

遷移,融會,凝聚:新華人移民在倫敦



Migration, Integration, Cohesion New Chinese Migrants to London





London, WC2H 7BA

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Foreword



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In June of 2000, 58 Chinese people, 54 men and 4 women, died of mass suffocation in the back of a lorry as it was carried on a cross channel ferry. They died attempting to enter the UK illegally. So the issue of Chinese migration to the UK was firmly brought to the attention of the British public.

Media attention focused on the 'snakeheads' who trafficked these people, placing the blame on unscrupulous criminals whose only intent was to exploit for profit. Yet seldom are issues so simple. Yes, the journey which was to end so tragically was organized by criminal gangs, and yes, profit was the motivation. However the context to this tragedy including China's economic reforms, British immigration policy, and a employment market in the UK which was ready and willing to employ such people in a wide range of business sectors, all play a part in the story.

Just how widespread Chinese workers had become in Britain's grey economy was highlighted by a second tragedy of national significance when, in early February 2004, 21 Chinese workers drowned in rising tides in the perilous waters of Morecombe Bay, dubbed by the Chinese press as the 'Devil's Beach'.

Such high profile events are a double-edged sword. They raise the profile of the plight of those who come to Britain with dreams of getting rich by working hard, and the reality of their lives once

they arrive...if they arrive. Yet let us not forget the impact this has upon a community which shuns publicity, and whose proudest claims to their life in Britain relate to law abiding citizenship. Indeed, on the ornamental arches in London's Chinatown are inscribed the words "The Chinese will uphold honesty and good public order." These events cause embarrassment to many in the Chinese community, and the personal tragedies often become lost in a cultural paradigm which instinctively will cause many to recoil from activities which are seen to be illegal. This was summed up in a Chinese newspaper which said of the Morecombe Bay tragedy, "Their complete disregard for national laws and international repercussions has not only brought harm to the country's prestige, but has also thrown away their own lives".

Yet for the majority of Britain's Chinese, there was a journey, a point of arrival and the challenges of life in a new country. The motivation for those who came in the past will vary little from those who are arriving today. The benefits of previous Chinese migration to the UK is clear, from food to feng shui, medicine to martial arts. The latest migrants bring challenges, but undoubtedly, as history tells us, will also bring great benefits. I commend this report to you, and hope it will challenge the Chinese community, politicians and policy makers to address the issues facing new Chinese migrants to the Britain.

Steve Lau
Chair
Chinese in Britain Forum



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Executive Summary



This report is written at a time in which discussions are taking place among London's Chinese about what the future may look like. Will London's Chinese community, so long dominated by Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong and ethnic Chinese from Malaysia and Singapore, become a Mandarin speaking community dominated by migrants from the Chinese mainland? Will the new migrants be as successful as the old in terms of finding an economic niche in British society? Will there be two different Chinese communities? Or three? Or more? These questions suggest that we are still in a period of transition, and the exact situation as it is today may soon be forgotten. But decisions made now with regard to policy, provision and integration, by those within the Chinese community and policy-makers without, are likely to be ones that lay the foundations, and determine the prospects, for London's Chinese population in the future. We present research findings that explore new Chinese migrants' living conditions, their hopes and aspirations, their economic activities, their issues and needs and their ways of meeting them. We look at the ways in which they engage with British life and institutions and their ability to integrate and get by. We also explore their relationship with the settled Chinese population in London and the existing infrastructure of Chinese institutions.

Methods

The research undertaken to compile this report encompassed several different strands and methods:

- A desk-based review of the relevant academic and policy literature
- A face-to-face survey with 177 Chi-

nese migrants from all over London

- 30 in-depth interviews
- 5 ethnographic case studies
- 2 workshops with community leaders and frontline service workers from London's Chinese community

Key statistical facts and findings

Demographics:

- Estimates suggest that number of people born in China now living in London could be anywhere between 100,000 and 300,000
- In 2009 there could be as many as 60,000 Chinese students in British Universities
- Asylum seekers make up a relatively small part of the Chinese population in London and the UK. Only 2100 applications were made in 2007, 1860 of these were refused

Facts about the 177 survey respondents:

- 84% came from mainland Chinese provinces
- Of those from the mainland, 42% came from one province: Fujian. Others came from all over the Chinese mainland
- 83% were under 40 years old
- 95% of those surveyed could speak Mandarin, 40% spoke Fujianese dialects and only 38% spoke Cantonese (the traditional language of London's Chinese population). Most respondents could speak more than one Chinese dialect
- 86% had arrived in the UK since 2005
- Half of those surveyed were men, and half women
- 30% were students or held post-study work visas
- Just under 50% held documentation allowing them to live, work or stay in the UK. The remaining 50% did not

Findings: Reasons for coming to London

- Most of those who had not come to the UK to study, had come to the UK to engage in employment or business (58%). For undocumented migrants the proportion was higher (78%).
- 85% of students had come primarily to study at University, 9% had come to join family. Of those without student visas, 21% had come to the UK in the hope of studying at some point
- There were only a small number of asylum seekers (9) and even fewer had been granted 'indefinite leave to remain' (3).

Findings: Families and separation

- Many new Chinese migrants have been separated from family members.
- Excluding students, 50% were married and 53% had children
 - Between a third and a half of married Chinese migrants had left their spouse in China
 - 64% of those migrants who had children, had at least one child who was living in China. This figure rises to 78% amongst undocumented migrants

Findings: Plans for the future

- 67% said that they were planning to settle indefinitely or were 'not sure' about their future plans. This figure rose to 79% for those who were undocumented
- 78% of those who had arrived before 2007, were unsure about their future in the UK or planned to settle indefinitely.
- For those who had arrived since 2007, only 50% were unsure, 50% planned to stay for 5 years or less
- 71% of those who had arrived before 2007 had changed the planned

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length of their stay. Only 37% of those who arrived after 2007 had changed their plans. The research suggests that the longer a migrant stays in the UK, the more likely they are to change their plans. Most often, this involves staying for longer.

Findings: Work and employment

- One third of respondents worked in the catering industry
- 60% were in formal employment and of those, 69% were in full-time employment. Men were more likely to be working full-time (77%) than women (59%)
- A significant minority of the respondents were engaged in informal types of employment such as DVD selling or prostitution
- Undocumented migrants were 4 times more likely to be job-seeking than documented migrants

Findings: Living conditions

- Chinese migrants were living in households with an average size of 5.4. The national average is 2.4. Official figures about Chinese living in Britain, place the figure at 2.9. New Chinese migrants are likely to be living in cramped and over-crowded conditions. For undocumented workers the average household size was 6.6.
- 45% of Chinese migrants lived in houses with more than 6 people, 23% with more than 8 and 13% with more than 10.
- 65% of the sample said they lived with people other than family members and a further 16% said that they lived with other whole families.

Findings: English language skills

- 88% of undocumented migrants say they have little or no English language skills
- 68% of all migrants claimed to have little or no English language skills
- Most of those who did claim to have English skills were students. But even then only 63% of student claimed to have 'conversational' or 'fluent' English language skills, raising questions about the ability of many to follow English University courses.

Findings: Use of Public services

- 34% of new Chinese migrants claimed to have used a hospital and

- 42% had seen a doctor
- Only 2 people (1%) had made use of public housing services
- Only 7 people (4%) had made use of benefits agencies
- 3% had made use of public schools
- 3% had used social services
- 10% of Chinese migrants had sought help from job-centres
- More women (75%) had used services than men (51%)

The most common reasons given for not using public services were: 'lack of information' (35%), 'not needed' (20%), 'not entitled' (17%) and 'no time' (10%)

Findings: Use of Chinese community organisations

- Only 22% of those surveyed had used services provided by Chinese community organisations
- 75% of those surveyed said that they lacked information about Chinese community organisations and the services they provided
- Most use of services came through recommendations from friends and from advertisements in free Chinese newspapers and other Chinese media, such as community radio

Demand for services was high. The services that migrants said they most wanted to see in Chinese community organisations were:

- Immigration advice 49%
- Legal Advice 48%
- Employment advice 38%
- English classes 22%

Key findings from the qualitative research

Social cohesion: In many ways the findings in this report challenge the very concepts upon which discussions of social cohesion are constructed. Chinese migrants are often either ignored or invisible within communities. London's new Chinese migrants are often isolated or 'segregated', living and working almost exclusively with other Chinese migrants. In other words, new Chinese migrants, at least as they appear in our research, ought to present something of a problem to those attempting to create social cohesion, but because they are not associated with the actual 'problems' that lack of integration is supposed to cause

(violence, extremism, faith division, inequality etc), they are largely forgotten by policy makers.

Expectations: Many new Chinese migrants come with the expectation of very high-living standards and plenty of ways to make lots of money. The value of the £ is attractive, and western TV shows and films show London as a wealthy modern city. Many plan to stay for only a short time to make some money before returning to China. These expectations often meet the harsh reality that it can be difficult to find work, there are problems with language, living conditions are poor and there are unscrupulous people willing to take advantage of new migrants' naivete.

Loneliness and separation: Many Chinese migrants suffer from a sense of grief and loneliness at being separated from family members. They must often share crowded accommodation with people they do not know and with whom they share little in common. Many Chinese migrants long for company, romance and a stronger network of friends.

Debts and exploitation: Many new Chinese migrants come to London with large debts incurred during the process of migration. Payments made to agents and snake-head migration brokers can be as large as 200,000 RMB (or £18,000). In order to pay off these debts, new Chinese migrants in London will find work wherever they can, often accepting long-hours for low pay. They may also work in poor conditions with little time-off. For those without documentation, there is the risk of exploitation by unscrupulous 'agents', who may take money for poor job advice, employers who pay far less than the minimum wage or withhold pay altogether, and those who offer to help with immigration status, but provide little in return for fees.

Work: Whilst many still work in the catering industry, new Chinese migrants are engaged in a wide range of types of employment. Students are finding jobs in all parts of the labour market, and other migrants are finding jobs in construction, hospitals, media etc. Undocumented workers

are still largely confined to manual work or informal business however. Finding stable work can mean that migrants are able to build lives, pay off debts and build new sets of aspirations for the future.

Segregation: Chinese migrants live largely Chinese lives. They interact mainly with Chinese people, shop and work in Chinese businesses, eat Chinese food and speak and learn Chinese languages. They do not integrate in any meaningful way with other parts of British society. There are also divisions within the Chinese population, especially between the older settled migrants who are largely Cantonese speaking and the newer Mandarin speaking mainland Chinese migrants. The major effect of this separation is the subsequent lack of support that is available to new migrants.

Recommendations and innovations:

The following recommendations were made with mind to improving the delivery of support to new Chinese migrants and to enhance their ability to integrate into London life, thus promoting the ideals of social and community cohesion.

Funding: Continuous funding, new funding, core funding: Whilst it is important for the Chinese community to continue to lobby central and local government bodies on the issues presented in this report and to call for funding, we call on both local and central government departments and bodies directly, to take seriously the findings presented in this report and consider providing support in the form of funds to Chinese community organisations and initiatives that aim to directly address the needs of Chinese migrants in London.

The establishment of a Chinese umbrella organisation: The organisation would serve three purposes: 1) It would create an inclusive network for the Chinese community in which information and ideas can be shared quickly between organisations and service providers 2) It would act as a forum for the development of overarching strategic principles or aims for the future delivery of services to

the changing Chinese community 3) It would act as the public face of efforts to promote and maintain the stability and success of London's (and Britain's) Chinese community.

The establishment of a national database of Chinese services and organisations: There is no reliable, central source of information to which Chinese service providers can turn to get advice or make referrals when dealing with new Chinese migrants. A long-term goal of such a database would be to build a searchable online resource for both migrants and service providers alike.

The creation of a national information and advice telephone line for Chinese migrants

English language training

- The continuation of free English language courses for asylum seekers and refugees
- Workplace English: Many Chinese migrants work in Chinese businesses in which the use of Chinese languages is ubiquitous. Employers could be encouraged to promote the use of the English language through signage, or periods of the day or spaces in which English is used.
- Employers could be encouraged to incentivise English learning amongst staff
- Chinese community centres could provide language exchange courses or groups, in which English speakers can learn Chinese in exchange for Chinese language lessons
- The removal of funding and statutory restrictions on who may attend English courses aimed at Chinese migrants

Creation of a Chinese Volunteering database: There are existing volunteering databases and skills bases in the UK. These services could be replicated or adapted to serve as a resource for community organisations and to provide opportunities to settled Chinese, Chinese students or new migrants themselves to work with new Chinese migrants.

Development of a communications and outreach strategy: A strategy needs to be developed by and for Chinese community organisations

to enable effective communication of information and services to the different networks of new Chinese migrants.

Active recruitment of Mandarin speakers: Chinese organisations are encouraged to take seriously their responsibility to deal with all parts of London's Chinese population and. Actively seek to recruit Mandarin speaking staff

Census drive: Chinese community organisations are encouraged to create a census drive designed to raise the response rate in the Chinese population. Local councils too have a vested interest in helping Chinese community organisations to do this. Local councils can be lobbied to employ Chinese-speaking census enumerators, which will provide employment to Chinese, and help to gain a more accurate picture of the number of Chinese people living in London.

Innovative training programmes / Best-practice data-base: Best practice ideas this need to be shared more widely throughout the Chinese communities. Chinese organisations should be encouraged to share knowledge of innovations and best-practice between themselves. Consideration of policies affecting migrants: Policy makers are urged to engage in a robust dialogue with Chinese community leaders to explore the real consequences of certain immigration policies.

Further research into specific aspects of new Chinese migrant lives: Research into the specific nature of things like exploitation, informal economies, social networks, reasons for coming to Britain etc. should be supported and encouraged in order to better understand Britain Chinese population and make appropriate policies aimed at social cohesion.

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報告摘要

在寫這份報告的同時，各種關於倫敦華人社區未來的討論亦在進行中。倫敦華埠一直被說廣東話的香港人所支配。現在，又是否會被來自中國大陸的新移民所支配呢？新移民又會否如舊移民一樣在英國社會上找到一個恰當的位置呢？新舊移民能否和睦相處，共建繁榮呢？

會否出現兩個、三個、或更多的華人社區呢？這些問題正出現在變遷中的華人社區里，也許目前的狀況是短暫的，但如果現時華人社區有遠見的政策策劃者，能夠作出相應的政策準備，將會為倫敦華埠社區未來的健康發展打下良好的基礎。

這份報告，主要研究新移民的生活狀況：

探討他們的理想願望與經濟活動，他們的生活問題，需要和解決方法；
探討他們如何參與英國主流生活，如何融入及生存。
探討他們與舊移民和華人社區組織的關係。

這報告採用幾種不同的搜集方法：

- 評論有關的學術及政策方面的文獻。
- 177份面對面在倫敦各區的調查報告
- 30份詳細的面談記錄
- 5個深入的田野報告
- 2個華人社區領袖及前線工作人員的座談會報告

主要資料

- 估計在中國出生的現時居住在倫敦的人口，大約100,000到300,000人左右。
- 在2009年，估計有60,000人以上的中國學生在英國大學求學。
- 難民人數佔居英中國的一小部分，在2007年只有2100名申請者，其中1860名被拒。
- 177名被拒者的資料：

- 84% 來自中國各省份。
- 在被拒者當中，有42名來自福建省，其他為全國各省。
- 83% 在40歲以下。
- 被訪中有55% 會說普通話，40% 會說福建話，只有38% 會說廣東話（流通於倫敦華人之間的語言）。很多被訪者能說多過一種的中國方言。

* 86% 在2005年前來英。

- * 被訪者有一半是男性，另一半為女性。
- * 30% 為學生簽證及學位完結的工作準許簽證。
- * 只有低於50% 持有文件容許他們在英居住與工作。
- * 另50% 沒有資料顯示他們來英的目的。
- * 在部份非學生的被訪者，來英以工作或做生意為目的為58% 而當中無證人士更佔78%
- * 85% 的學生來英的主要目的是上大學，9% 來英與家人團聚，當中21% 來英沒有學生簽證的被訪者當中，來英希望有機會讀書。
- * 其中只有一小部份人（9個）申請難民者獲得永久居留權

家庭分離

- 很多新移民與家人分開
- 不計學生在內，50% 的被訪者是已婚，53% 有孩子。
- 在三分之一至一半的被訪者中，有一半的被訪者有伴侶留在中國。
- 被訪者當中有64名有孩子，有至少一個孩子仍留在中國，這數字在無證身份的被訪者中高達78%

未來計劃

- 67% 被訪者考慮在英長期居留，或不肯定未來計劃。這數字在無證人士當中高達79%
- 在2007年來英人士中，有78% 不明確未來在英的計劃，或是否繼續在英居留。
- 在2007來英的被訪者當中，有50% 不肯定，另有50% 計劃在英居留低於5年。
- 71% 在2007年前來英的被訪者，已改變他們原先的計劃，只有37% 在2007年來英的被訪者改變他們原先的計劃。這調查又提出，居住在英愈長的被訪者，愈有可能改變其原先計劃，大部份會決定延續其居留時間。

