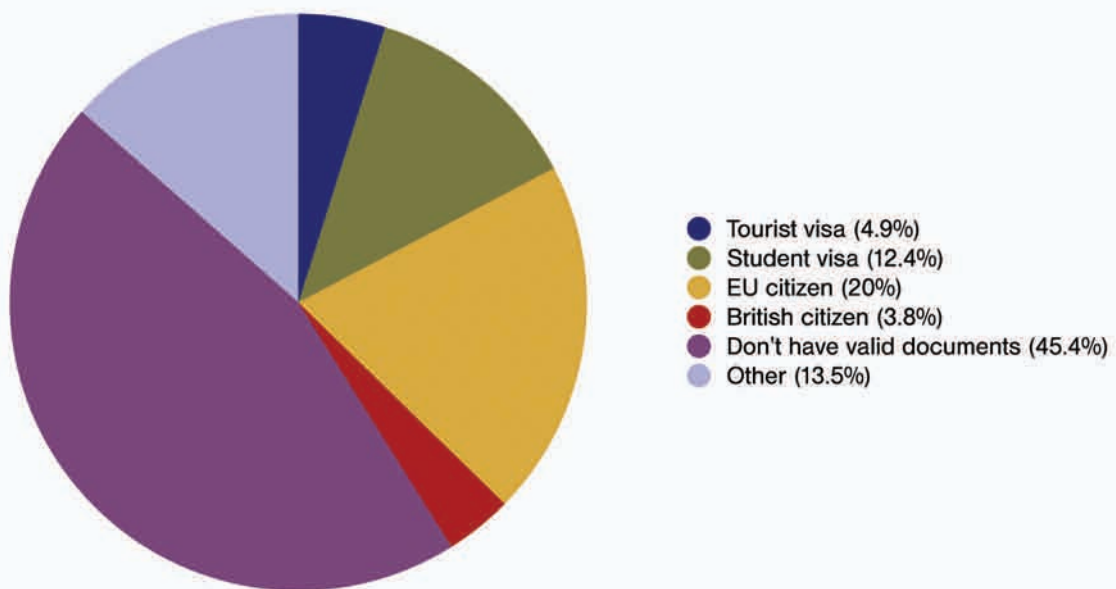
Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=89)

There was some variation in accessing welfare benefits by country of origin with Colombians and Ecuadorians being more likely to receive benefits (29% and 26%) than Brazilians and Bolivians (both 12%). This relates to Brazilians and Bolivians being less likely to have settled status giving them entitlement to benefits. This is also reflected in the difference in proportions of people receiving benefits according to year of arrival in the UK. For example, 14% of those who arrived after 2000 received benefits while one-third of those arriving in the decades before this were in receipt.

Many Latin Americans are excluded or exclude themselves from public health services

One in 5 Latin Americans have never been to a GP in the UK (19%)⁴⁵. Brazilians have particularly low rates (36%) followed by Bolivians (22%), again reflecting their greater likelihood of irregularity. This is further corroborated by the fact that Brazilians and Bolivians are also the main users of voluntary health advocacy projects in London for people excluded from mainstream provision (see Chapter 2). People from other nationalities have much higher rates of using a GP (87% for both Colombians and Ecuadorians). In terms of immigration status, the largest proportion of those who had never used a GP was irregular migrants (45%). However, one-fifth of those who had not used a GP were EU citizens who should in theory face fewer barriers in accessing such services (see Figure 9.2).

Figure 9.2: Immigration status of those who have never been to a GP



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=185)

Most of those who have never used a GP had been in the UK for less than 5 years (69%). The relatively young age profile of Latin American migrants together with having arrived recently in the country could therefore partly account for this high number. However, the large proportion of irregular migrants among this group indicates that they face particular barriers in accessing health services.

^[45] GP practices have discretion on who to register as patients. However, having a legal immigration status is not a requirement for registering.

On the other hand, more than half (54%) of those without valid documents had still managed to use these services. From the qualitative research there was evidence suggesting contrasting experiences for irregular migrants when accessing a GP. For example, 57-year-old Agustín from Ecuador who had previously lived with irregular status in London for 14 years did not find it difficult to register at a surgery:

'They did not ask for any papers. I only had to fill in some forms that they gave me and that was it. They did not ask for a passport or anything of the sort. I'm not sure how things are now because I haven't been there in some time'.

Similarly, despite being irregular, Roberto from Bolivia who worked with a false Spanish passport was able to register at his doctors' surgery with his Bolivian passport and proof of his address. Therefore, in practice, the lack of a visa is not always an obstacle to accessing health services.

There were others who perceived accessing health care as difficult. Pedro, a 57-year-old Salvadoran who was disabled and therefore had a particular concern, suggested that GPs often denied services to migrants: 'If a migrant goes to a GP he is told that there are no places at the surgery, but if an English person comes in then they will register them'. Indeed, there was considerable confusion about whether irregular migrants could officially register with a GP with the result that many were afraid to do so (see focus group discussion below). Such uncertainty led some to access a GP using false papers such as 44-year-old Patricio who said: 'I registered with another passport in the name of another person. Accessing services for Latin Americans is always difficult, but that's how it is'.

Access to other health services and rates of use were lower than for GPs. For example, 43% had used A&E services, 40% a dentist⁴⁶, 32% other hospital services and only 6% a polyclinic. A further 24% of women had used the services of a family planning clinic. On the other hand, a significant number of Latin Americans used private healthcare. This has important ramifications for public health among migrants and it is worth noting that London is the first developed country location for Doctors of the World through their Project London programme that provides a free healthcare for those otherwise unable to access it⁴⁷.

Focus group discussion by a group of 3 women and 3 men aged between 29 and 46 of Brazilian origin about immigration status and accessing GPs

The following dialogue illustrates the confusions over whether irregular people can access GP services:

'The issue of 'health' [can be a problem], because if a person does not have a visa, they cannot even go to the hospital'

'They cannot'?

'Well, they will be scared, won't they?'

'Well, actually, I think they [GPs] have an obligation'

'No, that is not the case, I remember when I registered with my GP I still had a visa, because afterwards [it would be difficult]'

'But did the GP ask for [a document]? Mine only asked for an address'

'He asked for my passport and a letter confirming my address.'

[46] Although this is not a direct comparison, in the last two years nearly 52% of London's population has seen an NHS dentist. If private dentists were taken into account this figure would be significantly higher. This figure therefore shows a significant difference in Latin Americans accessing primary health care services.

(http://www.ic.nhs.uk/webfiles/publications/Primary%20Care/Dentistry/dentalstats0910/NHS_Dental_Statistics_England_200910.Report.pdf (accessed 1 February 2011).

[47]

<http://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/projectionlondon/default.Asp> (accessed 10 February 2011).

The use of private health providers is widespread among Latin Americans

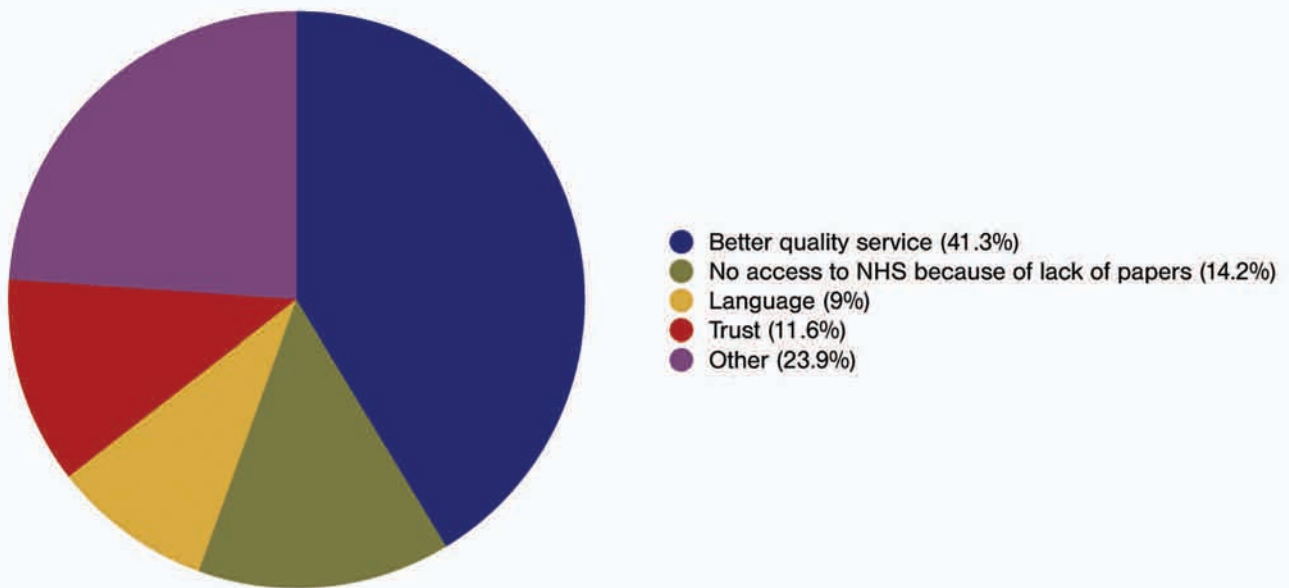
Almost 40% of Latin Americans have used private health services and about half of these (20%) were Latin American doctors⁴⁸. Most people who had visited a private doctor had also been to a GP (88%). This suggests that other factors beyond exclusion from public health services are at play among those using private health care. Yet, three-quarters of those who had never seen a GP had not been to a private doctor either. However, out of 33 irregular Latin Americans who had never been to a GP, 20 had consulted a private doctor at some point. This suggests barriers in accessing the NHS are also a significant determinant of using private healthcare for this group. For example, Luz Marta, a 30-year-old from Ecuador who was irregular, told how she had had a miscarriage but she couldn't get any help at the hospital. In the end she went to see a private Portuguese doctor who charged her £180. Similarly, 24-year-old Angela from Peru, who was also irregular, stated: 'I have paid for skin treatments and menstrual problems because I don't have access to a GP because of my immigration status.' Nevertheless, most Latin Americans who go to private doctors also have access to a GP. While on the one hand, accessing private health appears to be a question of choice rather than necessity, it could also be underpinned by poor quality of care by GPs as well as the refusal to treat irregular migrants and problems with English and interpreters.

Indeed, when respondents were asked why they use private doctors, the largest proportion mentioned a better service (41%), as well as lack of papers (14%), having more confidence in private doctors (12%) and because of language problems (9%) (see Figure 9.3). For example, Miriam, who was 60 years old and from Ecuador, paid for a private doctor because of language barriers, noting:

'I am paying for a dermatologist and a psychologist precisely because of the language issue, because in the borough of Camden they haven't provided me with an interpreter who speaks Spanish and therefore I need to pay for this and obviously it is very expensive and you often have to suspend your treatment because your income is not enough to pay for your treatment and the medicines are very expensive'.