工作及就業

- 三分之一被訪者從事飲食業工作。
- 當中有60% 是正式工作，當中有69% 是全職工作，男性佔大部分（77%），女性為59%
- 其中有顯著小部分被訪者從事販賣DVD及賣淫活動。
- 無證人士需要不斷尋找工作，是有證人士的4倍。

調查結果：生活環境

- 平均每戶有5.4人，共住一套房子，全英平均數字為2.4人，在英居住的華人正式數字為2.9人。華人新移民部分居住於壓迫的生活環境，無證人士平均每戶為6.6人。
- 45% 的中國移民住的房子多於6人，23% 多於8人，13% 多於10人。
- 被訪者中的65% 說他們與其他家庭成員同住，另16% 說他們全家一起住。

調查結果：英語水平

- 88% 的無證人士說他們有一點或沒有任何英語技能。
- 在所有被訪者當中68% 說他們有一點或沒有任何英語技能
- 大部分說他們有英語技能的為學生，但只有63% 說他們的英語能力水平為對話及流利水平，這點引起他們如何應付大學課程的疑點。

調查結果：使用公共設施

- 23% 的新移民說他們有使用醫院，42% 有用醫生。
- 只有2人（1%）的被訪者有用公屋設施。
- 只有7人（4%）有領取公援。
- 3% 有用公共學校。
- 3% 有用社工設施。
- 10% 的中國移民有在勞工處尋找幫助。
- 大部分女性（75%）有用公共設施多於51% 的男性。

最普遍不用公共設施的原因如下：

- 缺乏資訊35%，不需要20%，無資格17%和無時間10%

調查結果：使用華人社區組織

- 只有22% 被訪者有使用華人社區組織。
- 75% 的被訪者說他們缺乏華人社區組織的資料，也不清楚他們提供什麼服務
- 大部分使用這類服務的人士是通過朋友介紹，或免費報紙的廣告及其他傳媒，如社區電台等。
- 對社區服務的需求甚高，移民提出他們最希望的服務如下：
移民諮詢49%，
法律諮詢48%，
勞工諮詢38%，
英語班22%

在定性調查結果當中的主要結果 社會和諧

此報告在多方面挑戰社會凝聚力的核心觀念，中國移民很多時被遺忘或在社區中不顯著。倫敦的新移民更多被孤立或隔離，生活及工作在接近完全以華人為主的圈子當中。總體來說，華人新移民至少在這調查報告當中顯示對社會和諧性的問題。由於他們的問題並非問題如暴力，極端性宗教問題，不平等等等，中國人的問題絕大部分都被政策策劃人所遺忘。

期望

很多新移民帶著可以改生活質數及多賺錢的機會的期望來英，加上英鎊的對換率十分吸引，西方的電視及電影營造倫敦為一個富裕的現代城市。很多計劃來英短期賺錢後回國。這些期望往往因現實環境而不能實現，如找工作的困難，語言的問題，不良的生活環境和一些沒有操守，利用新移民的無知而謀取利益的人。

寂寞與分離

很多新移民面對離鄉別井的孤獨與寂寞，他們常要與陌生人共住擠迫的生活空間。很多華人移民渴求伴侶及更強的朋友網絡。

債務及剝削

很多華人新移民要付出大量金錢來英，因而背起沉重的債務。他們要付給中介人及蛇頭，數目高達20萬元人民幣(1萬8千鎊英鎊)。為了付清此項債務，很多新移民不介意他們的工作環境，亦會接受長時間低收入的工作。他們亦會在惡劣的環境和沒有休假的情況下亦仍需工作。那些無證人士更會被一些不持操守的中介人以介紹工作為由，騙取他們的金錢。僱主又會付出低於最低工資的工錢，有時甚至會扣起工錢，有些會以提供移民諮詢為由，沒有提供實際的服務，從而騙取金錢。

工作

即使很多新移民從事飲食，新移民參與的工作甚廣，學生在不同行業中工作，而其他移民則從事行業如：建築業，醫院，傳媒等。無證人士大部分只能從事體力工作或非正式工作，穩定的工作代表移民可以建立他們的生活，償還債項及建立對未來的新希望。

隔離

華人移民大部分生活於華人生活當中，他們大部分與華人接觸，日常購物及工作都在華人社區中進行，吃中國食品，說中國語言，他們並沒有顯著的融入其他英國主流社會。在華人社區中亦有分組，明顯的為說廣東話的老一代移民，及說普通話的新移民，最明顯的影響往往是對新移民的支援。

建議

以下的建議是希望改善對新移民的支援，更有效的幫助他們融入倫敦的生活，藉此提倡社會和社區的和諧性。

經費

延續經費，新經費，核心經費：華人社區向地區政府及中央政府繼續要求提供經費固然重要，我們亦希望籍著這份報告直接要求地區及中央政府重視報告內所提出的問題。考慮提供經濟上的支援，直接有效地顧及倫敦華人移民的需要。

成立一個有系統而統一的華人組織：

這組織提供3個目的：

- 一. 提供一個組織可以更有效地分享各華人組織的訊息
- 二. 亦可提供一個溝通平台，可以令各華人組織討論未來對華人政策的策略。
- 三. 亦可作為推廣華人社區在倫敦及英國的成就

建立華人在英服務的資料中心

現時並無一套可靠的中央資料中心，為新移民提供諮詢及轉介服務，長遠計劃應以建立一項網上諮詢服務，為移民及提供服務的機構提供相關訊息。

建立全國為中國移民提供資料及查詢服務熱線

英語訓練

- 繼續為難民和難民申請者提供免費英語班工作英語
- 很多華人移民在華人機構工作，以中文為主，僱主應鼓勵員工多用英語，例如在工作的某段時間或公司的某個區域以英語為溝通語言。

僱主應鼓勵員工多學英語

- 華人社區中心可提供中英語言交流課程，在此活動中英語人士可學中文，而華人亦可與英國人交流。
- 取消對有意參與英語課程的華人的一些資源及法家限制。

建立一個華人義工的資料中心

在英現存一個義工資料中心，這服務可以重複或改編成為一個為長居英國的華人，華人學生及新移民提供幫助的平台。

發展一個公關及對外宣傳的策略，此策略需由華人社團所策劃，更有效地與不同層面的新移民溝通及提供訊息。

積極招募能說普通話的工作人員

華人社區中心應照顧不同華人社群，積極招募能說普通話的工作人員。

推動人口調查

應鼓勵華人社區組織推動人口調查，以提高華人在人口當中的代表性。地區政府亦應給予援助，支持華人社區組織推行此項目。應鼓勵地區政府僱用會說中文的人口調查人員，此計劃亦有助提供華人就業機會，更有效地顯示在倫敦的華人生活的狀況。

有創意的訓練計劃/ 優良組織的資料中心

優良組織此觀念應廣泛地在華人組織中流傳，華人組織應鼓勵共同分享他們的知識，政策策劃人應鼓勵各華人社團的領袖建立一個有建設性的溝通對話，以尋求對移民政策所帶來的後果。

更多的針對新移民調查

調查深入了解：剝削，經濟交易，關係網絡，離開中國的原因等。此舉會更有效地提供對英國華人的認識，令政策更能加強社會的和諧性。

报告摘要

在写这份报告的同时,各种关于伦敦华人社区未来的讨论亦在进行中。伦敦华埠一直被说广东话的香港人所支配。现在,又是否会被来自中国大陆的新移民所支配呢?新移民又会否如旧移民一样在英国社会上找到一个恰当的位置呢?新旧移民能否和睦相处共建繁荣呢?

会否出现两个、三个、或更多的华人社区呢?这些问题正出现在变迁中的华人社区里,也许目前的状况是短暂的,但如果现时华人社区有远见的政策策划者,能够作出相应的政策准备,将会为伦敦华埠社区未来的健康发展打下良好的基础。

这份报告,主要研究新移民的生活状况:

探讨他们的理想愿望与经济活动,他们的生活问题,需要和解决方法;
探讨他们如何参与英国主流生活,如何融入及生存。
探讨他们与旧移民和华人社区组织的关系。

这报告采用几种不同的搜集方法:

- 评论有关的学术及政策方面的文献。
- 177份面对面在伦敦各区的调查报告
- 30份详细的面谈记录
- 5个深入的田野报告
- 2个华人社区领袖及前线工作人员的座谈会报告

主要资料

- 估计在中国出生的现时居住在伦敦的人口,大约100,000到300,000人左右。
- 在2009年,估计有60,000人以上的中国学生在英国大学求学。
- 难民人数占居英中国的一小部分,在2007年只有2100名申请者,其中1860名被拒。

177名被拒者的资料:

- 84% 来自中国各省份。
- 在被拒者当中,有42名来自福建省,其他为全国各省。
- 83% 在40岁以下。
- 被访中有55% 会说普通话,40% 会说福建话,只有38% 会说广东话(流通于伦敦华人之间的语言)。很多被访者能说多过一种的中国方言。
- * 86% 在2005年前来英。

- * 被访者有一半是男性,另一半为女性。
- * 30% 为学生签证及学位完结的工作准许签证。
- * 只有低于50% 持有文件容许他们在英居住与工作。
- * 另50% 没有资料显示他们来英的目的。
- * 在部份非学生的被访者,来英以工作或做生意为目的为58% 而当中无证人士更占78%
- * 85% 的学生来英的主要目的是上大学,9% 来英与家人团聚,当中21% 来英没有学生签证的被访者当中,来英希望有机会读书。
- * 其中只有一小部份人(9个)申请难民者获得永久居留权

家庭分离

- 很多新移民与家人分开
- 不计学生在内,50% 的被访者是已婚,53% 有孩子。
 - 在三分之一至一半的被访者中,有一半的被访者有伴侣留在中国。
 - 被访者当中有64名有孩子,有至少一个孩子仍留在中国,这数字在无证身份的被访者中高达78%

未来计划

- 67% 被访者考虑在英长期居留,或不肯定未来计划。这数字在无证人士当中高达79%
- 在2007年来英人士中,有78% 不明确未来在英的计划,或是否继续在英居留。
- 在2007来英的被访者当中,有50% 不肯定,另有50% 计划在英居留低于5年。
- 71% 在2007年前来英的被访者,已改变他们原先的计划,只有37% 在2007年来英的被访者改变他们原先的计划。这调查又提出,居住在英愈长的被访者,愈有可能改变其原先计划,大部份会决定延续其居留时间。

工作及就业

- 三分之一被访者从事饮食业工作。
- 当中有60% 是正式工作,当中有69% 是全职工作,男性占大部分(77%),女性为59%
- 其中有显著小部分被访者从事贩卖DVD及卖淫活动。
- 无证人士需要不断寻找工作,是有证人士的4倍。

调查结果: 生活环境

- 平均每户有5.4人,共住一套房子,全英平均数字为2.4人,在英居住的华人正式数字为2.9人。华人新移民部分居住于压迫的生活环境,无证人士平均每户为6.6人。
- 45% 的中国移民住的房子多于6人,23% 多于8人,13% 多于10人。
- 被访者中的65% 说他们与其他家庭成员同住,另16% 说他们全家一起住。

调查结果: 英语水平

- 88% 的无证人士说他们有一点或没有任何英语技能。
- 在所有被访者当中68% 说他们有一点或没有任何英语技能
- 大部分说他们有英语技能的为学生,但只有63% 说他们的英语能力水平为对话及流利水平,这点引起他们如何应付大学课程的疑点。

调查结果: 使用公共设施

- 23% 的新移民说他们有使用医院,42% 有用医生。
- 只有2人(1%) 的被访者有用公屋设施。
- 只有7人(4%) 有领取公援。
- 3% 有用公共学校。
- 3% 有用社工设施。
- 10% 的中国移民有在劳工处寻找帮助。
- 大部分女性(75%) 有用公共设施多于51% 的男性。

最普遍不用公共设施的原因如下:

- 缺乏资讯35%, 不需要20%, 无资格17%和无时间10%

调查结果: 使用华人社区组织

- 只有22% 被访者有使用华人社区组织。
- 75% 的被访者说他们缺乏华人社区组织的资料,也不清楚他们提供什么服务
- 大部分使用这类服务的人士是通过朋友介绍,或免费报纸的广告及其他传媒,如社区电台等。
- 对社区服务的需求甚高,移民提出他们最希望的服务如下:
移民咨询49%,
法律咨询48%,
劳工咨询38%,
英语班22%

在定性调查结果当中的主要结果 社会和谐

此报告在多方面挑战社会凝聚力的核心观念，中国移民很多时被遗忘或在社区中不显著。伦敦的新移民更多被孤立或隔离，生活及工作在接近完全以华人为主的圈子当中。总体来说，华人新移民至少在这调查报告当中显示对社会和谐性的问题。由于他们的问题并非问题如暴力，极端性宗教问题，不平等等等，中国人的问题绝大部分都被政策策划人所遗忘。

期望

很多新移民带著可以改生活质数及多赚钱的机会的期望来英，加上英镑的对换率十分吸引，西方的电视及电影营造伦敦为一个富裕的现代城市。很多计划来英短期赚钱后回国。这些期望往往因现实环境而不能实现，如找工作的困难，语言的问题，不良的生活环境和一些没有操守，利用新移民的无知而谋取利益的人。

寂寞与分离

很多新移民面对离乡别井的孤独与寂寞，他们常要与陌生人共住挤迫的生活空间。很多华人移民渴求伴侣及更强的朋友网络。

债务及剥削：

很多华人新移民要付出大量金钱来英，因而背起沉重的债务。他们要付给中介人及蛇头，数目高达20万元人民币（1万8千英镑）。为了付清此项债务，很多新移民不介意他们的工作环境，亦会接受长时间低收入的工作。他们亦会在恶劣的环境和没有休假的情况下亦仍需工作。那些无证人士更会被一些不持操守的中介人以介绍工作为由，骗取他们的金钱。雇主又会付出低于最低工资的工钱，有时甚至会扣起工钱，有些会以提供移民咨询为由，没有提供实际的服务，从而骗取金钱。

工作

即使很多新移民从事饮食，新移民参与的工作甚广，学生在不同行业中工作，而其他移民则从事行业如：建筑业，医院，传媒等。无证人士大部分只能从事体力工作或非正式工作，稳定的工作代表移民可以建立他们的生活，偿还债项及建立对未来的新希望。

隔离

华人移民大部分生活于华人生活当中，他们大部分与华人接触，日常购物及工作都在华人社区中进行，吃中国食品，说中国语言，他们并没有显著的融入其他英国主流社会。在华人社区中亦有分组，明显的为说广东话的老一代移民，及说普通话的新移民，最明显的影响往往是对新移民的支援。

建议

以下的建议是希望改善对新移民的支援，更有效的帮助他们融入伦敦的生活，藉此提倡社会和社区的和谐性。

经费

延续经费，新经费，核心经费：华人社区向地区政府及中央政府继续要求提供经费固然重要，我们亦希望籍著这份报告直接要求地区及中央政府重视报告内所提出的问题。考虑提供经济上的支援，直接有效地顾及伦敦华人移民的需要。

成立一个有系统而统一的华人组织：

这组织提供3个目的：

- 一. 提供一个组织可以更有效地分享各华人组织的讯息
- 二. 亦可提供一个沟通平台，可以令各华人组织讨论未来对华人政策的策略。
- 三. 亦可作为推广华人社区在伦敦及英国的成就

建立华人在英服务的资料中心

现时并无一套可靠的中央资料中心，为新移民提供咨询及转介服务，长远计划应以建立一项网上咨询服务，为移民及提供服务的机构提供相关资讯。

建立全国为中国移民提供资料及查询服务热线

英语训练

- 继续为难民和难民申请者提供免费英语班工作英语
- 很多华人移民在华人机构工作，以中文为主，雇主应鼓励员工多用英语，例如在工作的某段时间或公司的某个区域以英语为沟通语言。

雇主应鼓励员工多学英语

- 华人社区中心可提供中英语言交流课程，在此活动中英语人士可学中文，而华人亦可与英国人交流。

- 取消对有意参与英语课程的华人的一些资源及法家限制。

建立一个华人义工的资料中心

在英现存一个义工资料中心，这服务可以重复或改编成为一个为长居英国的华人，华人学生及新移民提供帮助的平台。

发展一个公关及对外宣传的策略，此策略需由华人社团所策划，更有效地与不同层面的新移民沟通及提供讯息。

积极招募能说普通话的工作人员

华人社区中心应照顾不同华人社群，积极招募能说普通话的工作人员。

推动人口调查

应鼓励华人社区组织推动人口调查，以提高华人在人口当中的代表性。地区政府亦应给予援助，支持华人社区组织推行此项目。应鼓励地区政府雇用会说中文的人口调查人员，此计划亦有助提供华人就业机会，更有效地显示在伦敦的华人生活的状况。

有创意的训练计划/ 优良组织的资料中心

优良组织此观念应广泛地在华人组织中流传，华人组织应鼓励共同分享他们的知识，政策策划人应鼓励各华人社团的领袖建立一个有建设性的沟通对话，以寻求对移民政策所带来的后果。

更多的针对新移民调查

调查深入了解：剥削，经济交易，关系网络，离开中国的原因等。此举会更有效地提供对英国华人的认识，令政策更能加强社会的和谐性。



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Introduction



When history paints broad-brush differences between the last century and this one, it looks likely that the changing role of China on the world stage will be one of the key themes. The research presented in this report suggests that such changes are also likely to affect the nature of London's Chinese population. New kinds of Chinese migrant, people with new-found freedoms, ambitions and/or passports, are coming to Britain to work, to study and to live. They are bringing with them new languages, new histories, new ideas, and of course, new issues. And they are transforming the character of the most recognisable aspects of Chinese life in London.