^[48] In the UK as a whole the vast majority of consultations with a doctor are done through the NHS rather than privately. For example, in the General Lifestyle Survey 2008 only 3% of people who reported seeing a doctor in the 14 days before the survey went to a private doctor.

Figure 9.3: Reasons for using a private doctor



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=155)

The proportions of people accessing private health do not vary according to income levels but there are some differences according to occupation. For example, 38% of people with personal monthly incomes below £1,000 had been to a private doctor while 40% of those with incomes above £1,000 had done so. Latin Americans in professional and managerial jobs were especially likely to have used private healthcare with 47% having done so. Even though lower, 37% of people in elementary jobs had also consulted a private doctor. This highlights the importance of the ability to pay for private healthcare, but also that this will be much more difficult for those working in elementary jobs given their lower earning power.

In terms of the reasons for accessing private health, people on low incomes mentioned broadly similar reasons as those with higher incomes. For people earning above £1,000 a month and those earning less, the most common reason was that private doctors provide a better service (48% and 35% respectively). Among lower earners, language was more common but still not one of the main reasons (9 out of 58 cited this). However, these low earners would be most likely to visit Spanish and Portuguese-speaking doctors. Among higher earners, confidence in the medical skills of private doctors was more common than for low earners but again not a major factor (13 out of 80 mentioned this)⁴⁹.

^[49] Although the issue did not arise specifically in our survey, interviews with various representatives from migrant community organisations identified casework experiences of unregistered private practitioners serving the Latin American community in London. These doctors have led to the endangering of people's lives.

Also very important is that almost one-third of people reported using health services in their home country when they travelled there (29%). This tended to be dental treatments as well as full physical check-ups. For example, 44-year-old Felicidade from Brazil commented:

'In six years we have been to Brazil twice. So, when I go back, when I go for holidays and I am there for a month, I do a full check up, health and dental, I get everything I need done on me because it is easier over there. But when I go on holidays to Brazil I have to pay for health services'.

One-third of Latin Americans have used adult education services, especially English language courses

Turning to education facilities, 14% said someone in their household had used nurseries, 23% primary schools and 20% secondary schools, but only 5% had accessed universities or college. In addition, one-third had accessed some sort of adult education course, often English language courses. This is important given that learning English was highlighted as particularly important in terms of the needs and challenges identified. However, irregular migrants expressed their frustration at not being able to access some English courses because proof of right to reside in the UK was a requirement (see Chapter 11).

Similar proportions of people on high and low incomes had pursued adult education courses with 27% of those with personal monthly incomes below £1,000 having done so compared with 31% of those with higher incomes. However, among those in elementary jobs the proportion who had taken adult education courses was only 25%.

Other services accessed by Latin Americans were employment programmes accessed by 14% of migrants. For instance, 37-year-old Laura from Peru was actively looking for paid work but was also receiving further support from a Jobcentre through money advances that were later deducted from her benefits:

One-third of Latin Americans have used the services of migrant community organisations

Migrant community organisations play a variety of roles in the Latin American community, ranging from cultural and sports associations to organisations that offer advice and services. Organisations in London linked with Latin America are diverse, with some promoting cultural awareness of the continent while others actively serve migrants. For example, there are several societies for elite Latin Americans and British people with an interest in Latin America. Others have their roots in solidarity movements in the 1970s and 1980s and evolved into migrant welfare organisations. There are also some more specific associations that deal with particular issues among migrants such as the elderly, sexual health, women's rights and business support.

These tend to serve the Spanish-speaking population though there are other specific organisations for Brazilians. Other organisations focus on migrant issues in general and Latin Americans use their services. There are also small football leagues that are

generally quite informal and associations of people who come from the same country or from the same town. Some have formed small initiatives to help people in need in their countries of origin (see Chapter 8).

Almost one-third of Latin Americans have used the services of a migrant community organisation (32%) which is very high given that respondents were not accessed through organisations. While the proportion of people in professional and managerial occupations who had used them was slightly higher than the average (33%), the proportion of those in elementary jobs was slightly lower (28%). On the other hand, people who had been through the asylum system were much more likely to have used the services of an organisation (48%), while only 28% of those who had never applied for asylum had done so. However, those with monthly incomes lower than £500 were most likely to have used these services (45%), indicating their importance for people who are economically excluded. Overall, the rates of use of organisations were broadly similar across the different income bands, suggesting that there are other needs for services not related to low incomes.

While most people have not used the services of migrant community organisations, in many cases they were aware of their existence. Many just had not needed to use them. In other cases, respondents preferred to solve their problems on their own. For others, organisations provided valuable assistance either in a moment of need or in a more recurrent way. For example, some people had specific support from organisations when going through their asylum cases. Alonso, a 48-year-old refugee from Colombia, used an interpreter and a legal adviser from a community organisation to help him fill in his application forms. Like many, however, he had little interest in these organisations once he got his settled status: 'I don't use their services any more. Now that I have my papers, what's the point?'

In other cases, some people had used the services of migrant organisations on multiple occasions and for various reasons. Laura from Peru had used the services of several organisations at different times including when she was going through her divorce and needed accommodation:

'There was a time when I went to the Latin American Women's Rights Services. I went there so that they could help me find a hostel at the time. My mother also used the services of Carila and, for immigration advice, the Migrants Resource Centre. And my mother goes to the Latin American elderly groups, which are also community services'.

One of the main roles of migrant community organisation is to help migrants to access public services and to get information on mainstream services with most seeking them out for advice on welfare, health and immigration issues. Viviana, who was 47 years old and from Colombia, was a victim of abuse at the hands of her British husband and spent some time at a women's refuge which she accessed through a migrant organisation:

'To get to the refuge I went for help to Carila where I was given advice and then I got some help from Latin American Women's Aid. When that happened, they could not give me the address of the refuge beforehand. Instead, I had to go to a place nearby and then they would take me there. We applied for Income Support and we received some assistance'.

Latin American migrant community organisations provide key welfare and immigration advice

Data on the demand for services offered was obtained from several migrant community organisations. Different organisations offer different services and therefore their number of users does not necessarily reflect all the needs of Latin Americans but the demand for those services that the organisations can provide. At the two organisations that provide immigration advice, this was by far the service with the largest number of users, accounting for half of the clients in one and for over 60% of clients in the other. Welfare advice, covering issues such as housing, benefits, finances and debts had a high demand in all three organisations.

At a Brazilian organisation, the main types of services include legal and psychological advice, social assistance, interpreters and translators and help with filling in forms. This mixture of services was welcomed by migrants themselves as one member of the Brazilian focus group noted: 'In my opinion it is Casa do Brasil [which is the best organisation], because they address legal issues as well as, say, psychological help'

Workers and users of several migrant community organisations, however, expressed concern about their sustainability and future, especially as the funding environment has become more challenging. Most of these organisations rely heavily on the work of volunteers. Some of them were beginning to charge for membership and/or for their services as a way of generating income. Others have had to scale back their work as they have lost funding from the public sector or from charitable trusts. In one of the focus group discussions, the prospect of community organisations disappearing was ranked as the main challenge facing the Latin American community because it would mean that many people would have nowhere to go for guidance.

There was a sense that this is a period of transition and a difficult time for Latin American migrant community organisations. There is a risk that the services offered will become greatly reduced or that users may not be willing or able to pay for the costs of services. This could have a significant impact especially on the many Latin Americans who find it difficult to access mainstream services.

Many Latin Americans rely on lawyers and private advisors for advice

Other service providers used by Latin Americans in relation to advice, most often immigration advice, were private advisors and lawyers. Indeed, 41% of people had used a private lawyer or advisor. A quarter of them had been to a Latin American private advisor and the rest had been to a lawyer. Almost two-thirds of those who had consulted lawyers had not had legal aid to help them cover their costs. Costs varied from £10 per hour to £5,000 for the whole case.

Although many people consulted lawyers for immigration advice, they also used them for other reasons such as establishing businesses, divorce or probate. According to a Latin American lawyer working very closely with the community, immigration issues are the most common, followed by employment abuses (mainly people being dismissed without pay), and people getting caught with false papers (linked mainly with the recent crack-down – see Chapter 5).

While half of those in managerial and professional jobs had been to an advisor or lawyer, only 38% of those in elementary occupations had done so. Among those who had used these services, people in elementary jobs tended to use specific Latin American private advisors more than those in professional and managerial jobs (28% and 19% respectively).

Perceptions of lawyers were mixed. In general, people often felt that paying someone to deal with problems meant a better service was secured. For example, 32-year-old Valentina from Ecuador had paid £3,000 to a private lawyer for immigration advice. She noted: 'I don't use any state lawyers because I think that private is much better because I now think I can win my case'.

However, there were also cases of people paying large sums of money and getting nothing in return. For example, Luz Marta, who was 30 years old from Ecuador, paid £1,800 to a lawyer who promised to get her legal papers and she said she was still waiting for them and she had lost hope; she had had her asylum claim rejected. According to interviews with representatives from migrant community organisations, these are not isolated incidents and there is a widespread and growing concern about private agents and lawyers who are unregulated or working outside recognised quality frameworks who have been exploiting members of the Latin American community.

The church plays an important support role among Latin Americans

Almost 90% of Latin Americans identify with some form of religion, mainly Roman Catholic (63%), but also Evangelical Christian (17%). Almost 70% attended church services with 35.5% of people attending every week and another 31.5% going sometimes. Among those who attended church, 67% went to Roman Catholic services while 28% went to Evangelical services. The vast majority of people attended religious services specifically aimed at Latin Americans (held by Latin American priests and pastors in Spanish or Portuguese). More women than men went to church services on a weekly basis (40% compared with 30%).

Many people also used churches as source of services and advice for Latin Americans that extend beyond religious guidance and practices and included immigration, education and health support. For example, a priest from the Catholic Chaplaincy noted: 'The services through the chaplaincy are baptisms for children, information for young people, bible study, prayer groups, charismatic groups ... everything is in Spanish and is free for them. We also provide advice. We have a free GP for people, and a lawyer in Spanish who comes and gives advice every Thursday for free. She works with legal issues and gives free advice. We also have a group of doctors who can help people who can't visit doctors and they give prescriptions.'

The church also provides social and psychological support to help people to cope with living in London. For instance, 44-year-old Francisco from Bolivia who went to a Catholic church noted: 'I go to church every Sunday and I go to prayer groups. I think the church helps us to keep going and it gives us strength to deal with what we need to do here, our work, loneliness'. It also provides spiritual guidance and assistance as noted by Socorro who was 38 and from Ecuador: 'I think that for Latin Americans everywhere in the world, the church provides hope and faith in a superior power that is helping us at every moment and I think it is very important'.

Some respondents also identified church-going as helping them to stay out of trouble. In the words of 29-year-old Magarida from Brazil:

'I would say that without it, without the church, without that communion with God, it would be very difficult to live here, without doing bad things. Because most Brazilians who come lose their way. They forget their goals, they are tempted by everything and they lose their own identity. They fall into drugs, prostitution, sometimes robbery, so I believe that in London it is very easy to fall off the path ... And I think that the church provides a way to avoid becoming involved, to try to escape or to try to avoid temptation'.

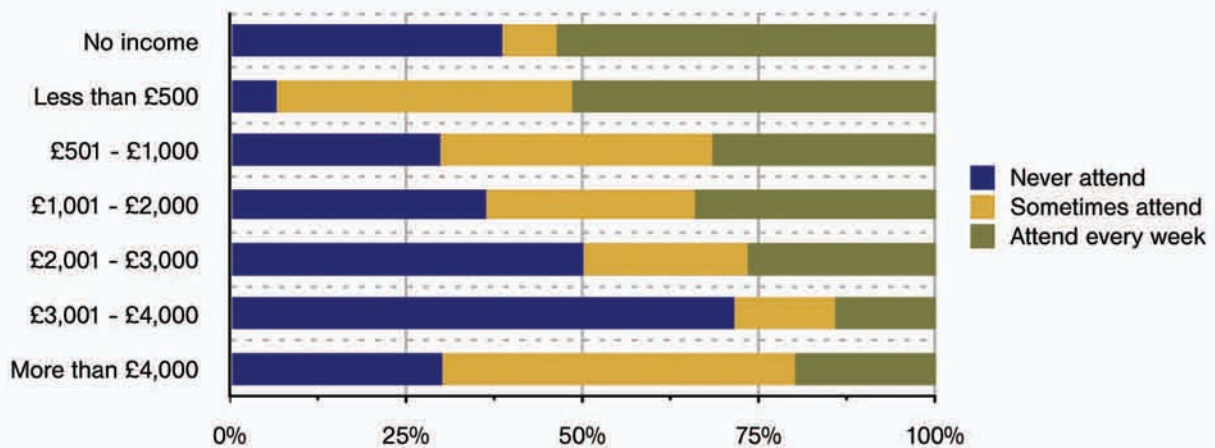
For non-believers, the church can still provide support, with several people admitting to not believing in God but going to church in order to make friends. For example, Jose from Colombia noted: 'I go to all the churches, but I don't believe, I go in order to socialise, to make friends, to construct a network of friends who are my sources of support. That's my objective, not faith'.

Those on lower incomes were much more likely to attend church every week (see Figure 9.4). People in professional and managerial jobs had the lowest rates of regular attendance (25%) compared with 35% of elementary workers or 48% of those working

in personal services. In addition, those on lower incomes were more likely to attend Evangelical churches: 56% of Evangelical church goers had incomes of less than £1,000 per month compared with 46% of Catholic church goers.

These patterns can have ramifications for some people's economic well-being in that most members of Evangelical churches in particular give up a percentage of their income to the church⁵⁰. For someone earning £1,000 per month, a voluntary offering of up to 10% of their income is significant. This was highlighted by 45-year-old Edilberto from Colombia who did not attend church because he felt the church tricked people into handing over money: 'I think it's very false to make people give money and then tell them – I will help you if you are a brother, I will help you if you donate, I will only help you if you are in my church.'

Figure 9.4: Church attendance by personal monthly income



Source: Authors' questionnaire (n=344)

^[50] Evangelical churches are funded through contributions from their members. This is normally an offering of a tithe (diezmo) which is approximately 10% of a person's income) (see http://www.comunidadcristianadealicante.es/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8&Itemid=2 (accessed 1 November 2010).

Social networks can enhance and undermine well-being among Latin Americans

As well as formal organisational support, there are also informal support networks among Latin Americans in London that help to ameliorate economic and emotional hardships. A core aspect of social networks is friendship. Latin Americans have relatively strong friendship networks. They identified a median of 5 friends, with more than half having 5 friends or less and only 6% having no friends. More than 40% had more than 6 friends while one-fifth had more than 10⁵¹.

Friends provide an important emotional and economic support function. They provide an escape from people's working lives as well as the provision of contacts that can lead to jobs, and can also serve as a source of small-scale borrowing to tide people over. Evidence from the qualitative research highlighted how the vast majority of people secured their jobs through friends, most of whom were other Latin Americans. Maria who was 27 years old and from Santa Cruz in Bolivia noted:

'I got my current job in cleaning via a friend because he knew that I had left my sister's house without a penny and that I had nowhere to live. He helped me find a room near Old Kent Road ... he paid the rent, the deposit, everything. He then got me a job in his company where he cleans. He is one of the best friends that I have and I will always be very grateful to him'.

For those with few friends, lack of time and over-work were the main reasons identified in the qualitative research as described by Mateo, a 32-year-old Colombian: 'The truth is that I go to work and home and then from home to work. I don't go out much and I don't have many friends'. Nevertheless, overall those working in elementary jobs had just as many friends as professional and managerial workers.

The creation of social networks is underpinned by levels of trust which reflect a mixed picture with just over half (53%) saying they trusted other Latin Americans. This trust was rooted in helping others out in times of need, especially in terms of finding work and accommodation. For example, Soraya, a 28-year-old from Bolivia who worked as a cleaner stated:

'When there is a problem, people communicate by text message and tell someone else to try to find help for them. I'm not sure what happens with Ecuadorians and Colombians, but in the Bolivians' case if someone needs something or they are suffering in some way, we try and contact someone to help either economically or with other support.'

The reasons why people did not trust others were linked with a sense of individualism (identified by 27% of all people) or envy (cited by 24%) within the community. Alfonso, a 41-year-old from Paraguay, said that the root of the problems was in the migration process: 'It's because the mentality is to come and earn money and then return. I always say that my heart and my mind are here but many people have their mind there and their body here ... this is bad.' Immigration status also played an important role, as noted by Yaneth, a 33-year-old from Colombia:

'People have different preferences and among us we are envious if someone has papers. There is also a lot of competition for jobs, people always ask you how much you earn, if you have papers. If you introduce someone to a friend they first ask if you have documents as if it's a competition'.

^[51] Robin Dunbar (2010) notes that most people in the UK and beyond have an average of 5 good friends and a maximum of 150.

Trust is more commonplace among those from professional and managerial backgrounds (with 70% saying they trusted others) compared with only 45% of those with elementary jobs. This is probably linked with the greater precariousness of people's situation when they work in elementary jobs for low wages and under poor conditions.

There are also some tensions among different nationality groups. One of the most marked was the separation of Spanish- and Portuguese speaking Latin Americans. Indeed, only 44% of Brazilians identified as Latin American, compared with over 70% among all Spanish-speaking nationalities. They were also the least likely to celebrate any of the cultural activities with only one-third attending summer carnivals. This is also reflected in the fact that there tend to be different organisations serving each set of language groups and different commercial and cultural outlets. In a focus group of 6 Brazilians, only 2 people said they felt Latin American, as one person noted:

'I don't know if I feel [like a Latin American], I also think it is more to do with accepting it than feeling it. For instance, if I have to tick a box about my profile and I see 'British' and all the others, and also 'Latino', then I'll tick this box, but I think it is important to note that I have let this happen to me, I know very little about the countries in South America, I have never visited, I feel there is little integration amongst us'.

There were also tensions among Spanish-speaking nationalities with several people stating that tensions within their own nationality group are stronger than within others. For example, Serafina, a 40 year-old from Ecuador who owned a hairdressing salon, noted that: 'Really, it seems that we Ecuadorians are the ones who do not trust each other. I've seen more organisation in other communities such as the Colombian and the Bolivians that are more united, but us, no'.

Participation in cultural activities can make Latin Americans 'feel at home'

Migrants living far from their home often engage in various cultural activities or build what can be called cultural capital as a way of coping with their lives in a new place. This can also act as a mechanism for dealing with economic hardships and exclusion they face in wider society (Wills et al., 2009).

There is widespread participation in Latin American cultural events such as carnivals with almost two-thirds attending the summer carnivals such as the Carnaval del Pueblo (63%). Hometown fiestas and Independence Day celebrations were also important for Latin Americans, but participation in these was lower (42%). People participated in cultural activities regardless of their occupational background or income, except for those with personal monthly incomes of more than £4,000 per month who were the least likely to attend summer festivals and other activities.

Another dimension of engaging with Latin American culture on a daily basis is through using Latin American services and shopping areas such as Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters markets. Levels of use were very high (85%) although only one-fifth of Brazilians used such places, probably because they have distinct commercial areas in Willesden Green or Bayswater. The main services accessed were cafes or restaurants, buying food and ingredients, sending money home and using hairdressers. Consuela, a 61-year-old from Chile, said that these places were really valuable: 'it's important for the community to maintain their products, their customs'. Qualitative data shows that people from all socio-economic backgrounds used these places although the working classes tend to use them more regularly.

Chapter 10:

Lives of second generation Latin Americans in London

Key points

- Second generation Latin Americans in our survey are young, most likely to be born to Latin American mothers, have Colombian parents and identify as 'British Latino'.
- The second generation are well-educated to post-secondary level with more than half still studying.
- Almost half identify as working class and half receive benefits.
- There is a shift away from working in elementary occupations.
- The second generation maintain strong links with their Latin American heritage.
- Almost two-thirds have experienced discrimination, especially workplace abuses, educational racism and police harassment.
- Integration is also an issue for the second generation, especially in relation to their social lives.

Introduction

This chapter examines the experiences of 52 second generation Latin Americans who were either born in the UK and have at least one parent from Latin America or who had come to the UK before they were 7 years old. This sample excluded Brazilians given that they are such a recent population group and it proved difficult to find Brazilian second generation people willing to be interviewed. The survey was conducted with a purposive sample that aimed to be as representative as possible, accessed mainly through youth groups, churches and the parents of existing contacts of the research team. However, because of the small numbers involved, care must be taken with extrapolating from the sample and as a result, numbers rather than percentages are used.