Changes in places like Chinatown, in the kitchens of takeaways and restaurants, in the aisles of Chinese supermarkets and in the languages and topics of Chinese conversations, are happening quickly. At the present time, London's Chinese population seems to be in a period of transition that began as far back as the 1970's (Pieke, 2004) when sources of Chinese migrants to the UK ceased to be solely Hong Kong and South East Asia, and started to include the provinces of the Chinese mainland itself. The numbers of these 'new migrants' in London are certainly now high enough to mean that they cannot anymore be seen as a curious minority. As we will see, they may well already make up the majority of Chinese living in London.

This report is written at a time in which discussions are taking place among London's Chinese about what the future may look like. Will London's Chinese community, so long

dominated by Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong and ethnic Chinese from Malayasia and Singapore, become a Mandarin speaking community dominated by migrants from the Chinese mainland? Will the new migrants be as successful as the old in terms of finding an economic niche in British society? Will there be two different Chinese communities? Or three? Or more? These questions suggest that we are still in a period of transition, and the exact situation as it is today may soon be forgotten. But decisions made now with regard to policy, provision and integration, by those within the Chinese community and policy-makers without, are likely to be ones that lay the foundations, and determine the prospects, for London's Chinese population in the future.

Some of the realities we present may challenge the assumptions of policy-makers in local and central government. They may also challenge the assumptions of certain parts of the Chinese community itself. And they will certainly challenge some of the existing orthodoxies that surround discussion of immigration, integration and cohesion.

This report is about these 'new Chinese migrants', specifically the ones who live and work in London. It is the culmination of an ambitious research project that aimed to reveal the realities of their lives. We present findings that explore their living conditions, their hopes and aspirations, their economic activities, their issues and needs and their ways of meeting them. We look at the ways in which they engage with British life and institutions and their ability to integrate and get by. We also explore their relationship with the settled Chinese population in London and the existing infrastructure of Chinese institutions. But above all, we attempt to bring everything to life with real stories and real people.

Some of the realities we present may challenge the assumptions of policy-makers in local and central government. They may also challenge the assumptions of certain parts of the Chinese community itself. And they will certainly challenge some of the existing orthodoxies that surround discussion of immigration, integration and cohesion. We hope however that our research increases understanding for all of those who have an interest in the lives and well-being of Chinese migrants in London.

Social Cohesion: An overview

This report is not directly about the impact of Chinese immigration on social or community cohesion, at least not in the sense in which it is usually understood. However, the findings we present obviously have some relevance to policy discussions around social cohesion. Apart from anything else, immigration of any kind is often seen as being a central

'problem' for achieving goals of social cohesion. Hickman et al.'s study of immigration and cohesion put it thus: "The main debate [about the impact of immigration] lies in two areas: the impact of immigration on social cohesion because of what is perceived as the disruptive effects of increased ethnic, religious and cultural heterogeneity; and the pressure of immigration on public service provision and housing" (Hickman et al., 2008). They refer here to the public debate over immigration and the twin themes of integration and public provision. We address both of these themes in our report.

The Department of Communities and Local Government defines 'community cohesion' as being based on 'three foundations' (taken from Communities and Local Government website November, 2009):

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly

And 'three key ways of living together':

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

These definitions seem to come broadly from the work done on defining the term by Cattle et al. in a report commissioned in the wake of outbreaks of violence in Britain's Northern towns in 2001. The focus on bringing people together through a shared sense of values and of community is precisely what migration is seen as being a challenge, or more honestly 'threat', to. Migration brings diversity of views and aspiration, and migrants are perceived as having a sense of belonging and

identity based on cultural and religious values or languages that are not necessarily shared with existing populations.

In view of this potential conflict between the aims of social cohesion and the uncomfortable reality of difference that migrants bring, much of the language of 'cohesion' policy has focused on the need for 'integration', that is to say, the need for migrants to 'integrate' into British life. British life itself must also have a coherent set of values around which both migrants and the settled population can cohere. Most often, these values are talked of in terms of citizenship, belonging and a shared sense of British identity or, 'Britishness' (Zetter et al., 2006).

Chinese migrants, at least as they appear in our research, ought to present something of a problem to those attempting to create social cohesion, but because they are not associated with the actual 'problems' that lack of integration is supposed to cause, they are largely forgotten.

There is an inherent tension, as Zetter et al. note, between these loftier, goals like 'British identity' and 'citizenship', and the means by which social or community cohesion is promoted on the ground. The report by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion "Our Shared Future" (2007) makes it very clear that the actual stuff of cohesion happens at a local level within local communities, even if it later knits together to form a utopian whole. The opening paragraphs for example, imagine the ideal community of 2020:

"Imagine the open communities of 2020 ... thriving and

prosperous places where people from all different backgrounds are equal, and where everyone matters – whether old or young, settled or new, Black or White. There are local places where all groups feel that they are treated fairly, and that they have a responsibility to others that transcends the differences between them. Places where people are not fearful of meeting their neighbours, and where they don't see individual differences as a barrier to the success of the whole community.

Imagine the local towns and villages where shared spaces – parks, community centres, villages and estates – are a reflection of what binds people together. Where people have been inspired to get out and work together to solve problems – regenerating their physical spaces, or bringing young people together for shared activities that have resulted in a strong civic spirit."

The official government response to the commission's report was to confirm this commitment to building social cohesion at a local level: "At the heart of government's approach to cohesion, like the Commission's, is the principle that cohesion is something that can only be understood and built locally" (2008). The problem here is with the lack of a clear link between fostering local identities or local senses of belonging, and the subsequent emergence of a sense of national citizenship. And whilst a commitment to 'local' cohesion is clearly driven by a desire to recognise the diversity of different local situations, the idea that these can come together to form a national identity that then sits neatly on top of these differences, seems a little pie-in-the-sky.

Finally, there is a specific theme that emerges constantly in policy discussions about cohesion, and which arises perhaps directly from the purpose of Cattle's original report:

violence and extremism. Often without explicitly saying so, government documents imply that without cohesion, there is a greater chance of extremism and violence emerging from either the extremist ideologies of migrant/ethnic others, or the unfounded fears and reactions of the settled. For example, in the Cohesion Delivery Framework (2008) the government says: "Experience has shown that violent extremism can emerge from even the most cohesive communities, but that extremist messages are less likely to find support in this environment. So work to build cohesion can help prevent violent extremism [...]." Less controversial perhaps, is the language of Cantle's report, in which the notion of people of different 'cultural backgrounds' living 'parallel lives' is used to suggest that: "There is little wonder that the ignorance about each others' communities can easily grow into fear; especially where this is exploited by extremist groups determined to undermine community harmony and foster divisions" (Cantle, 2001).

What about the Chinese?

It is perhaps ironic then, that for all the desire for social cohesion to address the issues raised by diversity and difference, much of the rhetoric of social cohesion uses terms like 'migrant', or 'people from different cultural backgrounds' and 'communities' in ways that paper over those very same cultural differences. Little attempt is made to address the fact that different types of people may have different needs, or approach ideas like 'belonging' and 'cohesion' in different ways. Are we to assume, for example, that a Palestinian refugee will understand a concept like 'citizenship' in the same way as an undocumented Chinese migrant understands it? And this is before we even consider the possibility that neither understands it in the same way as those who are part of the settled, white and black British population.

In many ways the findings in this report challenge the very concepts upon which discussions of social cohesion are constructed. Chinese migrants are often either ignored or

invisible within communities (for reasons we explore later on) and seem to fall into the gaps of discussions around social cohesion. London's new Chinese migrants, for example, are often isolated or 'segregated', living and working almost exclusively with other Chinese migrants. Yet at the same time, they seem to have given rise to very little in the way of hand-wringing or demonising media reports or even serious literature, that addresses those characteristics supposed to be caused by this 'lack of social cohesion'; violence, extremism, segregation, faith identity, inequality etc. In other words, new Chinese migrants, at least as they appear in our research, ought to present something of a problem to those attempting to create social cohesion, but because they are not associated with the actual 'problems' that lack of integration is supposed to cause, they are largely forgotten.

Chinese migrants are often either ignored or invisible within communities... and seem to fall into the gaps of discussions around social cohesion.

In fact, despite being quite a large, and in many ways conspicuous, population in London as a whole (due, in no small part, to Chinatown and Chinese restaurants and take-aways), Chinese migrants are very poorly understood and very poorly represented in the large-scale reports, studies and surveys that address issues of social cohesion. For example, in the Commission for Integration and Cohesion's report cited above, there is one, single, oblique reference made to a stereotype of Chinese takeaways. In the government's "Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society: A third progress report on the Government's strategy for race equality and community cohesion" (2009) there are references made to the fact that Chinese pupils tend to do well at school, which perhaps helps to foster

the myth that the Chinese community is relatively problem free. And there is also a paragraph referring to the government's support of Min Quan, a group that assists Chinese victims of racial harassment and violence. The same paragraph appears in another government report produced in March of 2009 "Managing the impacts of migration: Improvements and innovations". Members of Min Quan, a small organisation, were involved in the research for this report. At the time of writing (only a few months after the government publications were published) Min Quan faces closure due to lack of funding support.

Similarly, as we shall see, even when 'Chinese' are represented in such surveys as the Labour Force Survey or Census, there is good reason not to trust the figures as being in any way representative of the population as a whole. Chinese people, especially those who have arrived more recently, can be notoriously difficult to include in survey data for several reasons. Language barriers, issues with legal status, a certain cultural insularity and complex living arrangements can all mean that accurate surveying of the Chinese population, in London or Britain, is difficult, to say the least (ESRO, 2007).

In the Citizenship Survey, a key tool in the measurement and monitoring of social cohesion, there is a category called "Chinese/Other" which makes the specifically Chinese experience of social cohesion even less legible. Though what little we can pick up from the survey shows that this group is particularly disengaged in terms of taking part in local 'civic life' and is likely to feel the least empowered in terms of making a difference to local policy.

Of course there are questions about what constitutes 'local' or 'community' when it comes to London's Chinese population anyway. Many in our sample of new migrants were unable to describe by name, the place in which they lived. They pointed to stations on tube maps, wrote post-codes or gave rough approximations of areas. It is very unclear that any



questions asked about 'where they lived' or 'their community' would elicit responses relevant to the borders of London Borough Councils. Furthermore, the population has a focal point in Chinatown but is relatively dispersed around London. More than one of our respondents described going about their lives, not in a geographic community as such, but in a transport corridor between where they lived and where they worked. Their social world was almost entirely based within this corridor and was, in most cases, entirely Chinese. Yet even resting on the idea of a 'Chinese community' is problematic, given the division between the older settled Chinese population and the new migrants who are the subject of this report.

And so we have a paradoxical group. A 'community' that is very possibly the least integrated and least understood of all of London's different groups; one that is very isolated from, and excluded from, mainstream society. It is a population with few who speak English and even fewer who would understand concepts such as 'Britishness'. But it is also a community that is not seen as being a problem, and is therefore often ignored or overlooked

Not all of these complications are unique to the Chinese. A lot of recent discussions and policy initiatives recognise, for example, that arbitrary, race-based or country-based ascriptions of identity may not be as important as religious or faith-based identity markers. Furthermore, there

have been calls recently by the Communities Secretary John Denham for faith-based groups and institutions to help to: "overcome social division and promote cohesion". Discussions of Chinese faith however, would lead us nowhere. Suffice it to say that faith-based groups and a shift in emphasis to faith or religion as an identity-marker are not likely to increase recognition of the Chinese population.

It is no surprise then, that the particular experiences of new Chinese migrants remain relatively unexplored. Chinese community organisations have conducted small-scale surveys of the needs of Chinese populations in particular regions (Chinese Community Centre 2005; London Chinese Community Network 2005, n.d.; Tran 2006 etc). Some of these studies have included the perspectives of new migrants as well as members of the more settled Chinese community but they remain small and localised. In fact, most local organisations would not even have enough funding to explore these possibilities. To date, academic studies have been limited to Pieke's long-term research project on Fujianese migration to Europe (Pieke, 2002, 2004a, 2004b), Luk's (2008) investigation of the social geography of Chinese migration to the UK and work by Lam (2009) and Sales et al (2009) on new Chinese migrants in London. Based on three years of ethnographic fieldwork, Pieke's (2004b) study provides in-depth analysis of the social settings in China from which migrants depart for Europe, as well as details of migrants' lives in the UK. However, other evidence suggests that the situation of Chinese migrants in the UK has already changed in the decade since Pieke and colleagues conducted their fieldwork in 1999-2001.

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a problem, and is therefore often ignored or overlooked. Chinese community organisations suffer from a lack of financial support, both from the Chinese business community and from local or central government. All of this raises serious questions about what we mean by 'social cohesion' and whether its attendant policies and initiatives are equally applicable and effective for all.



Method

The research undertaken to compile this report encompassed several different strands and methods. It combined a desk-based literature review, a face-to-face survey, a number of in-depth interviews, some ethnographic case studies and workshops with community leaders and frontline service workers from London's Chinese community.

Such a wide range of research methods inevitably creates a wealth of data that could be synthesized in many different ways. In this report we have tried to combine the different sources and make our findings as seamless as possible to the reader. In doing so, we hope that we have allowed for a more holistic view of new Chinese migrants in London.

Much of the literature review, which aimed to cover as much of the relevant ground as possible, is incorporated within the main body of the document. We included information on recent policy changes, local and central government surveys and academic materials concerned with the needs and lifestyles of Chinese migrants living in London. In general, we found that the field was relatively sparse, especially when compared with the weight of material that has been produced in relation to various other migrant groups in the UK. But, along with the publication of our findings, recent reports from Middlesex University, Nottingham University and forthcoming work by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), suggest that the kinds of challenges and questions we pose here, may well be explored with greater frequency in the future.

Face-to-face survey.

The single largest part of the research project was the face-to-face survey. A field-research team was employed to go to different parts of London where we thought that we might find new Chinese migrants. All of the research team were native Chinese speakers and had skills with both Mandarin and Cantonese. Though some respondent's first language was Hakka or a Fujianese dialect, the interviewers reported no

problems with conducting the interviews in Mandarin and the text of the questionnaires had been translated into Chinese, in case of any dialectical misunderstandings. Mandarin is rapidly becoming the lingua franca in China and most people coming from the mainland will have at least cursory knowledge of how to speak it. Written Chinese is mutually intelligible for speakers of all Chinese dialects, assuming that they are able to read.

We met with some difficulty when trying to complete questionnaires. Many respondents were reluctant to fill in a survey at all...or didn't want to complete a form. Some thought that interviewers might be government agents or journalists and did not want to reveal themselves in any way.

A list of sites was drawn up by the research advisory group that included supermarkets, Chinese community centres, known locations for DVD sellers, churches with Chinese congregations, the Chinese library in Charing Cross, asylum and refugee centres, student accommodation, restaurants and of course Chinatown itself. The sites were spread across various different geographical locations in the city, on both sides of the river and in boroughs that were both near and far from the city centre. As we have already suggested, it is not clear exactly how an accurate sample of the existing population of Chinese migrants might be achieved, given how little is known about the population as a whole, let alone those who are undocumented. However, we do feel that by covering so many locations in order to complete the survey base, we were able to reach a wide range of different types of migrant

and gain at least some sense of a representative sample.

Initially, the plan was to interview between 5 and 10 people in each of the 20-30 different locations. However, it quickly became clear that in some locations, new migrants were difficult to find (e.g. Chinese community centres), whereas other locations proved more fruitful in terms of finding respondents (e.g. supermarkets). There is then, some weighting in the sample towards certain locations, though at least a small number of respondents were interviewed in every location.

Initially we met with some difficulty when trying to complete questionnaires. Many respondents were reluctant to fill in a survey at all, saying that they had not enough time, or didn't want to complete a form. Some thought that interviewers might be government agents or journalists and did not want to reveal themselves in any way. New migrants too, though relatively easy to find amongst the staff of restaurants for example, did not want to be seen to be filling in forms in front of colleagues or their bosses. Those who were initially willing to fill in forms and answer questions, often turned out to have been living here for more than 10 years, far beyond the range we wanted in order to be able to look specifically at 'new' migrants. It is also abundantly clear that trying to conduct fieldwork like this without fluency not only in the Chinese language but also with Chinese culture, would make the project nearly impossible.

All of these things meant that research was a far more drawn out process than had initially been hoped. However, with persistence and by building trust in the various locations, we were able to collect a good number (177) of returns, and by sticking to the principles guiding the research, of varying location and seeking only those migrants who had arrived within the last decade, we were able to arrive at a sample which we feel is representative of a wide range of new Chinese migrants and also broadly agrees with the best guesses we can make about the new Chinese migrant population of London.

In-depth interviews and mini-ethnographies

Data from 30 in-depth interviews held with a range of different migrants, mainly undocumented, has also been incorporated into this report. The data were collected during a previous project managed in partnership with the Chinese in Britain Forum, but without the involvement of the LSE or ESRO. These interviews were aimed at learning about the experiences and needs of migrants and focussed on the ways in which new migrants expressed their feelings about their living situation. Unless indicated otherwise, the direct quotes in this report are taken from these 30 interviews.

We also carried out 5 mini-ethnographic case-studies. Trained ethnographic field researchers spent between 4 and 5 days immersed in everyday lives of certain people and organisations. They included:

- Li Yan, a DVD seller, living in South London
- Stella Huang, a young woman who had come to London to study and now worked in a Chinese publisher
- Wen Ji and her husband, who had come to London 8 years ago as asylum seekers. Their case remains unresolved.
- A centre providing information services to Chinese migrants in Chinatown
- A central London Chinese community centre

Researchers spent extended periods of time with these people and in these places; in homes, offices, shops and workplaces. They examined the habits, rituals, thoughts, feelings, actions and reactions of those they worked with as well as collecting more migration stories. The locations and people were chosen to give a mix of different kinds of information and provide real depth to the survey and interview data. Researchers were able to see inside the lives of those they studied, seeing living conditions and the realities of daily life with their own eyes rather than relying on the self-reporting of interviews.

Stakeholder workshops

The original research plan involved surveying Chinese community stakeholder organisations such as community centres and legal services. Once the first stages of research had been completed however, it was felt by the research team and the advisory group that what was needed was not further repetition of what we already knew (that the existing Chinese community infrastructure is not reaching new migrants). Instead we decided to hold learning and innovation workshops with innovative and progressive members of the community.

- London Chinese Community Centre
- Chinese Liberal Democrats party
- Haringey Chinese Centre
- Chinese Association of Tower Hamlets
- North London Chinese Association
- Bishop Ho Ming Wah Association
- Islington Chinese Centre
- Lambeth Chinese Association
- Business leaders (Anonymous)
- Bank of China
- Strangers Into Citizens

We also carried out 5 mini-ethnographic case-studies. Trained ethnographic field researchers spent between 4 and 5 days immersed in everyday lives of certain people and organisations.

Two workshops were held with various community leaders and representatives of organisations in which the research team presented initial findings from the survey data and challenged the leaders and frontline staff to come up with solutions to problems and suggestions for ways in which the community might address the changing face of London's Chinese population. A list of the recommendations and outcomes from these workshops is outlined in the conclusion of this report.

Contributors to this part of the research included delegates from:

- The Chinese in Britain Forum
- Spectrum Radio
- Chinese Mental Health Association
- Camden Chinese Community Centre
- Christine Lee Solicitors
- London Law Centre
- Monitoring Group – Min Quan
- The Chinese Information and Advice Centre



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London's new Chinese migrants: Population demographics



Getting a firm handle on London's Chinese population can be difficult. The 2001 census is now somewhat out of date and may well not have been very reliable as a guide to the Chinese population in the first place (ESRO, 2007). Furthermore, different kinds of surveying and population estimation methods lead to different estimates of the size of the Chinese population. And, as if this didn't make the problem difficult enough, there is also the fact that when it comes to measuring the number of undocumented Chinese we are largely in the dark. In 2009, London's Chinese population could be as large as 250,000. It could be greater still and as many as half of this number could be undocumented.

Population clues

Both official bodies and community agencies agree that the British Chinese population has grown in size over recent years with the large proportion of new migrants coming from mainland China. The Annual Population Survey (National Statistics 2008) estimated that in 2008 there were 107,000 people born in China in the UK, and 95,000 born in Hong Kong, of which 95,000 had Chinese nationality and 15,000 Hong Kong nationality respectively. These figures would include individuals who had entered the UK at different times and with different residence status (see Table 1).

However, in a mapping exercise carried out in 2006, Chinese community leaders told the International Organisation for Migration that such figures seriously underestimated the true total. The IOM survey (2006) reports estimated totals of between 50,000 and 200,000 Chinese in London alone (of which 50,000-60,000 were said to be Fujianese). Pieke (2004b) states that around 10,000 Fujianese came to live in the UK, Italy, Germany, Netherlands and France in the late 1990s and early 2000s alone.

The 177 respondents we spoke to actually constitutes a larger sample... than even large-scale national surveys, such as the Citizenship survey or the Labour Force Survey,

For many reasons it is difficult to measure the new wave of migration from China to the UK. National censuses have failed to account for those living in the country without official documentation, and do not adequately represent the "temporary migrant" status of overseas student- There is simply no way of putting

an accurate figure on the number of undocumented (or 'irregular') Chinese migrants living in London or the UK. Furthermore, as we have already said, any kind of population data, either from the International Passenger Survey, the Labour Force Survey or the Census itself are often unreliable when it comes to the Chinese population, both documented and undocumented. This is primarily due to difficulties of sampling and response (ESRO, 2007).

Population clues: asylum seekers

While by definition it is not possible to quantify irregular immigration from China to the UK, some small conclusions may be drawn from Home Office statistics on asylum applications (see Table 2).

Even allowing for errors and wrongly judged cases, the very small number of asylum applications from China which are approved, compared with the number made, suggests that most Chinese applicants are in fact economic migrants and not fleeing political persecution. From interviews with immigration lawyers in London, Pieke (2004) found that many Fujianese migrants to Britain automatically sought asylum on arrival, because they "generally perceive the asylum system as a peculiar sort of immigration arrangement rather than a humanitarian instrument and therefore do not see 'making up stories' as something illegal". Benton and Gomez (2008) agree that most Chinese asylum seekers are driven by the same economic motives as other immigrants, and explain that Chinese "migration brokers" began to transport people to Europe in the

Place of birth	2004	2005	2006	2007	Oct 07 Sept 08
China	64,000	77,000	78,000	93,000	107,000
Hong Kong	86,000	86,000	85,000	79,000	95,000

Table 1: Estimated population resident in the United Kingdom, by foreign country of birth from the Annual Population Survey 2004-2008 (National Statistics 2008)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Applications received for asylum in the UK, from China	1,925	2,625	4,000	2,390	3,675	3,450	2,365	1,730	1,945	2,100
Cases from China recognised as refugees and granted asylum, excluding dependants	5	5	40	20	15	20	15	10	15	60
Cases from China not recognised as refugees but granted exceptional leave, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave, excluding dependants	15	5	130	160	240	155	80	75	110	85
Refusals of asylum from China, exceptional leave, humanitarian protection and discretionary leave, excluding dependants	1,500	2,000	5,480	4,160	3,360	3,690	2,525	1,685	1,600	1860

Table 2: Asylum statistics United Kingdom 2007 (Home Office 2008)

1980s at a time when western European countries were bringing in more restrictive immigration policies (e.g. the UK's Immigration and Asylum Act of 1999).

It appears that many of these migrants may remain in the UK after their asylum applications have been refused. The IOM (2006) reports the view of British Chinese community leaders that as many as 90% of Chinese migrants who had been refused asylum were still living clandestinely in the UK. While the UK government, with the IOM, encourages the voluntary return of failed asylum seekers to their countries of origin, programmes to assist return have not resulted in Chinese migrants leaving the country. In a study exploring the reasons behind migrants' decisions to return home, Black (2004) found that Chinese migrants in particular would actively reject offers of assistance, quoting a Chinese community leader who said: "The UK Fujian Community Centre doesn't have links with IOM. People who want to go home don't need help. They have their own money. You don't see Chinese people queuing for benefits. It is the Chinese mentality – they don't like to depend on benefits".

It has also been reported that Chinese migrants may choose not to draw attention to their status as asylum-seekers, for example by applying for financial help under Section 4 of the 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act, because this might jeopardise their future return to China, where it would be seen as disloyal to have claimed asylum from the state. Sales et al (2009) argue that the sensitivity around the issue of asylum is felt by other Chinese, including longer-term migrants in the UK, who are increasingly developing business links with mainland China and thus do not wish to acknowledge criticism of the Chinese government. This may be one factor in the complex relationship between new Chinese migrants and their co-ethnic employers from more settled British Chinese community groups.

All of this suggests two things. One; that there may be a significant number of failed asylum seekers who never left the UK and two; that they would be very difficult to find and enumerate. Though it should be noted too that asylum seekers account for only a small proportion of the Chinese population in London and the UK.

Population clues: work permit holders

Many skilled migrants from China may enter the UK on work permits: 2,095 work permit holders arrived in 2007, accompanied by 2,060 dependants (Home Office, 2007). These migrant workers are included in the total number of Chinese nationals who entered the UK and were allocated National Insurance numbers each year (see Table 3), although this figure also includes people not working but receiving certain benefits and tax credits.

Population clues: students

A separate group of recent migrants is comprised of Chinese students at British schools and Universities. In 2007 there were 2,419 pupils from mainland China at independent schools in the UK, with a further 5,612 from Hong Kong (Independent Schools Council, 2008). In 2007/8 Chinese students were the largest group of non-UK domiciled students in British Higher Education Institutions: 45,355 in total, comprising 13.3% of all foreign students (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2009). It is thought that as of 2009 this number could be as high as 60,000. Migrants on student visas are permitted

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total (000's)	3,804.38	311.34	362.21	412.78	618.56	633.05	669.56
China (000's)	88.73	7.32	12.69	13.33	13.16	11.45%	15.59

Table 3. NI Number registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK (Department for Works and Pensions)

to work up to 20 hours a week in term time, and full-time during vacations (UKBA, 2009a). The Institute for Public Policy Research has recently pointed out (IPPR, 2009) that some students may become “irregular” as a result of over-staying visas, or breaching visa conditions by working more hours than allowed. Others coming in on student visas may be eligible to apply for a post-study work visa. This visa can extend a student’s right to stay in the UK for one or even two years after they have finished their course.

Our sample

In many ways the sample created by the face-to-face interview work provides interesting research data in itself. The 177 respondents we spoke to, actually constitute a larger sample of new Chinese migrants than most other surveys of the Chinese population so far collected. In some cases the sample is greater than even large-scale national surveys, such as the Citizenship survey or the Labour Force Survey, which in any case are only likely to be able to capture settled, long-term resident, Chinese respondents.

Our sample: Places of Origin

For our purposes the common factor for all of our respondents was that they designated themselves as being ethnically Chinese and spoke a language that was recognised to be a Chinese language.

The vast majority of our respondents came from the provinces of the Chinese mainland (see Table 4). This reflects trends that have been noted elsewhere and in previous studies (Luk, 2008; Lam 2009, Sales et al, 2009). We cannot say definitively whether 84% is a representative figure for the proportion of new Chinese migrants that come from the mainland, but it is broadly in agreement with previous estimates.

A survey by the Chinese Community

Pace of origin	Mainland China	Hong Kong	Taiwan	Malaysia	Singapore
	84%	7%	1%	8%	1%

Table 4 Where the 177 respondents came from (NB In all of the tables which follow, numbers were rounded up to the nearest whole percentage point).

Centre (2005) that set out to assess the needs of the Chinese population in the UK as a whole, noted that in the past 20 years there has been a rise both in wealthy Chinese sending their children to study in the UK, and in economic migrants, often unskilled and undocumented, coming to the UK. Many of the new economic migrants came from parts of China with no previous migratory link to Britain, initially Fujian but also North-East China and other regions.

Luk (2008) identifies six main sub-groups of the Chinese population in Britain today:

1. Hakka and Cantonese-speakers from the New Territories of Hong Kong who migrated in the 1950s and 60s to work in the catering industry
2. Professional people and students “voluntarily exiled” from Hong Kong in the 1980s
3. Immigrants from Fujian and Zhejiang provinces in China, appearing since the late 1980s, and often assisted in their migration by human traffickers, or “snake-heads”
4. Mandarin speakers from urban areas of northern China, beginning in the 1990s

5. Chinese from South East Asia coming first to study in the UK, from the 1950s on but increasingly in the 1980s

6. Second-generation British-born Chinese, mainly descended from Hong Kong immigrants.

This is clearly a heterogeneous group, diverse in language, educational background, wealth and intentions with regard to migration. It is people in the third, fourth and fifth categories in Luk’s list which form the majority of recent migration to Britain and the focus of the present study.

The two interesting things to note from Table 5 are the high percentage of respondents who have come from one single province, Fujian, and the sheer diversity of provinces that the others have come from. People have come from all over China to live in London.

These figures should by no means be taken as a representative breakdown of London’s new Chinese migrant population as a whole, since our interviewers will have run into groups of people that came from the same place. Sometimes they will all have declined to be interviewed, at other times they may have all responded. Nonetheless, it is clear from our sample that London’s new Chinese migrants

Province	% (Actual)	Province	% (Actual)	Province	% (Actual)
Anhui	1% (2)	Heilongjiang	1% (2)	Liaoning	7% (11)
Beijing	5% (7)	Henan	1% (2)	Shaanxi	2% (3)
Chongqing	1% (2)	Hong Kong	7% (11)	Shandong	5% (7)
Fujian	42% (64)	Hubei	2% (3)	Shanxi	2% (3)
Guangdong	12% (18)	Hunan	1% (2)	Sichuan	1% (2)
Guangxi	1% (2)	Inner Mongolia	1% (2)	Tianjin	1% (2)
Hebei	1% (2)	Jiangsu	3% (4)	Zhejiang	3% (5)

Table 5. Breakdown of respondents coming from the Chinese mainland, by province

遷移，融會，凝聚

do come from all over China. The link between Britain and Fujian is long-established. Many of the respondents in our stakeholders workshops felt that migration from Fujian had now been going on long enough to mean that there was a significant Fujianese infrastructure in the UK in terms of businesses and landlords, as well as the well-documented infrastructure of people-traffickers bringing people from Fujian to Europe and the UK. It is the Fujianese, for example, who are most commonly associated with the slightly overblown term, 'snake-head gangs' (Pieke, 2004b).

Our sample: Age

More than three quarters of those we interviewed were between 18 and 39 years of age (see Table 6). And this remained the case even when those who are students or are on extended working visas obtained after post-graduate study (post-study work visas) were removed from the sample. Unsurprisingly however, the ages of those who were not here on any kind of student visa, were a little older. In terms of age, there was little difference between those who were documented and those who were undocumented.

Age	18-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
% of total	24%	26%	33%	13%	3%	1%	0%
Non-students	7%	24%	44%	20%	4%	1%	0%
Undocumented	8%	23%	45%	19%	5%	0%	0%

Table 6. Survey respondents by age.

This demographic broadly reflects the fact that the vast majority of these migrants are either students or economic migrants; in London to work or study. Very few of our respondents were near the end of the working lives.

Our sample: Language

The breakdown of languages spoken by our respondents reveals some interesting facts about our sample population. Unsurprisingly, 95% of those we surveyed spoke Mandarin. Mandarin is rapidly becoming the dominant language on the Chinese mainland, and though regional dialects are still spoken and proudly adhered to in many parts of the country, all schoolchildren will now

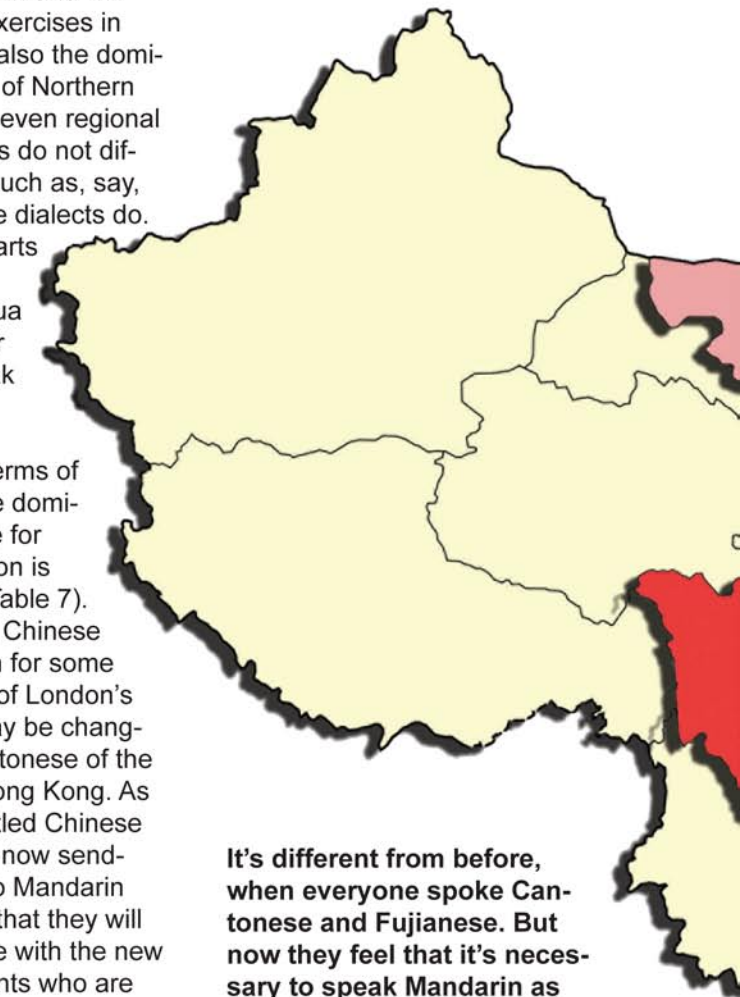
have lessons in Mandarin and will perform many school exercises in Mandarin. Mandarin is also the dominant language in much of Northern and central China, and even regional dialects in these regions do not differ from Mandarin as much as, say, Cantonese or Fujianese dialects do. People from different parts of China will now often use Mandarin as a lingua franca to speak to other Chinese who may speak very different dialects.