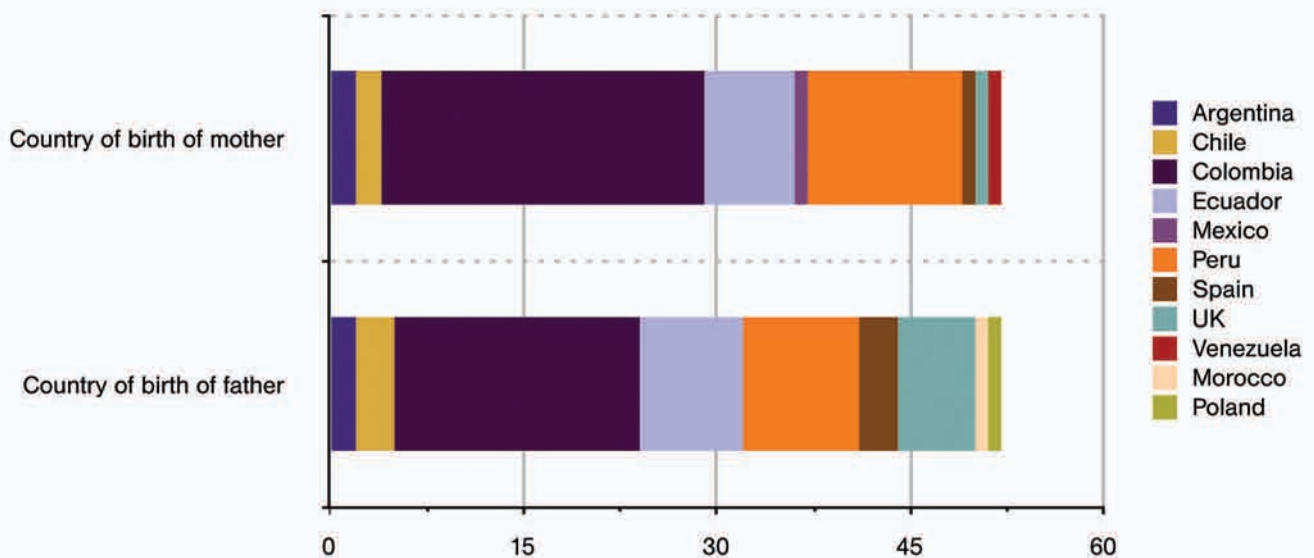
Most second generation Latin Americans have Colombian parents, are British citizens and identify as British Latinos

The second generation Latin Americans discussed here include 23 young men and 29 young women with an average age of 21. Residentially, this group were concentrated in the boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark where almost a half lived. The vast majority were single with only 10 married or cohabiting people and 1 divorcee.

The most common nationality background among the second generation was Colombian. Almost half of all their mothers were Colombian and 19 of all their fathers. Overall, fathers were less likely to be Latin American (11 are non-Latino) than mothers (only 2 non-Latinos) (see Figure 10.1).

The vast majority of the second generation had British nationality (49) with only three with nationality from other countries (all Spanish). 34 had dual nationality, most of whom were Colombian (22). Linked with this, almost half identified themselves as British Latino (23) with most others calling themselves Latin American (11) and *mestizo/mixed* (10). This highlights how a British Latino identity is emerging as the population has become more settled given that only 4 people among the larger sample identified as such.

Figure 10.1 Country of birth of mother and father among second generation Latin Americans



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey of second generation (n=52)

Most second generation Latin Americans have high education levels yet identify as working class

Education levels were generally high, with 41 having reached further education college level as a basic minimum. Half of these were attending sixth form college where people were doing A levels or various post-GCSE courses (22). A further 19 were in the process of doing or having completed vocational or university courses. Because of the young age of the sample, the main economic activity of this group was studying (see below).

Almost half of second generation Latin Americans surveyed identified as working class (23) which is much more than their parents' generation (just over a third). This suggests that it has been difficult for this generation to rebuild the class position that their parents had back home in Latin America and which has been eroded on arrival in London.

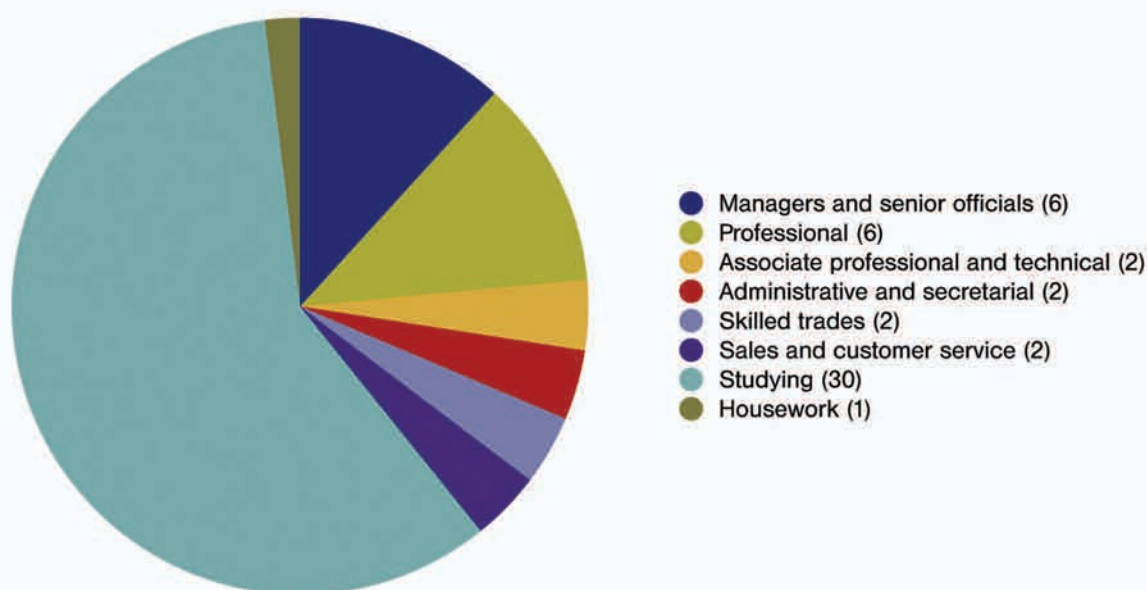
The economic activity of second generation Latin Americans is dominated by studying and a shift away from elementary jobs

More than half of second generation migrants interviewed were studying (30). Given this concentration within the sample, it is difficult to build up a picture of the types of paid work they are likely to move into. Acknowledging this, it appears that they are less likely than their parents to work in elementary jobs. Although several people worked in elementary jobs to assist in paying tuition fees and paying their way at school or college, no-one identified such occupations as their primary job. In addition, more people worked in professional and managerial jobs (14) (see Figure 10.2).

Although many second generation Latin Americans interviewed faced considerable barriers in the labour market and in the education system (see below), it is important to note a shift away from the elementary sector, with many improving their occupational status compared to their parents, as well as an aspiration to do better. Perhaps not surprisingly, 40 people said that they wanted to have better jobs than their parents in London. Dario, who was 18 years old with Ecuadorian parents, was studying art at college. He had both British and Ecuadorian nationality but his parents, who worked as cleaners, had been irregular until 2009. He noted:

'They had to suffer a lot and it's made it very difficult for me to go to college ... when your parents don't have papers they have to work all week until very late [his parents worked in cleaning] and you are brought up on your own with your siblings and friends. Life is very difficult for them as they were always afraid ... We had to move house many times because we were afraid of the police'.

Figure 10.2: Economic activity among second generation Latin Americans



Source: Authors' survey of second generation (n=51)

Some have been able to achieve their goals, such as Enrique, who was 26 years old and whose mother and father were from Ecuador. Both his parents worked as cleaners. Although Enrique had studied at college, he decided to set up his own cleaning company because he knew about the business from his parents. This illustrates some occupational mobility although it was limited to a low-paid sector of the labour market.

Many second generation Latin Americans are economically and socially vulnerable

The high proportion of second generation Latin Americans in education also conceals the economic vulnerability among many. This is reflected in the fact that more than half (29) received state benefits themselves or via their parents. This was mainly Working Tax credits, Housing Benefit or Council Tax relief. This is much higher than for Latin Americans as a whole and reflects their ability to claim as British citizens as well as their economic needs.

The second generation Latin Americans in our survey lived in large households with an average of 4 people. Almost half lived in couple households with dependent children (usually with their parents), although over a fifth lived in female-headed lone parent households (11 people) (usually with their mother). The proportion living in social housing (23) was much higher than for the sample as a whole. This partly reflects the concentration of Colombians and Ecuadorians among this group who were more likely to live in social housing in general. Housing conditions of the second generation, while better than the first generation, were still affected by issues such as overcrowding. For example, 6 out of 46 households were overcrowded, which is higher than the London average of 6.8% (see Chapter 7).

The majority of second generation Latin Americans have experienced discrimination

Almost two-thirds of the second generation included here (33) identified discrimination as an issue in their lives. The most frequent type was related with workplace abuses, although educational racism and police harassment also emerged as important. Several people also identified discrimination in housing. Carlos, who was 20 years old and of Colombian origin, noted in relation to schooling:

‘We’re all whites, but they don’t help us like the English. They put us in the bottom groups in college so that we don’t get ahead. We are not an ethnic minority ... My friends can all speak English, but in college we are always put in the lower end in the lower streams and they never advise us to go to university.’

His comment also illustrates how he perceived himself as ‘white’ and British yet his experiences of racism and discrimination indicate that he was being treated by others as a member of an ethnic minority group.

Discrimination was felt especially strongly by those of Colombian descent. 17-year-old Juanita complained:

‘When you say to someone that you’re Colombian all they talk about is drugs and this prejudice really affects me ...sometime when you say you are Latin, people say that we are bad, that we sell drugs. Always in Elephant we are stopped and searched. The police are really racist in this country. When you say you are Colombian, they search you’.

Second generation Latin Americans have a strong affinity with their Latin American heritage

Reflecting the substantial proportion of second generation Latin Americans in our survey who called themselves British Latino, it is not surprising that they identified as both British and Latin American. However, a larger number said they felt more Latin American than British (45 compared with 37). Some also admitted to feeling confused about their identity. Felipe, who was 17 years old and at college, and whose parents were both Colombian, stated:

'When I'm asked what ethnicity I am, there is no box. It seems that there are not enough Latin Americans to make a box, this is wrong. We do not have political leaders. I feel I have an identity crisis. I feel British Colombian. Before I had more in common with blacks, but now I have more in common with whites'.

Partly reflecting their Latin American heritage, the vast majority of this group were fluent Spanish speakers (43) with only 1 person being unable to understand or speak it. Moreover, 20 people spoke Spanish all the time, with another 30 speaking it with their family. Their language skills had usually been encouraged by their parents, with over half having attended Saturday schools where they learnt Spanish.

As well as their bilingualism, several young people noted how they also spoke 'Spanglish' with their friends. While this can be a positive form of communication, some pointed out that it undermined the quality of their English. Alicia, who was 17 years old and of Colombian origin, and who was studying at college, noted:

'Although I've been here since I was two years old it's difficult for me to study English for exams and to speak it perfectly. Because I'm young I speak with my friends in a relaxed type of English but when I talk to adults I have to speak perfect English. We speak Spanglish'.

Reinforcing their Latin American heritage, the majority (42) maintained links with their parents' homelands in Latin America. This was mainly through telephone calls, internet chat and email at least once a month and often more frequently. In addition, 25 people sent money and gifts to Latin America. These connections are strengthened by the fact that 45 had travelled to their parents' homeland, making an average of 5 trips. Also significant is that 13 people had travelled to their parents' homeland in order to access medical or dental care.

Many have strong connections to the community here, celebrating their Latin American roots by engaging in cultural events or using commercial centres oriented towards Latin Americans in London. The majority attended the summer carnivals either every year (18) or occasionally (25). In addition, 11 used Latin American services such as those available in Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters shopping centres on a regular basis while 39 used them more occasionally. This was mainly to visit cafes and restaurants, go to a Latin American disco and to buy food. These cultural and commercial activities are more popular than attending churches, with just over half attending services, with only 12 attending every week.

Again reflecting their strong association with Latin America, many said that their friends were other British Latin Americans (21), although 26 said they were a mixture of British-born Latin Americans, with others who were British-born of diverse origin. Very few (5) had white British friends.

Chapter 11:

Main challenges, needs and projects identified by Latin Americans in London

Key points

- Almost 70% of Latin Americans perceive discrimination to be a problem, especially workplace abuse and exploitation.
- More than half identify English language difficulties as their main problem, citing a lack of appropriate ESOL provision.
- Resolving immigration status and irregularity is pivotal to overcoming most of the challenges and needs identified.
- The types of project most commonly identified were an immigration amnesty, improved and accessible language training and better immigration advice.
- There were difficulties in moving into jobs other than cleaning, with many feeling stereotyped as not being able to work in other sectors.

Introduction

This chapter examines the challenges faced by the Latin American community in London, highlighting a range of obstacles to integration. The main problems faced by Latin Americans are outlined as well as their most pressing needs. The specific issues of discrimination and the ways in which immigration status impacts on the lives of Latin Americans are also discussed together with an outline of the types of projects required.

Experiences of discrimination are widespread among Latin Americans

Discrimination was perceived to be a problem by 69% of Latin Americans. Bolivians felt the most discriminated against of all nationalities (78%), while men were slightly more likely to identify discrimination than women (72% compared to 66%). Younger people were most likely to identify discrimination, especially those in their 30s (73%). Analysis by immigration status showed that those most likely to identify discrimination were irregular migrants (81%). However, 71% of people with British passports identified discrimination, suggesting that the processes are more deep-seated than simply acquiring legal status.

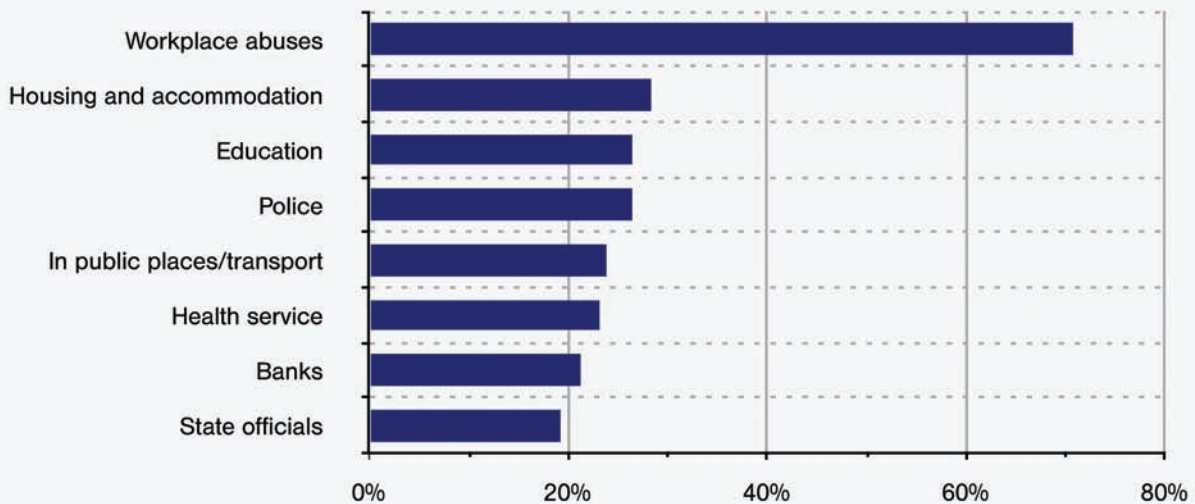
The most common type of discrimination, by a wide margin, was workplace exploitation – identified by 71% of those who reported discrimination as an issue. Around a quarter also mentioned housing and accommodation, educational disadvantage, hostilities on the part of the police, abuse in public places and on public transport and disadvantage in relation to the health service. Around one-fifth identified problems in banks and difficulties in interacting with state officials (see Figure 11.1).

The concentration of many Latin Americans in low skilled and low paid jobs affects their perceptions of discrimination. Evidence from the qualitative research showed that they were stereotyped as cleaners and that British people often assumed that they were not able to do other jobs. Mercedes, who was 27 years old and from Bolivia, pointed out:

‘Look, the English are great people, but just by being Latin American, they try and discriminate even though it’s an offence to do that here, I’ve noticed it. They say - you are Latina and so you can do all the work that I give you - and because you don’t understand the language very well they find any excuse to get you to do more work; this has happened to me’.

This has the knock-on effect of preventing occupational mobility. Leon, also from Bolivia, felt aggrieved that he wasn’t given a chance to move out of cleaning into white-collar work. He recalled how he had worked in a hospital as a cleaner and he had been encouraged to apply for an administrative job because he had got on well with the staff. However, in the end, they told him his English wasn’t good enough and they thought he wouldn’t be able to cope: ‘it was about racism perhaps, or that the English don’t associate Latin Americans with working in reception’.

Figure 11.1: Types of discrimination identified by Latin Americans



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=307)

Note: Some types have been identified more than once

Another important type of discrimination to emerge from the qualitative research and felt by Colombians in particular was the stereotype of involvement with the drugs industry – an issue identified by the second generation as well. For example, 24-year-old Luis stated: 'There is a stigmatisation of those of Latin American origin. They think that we are not capable of some things. In addition, they think that Colombians sell and grow drugs'.

Many Brazilians spoke about how they either hid behind their European nationality and ancestry if they had it, or how it was used against them as a form of discrimination. For example, 39-year-old Guilherme from Brazil spoke about a former wealthy boyfriend who would always introduce him as Italian:

'Every time we went out together and I became part of his circle of friends, (at that time I knew little English), he'd introduce me as: 'this is my boyfriend, his name is ... he is from Italy'. From Italy? So that happened once, twice, then on the third time I told him 'Hold on, you are telling your friends that I am Italian, that I am from Italy? He said 'Yes, darling, because you are half-Italian'. I told him 'I only have 25% of Italian blood, my grandmother went to Brazil and my grandfather was Brazilian, my parents were born in Brazil, I am not ashamed of being Brazilian. Please stop it, because otherwise you will be the one to be embarrassed because your friends will come and ask me what part of Italy I am from and there is no reason for me to lie!'

However, another Brazilian from the focus group discussion admitted to always saying she was Brazilian with Portuguese citizenship to prevent people from discriminating against her:

‘I thought that if you said you were Brazilian people would think that you were here illegally or something like that, because Brazil is not part of the European Community.’

As well as police harassment, young people felt especially vulnerable to discrimination by private law enforcement guards. 17-year-old Rafael from Colombia spoke about his experiences in a shopping centre:

‘One time I went out and we went to a shopping centre and the security guards stopped us because they thought we were suspicious. I think it was because we were young and we were not English. There was a group of young white people close-by and they asked them nothing’.

Others spoke of implicit discrimination through the lack of role models or the lack of attention paid to the Latin American community or the fact that they have no political presence in London. For example, Delmar, who was 32 years old and from Ecuador, pointed out:

‘It’s true that we don’t have an important role in this country. I’m 100% sure that we don’t have a force, a presence. I have seen posters saying that we were going to have an Ibero-American mayor, but I don’t know. If we were to have a political representative from the Latin American community or a sportsperson who came from the Latin community like happens in Germany or Spain it would give more attention to the Latin American community and open it up’.

Another issue to emerge from the qualitative research was that some felt that Latin Americans themselves are responsible for discrimination especially through their separatism. However, this was expressed mainly by people who spoke fluent English and who worked in professional jobs. For example, Reynaldo, who was from Colombia and worked as a recruitment consultant, said that he didn’t feel much affinity with other Latin Americans. He noted: ‘I think that, although it’s difficult to generalise, Latin Americans close themselves in a lot. They will say, let’s go here because there are other Latinos there’. This was echoed by 48-year-old Rodolfo from Ecuador, who worked as a driving school teacher: ‘We exclude ourselves because of the language, we don’t understand the system, we live our lives constantly thinking about returning to South America’.

Almost one-third did not think that discrimination was an issue in London. This was often people who had lived elsewhere in Europe where they commented that racism was much worse than in the UK. According to 57-year-old Agustín from Ecuador there was significant labour abuse in the UK, but Italy was worse: ‘In general the Italian is the one who thinks he’s in charge of Latinos - especially Ecuadorians; he thinks he can boss them around, take advantage of them and exploit them’.

There was some sense, especially among Brazilians that discrimination was declining and that Latin American culture was being celebrated by wider society. A Brazilian man from a focus group discussion noted:

‘I think there was a lot more [discrimination] in the past, because in the past when you talked about Brazil, all women were sluts and men were thieves, tramps, they’d take advantage of you, steal from you. It is not like that now, I have many British friends and you talk about Brazil, they’ve even visited with me, now it is this thing of being a ‘happy’ country, a country that only has good things.’

Immigration status underpins many of the problems identified by Latin Americans

Problems associated with immigration status pervade the Latin American community. Although 19% were explicitly irregular, many people have experienced irregularity at some point in their migration trajectory or will be likely to face it at some point. For those who were irregular, the situation is obviously much worse in terms of their ability to secure work and move about the city freely as well as the anxiety that lack of immigration status engenders. This is summed up by 48-year-old Victor from Bolivia who was irregular:

‘Illegal people need freedom because we have to walk around in fear that we will be caught wherever we go. We walk around in fear. We don’t have freedom or security’.