What is significant, in terms of our research, is that the dominant common language for these migrants in London is clearly Mandarin (see Table 7). Members of the settled Chinese community have known for some time that the language of London's Chinese community may be changing, away from the Cantonese of the original settlers from Hong Kong. As we shall see, many settled Chinese community leaders are now sending their own children to Mandarin classes, in London, so that they will be able to communicate with the new wave of Chinese migrants who are reshaping London's Chinese community.

However, the learning of Mandarin by Cantonese speakers is not the only way in which Chinese linguistic abilities are being expanded in London. Some 38% of the respondents say that they can speak Cantonese. This is interesting since it is a far larger percentage

Language	%
Mandarin	95
Cantonese	38
Hakka	9
Fujian Dialect	40
Other	9

Table 7. Language spoken by survey respondents



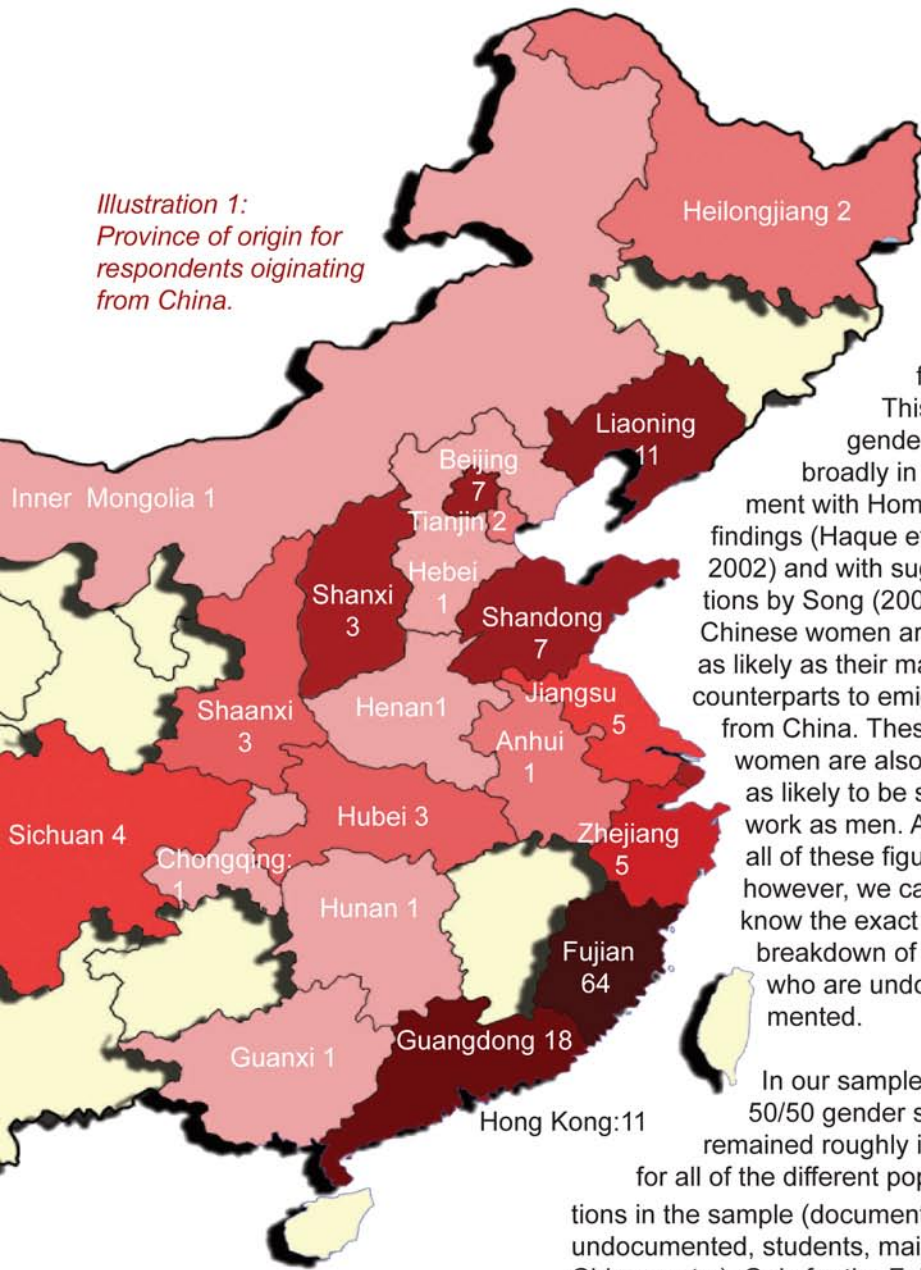
It's different from before, when everyone spoke Cantonese and Fujianese. But now they feel that it's necessary to speak Mandarin as well. Now Mandarin and Cantonese are equally important. So now they probably think learning one more language is not a bad thing.

- Rui, female, 50 years old

than the percentage of those who came from Cantonese-speaking parts of China (mainly Hong Kong, Guangdong and Guangxi).

In conversation with respondents in various contexts, it became clear that there is a measure of informal language learning going on amongst the migrants. Indeed, whilst many come to London already bi-lingual (speaking a regional dialect and Mandarin), they are becoming tri-lingual after arriving. Cantonese speakers are learning Mandarin and Mandarin speakers are learning Cantonese. Speaking both languages enables migrants to look for jobs in both the newer Chinese businesses in London and in the older, settled Cantonese-speaking businesses. It also means that migrants can communicate better with work colleagues and house-mates. These languages and dialects are picked up informally, over shared cigarettes, in kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms, with co-workers and

Illustration 1: Province of origin for respondents originating from China.



female. This 50:50 gender split is broadly in agreement with Home Office findings (Haque et al., 2002) and with suggestions by Song (2004) that Chinese women are just as likely as their male counterparts to emigrate from China. These women are also just as likely to be seeking work as men. As with all of these figures however, we cannot know the exact gender breakdown of those who are undocumented.

In our sample, the 50/50 gender split remained roughly in place for all of the different populations in the sample (documented, undocumented, students, mainland Chinese etc.).

Only for the Fujianese migrants did this change. Amongst our Fujianese respondents 56% were men and 44% were women. But it is difficult to read any significance into this finding without knowing more about the total population.

friends rather than through formal education.

Our sample: When did they arrive in the UK?

The majority (86%) of our respondents had arrived in the UK within 5 years of the research (remembering that the field research was conducted during 2008 and 2009). This allows us to talk with some confidence of ‘new migrants’ in relation to our findings. As we have already said, getting these new migrants to talk to us and complete surveys with one of our researchers was not always easy and we were pleased to be able to get such a large amount of responses from genuinely ‘new’ migrants for the purposes of our research (see Table 8).

Our sample: Other demographics (Gender and status)

Gender: Of the 177 people surveyed, 88 were male and 89 were

Students:

Year	%
1999	1
2000	1
2001	0
2002	2
2003	11
2004	14
2005	12
2006	22
2007	21
2008	12
2009	5

Table 8. Survey respondents’ year of arrival in the UK.

30% of our sample (54 people) held student visas or post-study work visas. We felt that it was important to include this group within our sample for two reasons. First, a high proportion of these students are working and contributing to the British economy. Second, a great many of them are likely to stay on in Britain and therefore they have as significant a role to play in London’s changing Chinese population as do any other type of migrant.

It’s different from before, when everyone spoke Cantonese and Fujianese. But now they feel that it’s necessary to speak Mandarin as well. Now Mandarin and Cantonese are equally important. So now they probably think learning one more language is not a bad thing.

Legal status: 62% of our sample (109 people) claimed to hold formal documentation allowing them to reside in the UK. However, when asked to describe the nature of this documentation (work visa, ‘indefinite leave to remain’ etc.), 29 of these did not provide an answer. This may be down to confusion over exact legal status in the UK and what constituted documentation (overstayed visas, for example), but may also be down to the fact that some people wanted the interviewers to record their status as ‘documented’ even when they were not. For the purposes of statistics presented throughout this report, we counted those who could accurately describe their legal documentation as being ‘documented’. ‘Undocumented’ includes those who freely told us that they had no legal documentation entitling them to reside in the UK, overstayers, and those who could not describe any documentation that they had.



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Legacy and longing: The journey from China to London



There are many reasons for Chinese people to consider migrating to the UK. The majority of migrants would be classified 'economic migrants', but this designation can hide the complexities beneath. There can be little doubt that most who come, come with at least the *idea* of making mon-

ey and forging a new, more lucrative and more fulfilling, life. This is part of the 'longing' referred to in the chapter title. Individual stories however, are always more complicated. They often involve elements of both 'push' and 'pull'. Circumstances in China can 'push' people to look for a way out,

and fantasies of wealth and exoticism in the UK can 'pull' people towards the migration option.

The act of migration however, also creates its own legacies and debts, both emotional and material. People, places and things may be left behind physically but the emotional legacies of separation are carried to the UK. The financial cost of migration may also be high and can leave migrants with debts large enough that they structure and determine the choices and options they have when they are in the UK. These are not simple stories of leaving one life and finding a new one, these are stories of a journey, from one place to another, in which the past continues to exert its influence on the present. The needs and aspirations of new Chinese migrants are as much a product of their lives in China and their means of migration, as they are of the conditions they find in the UK.

Leaving China

For Li Yan, leaving his village was as much about opportunism as it was escape. He had felt trapped in a situation in China that he did not enjoy and felt he had few prospects for achieving more excitement or intellectual stimulation. When presented with the opportunity to see the world and forge a new life, he took it.

For others, the need to leave seems more urgent; they present the situation they faced in China more as force than nudge. Some respondents described trouble with Chinese authorities and fear of prosecution or persecution:

When we were in China... because of the situation in China, we were subjected to

Li Yan

Li Yan had many tales about leaving China and coming to London. Not all of them were compatible with each other. Over several days and several meals, a clearer set of facts began to emerge. It was clear that Li Yan had told so many versions of his story to so many people, that truth and untruth had become woven into each other seamlessly. Possibly even for him.

Li Yan grew up in Hebei province in Northern China. He came from several generations of farmers working on tiny plots of land for very little reward. For many children in his situation, growing up on farms in the 1960's, and 1970's there were few options but to go to a local village school for a basic education before a life of manual chores in the fields. But Li Yan did well during these years of basic schooling and his parents saved and borrowed enough money for him to go on to a high school. This education was enough for him to gain employment on the railways; as a carriage guard working on the trains. The high school also enabled him to explore an interest he had developed from a young age and which was to change his life forever: painting.

Li Yan's heart was never really in the harsh, manual labour of farming, but he never earned enough money to leave it behind. He got married

when he was 23 to a woman he never particularly loved. His parents had introduced him formally to her, a daughter of another family of farmers in a nearby village. Now, 20 years later, he says: "She is pretty but I don't think she is very bright. What do you expect from a farmer?" The couple had two children and lived in a small village of farmers, mainly on Li Yan's income from the trains. His wife still worked on her family farm.

As his children grew up in the village, their path seemed to be a repeat of Li Yan's own. Unfortunately they did not do so well at school and never went on to receive a high school education. Li Yan on the other hand, was painting more and more. In fact, his reputation as a 'folk artist' had spread beyond the confines of the village, and people came to him from further afield to buy or commission his work. In 2005 his fame was such that local government officials knew of his work, and he was invited to take part in a 'cultural exchange'. The exchange was organised by the Chinese government itself. Li Yan was invited, in his capacity as a talented Chinese folk artist, to go to London, in the United Kingdom.

He told his wife that he was going to go on the cultural exchange, and that he was not going to return.

遷移, 融會, 凝聚

persecution; our life was not stable. In China, when my wife was thinking of having a second baby, she was sent to prison and was fined for that... And since our income was very low, we could not maintain a reasonable living standard, so I escaped there to go abroad... I came because I wanted to be able to feed a family and maintain a reasonable living standard.

- Gao Yu, male, mid-forties, arrived in the UK in 2001

There are a number of reasons... that I escaped [from China] [...] I had a problem with the authorities... I lodged a complaint and then the police wanted to arrest me. [...] Not because of political reasons. I made enemies. They were corrupt officials and I lodged a complaint to report them, so they wanted to arrest me for revenge. So I fled.

- Wang Wei, male, 50 years old

It is difficult to know whether such stories are entirely true. As Pieke (2004b) points out, migrants who have come to the UK via routes organised by people-traffickers have often been coached in how to create stories for asylum applications. Li Yan himself initially told us a story of persecution and of travelling in the back of trucks across continents, before presenting us with his final version. Tales of corrupt officials, the enforcement of the one-child policy and of being a member of the Falun Gong (a religious cult suppressed in China) are commonplace among Chinese migrants in London, but are perhaps more commonplace here than in China. They also present a picture of China that perhaps masks other kinds of realities.

According to Benton and Gomez (2008), some Chinese officials often see 'new migrants' as potential agents of economic transformation in China, a potential economic asset. This has, in many cases, led to quite pragmatic policy approaches

to migration, for example allowing students who opt to stay abroad to return to China and leave again, instead of being required to return permanently to serve their country. Many students do remain abroad, finding permanent work on completing their studies. Pieke's (2002, 2004a, 2004b) research in Fujian province also revealed that agencies of the Chinese state have been instrumental in promoting large-scale emigration by unskilled workers as well. Some local officials, who see the potential for remittances of foreign earnings to boost the local economy, have welcomed international migration. Furthermore, as we have already said, Pieke's interviews with immigration lawyers in London found that many Fujianese migrants to Britain automatically sought asylum on arrival, and they did not see 'making up stories' as wrong, but rather, a pragmatic means to an end.

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Working out what is true and what is fabrication is not only impossible but also perhaps missing the point. The purpose, for all, is to find a way of entering the UK. As one respondent put it:

When I first came I felt that the UK was not as perfect as I had imagined. In particular after the asylum procedures and the like, I began to realise that the immigration department and relevant

departments in the UK did not understand China. They (the immigration people) assess the issues in China with their own criteria. As a result, lots of things they do are not right. For example, lots of refugees.... Lots of people who should be given refugee status were not given; whereas those who should not be given were awarded that status. That is a total mess. [His own application was rejected – earlier he had cited "various reasons, including human rights, personal political orientation" for his need for refugee status.]

- Zhang Qing, male, 40 years old

A certain grim pragmatism, mostly financial, punctuated many of our interviews. Other stories did not pack the emotional or legal punch of the asylum stories but in the end provided no less compelling a reason to brave the hardships of migration. Most common among these were the simple expressions of a lack of economic opportunity:

In China [...] it's hard to find work, and the wages are low, you get only a few hundred RMB a month [less than £100]. If you had a family then you can't support them. It may not even be enough for your own spending.

- Chen Liang, male, 30 years old

The other issue is that in China, the cost of living is particularly high. In China, the money you earn may not be enough for food and drink. The money you earn in a month is not enough to meet the costs of living for the same period.

- He Cun, male, 30-39 years old

For some, this financial hardship had become more pressing. Accumulated debts and/or the difficulty in meeting

example, has seen outward emigration for many centuries, but from the 1980s onwards, “professional migration networks” were formed, with brokers within China encouraging new migrants to follow established routes around the world in search of work. Benton and Gomez (2008) also refer to new migrants coming from the coastal provinces of Guangdong and Zhejiang as well as Fujian. Migration brokerage became a source of income for private businessmen and criminal gangs, but also a project of local government agencies in Fujian, who might facilitate migration through loans and supply of paperwork.

Ideally, all new Chinese migrants would like to come to the London with formal documentation that allows them to work or live in the UK. In practice, obtaining this kind of documentation is difficult and so many turn to the informal migrant routes and the informal brokers. But the different routes by which people choose to enter the country will leave different legacies.

Many of the economic migrants who set off from Fujian to Europe are poor, and their families often incur huge debts to the traffickers who arrange their passage. A recent survey of undocumented migrants in detention in the UK found that Chinese migrants had paid between £10,000 and £22,000 to traffickers (Black et al., 2005). Repayment of these debts becomes a major reason for the migrants to remain abroad working until they have earned enough money to pay the broker and return home.

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Skeldon (2000) has sought to demythologise the trafficking of Chinese people to Europe. He explains some of the complexity of the migration system, defining the smugglers themselves as “loosely structured organizations that consist of constantly shifting relationships among various criminal groups such as triads in origin areas and local mafias and street gangs in destination areas but which can also incorporate corrupt government officials and even legitimate businessmen”. Skeldon also argues, and we can see this clearly in our own research, that many “trafficked” people are willing migrants who are able to achieve their aspirations after paying off their debts to the traffickers.