While some people were afraid of having no papers, others were scared of having to use false documents, such as 45-year-old Lidia from Ecuador, who bought a false passport in Spain for 1,200 Euros. She bought it because she was desperate to get a job [she was a cleaning supervisor] which would enable her to send the £500 a month needed to support her 3 children and mother at home in Quito:

‘I’m a very solitary person, I have suffered a lot since I arrived and I just have to keep going ... I’m afraid that I’ll be caught with a false passport even though I’m an honourable person; I pay tax and all my bills. There are people who lie to get asylum. And I would never lie and I’m afraid’.

Indeed, not only are irregular migrants psychologically affected by having to cope with fear and insecurity, but they also have to deal with how society criminalises them. 40-year-old Maria from Bolivia said: ‘It should be recognised that we are honourable, hard-working people, not criminals’. Emilio, who was also 40 and from Ecuador, stated:

‘It’s an oppression, you don’t feel secure in anything, you can’t be relaxed even at home, you can’t do anything, you are like a type of ghost, you are not secure. Psychologically it affects you, you get depressed, you get stressed, you feel like you are being persecuted as if you were a delinquent’.

Another effect of irregularity is the difficulty of visiting home. For example, 35-year-old Alejandro from Nicaragua had a false Spanish passport that he bought for £500 so that he could work (as a chef). He said the main effect of being irregular was not being able to return home to see his family. His mother had been very ill and he couldn’t visit her because he knew he wouldn’t be able to get back into the country.

‘It affects my life because now I can’t leave to go anywhere, I can’t see my family, I can’t go on holiday. It also affects me morally because my mother is very sick ...it hurts me that I can’t go. I’ve spoken about this with my mother, about what happens if she dies ...’.

As Alejandro’s case illustrates, Latin Americans are also very aware as to why people risked this anxiety and hardship in that there were few opportunities in their home countries and many were left with few options other than to migrate. This is why educated and professional people are often willing to take risks in order to improve their lives through migration, even if it means having to work in low-skilled jobs.

Everyone realised just how important it is to have legal status in that it affects all aspects of people's lives in terms of resources, emotion and self-respect. For instance, a Brazilian who participated in the focus group noted: 'You obtain respect, from the moment you have a visa, that you have legal status in the country, you'll also have respect.'

There was also recognition that the immigration system is extremely dynamic and that changes in it can force people into irregularity and criminality overnight. Another Brazilian from the focus group noted:

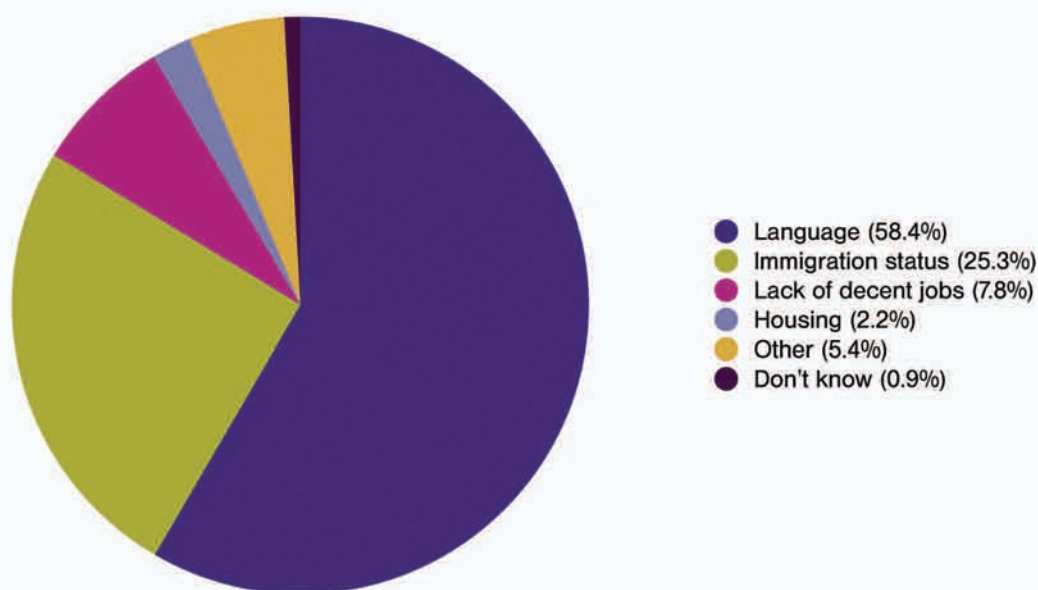
'The system practically imposes an 'illegality' For instance, if you are a student and you need money, if you wish to have decent accommodation, etc etc, you need to work more than ten hours a week, and I am your employer and I say 'no worries, come work for me', I'll be placing you in the illegality, and you, in turn, will also compromise me ... in a way, they 'authorise' this illegality, in this way, not officially, of course.'

Unfortunately, immigration status and the lack of it were also used as a bargaining tool and a source of control within the community. The qualitative research uncovered several tales of people reporting others without papers to the Home Office in order to settle scores. For example, one woman in the Colombian focus group noted how Colombians reported each other to the immigration authorities in order to reduce competition for jobs.

English language difficulties dominate the main problems identified by Latin Americans

More than half of Latin Americans identified language difficulties and specifically, the inability to speak English as their main problem (58%). Another quarter felt that immigration status, and specifically the difficulties in regularising and attaining permanent residency in London, was their main problem (see Figure 11.2).

Figure 11.2: Main problems facing Latin Americans in London



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=447)

Colombians were much more concerned about language difficulties than other nationalities (69%). This is possibly due to the fact that they are more established and have realised the importance of learning English in order to settle effectively in London. Brazilians were much more concerned than other nationalities with immigration status (35%), while Bolivians were especially concerned about decent jobs. Women were more concerned about language than men (61% and 55%), while men perceived immigration status as more of an issue than women (27% and 24%).

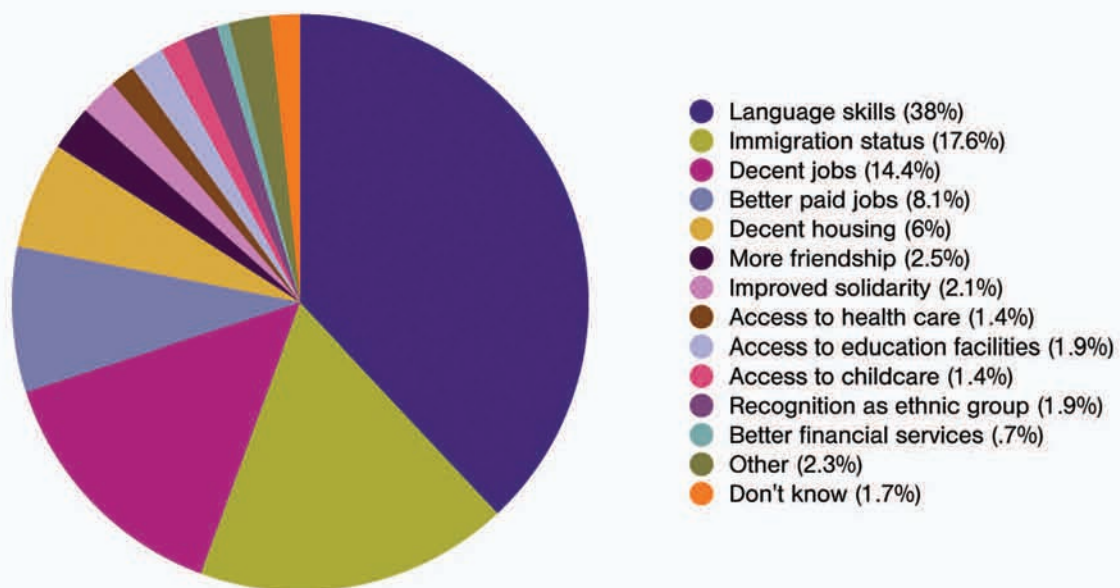
Among the second generation, language also emerged as their main preoccupation (identified by almost half) despite the fact that all of them spoke English. Lack of decent jobs and immigration status were also identified by around one-fifth, again despite the fact that the vast majority were British citizens. Indeed, their views tended to reflect those of the community more widely and probably their parents, rather than issues specifically related to the second generation.

Improved English language provision dominates the main needs among Latin Americans

Although the challenges faced and needs identified are interrelated, respondents were asked about them separately. The main need to emerge was providing improved language skills in English, something mentioned by over a third (38%) (see Figure 11.3). Again, Colombians were the most likely to identify language as their main need (50.5%), while immigration status was the most pressing concern for Bolivians. Men were more concerned with addressing immigration status than women (20% compared with 15%).

Among the second generation, the need for decent jobs compatible with skills emerged as the most important identified by over a quarter with another one-fifth mentioning the need for better paid jobs. Just under one-fifth felt that addressing 'culture clash' was important.

Figure 11.3: Main needs identified by Latin Americans



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=432)

There was also a close relationship between language and immigration status in that those without papers were unlikely to be able or to afford to learn English. People were afraid to go to classes in case they were reported to the authorities. Because of fear of deportation, people felt it was better to work as hard as possible in case they were

caught and deported; they would have something to show for their time in London. Aurelio, who was 40 and from Ecuador, noted:

'I haven't learnt English because I don't have papers, and they always ask you for them. If I was to have documents I would study English and I would dedicate my time to being a teacher [his profession in Ecuador]. However, you have to work here and there's no time for anything'.

Indeed, once immigration status was secured then people could begin to learn English. This is reflected in 57-year-old Ecuadorian Agustín's case. He did not learn English until he managed to obtain Indefinite Leave to Remain:

'Now I'm studying English and it's the best benefit that I have received from the state although it's not free – it's £80 per year which in reality is nothing. Now I can do it because I have papers'.

An immigration amnesty dominates the types of projects identified by Latin Americans

The single most commonly cited project that Latin Americans felt that their community required was an immigration amnesty for migrants, followed by more language training and better immigration advice (see Figure 11.4). Bolivians and Brazilians were the most likely to identify an amnesty (45% and 43%), reflecting the high levels of irregularity among them. Brazilians were the most likely to mention language training, while better immigration advice was important for Bolivians. Interestingly, women felt that access to better immigration advice was more important than men (54% and 47%), although they were less likely to identify immigration as an issue than men (see above).

Clearly, the issue of an amnesty for irregular migrants is beyond the scope of a specific project addressing problems of Latin Americans in particular. However, there was widespread support for broader campaigns such as the Strangers into Citizens campaign that calls for an earned amnesty⁵². Ramiro from Ecuador, who had a British passport and worked as a dentist and entrepreneur, summarised the situation:

'It's so sad to see so many people with no papers ... they spend their lives like an engine of survival, adapting to circumstances, perhaps living here today and there tomorrow, fleeing all the time ... These circumstances have affected our community really strongly ... It's important to realise this and hopefully someone will do something in relation to these migration processes that do so much damage to people and the society in this cruel way of calling people illegal'.