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Li Yan’s journey was relatively easy, and he was in the fortunate position of not having a huge burden of debt. However, his status in the UK was precarious. Whilst others hoped of amnesty or one day gaining recognition or rights to stay based on their time working here and their willingness to pay taxes, Li Yan was left with the idea that no such rights were ever likely to come to him.

For others the journey itself was a more frightening and uncertain experience. Again, we cannot be sure of the truth of the individual stories that we heard but we can be sure that stories like this are not unknown. The reality of them was brought home tragically on Sunday 18th June, 2000 when the bodies of fifty-eight Chinese

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From this point on, Li Yan’s life has become one in which secrecy and false identity is a daily routine. He has used many different names, and many forms of identification. At one point he shows us a crumpled piece of paper that he keeps in his pocket. It is a document entitling him to NHS healthcare as an asylum seeker, with a Chinese interpreter. He obtained the document, he said, when he went through the asylum process. Could this be true? The name on the document is not ‘Li Yan’. The photograph is grainy. Each name, he says, has a different story.

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They put me into a container and said we'll take you to a safe place. [...] I reached here after 40 odd days. I don't know where I had gone past. I didn't come out of the container, so I didn't know where I was exactly. I guess it was on sea. I only noticed that the container was loaded and unloaded and they told me that it was safe. And I got here after 40 days. [...] I came alone. [...] I paid more than 200,000 RMB [over £15,000].

- Wang Wei, male,
50 years old

Many others told similar stories of being shut inside containers for days at the mercy of others. They ate, slept, peed and defecated in the container, suffering from seasickness and disorientation. There can be no doubt that such journeys are dangerous, but they also offer a harsh rite of passage to the UK. It is perhaps even more disturbing that such a journey could cost so much money and create such enormous debts for those who undertake them.

This is not the only way into the UK of course. People describe being able to make choices in China as to how much they will pay and what kind of journey they can expect and what kind of documents they will receive. Some journeys involve crossing multiple borders on multiple forms of transport. They meet migration brokers at different stages of their journey who either facilitate each stage or provide them with different kinds of documentation. At each point, the quality of the journey and the quality of the documents is determined by the price the migrant is willing to pay. But there are no guarantees. In one of our interviews, a man from northern China described paying as little as 30,000 RMB (£2-3000) for a tourist visa. With this he was able to fly directly from Beijing to London. He felt that the price he had paid was far less than those who came from Fujian province in the South East of China.

The debts acquired by the undocumented migrants can be huge then.

Wen Ji

For Wen Ji's husband the journey to London was complex. He first travelled North to Shanghai, and then took a plane to Moscow. From there he was taken on a route (by car, in coaches, in lorries and on foot) through the Czech Republic and on to Germany, Holland, France and finally the UK. In each different country he had to wait for between 2 and 10 days while arrangements were made or documents were obtained. All told, it was 2 months between leaving his home in Fujian and his arrival in the UK. From Fujian he had begun his journey with 3 others. They travelled together to Shanghai but at each stage of the journey more Chinese migrants joined them, coming via different routes and on different modes of transport. By the time they arrived in the UK, there were 22 of

These are debts that accrue during the process of migration itself. Many do not realise the length of time that it will take to be able to repay these kinds of sums once they arrive in the UK. Many imagine that it is simple to work and live in London and save these kinds of sum. As we shall see in the next chapter, these initial expectations are soon dashed. Of course, for those with work or student visas, the journey is less sig-

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nificant. They can fly into the UK and not worry about the scrutiny of border guards or police. They do not carry with them the burdens of the journey of the undocumented migrant. From the outside it is easy to see a clear difference between the documented and the undocumented. We might be tempted to think of them as two

them. The whole trip had cost him 160,000 RMB (more than £10,000).

Given that Wen Ji's husband had already accumulated large debts through his failing business, the extra debt of 160,000 RMB meant that he arrived in the UK with a heavy burden indeed. When he fell ill and Wen Ji felt that she had to get to him quickly, she threw them into even greater debt; choosing a more expensive option to travel. With two other Fujianese, Wen Ji was taken by on a boat with a 'guide', to Indonesia. In Indonesia she was given a new passport that said that she was an Indonesia of Chinese ethnicity. Using this passport, she was able to fly directly from Jakarta to London. Her much safer journey cost 220,000 RMB (over £15,000)

completely separate populations of people. We shall see in later chapters however, that whilst undocumented migrants often face problems in greater number, the kinds of issues that both sets of migrants face, especially amongst those who chose to stay for a longer period of time, are similar. In fact, the lives of the documented and the undocumented can become intertwined, and in practice it becomes difficult to separate them.

Expectations and arrival

Some, like Li Yan, arrive with no fixed plans. They do not know how long they will stay in the UK and the possibility of permanent settlement is real. For others, the plan is to stay for just a short time, make some money and then return to China. Most however, do arrive with the idea that the UK will be a place where money can be made, where rights will be respected, and living standards will be high:

Currently for me, the main concern is to find a job. I hope to work for two more years and during this period, I would see if there's anything coming up. It's a matter of working and looking for opportunities.

- Ma Rong, male, thirties

	Whole Population	Docu-mented	Undocu-mented	Students	Arrived 2007 or after	Arrived before 2007	Fujianese
Less than 1 year	5%	6%	2%	9%	5%	5%	1%
1-5 years	26%	32%	16%	41%	48%	14%	11%
More than 5 years	2%	2%	3%	2%	0%	4%	2%
Planning to settle indefinitely	29%	24%	39%	11%	16%	36%	40%
Not Sure	38%	37%	40%	39%	34%	42%	45%

Table 12: New migrant's planned length of stay

So when I first came, I planned to stay for two years. Money earned in the first year would allow me to pay back [the debt incurred for coming out here], and I'd go home in the second year so the second year's earning would be what I really earned.

- Guo Yu, male, forties

It does not take long for expectations to be confronted by reality. London turns out not to be as glittering or full of wonder as hoped, job opportunities prove more difficult to come by, living standards don't meet expectations and the reality of living without being able to speak English is tougher than most had imagined. For some, there is also a status shock. The idea of coming to London had filled them with a sense of moving up in the world, of moving on. The reality for many is that they find their status drops. We will address all of these things in greater detail below. For the time being it is worth considering the following descriptions of realities of life in London:

No. When I arrived here what I saw was totally different from what I had imagined. Life was hard for me. I never intended to stay permanently. I thought I'd spend a few years here earning some money and go home. Before we had been told it was easy to earn money abroad. But when I arrived here, things turned out to be

different from what we had been told. Not the same situation as had been informed... and the living condition here was harsh, too.

- Guo Yu, male forties

The idea of coming to London had filled them with a sense of moving up in the world, of moving on. The reality for many is that they find their status drops

First impression when I came to London?... Apart from the city centre, I found lots of difference there (different from what had been imagined)... In the suburbs, London looks rather bad.

- Du Fang, male, twenties

The biggest problem is that it is difficult to find work. Finding work is not so straightforward. Some of the bosses, whether they are from Hong Kong, Malaysia, or any other country, they are not as good as imagined. There's some mentality of discrimination there.

- He Cun, male, thirties

I was very homesick. I didn't speak any English, I didn't know even how to shop; I could not even buy travel ticket; I didn't know the roads here. The roads here and different to China's. There are lots of one way streets. It's not easy for us when we first came. I often got lost and could not find way home. Then I'd sit in the park and cry. I most cried every day. I couldn't do a thing. I needed help from friends. Whenever I wanted to buy travel tickets I'd ask a friend to write a little note for me in English the night before, then I'd take it to the ticket office the next morning and hand it to the ticket clerks, who'd know what kind of ticket I wanted. That was how I got around by public transport.

- Liu Shun, female, forties

Because it was not the same as you'd see in the films and on television... the kind of new and huge cities...where everything was modern and new... So at a glance [London] wasn't as modern as I had thought. [...] Here we are those who are in the lowest level [of society].

- Li Hong, male, forties

The jarring difference between expectation and reality is perhaps



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brought home by the figures collected on migrant intentions for the future. And specifically, how long they intend to stay in London (see Table 12).

There are a number of interesting points here. The first point of interest is the proportion of people who replied that they are ‘planning to settle indefinitely’ or are ‘not sure’ about how long they will stay: 67% of the population. For those who were undocumented this figure rises to 79%, and for the Fujianese, 85%. All of these figures are very high, and immediately point to the fact that expectations do not match reality.

The idea of coming to London had filled them with a sense of moving up in the world, of moving on. The reality for many is that they find their status drops

The figures also suggest a trend that we examine later in this report. Of those who arrived before 2007, 78% said that they planned to settle indefinitely or that they were unsure of how long they would stay. This compares

evidence in the fact that a greater proportion of those who arrived after 2007 in our sample, had come to the UK in order to study (54%) than those who had arrived before 2007 (33%). These students might have more fixed plans based on the lengths of their courses of study. But there is also supporting evidence for the second explanation, that the longer migrants stay, the less sure they become about leaving, in the qualitative evidence about changing plans, unmet expectations, the difficulties encountered in making money and uncertainties about legal status both in the UK and in China. In fact, this second explanation looks stronger when we revisit the data in Table 8 and examine the figures for those who arrived before 2007. Only 23% give a fixed period of stay. Yet we know that 33% of the sample were students. This suggests that students might come with fixed plans but that they also change them.

In fact, we asked respondents whether their plans had changed. Did they plan to stay for longer, shorter or the same as they had originally planned? (see Table 13)

The figures here seem to be clear. The longer that migrants stay in the UK, the more likely they are to stay for longer than they had originally

It was different from what I had in mind. Earlier I had thought that it would be easy to find work. I can't say whether I felt good or bad when I first arrived, but I had thought that finding work would be easy here. So gradually I felt disappointed. [...] I felt OK when I first arrived. But now I feel lots of pressure because it's difficult to find work; and I don't have status. Also, whenever we get something to do, the wage is very, very low.

- Ping, female, forties

	Whole Population	Students	Arrived 2007 or after	Arrived before 2007
The same as planned	40%	56%	56%	29%
Longer than planned	51%	34%	37%	60%
Shorter than planned	9%	10%	7%	11%

Table 13: New migrant's plans: Do they plan to stay for longer, shorter or the same as originally planned?

with only 50% of those had who arrived since 2007. There are two possible explanations for this finding. The first is that the types of migrants that have arrived since 2007 are different, and have more of a fixed plan. The second is that the longer migrants stay in the UK, the less certain they become about whether or when they will be going home.

With regard to the first explanation there is a piece of supporting

planned. A large proportion of students (34%) also seem to be staying longer than they had originally planned. It should also be remembered that 36% of those interviewed had only arrived within the past three years, and may still be within the period of time they had originally planned to stay. They may not yet have been confronted by all of those factors that can affect migrant plans and cause them to stay for longer.



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Making money, making lives

We have looked in some detail at the complex motivations that can lie behind coming to the UK. We have seen that the simple desire to make money is often only half of the story. There are also desires to travel and see the world, join family members, solve local problems and start new lives. Nonetheless, once in the UK, the manifestation of all these different migrant motivations is often the same: the need to make money. Although a great many of those we talked to aspired, one day, to be able to go back to China. Few wanted to do so with empty hands or without having achieved 'success' in the UK. And for most, the measurement of success was financial.

Even among those for whom life in London had become unbearable, there was often a palpable desire to stay nonetheless. Some feared 'losing face'. For many Chinese people, the fear of 'losing face' can be a powerful driver of decisions. Put simply, 'losing face' means being shamed. To go back to China with nothing would be to mark oneself as a failure, and to suffer a fall in reputation. This drop in social standing would also be felt keenly inside, as an acute embarrassment. Avoiding losing face can be a powerful motivation. For others of course, there is the fact that they simply owe too much money, and fear the consequences of not repaying, both in terms of the potential for recrimination and in terms of a loss of face.

I wouldn't want to go back unless I made a success in this country. Even if that means my hair turns all white.

- Li Yan

I have not considered going back to China. I borrowed money to get here and I must earn some money to pay the debt. I still owe lots of money back home. So I have not considered going back yet.

- Ping, female, forties

To go back to China with nothing would be to mark oneself as a failure, and to suffer a fall in reputation. This drop in social standing would also be felt keenly inside, as an acute embarrassment. Avoiding losing face can be a powerful motivation.

In order to make money, of course, migrants must find work of some kind. Traditionally Chinese migrants have been associated with jobs in the restaurant and take-away industry and indeed a great many new migrants are employed in these businesses. They are willing to work long hours for relatively low pay and can help to drive profits for the business owners. In our sample, a great many of those who specified their place of work did indicate that they were working as chefs or waitresses in Chinese restaurants. Some also worked in fast-food outlets of other kinds. It is perhaps surprising then that, of the 120 people in the survey who specified the nature of their work, only 30% (36) said that they

worked in restaurants or takeaways. This is still a large proportion. It compares with the 4.6% of the total London workforce employed in the hotel and restaurant sector (Greater London Authority, 2005). What is interesting however, is the sheer variety of things that new Chinese migrants are now doing in London. Some of the other types of work represented in the survey were: Selling DVD's, cleaning, nannying, factory labour, engineering, web-design, data-analysis, construction, nursing, housewife, retail, carpentry, advertising, construction, journalism, travel agency, martial arts coaching and one who said that he sells fish-balls.

Employment and work

If you are an able guy, you'd make money anyway, whichever country you are in. Right?

- Guo Yu, male, forties

When asked by our interviewers why they had come to London, a number of our respondents rejected the answer on our form that had been designed to capture intentions to work and earn ("employment or business"). Instead they said that they had come simply to 'make money' (Ch. zhuan qian). This perhaps reflects the situation for many who had come without plans or a specific job and would simply try to 'make money' in any way they could. The idea reflects a growing trend amongst new Chinese migrants, to take short-term economic opportunities, often outside of the traditional catering businesses and often in ways that would lie outside of formal business or employment contracts; such as street-selling or even prostitution.

Employment	Whole Population	Male	Female	Undocumented	Fujianese
Full-time	69%	77%	59%	81%	54%
Part-time	31%	23%	41%	19%	46%

Table 15: New Migrants' who are employed: Full-time/Part-time

69% of those who worked said that they worked in full-time employment. The figures also show something of a difference between genders here. Although it is fair to say that Chinese women are as likely to come to London to work as men, when they get here it is not necessarily the case that all things are equal. Many women in the sample said that they worked part-time so as to take care of children as well as earn money. Furthermore, the kinds of work offered to women were not necessarily the same as men. Men were more likely to be working long hours in kitchens for example. This does not mean that women do not do jobs that involve hard manual labour. One respondent, a woman in her fifties named Zhao Zao, describes being taken on a bus to go and pull up onions on a farm near Birmingham for example. The findings merely suggest that some roles and assumptions in the labour market are still gendered.

One final feature of the labour market statistics that is perhaps unsurpris-

ingly, is the proportion of those who are working who are employees, employers or self-employed. The majority, 86%, are employees and must deal with the different kinds of bosses that come their way (see Table 16). This proportion remained even across most of the different types of migrant (documented, undocumented, Fujianese etc.) However, both students and migrants who had arrived since 2007 were much more likely to be employees than employers or self-employed (97% and 100%

Finding a job

Some migrants come to the UK with a sense of what job they will do when they get here. The most common way of getting a work visa, for example, is to have an invite from a company based in the UK. Most commonly this will be a formal invitation from a restaurant to a Chinese chef. Whilst such invites are a good way of coming to the UK with documentation, not all applications are approved. This may be because it is not unknown for invites to be bought and paid for, by migration brokers in China, on behalf of clients who have no intention of working in the company that the invitation has come from. In fact, the company itself may not ever have had any intention of employing the person either.

Employment Status	Whole Population	Students	Arrived since 2007
Employee	86%	97%	100%
Employer	5%	0%	0%
Self-employed	8%	3%	0%

Table 16: New Migrants' who are employed: Employee/Employer/Self-em-

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Ping, a woman in her forties from Northern China described how she had paid over 100,000 RMB (more than £7000) to some men in her province to arrange her a business visa to the UK on the pretence of visiting a machine parts factory. The purpose of the trip was, supposedly, for her and another man to go and see if there was a potential for trade with the British company. When they arrived at the airport, they were met by two Chinese men. They never heard anything more about the Brit-

ish company but instead were given a job in a clothing factory. They spent the first night in a flat that the two men had brought them to, but after paying the men £200 in exchange for finding them the job, they left, and never heard from them again.

Several of the interviewees described paying for similar visas to visit businesses or colleges. This kind of visa, known as a 'kao-cha' in China, is designed for visits to the UK to promote business between the two countries. The advantage of this method of entry into the UK is that they usually involve a network of people who may also be paid to find jobs for the clients. One way or the other, for those without a legitimate job offer, it is invariably necessary to use intermediaries to find work. Without language skills and without any familiarity with the UK, it would be impossible for people to find work on their own. Migrants without documentation or without contacts or friends may well have to find 'agents' who will find them work. There are many types of 'agent', from legitimate work and job agencies, to gangmasters looking to fill casual labour contracts and the more unscrupulous types who will happily take advantage of the inexperience and naïveté of new migrants.