Others such as Alonso from Colombia, who owned a restaurant and also had a British passport, stated:

'People are always asking: when are they going to do it? Will there be a regularisation or not? Is there going to be an agreement or something? And so far they know nothing, this is the thing, therefore if someone could help them. They have done marches, and the church is asking for legalisation. This is essential because there are lots of people working honourably, coming here for their families, but they don't have papers, it is essential for them so that they can have services'.

^[52] This campaign calls for an "earned amnesty" or "pathway into citizenship", open to those with at least six years in the UK, who present employer and character references, a clean criminal record, and proficiency in English" (http://www.strangersintocitizens.org.uk/assets/pdf/SIC_Briefing_volume1.pdf). Accessed June 24 2010.

As well as calling for an amnesty so that irregular people would no longer have to live in poor conditions, there was also a general perception that it would also recognise the contribution of Latin Americans to the economy, society and culture of London. This was expressed by 31-year-old Gilberto from Venezuela:

'I think we need to help people who are undocumented, who don't have many resources, who perhaps live in a small room. You have to recognise that these people are supporting the development of this country because they pay their taxes, tax that they will never recover. There needs to be legal help for the illegal. That would help a lot'.

People tended to be more specific when discussing the need for English classes. There was a general consensus that such classes needed to be provided for all people regardless of immigration status and at times that were suitable for people who were working. For example, Marcelo, who was 37 and from Brazil, said: 'The government needs to provide more English classes that are more accessible and with good timetables because there are people who can't go because they are working.' Most wanted these classes to be free and with good teachers who were native English speakers.

There were also several suggestions of projects that entailed opening a centre for Latin Americans that was open to everyone and would provide information, English classes and various types of training. For example, Pedro from El Salvador suggested:

'It would be good to have many projects and big ones, for example, open a centre where there could be help with the English language. There are lots of courses but irregularity is a barrier because they ask for lots of papers. It would be good to have free courses for irregular people at accessible times where they could go and learn'.

Lack of information appeared to be an issue for many; they did not know where to start looking for assistance. For example, Reynaldo from Colombia was very critical about Latin Americans, and especially working class people whom he said isolated themselves from wider society:

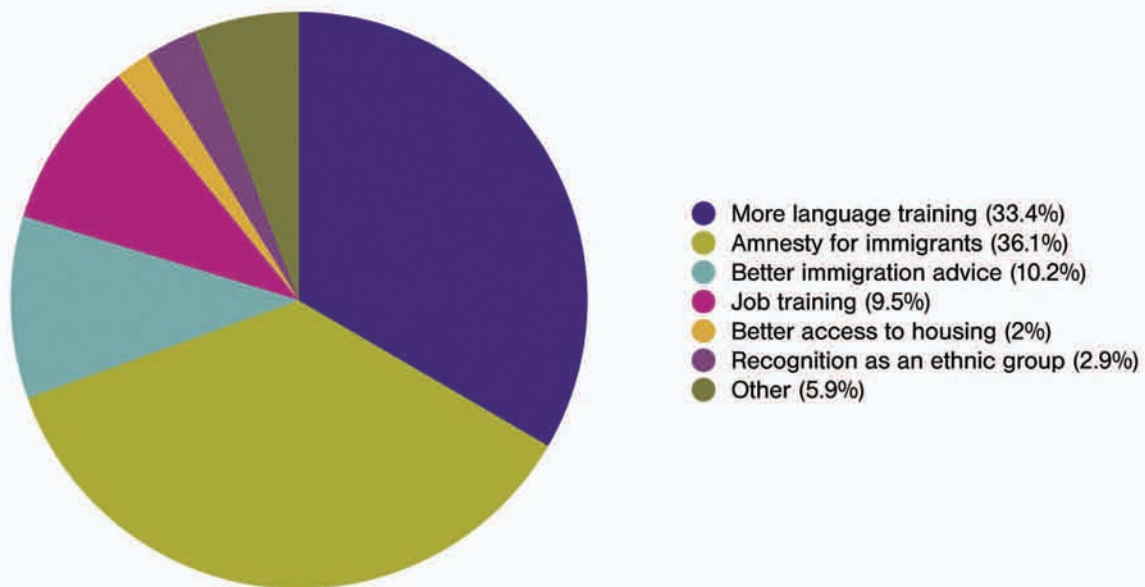
'They close themselves in the Latin community, they only go to Latin places, they only eat Latin food, they only read Latin newspapers, they are not interested in learning about the new culture'.

He felt that if people had more information about wider society then this isolation might not occur so much:

'Many people arrive here and because of the lack of information, they don't know what they have a right to, what is available here for people; for example, many people come with the dream of studying and there is a lot of help to study, but they don't have the information'

Linked with this, many people felt that integration projects would be very useful. These could take various forms but would be a combination of different types of suggestions outlined above and in the examples listed below.

Figure 11.4: Types of projects required



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=443)

Among the second generation surveyed, more than half identified job training programmes. Less than one-fifth mentioned better access to housing and the need for cultural education about Latin America highlighting the fact that the second generation feel very closely associated with their parents' homelands. Reflecting the types of projects discussed, Miguel who was 26 years old with a Peruvian mother and a Chilean father, noted:

'There is a real need to connect the different races. Sometimes I feel like I would like to know a lot more about Latin America [he had never visited] because I feel Latin but there are no groups open to everyone that promote our culture. It would be good to have an integration project among all the Latins because we are really separated by countries.'

The issues of gangs and drugs were mentioned by several young people. Some suggested that it was linked with the 'culture clash', lack of integration and discrimination. For example, 17-year-old Luis, whose mother was Colombian and father Peruvian, noted that because of lack of integration some young people joined gangs such as the LCC (Latino Cartel Callejeros) so that they could feel superior. He said that there was a:

'need for groups to talk to these young people and give them professional help so that they feel protected. Some of the LCC who have joined youth groups say that they'll be attacked if they leave.'

Overall, the need for integration that could be facilitated through some form of pathway to regularisation and citizenship, together with improved language training, emerged as central to addressing the problems and needs of Latin Americans in London.

Examples of projects suggested by Latin Americans

Elisa, 43 years old and from Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Cleaner: 'There is a lack of projects about life in London. There needs to be a project on the social acceptance of migrants'.

Socorro, 40 years old from Quito, Ecuador. Housekeeper: 'A fantastic project would be to motivate the people to get their own house with loans from their own community, to collect funds to help the community who most need it (to re-invest the money) ... I think that assisting people to acquire their own house in this way would be a big help for the community to live with dignity not like now with 3 or 4 families in one house, even those with British passports or families with lots of children in very small places. It would be a big help for women to have housing'.

Diego, 39 years old from Amazonia, Bolivia. Shop manager: 'An agency outside of the police force where you can go to report exploitation at work – when you don't get paid. An agency to protect the rights of migrants. Also a club where people could go to socialise, to eat, or when you needed something'.

Emilio, 36 years old from Bogotá, Colombia. Vice-president in a city bank: 'The community needs more access to credit and assistance in opening bank accounts'.

Camilo, 21 years old from Cali, Colombia. Cleaner: 'There need to be projects on work training and work integration. Also projects that help to create more solidarity for the Latin community so that there is more integration and so that they feel less enclosed, less shut-in in their daily life'.

Ana, 40 years old, from Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Cleaner: 'We need training for people so that we can get by and earn more and get work in jobs that are not just cleaning'.

David, 45 years old, from Trujillo, Peru. Owns import/export business: 'We need projects to learn about English culture and to get more information'.

Miriam, 49 years old, from Quito, Ecuador. Cleaner: 'The government needs to recognise that we exist and what we contribute. I should express myself more clearly – "London without Latins would be filthy". We are an important part of this country and therefore we need to be recognised, we need more English courses, better jobs and more assistance'.

Malia, 60 years old, from Quito, Ecuador. Housemaker: 'I think that it would be good to have more projects to unite the community of elderly Latin Americans as well as those who have just arrived and who need a guide to help them in a new country'.

Alejandra, 24 years old, from Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Cleaner: 'We need a project to recognise us as an ethnic group and to receive more support because there are a lot of Latinos in this country'.

Danilo, 32 years old, from Antioquia, Colombia. Waiter: 'I think it would be good to have something to keep Latinos connected with their country ... it could be a good website or an organisation with a radio station or internet site. A Latin radio station would be good where you could have news programmes, music. Television would be ideal but initially you could do it by the internet. That way people could keep in touch with Colombia without being there'.

Pedro, 57 years old, from El Salvador. Disabled and not working: 'For me the main project that is needed in any part of the world is a health project and it could have many different aspects because it could never address all needs. As a Spanish doctor told me: "Immigrants arrive in a foreign country healthy and the country makes them sick". Because of bad treatment, because of discrimination, because of all the limitations they face'.

Recommendations

Ethnic Monitoring

- 1 Ethnic monitoring needs to include a 'Latin American' category as well as improving recording of other large ethnic communities in the capital. This is particularly important for the Greater London Authority, other London-wide public agencies and local and health authorities with significant Latin American communities, in order to support their inclusion in relevant policies, strategies and in service planning and delivery.

Employment rights

- 2 Government, trade unions, employers and other civil society groups need to increase awareness of employment rights and provide access to advice, given the large number of Latin Americans experiencing labour rights infringements.
- 3 The Government should consider extending the Gangmasters Licensing Authority's remit to cover sectors with highest levels of exploitation, including cleaning, catering and hospitality services.
- 4 Campaigns to raise awareness of the National Minimum Wage and to secure its implementation need to include Latin Americans as a key target group. Access to advice and support needs to be provided, targeting employment sectors where the law is most frequently infringed.
- 5 Employers and training agencies in London should consider offering career development support to enable Latin Americans to contribute their professional skills and experience to the wider economy, particularly in sectors where there is a skills shortage.

Public services and benefits

- 6 Statutory health providers, particularly those delivering primary care, need to tackle inequalities of access to health care facing Latin Americans. Take-up campaigns should outline available services, how they can be obtained and include details of eligibility. The focus should be on areas with significant Latin American populations.
- 7 Central, regional and local government should work more closely with community groups to ensure better awareness of welfare benefits (including housing benefit) amongst those who are entitled to receive them.
- 8 Local authorities in London with large concentrations of migrant communities must regularly monitor housing conditions in private rented accommodation with a particular focus in tackling overcrowding and disrepair in multiple occupancy dwellings.
- 9 English language is pivotal to the integration of all migrant communities, including Latin Americans. Opportunities to learn the language need to be more widely available regardless of length of residence and immigration status. Classes need to be affordable, provided at times which are accessible to those working anti-social hours, and delivered via a range of providers including by employers.
- 10 Translation and interpretation services in Spanish and Portuguese need to be made available by providers of essential services throughout London.

Immigration

- 11 Legal aid provision for immigration advice is vital for migrants with little or no understanding of English and the legal system in the UK such as Latin Americans. This is particularly needed for women experiencing violence who rely on such assistance to extricate themselves from violence in the home and other spheres.
- 12 Government should consider the regularisation of migrants who have established roots in the UK but have no settled migration status here. This would increase their contribution to the UK economy and would help prevent abuses against vulnerable workers.

Funding community services

- 13 Whilst there are concentrations of the Latin American population in certain wards and boroughs in London, it is a community spread across the capital. Funders and commissioners need to take account of this and ensure pan-London and sub-regional funds are available to support community organisations addressing the needs of the whole community.
- 14 There is a need to better support and fund community organisations which are the first port of call for Latin Americans in need. In particular, there is a need to strengthen capacity to address the needs of Brazilians who are the fastest growing and most recent migrant group in this community.

Appendix 1

Methodological framework

The research on which this report is based was conducted between June 2009 and April 2010. A team of 12 community researchers conducted the surveys and in-depth interviews under the direction of Cathy Mcllwaine and coordination of Juan Camilo Cock. This team included a range of different Latin American nationalities who had different networks and entry points into the community (4 Colombians, an Ecuadorian, an Argentinean, an Argentinean/Bolivian, a Peruvian, a Venezuelan and 2 Brazilians). Cathy Mcllwaine, Juan Camilo Cock and Yara Evans conducted the focus group discussions and the interviews with service providers. This was all conducted completely independently of the Latin American Women's Rights Service.

The research was divided into a series of methodological stages:

1) Long questionnaire survey with foreign born Latin Americans (n=453)

A survey using a long questionnaire (17 pages) was conducted with 453 adults born in Latin America. This addressed a range of issues including basic socio-economic data, migration trajectories, occupation, earnings, working conditions, financial exclusion, household structures, housing, use of Latin American services, remittances, use of statutory and voluntary sector services, participation in community activities, the main problems faced and types of solutions/projects identified as necessary.

This was based on purposive sampling combined with snowballing techniques (a recognised form of sampling 'hard-to-reach' populations) and involved identifying gatekeepers, individuals and referrals on the part of the community researchers. The criteria included country of birth, gender, age and occupation. The survey included a broadly representative sample of the main nationality groups, slightly weighted towards Colombians and Brazilians, and a range of other LA nationalities particularly Ecuadorians, Bolivians, and Peruvians. This weighting was based on the 2001 census and the previous experience of the researchers. It included professional Latin Americans as well as those working in the lower echelons of the economy. This was determined by occupation and was again based on broad patterns from the 2001 census. Broadly equal numbers of women and men and different ages were interviewed.

2) Long questionnaire survey with second generation Latin Americans (n=52)

A survey using a long questionnaire (11 pages) was conducted with 52 Latin Americans who were either born in the UK with at least one parent from Latin America or who had come to the UK before they were 7 years old. This sample excluded Brazilians given that they were a very recent population group and it proved difficult to find Brazilian second generation young people. This addressed similar issues to those included in the questionnaire for foreign born Latin Americans such as basic socio-economic data, occupation, earnings, household structures, housing, use of Latin American services, use of statutory and voluntary sector services, participation in community activities, the main problems faced and types of solutions/projects identified as necessary. It omitted information on migration processes and asked additional questions about identities and connections with parents' homelands. It was also conducted using purposive sampling but was less prescriptive in terms of identifying particular nationalities.

3) Short questionnaire survey with foreign born Latin Americans (n=509)

A short questionnaire survey (2 pages) was conducted in a random manner with 509 Latin Americans who attended Latin American churches (Catholic and Evangelical), the Carnaval del Pueblo, the Tottenham carnival, several Latin American events, several offices of migrant organisations and the offices of a private lawyer. This gathered basic socio-economic data on country of birth, occupation, wages, reasons for migration, housing, and GP services.

4) In-depth interviews (n=50)

These were conducted with 50 people who had previously completed the long questionnaire survey. The aim of these interviews was to explore some of the themes outlined in the questionnaire survey in more depth, such as greater detail on why people had moved to London, migration trajectories, negotiating immigration status, meanings of irregular migration status, experiences in the labour market such as access, working conditions and occupational mobility. They also addressed discrimination within and beyond the labour market, social relations, integration, formal and informal networks and use of migrant organisations. Gender roles and relations were also explored, as well as the effect of the global financial crisis on Latin American migrants. The interviews identified the barriers to accessing services and problems affecting individuals and the population as a whole.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 men and 20 women from a wide range of different nationalities (13 Ecuadorians, 11 Colombians, 1 Venezuelan, 1 Paraguayan, 2 Chileans, 1 Nicaraguan, 5 Bolivians, 4 Peruvians, 10 Brazilians, 1 Salvadoran). The criteria for interviewing these people was agreeing to a further interview, and having had interesting stories that reflected different realities of Latin American life in London. For example, they included interviews with people with professional jobs and permanent status and with few links with other Latin Americans, as well as irregular migrants working in the low paid economy.

5) Focus group discussions (four groups with a total of 20 people)

These discussions included people who had not completed any of the surveys or interviews but with the aim of exploring issues affecting the Latin American community in greater depth than the surveys and using participatory appraisal methodologies (such as causal flow diagrams and institutional mapping techniques). They covered issues such as the main problems affecting Latin Americans, the services they accessed, the migrant community organisations they used and their views on discrimination and gender relations. Three of these were conducted through migrant community organisations (1 at LAWRS and 2 at IRMO) and one with Brazilians only was conducted independently of an organisation. One group was women-only, while the other three were mixed gender. One included Brazilians only, another was with Colombians only, while the other two were mixed. One group consisted only of young people.

6) Interviews with service providers and migrant community organisations (n=15)

Interviews were conducted with 12 representatives of service providers and migrant community organisations. In addition, 3 Latin American consuls were interviewed. These interviews addressed issues such as the problems facing the Latin American community and the types of services provided by the various organisations. Other organisations were also approached for basic information about their beneficiaries and the types of services they provided without conducting a formal interview.

7) Latin American consulate survey (n=16)

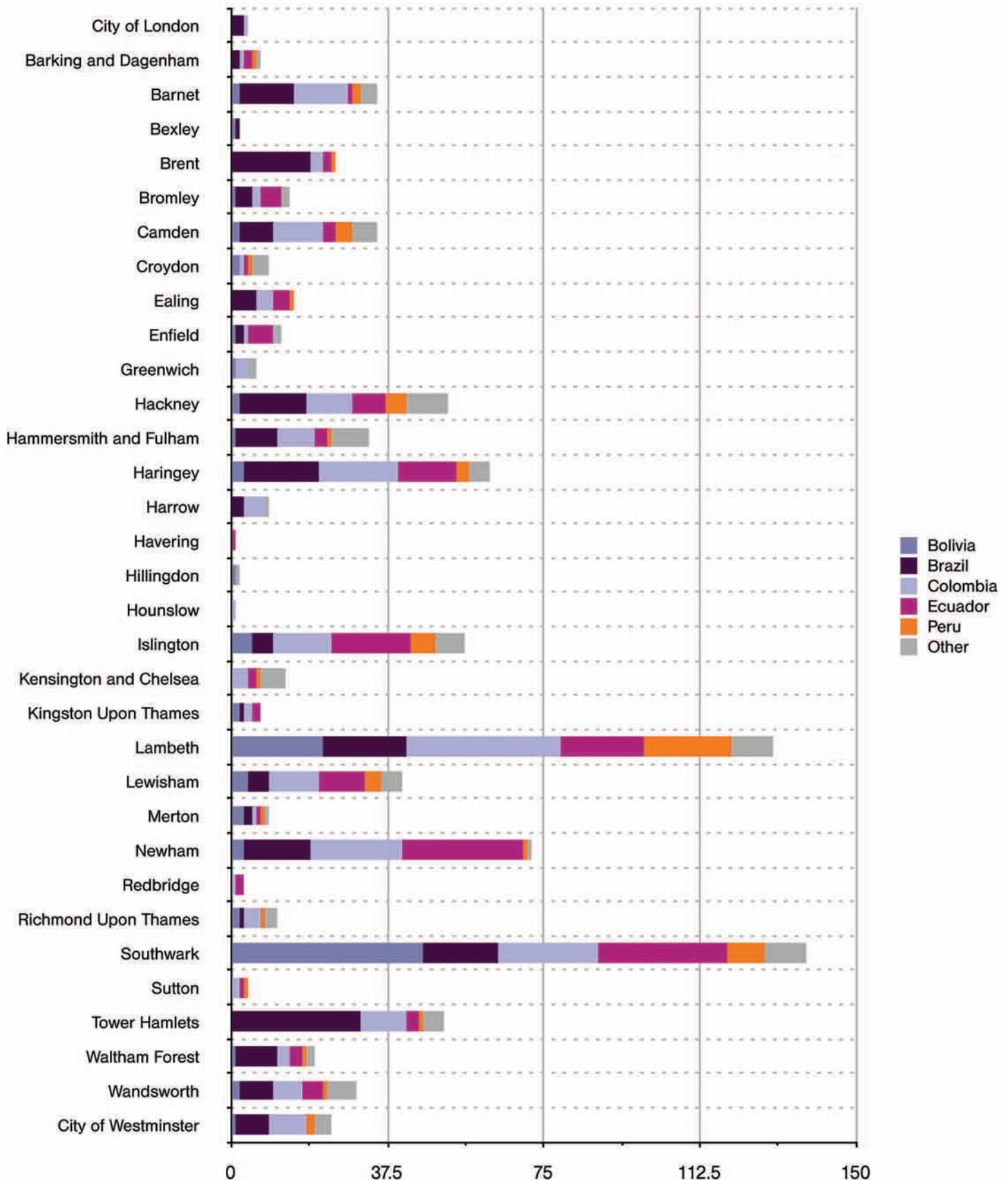
A small survey of 16 Latin American consulates was conducted primarily to ascertain the number of people that were registered with them.

8) Secondary data analysis

Secondary data analysis was conducted using the existing statistical sources in order to calculate the estimates of the size of the Latin American population in London. This involved consulting and analysing the 2001 census, Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey, ONS Vital Statistics data, International Passenger Survey, National Insurance Number Registrations, UK Border Agency and Home Office data (e.g. on work permits, grants of settlements).

Appendix 2

Borough of residence by main nationality group (frequency)



Source: Authors' questionnaire survey (n=933)

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