We met one young undocumented migrant living in East London who had arrived with nothing but the clothes he wore, £100 cash in one pocket and a slip of paper in the other. He had arrived only 2 weeks before we met him. The £100 had long gone and he had already spent two nights sleeping on the street before he was found by another migrant who had come from the same province as him and who let him sleep on a floor in a shared house. On the slip of paper was an address of a friend who had come to London some months before and who he was supposed to contact once he had arrived. The friend was supposed to be finding him a job. But the slip of paper had got wet and the address was no longer legible. Still the young man kept hold of the paper, clinging to the hope that it would reveal the location of his friend to someone who could read it.

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To find work, migrants will need to go through friends, friends of friends or agents. The best option is to find work through friends, that way there is a measure of trust involved.

Correct. I've made quite a few friends since coming here. Many of us are from the same region (Northeast). There are people from Harbin, Shenyang, and Jilin like myself. We are all from the Northeast. So when we meet we exchange telephone numbers, so that if there's a job, we can tell people to get it and so on.

- Ping, female, forties

If a migrant has few friends to call on, then he/she will most likely have to use an agent. There are agencies in Chinatown who will find work for migrants with documentation, there are agents who advertise in the free Chinese newspapers who will find work for anyone and there are less formal agents, who simply hang around the places where they might find new migrants. This last type were sometimes referred to as 'Big Ears' since they know what is going on in London. They know where employees are needed and where to find new migrants who will do the work. All agents will take a fee for finding work, and some may take a fee and provide nothing at all...

...even though there are agents, we are too afraid to contact them [for help]. So most of those agents whom we contact are those recommended to us by friends... for example those who have found jobs for our friends and therefore are more trustworthy. Some agents... who say that they can find you work... yet after you've paid them the fee, you'd find there is no such work as promised... There is no work found for you at all! And they have taken your money! You may want to chase them up... but there is no such an office anywhere to be found!

- Gao Lin, male, forties

Wen Ji

When Wen Ji arrived in the UK she had no work. She involved herself in the life of a Chinese church in North London, while her husband worked in a restaurant. A friend that she made in the church eventually found her a job working in a supermarket in Chinatown. The hours of work are long and the pay is low, but it is stable work and unlikely to be taken away.

Wen Ji's husband had been working in a restaurant. Every day she noticed that the high-stress atmosphere of the work was putting a strain on him and his fragile mental health. When a job vacancy came up at the supermarket, Wen Ji asked her boss to hold the job for her husband to join her. Her husband was reluctant at first because of the drop in pay, but she was able to persuade him that they would be able to spend more time together that way. He agreed. Now they work together, 6 days a week in the supermarket. Wen Ji finally feels she is able to look after him and take care of his health.

I went to find the agents who advertised in the newspapers... I found two jobs and in the course after that, I had worked in two different places. [...] I worked as a 'baomu' [nanny]. I was just there to clean the house and keep it tidy [...] then I went to work in a fish & chips shop. [...] The owner is from Guangxi [Province, in south China]. The agent got the jobs for me. [...] you have to pay them a commission fee. If you don't pay, how would they find it for you? [...] it was quite expensive. £80.

- Chen Bing, female, forties

Pay and conditions

Some concern has been expressed about the exploitation and ill-treatment of migrant workers from various countries of origin and in different sectors of the economy. A study of

low-paid workers in London (Evans et al., 2005) found that 90% of their sample were migrants, a far higher proportion than found in earlier studies. This perhaps indicates the growing importance of migrant workers to the capital's economy. Apart from a low rate of pay, these workers experienced very poor working conditions, unsocial hours and frequent overtime that was not paid at an enhanced rate. Only a minority received benefits such as sick pay, paid holiday or pensions.

Journalist Hsao-Hung Pai has highlighted the exploitation of undocumented Chinese migrants in the UK, through undercover investigation in workplaces ranging from restaurants and food-packing factories to brothels and vegetable farms (Pai 2008a). The perilous situation of these clandestine workers was further highlighted by the death of 21 Chinese cockle-pickers at Morecambe Bay in 2004, including two who were gangmasters. One response to the tragedy was the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act of 2004 which saw the creation in 2005 of a Gangmasters Licensing Authority to regulate those who supply labour or use workers to provide services in agriculture, forestry, horticulture, shellfish gathering and food processing and packaging.

Of course not all exploitation ends in such tragedy. Often it can simply be designed to eke a little more work from, and pay a little less money to, migrants. This kind of exploitation is not disastrous but can take its toll on the mental well-being of those who suffer. Wen Ji's husband provides one stark example of this but many of our respondents described London as a demoralising place to try and live and work in.

This happens a lot [being owed money for a construction job]. This kind of situation is nothing uncommon. Because we don't have legal status, we can't communicate well with them,... whether you are working (doing the renovation) for Chinese or British, it's difficult to negotiate... right? Say if they told you that the job was for £5000; but when you've finished it they give you only £3000. You can't argue with them, you can't

take them to court, can you? Right? You can't do anything, even though they still owe you money.

It's bullying. For example, the standard rate in the UK is over £5 per hour. But they pay you £3 per hour. They deduct this and that. It was normal. If you are not happy, you can go. If you go, you don't have work. In the UK, if they pay you £3 or even £2.80 per hour, whether you accept it or not is your business. If you don't take it, you have no income to survive. There's no alternative but to take it. They will deduct this and that. If you don't take the job, you will have no work. Right? There is no alternative.

- Li Hong, male, forties

Others are less resigned to this situation and show more anger at how they are treated. The sense of injustice can sour experiences and help to create a negative view of the city and country they have chosen to live in.

...relationships between people should be better than those seen between the folks in China. But after coming here I began to realize that relationship here is even much more disgusting than in China. The relationship between people, the way the bosses employ people, are simply disgusting. [...] I have worked in places owned by Westerners, too, and they were very disgusting as well.

- Guo Yu, male, forties

Previous research (Chinese Community Centre, 2005) has noted the paradox that, while nationally Chinese (including British born Chinese) people have the highest average earnings of all ethnic groups in the UK, including White British, they are also over-represented in the lowest-earning category. Wages in the catering sector are generally low, not only for Chinese workers. A 2004 economic study of Chinatown (Page Reference & Partnership Solutions, 2004) found that documented

workers in the Chinese restaurants earned an average of £3.40 per hour while undocumented workers earned an average of £2.50 per hour, both far lower than the national minimum wage of £5.40 per hour.

Making Lives

Despite the hardships faced by many new Chinese migrants, it is possible for some to find work, find places to live and make themselves lives in the UK. Not all migrants suffer the problems associated with lack of documentation, and many find ways of coping in the city. Even for those who face many different troubles and challenges, there can be ways of managing, and of finding a routine or pattern that allows some hope for the future and some pleasure in the present. Sometimes, the lives that emerge from trouble or negotiation are not the lives that had originally been planned, but they are often more realistic.

For Stella, the new life she is building for herself in London is largely centred on the Chinese community itself. She has found resources, social and material, within the existing Chinese community infrastructures that have allowed her to find work and a place to live. The degree she has obtained from a British University, and the fact that she currently holds a post-study working visa means that she is employable and that she has access to career possibilities. Many of the students we interviewed harboured similar ambitions. Not all were determined to stay in the UK, though we can see from the figures in Table 9 that perhaps more end up staying on in the UK than originally plan to. For many, the cost of going to a British University is a cost that is justified only by perceived future returns in terms of higher salaries. There are many more high salary job opportunities in China than before, but competition is also fierce, with large numbers of students graduating from China's burgeoning University courses. Because of this, some Chinese students in the UK apply for post-study work visas and try their luck in the UK job market. If they are able to find work then all the better for their future careers, here or in

China. If they cannot find anything, then they will go back to China.

Of course building a life with stability is easier for those who do have skills, and correct documents than for those without. Students are not the only kinds of new Chinese migrant to have these. In our survey, students accounted for the majority of those who held documentation but there

Stella Huang

Stella has been in the UK for 3 years. Stella initially came to Britain as a student. She studied for an MA in marketing at Swansea University in Wales. While at University she found a Welsh boyfriend and when she graduated she looked for jobs in Swansea so that she could stay with him. She got some temp jobs through an agency but nothing seemed to be leading to anything permanent. There was always work in Chinese take-aways but she didn't even want to consider this.

Eventually her boyfriend himself advised her to leave Swansea and look for jobs elsewhere. She began to look for jobs in London and soon found a job advertised in a Chinese newspaper that involved selling advertising space in a Chinese publication. Although it meant an end to her relationship, she left Swansea and came to live in London.

She found a room in a shared flat in North London and began her new life. She has now been working at the offices for over 12 months. The job is not challenging and she knows she could be doing more. She imagines herself doing marketing or PR in a firm in London, living a more glamorous life. But the attraction of her current work is the opportunity to network. And as she says, "I don't think you can get to know as many Chinese companies in such short time in another job..." The working environment is also relaxed. She and her co-workers chat and gossip between calling and talking to clients. They have lunch together and sometimes dinner together. In a short time, Stella has found a social life and a living, in London.

Wen Ji

When Wen Ji's husband first came to the UK, ridden with debt and alone, he had applied for asylum. His status as an asylum seeker had entitled him to basic accommodation and he had been able to find work without employers having to fear for his legal status. Wen Ji joined him and made a similar application. In the meantime, Wen Ji's husband's siblings (a brother and sister) also came to the UK and also applied for asylum. For a long time the legal status of the family was in limbo, part of the now infamous, Home Office, backlog of asylum cases. They worked and saved, never knowing if their cases would fail or what they would do if it was decided that they should return home to China.

Wen Ji's sister in law was the first to have her 'legacy case' assessed when the Home Office moved to clear the build-up. Her stable address and good work record stood her in good stead and she was given 'indefinite leave to remain'. Her brother-in-law followed soon after. In fact, so successful had Wen Ji's brother-in-law been, that upon being given indefinite leave to remain he was able to open his own, successful, chain of take-away businesses.

Being able to apply for leave to remain as a family, also stood Wen Ji and her husband in good stead. They had been living at the same address for some years and were easy for officials to find. They had long since started paying their own rent and had taken in a lodger to help with bills. The flat has only one bedroom, and now they must live in a kitchen-cum-living-room-cum-bedroom but they were determined to pay their own way. Both had stable jobs in the supermarket, and had been saving money diligently. They too were granted 'indefinite leave to remain'.

Recently, they were able to go back to China for the first time in several years to see their children, whom they hope will be able to join them in the UK; as students rather than migrant workers. They also have plans to buy a house in Colindale (where many other successful new Chinese migrants have chosen to live). As Wen Ji's husband puts it: "First get your own property, then save up for your first take-away."

were also others who had come with work visas based on invitations from companies. One dim-sum chef that we interviewed had come from Guangzhou to work in a London restaurant. He had taken the job because it offered the opportunity to come and see a new country. He had ambitions of opening his own restaurant either in Guangzhou or in London. The pay he received in London was less than he had been expecting and he admits that his quality of life in Guangzhou was better. However, he plans to stay in London for several years. He is willing to live in poor accommodation and save money, to see what opportunities may come. Life is tough, but he will return to China if he has to. In the meantime he knows he will always be able to find work in London, where demand for skilled dim-sum chefs with working visas is still high.

Even for those whose situation is more precarious, with fewer skills and a less secure legal status, it is possible to find stability and build lives. As Skeldon (2000) has argued, some migrant workers, even among those who have built up large debts during the migration process, have

He had taken the job because it offered the opportunity to come and see a new country. He had ambitions of opening his own restaurant either in Guangzhou or in London.

been able to pay off debts and build lives for themselves.

And for those migrants whose situation is more difficult, who may never gain the legal status they want, lives are still built. Friendship networks are established, business is done and distinctly London Chinese social worlds are developed. To be sure there are hardships (many more of which we outline in the next chapter), and there are the brutal realities of hard work, low pay and poor living conditions, but rarely is life static. The lives of new Chinese migrants are often still fluid. They are working, or searching, aspiring, hoping and moving, always in pursuit of achieving a better quality of life.

Li Yan

Li Yan's house is easy to spot. He lives in a small, ex-council flat in a block that lies in the centre of a large inner-London housing estate. At the time of research it was mid-summer and the door was wide open. Outside, hung along the wall to dry, were several woks and towels. As Li Yan walks through the estate, people shout to him. They know he has DVD's, he says. He doesn't understand the words they use, but he smiles and waves: "They are often my best customers."

The flat is cramped. Li Yan lives in a room with 5 other men, all Fujianese migrants, all earning a living selling DVD's. One man is asleep on the top bunk, seemingly oblivious to the noise Li Yan makes as he returns and dumps his bag of unsold DVD's on the floor. The men go out on different shifts and sleep at different times of the day. They have long since got used to sleeping through noise. Each man lives in a space that is little more than the space between a mattress and the bed or ceiling above. Li Yan keeps most of his possessions in a small rucksack, but they amount to

little more than some photographs and a portable DVD player which he uses to watch Chinese films in the evening and to show customers the quality of the DVD's he sells.

There are three other rooms in the tiny flat. One is occupied by two Chinese women, one of whom has a young child; another by a family of Brazilian migrants and the final one is occupied by the landlord himself, another Chinese man. The shared bathroom is functional with signs on the door reminding residents to keep it clean since they must all use it. Li Yan takes his own toiletries in and out when he needs to. The kitchen is small too. No more than two people could realistically cook at the same time. Space in the two fridges and the cupboards is divided between the different renters.

Li Yan cannot communicate easily with the others in the house. He cannot speak with the Brazilian family and the other Chinese are all from Fujian. He finds them less educated than he is, rougher and less cultured. He also finds their Mandarin difficult

to understand as it carries a heavy accent, and he can't speak or understand their Fujianese.

But Li Yan is amiable, and easy to get along with. He causes few problems and is a benign presence in the house. He stays because the rent is cheap and the landlord seems fair. £25 a week covers everything from his bed and washing up liquid to bills and cleaning products, but not toilet paper. He can also keep his head down and save some money. He sometimes plays Mahjong with the Landlord and some of the others but he is trying not to gamble after losing £250 in one gambling spree. Recently he found a Chinese church in central London. They had an outreach worker from Hong Kong who had taught himself Mandarin, who made contact with Li Yan while he was selling DVD's. Li Yan has started to attend the club there that allows him to meet other migrants from the North of China and play ping pong. But his main preoccupation, is with finding a new lover...

Hua



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Integration and segregation in London

If the research in this report is going to have any impact on policy-makers and leaders of London's Chinese community, then it must address those aspects of new Chinese migrants' lives in London that speak to the issues of integration and 'community cohesion'. There are two clear ways of looking at these issues. The first is to think about the quality of life, and equality of opportunity issues that 'community cohesion' policies are supposed to address, and the second is to look at the degree to which new Chinese migrants can be described as 'integrated' within society. In doing so, we can also examine the barriers to integration and opportunity. Beyond these two questions, we should also consider what might be going on beyond the policy radar. If new Chinese migrants are finding it difficult to 'integrate' or to become part of existing communities, then should we begin to consider whether the situation at the moment is closer to 'segregation' than 'integration'? And if so, what does this mean for policy makers, local governments, and the Chinese community in London?

I've been here a few years, and have yet to understand much about the society in great detail. I don't speak English and don't read English; when I go out I just buy some vegetable, I just buy something to eat, or I just buy some stuff for daily use: I'd come back home straight away after buying the stuff I need. I don't see much about the society such as the leisure activities. I certainly don't visit the gambling places; we

are working people and we don't visit such places. We come here to work and earn cash, we are not here as tourists; we are not here for sightseeing. We don't visit the places where you have to spend lots of money.

Basically apart from working we don't go anywhere else. We go [to the market] and buy some vegetables and come home to cook dinner. After dinner we'd take a rest. There is basically no entertainment for us. [...] Basically I won't go anywhere that I don't like, right? But for those places that I want to go, I might not be able to go, right? Because our status is different. We are in a different situation, right? That's why there is no question of what you like most or what you don't like to do. Here we are, those who are at the lowest level of society. You basically have no right to discuss that kind of question. Right?

- Li Hong, male, forties

Crowds and loneliness

Often an indicator of living standards is given by the extent to which people live in crowded conditions. If these are indeed good measures of quality

of life then the findings of our survey should cause pause for thought (see table 17).

The national average household size according to the General Household Survey in 2007 was 2.4 and on a long-term downward trend. For new Chinese migrants we find that the average household size is 5.4. Interestingly, the figure given for average household size for Chinese living in Britain by the Labour Force Survey (2007) is 2.9 (based on a sample of 128). We suspect that the Labour Force Survey's figure suffers from the difficulty in finding and including new Chinese migrants in such large-scale survey programmes. The problem of course, is that whilst we may suspect that the average household size for Chinese living in Britain and London may be higher than is officially recognised, the more important point is that issues such as these may not have the prominence they deserve or need.

Looking further into the figures in Table 17, we can see that students live in large households, as we might expect. However, students bring the average household size down, rather than pushing it up. It is also clear that there is a significant difference in household size between undocumented migrants (6.6) and

Who lives in the household?	Whole Population	Undocumented	Documented	Fujianese	Students
Average household size	5.4	6.6	4.6	6.5	4.5
Percentage living in households with more than 6 people	45%	37%	35%	58%	37%

Table 17. Number of people living in new Chinese migrants' households

Stella Huang

Stella does not yearn to go home to Hong Kong. She is not close to her family and does not speak to them with any regularity. But her social world in the UK, is very much confined to her work mates. The company itself gives little respite from the daily grind. Employees have no holiday to speak of; if Stella doesn't work, she does not get paid. Chances to go out with anyone other than her colleagues are few, and dependent on the amount of work that needs to get done in terms of sales for the publication.

Outside of work Stella can feel lonely. Her ex-boyfriend who she used to talk

to a lot, now has a new partner. "And the Chinese social circle in London is so small," she says. She describes feeling lonely, with no friends to call any more. Her friends from Hong Kong are mostly married with children and she no longer feels anything in common with them.

But Stella does have something else significant going on in her life. She has made a decision and has a goal. She is going to stay in London for one more year, and if she does not succeed in reaching the goal in that time, she will go home. Stella wants to find a British boyfriend. The kind that could

become a husband. "The good Chinese men are hard to find", she says. And British men seem to show more interest in her. At least that is what she has found in her experience on internet dating sites. She has found a site that does not cost money to join and has not looked back. Going on dates to find the right man has become a significant part of her social life. She has also applied for a "Highly Skilled Work Permit" just in case she does find someone and needs to stay in London. As she says: "I believe in fate and you have to keep your options open."

For others there is less complexity. They worked hard, had few friends and simply longed for company. The topic of sex is somewhat taboo but it should be remembered that many new Chinese migrants come from China alone. They are either single or separated from spouses. They can feel lonely and isolated. The need for physical intimacy is real. Above, we described the situation for some women, that prostitution had become the only option for them to make money. The services they provided were often to other migrants.

Chinese migrants, Chinese lives

Throughout this report it has been clear that much of what we have been talking about is an almost exclusively Chinese social world taking place in London. Whilst Chinese migrants are an ever more visible presence on the streets and in Universities, they can nonetheless live lives that are completely separated from the rest of London life. There may be some uniquely British or London-ish characteristics of the ways in which Chinese migrants live in the city, such as working in fish and

chip shops or using London's distinctive public transport system, but for the most part these are still Chinese people living largely Chinese lives. They interact mainly with other Chinese people, live with other Chinese people, do their shopping in Chinese shops, come home and cook Chinese food, watch Chinese films and talk to family in China. And yet, this is a way of living that is not necessarily what they want or aspire to.

The single biggest barrier to Chinese migrants in terms of social integration

Li Yan

Li Yan did not intend on going back to China. He wanted to find some way of securing rights to work and live in the UK and stay. One of the best ways seemed to be to find a woman who had secure status. Though this seems instrumental, Li Yan had also complained that he had been feeling lonely and isolated. Nor was he willing to be with just anyone. He didn't want a girlfriend just for the sake of her documentation, nor just for the sake of sex.

Li Yan explains that it is easy to pay for sex. Some women advertise themselves as prostitutes in the free Chinese newspapers. These girls will come even to the houses and rooms full of male migrants. Li Yan says that the other men will respect each other's privacy, though often the act will take place with others in the room. Other

women, who are not prostitutes, he says, will enter an informal relationship with a man, on the understanding that he will give her gifts of money. Such women, he said, can have as many as three or four different 'relationships' at the same time and can live off the money they make.

But neither of these is what Li Yan really wants. He wants to fall in love. There is a woman who is a close friend. She has lived in the UK for a long time and has a son in a British school. She owns a restaurant somewhere outside of London and earns a decent living from it. Li Yan sees her infrequently, but will go out of his way to impress her. He has asked her many times to be his girlfriend but she declines. She tells him that she can't because he is married in China. He knows it's an excuse. He has over

heard her on the phone talking to her mother about finding a rich man.

"I have nothing to offer her", he says. This is not quite true. It is clear that when they talk there is something between them. Li Yan can be charming. He does not have material means, but he does have charisma. The woman may never be with him, but she clearly enjoys being around him.

Li Yan has tried dating other women. He looks for women with documentation in the singles ads in the free Chinese newspapers. But he finds that courting is expensive and he can't do it often. "If I had money..." He says thoughtfully. The experience often leaves him feeling lonelier and more of a failure.

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- Liu, male, 59 years old

There has no been time for me to take English class. I've been busy day and night trying to work in order to earn money. You see, normally we break at 12 O'clock in the afternoon and 11 O'clock at night... We work through the day and only break at 11 O'clock or 12 O'clock at night. Where can we find time to learn English?

He Cun, male, thirties

Lack of English can lie behind many of the other issues that new migrants face, from accessing services (see below) to finding work. The irony is, that the problem is exacerbated by the very same infrastructure and networks that migrants use to cope when they realise how difficult life can be without English. In Chinatown for example, Chinese migrants can go shopping, eat a meal, buy a newspaper, get clothes, find a job,

Stella Huang

Stella's life takes place almost exclusively on a corridor between her house in North London and her work place in Chinatown. When she and her colleagues go out, they go out in Chinatown. They may go for meals or to dance in clubs. But always in Chinatown. When Stella meets men that she has met on the internet she almost always arranges to meet them in Chinatown. For them the experience may well be different, exotic even, but for Stella it means safety and familiarity. At work, all of her colleagues speak Chinese. There is no need to speak English, though some of them can.

Stella is open about the fact that what she finds most challenging, threatening even, is the idea of integrating fully into British life. On the one hand she harbours the ambition of working in a mainstream London PR firm, on the other she has the ease and comfort of remaining in the Chinese world.

gamble, drink, socialise etc. without once needing to speak English.

The lack of English skills is felt acutely, and Chinese migrants are often perfectly well aware that without being able to speak English they are denying themselves opportunities for different kinds of work as well as being prevented from making new friends, or enjoy many simple pleasures such as ordering food in a restaurant (that isn't Chinese) or going to the cinema.

We found that, despite the relatively dispersed living patterns of Chinese migrants, many chose to come back to Chinatown to take care of their basic needs. In doing so they were able to feel a sense of community rather than continuing to feel isolated or lonely in the places they lived.

Chinese businesses will continue to offer a route of employment and Chinatown may well continue to be a hub of support, but the existing Chinese infrastructure in London will almost certainly not be able to absorb all of them.

Many of these things will not be new to members of the settled Chinese community in London. The main way that they integrate in British society is through their children who go to Brit-

ish schools and speak English. There are many people who have been living in London for a long time and still don't speak English with any great skill. They rarely interact with non-Chinese people. They eat Chinese food and shop at Chinese shops.

But this traditional insularity, which may well have been possible while the community remained relatively small, may now have undesirable consequences. In London's competitive Labour market, migrants who can speak English, who can look for jobs in a number of different fields and who are able to understand public services and rules and regulations, are going to be more employable. In this context new Chinese migrants are likely to continue to find it difficult to find good job opportunities and therefore continue to suffer from all of the problems we have described.

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Help and provision

As we said at the beginning of this chapter, all of the insight we have provided into the lives and struggles of new Chinese migrants in London, raise significant questions about the issue of integration and cohesion. The final key component that we examined is the extent to which new Chinese migrants find help and support from within and without the Chinese community. To what extent do existing services (public and Chinese) meet needs? Are they reaching the right people?

The results of our survey give us some headline findings that are highly significant. We present the findings in Tables 19, 20, 21 and 22. Essentially the figures tell a clear story. New Chinese migrants are using very few public services other than healthcare and even fewer of the services offered by existing Chinese associations.

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The results of our survey give us some headline findings that are highly significant. We present the findings in Tables 19, 20, 21 and 22. Essentially the figures tell a clear story. New Chinese migrants are using very few public services other than healthcare and even fewer of the services offered by existing Chinese associations.

	Whole Population	Male	Female	Undocumented	Documented	Cantonese Speaker	Non-Cantonese Speaker	Fujianese
Yes	62%	51%	75%	47%	72%	70%	58%	52%
No	35%	45%	24%	47%	28%	27%	39%	45%

Table 19. New Chinese migrants use of public services: Have you used any public services whilst living in London? (missing numbers indicate people who were 'not sure')

It is important to understand the complex of factors that lie behind these figures rather than to take them at face value. The figures are a reflection of lack of resources, lack of funding and subsequent lack of capacity every bit as much as any kind of 'failure'.

Table 19 shows that despite the high level of need, only 62% of those we interviewed had used any kind of public services. The figures also indicate that a greater proportion of women (75%) had used services than men (51%). As we can see in Table 20, most of this difference is accounted for by women's use of medical services. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those without documentation were less likely to have used public services than those who were documented. More significant is the marked difference between those who can speak Cantonese and those who cannot. Cantonese speakers were far more likely to have accessed public services than those from the Chinese mainland, who could not speak Cantonese. We will come back to this point below.

Some of these figures may seem to be high, but when we break them down and look at what kinds of services people were accessing (Table 20), it becomes clear that in the case of most public services, new Chinese migrants were hardly making any demands at all.

Medical Services: The most common services

that new Chinese migrants made use of were hospitals and doctors. In fact, this accounted for most of the public service usage. Women were almost twice as likely to use the hospital as men and significantly more likely to have made use of a doctor. 54% of women had seen a doctor, as opposed to only 32% of men. This difference may be accounted for by the needs associated with childcare and/or pregnancy. Students also accounted for a large proportion of those that said they had used hospital and GP's services (one third). Students, of course, are encouraged to register with GP's surgeries when they begin their University courses. Some caution must be taken with these figures.

Some respondents may have been including visits to private Chinese doctors in their answers. Although our question specified the use of public, rather than private, services, the distinction may not always be clear to migrants who understand little of British bureaucracy.

Undocumented migrants also made some use of medical services but in smaller numbers (30% using both hospitals and doctors). This was reflected in a comment made by one undocumented migrant we met: "We cannot afford to be ill." He had a large wound on his arm where oil from a hot wok had spilled over his skin. He had never been to see

Type of Service	Whole Population	Male	Female	Undocumented	Documented
Hospital	34%	24%	46%	30%	37%
Public housing	1%	0%	2%	2%	1%
Social services (incl day centres and home helps)	3%	1%	4%	2%	4%
Community health	3%	2%	5%	3%	4%
Legal Services	6%	6%	7%	0%	9%
Job Centres	10%	7%	14%	3%	14%
Schools	3%	2%	4%	0%	5%
University	25%	17%	36%	5%	38%
Doctor/GP's	42%	32%	54%	30%	49%
Benefit agencies	4%	2%	6%	5%	4%
Police	4%	11%	13%	11%	14%
English Courses	13%	1%	18%	6%	16%
Other education/training	12%	0%	2%	0%	2%

Table 20. New Chinese migrants use of public services: Breakdown by type of service

a doctor, for fear of being caught without documentation. The scars are now permanent.

Many of those we interviewed or met during the course of the research expressed some concern about what they might do in the event of ill health. There were fears amongst undocumented migrants that they may get into trouble if they were to go to hospital. There were concerns from all that they would not be able to understand what was being said to them or that they may not be able to express adequately how they felt. Many said that a visit to the doctor or to a hospital would involve taking someone with them to translate. And in some cases this meant that even in the event of an emergency, an ill migrant may be totally reliant on someone else to help them be taken care of.

Sometimes there may be a minor complaint or two, but since I'm still young, I would just bear it as long as I can. Say if you had to see the doctor, you go to the hospital but then you can't communicate with the doctors/nurses; they won't be able to diagnose you because of this, right? You must think of this as well. That's why I have never seen a doctor in the UK.

- He Cun, male, thirties

I have once seen a doctor! Yes... I have seen a doctor here once... There was a student from China who took me there... she could speak English. [...] No. I didn't have to pay her. She was just helping me. She is very helpful. We don't speak English. This young person is very helpful. It was in the evening and she came with me to see the doctor. And I think the doctor was good, too.
- Chen Bing, female, forties

	Whole Population	Undocumented	Arrived 2007 or later
Do not need	20%	20%	35%
Not entitled	17%	45%	8%
Lack of information	35%	60%	53%
No time	10%	13%	13%
Other	18%	35%	30%

The category 'other' includes those who felt that the question was not yet relevant to them as well as those who felt worried that they may be vulnerable to investigation if they sought services.

Table 21. Reasons behind new Chinese migrants NOT using public services

Information from the Chinese Mental Health Association (MIND, 2006) suggests that, while Chinese people in Britain may be no more likely than the general population to experience general health problems, they are less likely than others to seek help. The research suggests that social isolation, long working hours, language barriers and a lack of information may contribute to the low take-up of services by Chinese immigrants. These same factors can also lead to health issues, including mental illness. A survey carried out by the Chinese Mental Health Association found that there was a very strong stigma attached to mental health problems within the Chinese community, which also made people reluctant to seek help.

A report into the health needs of Chinese people in Shropshire County, Telford and Wrekin (Tran, 2006) reinforced the point that new arrivals in particular needed health information to be provided in Chinese, ideally with access to a Chinese-speaking link worker. Tran found that, besides the language barrier, different health beliefs affected the way Chinese people accessed health services in Britain. Non-Chinese health professionals should be trained in cultural awareness in order to understand this. Based on the Chinese view of illness as "absence of health", for example, Chinese people were more likely to seek help reactively than to use preventative services.

Other public services: The next most commonly used services that new Chinese migrants made use of were University services. 25% of the sample said that they had made use of Universities. The students in our survey largely accounted for this percentage. Some students however did not record their use of this 'public' service because of course they pay high fees in order to study in the UK.

Other than health services and University services very little use was made of any other kind of public service. Only 1% of our sample had made any use of public housing. This amounts to 2 people out of the 177 that we interviewed. Only 7 people of the 177 in our sample had made benefits claims (4%). Slightly higher numbers had attempted to use job centres and English courses, in an attempt to find work, but only about 10% in each case. In most cases, the numbers of people who made use of a service, such as social services, schools, or the police were so small that they are barely significant. In most of these cases between only between 1 and 5 of the whole sample of 177 had made any demands for services. Perhaps ironically, we heard anecdotally of more undocumented workers paying taxes through fake National Insurance numbers and through rents that included council tax bills, than had been using some public services.

It is with some justification then, that one of our respondents said: "We do not want to take benefits. We want to be able to look after ourselves." Looking at the figures in Table 20, it is quite possible that there are lot of migrants who need services, are entitled to services, but are not using services.

In Table 21 we look at some of the reasons for why new Chinese migrants might not use public services. By far the biggest barrier is 'lack of information'. For undocumented

migrants and those who have arrived within the last 3 years, 'lack of information' is claimed as a factor in not using public services by an even greater proportion (60% and 53% respectively). Of course, this is mirrored by the larger number of undocumented migrants who feel that they may not be entitled to use public services (45% as opposed to the 20% overall). But it also highlights the lack of information that is provided to new migrants when they arrive in the UK. It clearly takes a long time for new Chinese migrants to be able to come to terms with what services may be available to them.

One other important difference emerged from the figures on why new Chinese migrants were not using services. A larger proportion of non-Cantonese speaking migrants cited 'lack of information' as a barrier to accessing services (54%) than did Cantonese-speaking migrants (24%). This large difference is a significant indicator that when it comes to accessing public services, Cantonese speakers were at some kind of advantage over their non-Cantonese speaking counterparts. We explore this in greater detail below.

Chinese services: Chinese community organisations were also underutilised by new Chinese migrants. Only 39 people out of the 177 (22%) we interviewed had used any kind of Chinese service. Of these 39, 24 were women, but only 10 were undocumented. This does not suggest of course, that Chinese community organisations are not utilised. Rather it suggests that they may not be reaching new Chinese migrants. We asked respondents to list the Chinese community services that they used and the two most popular answers were the Chinese Library in Charing Cross and 'social/cultural' activities. This rather suggests that most Chinese migrants perceive the services offered to be social rather than 'useful'. English classes, advice services, translation services, schooling etc. all received so few mentions that the figures and proportions are insignificant.

Of those 39 who had used services provided by community or-

ganisations, only half thought that the services were 'satisfactory' or 'good'. Again, this does not reflect a poor quality of service but rather the fact that new migrants felt that their needs were not being met. In many cases of course, Chinese community organisations are currently unable to meet those needs.

Despite the apparent lack of use of services, the demand for services from Chinese organisations is clear. Only 39 people in the survey answered our questions about use of existing Chinese services but 170 an-

	170 People
Immigratin Advice	49%
Legal Advice	48%
Employment advice	39%
English class	22%

Table 22. New Chinese migrants' preferences for types of service which could be offered by Chinese organisations (top 4 answers)

swered the following question about the services that they would like to see being provided. And the results were clear (see Table 22).

Table 22 shows that the greatest demand clearly lies in the area of advice about immigration status and documentation. For many of those we spoke to, the issue of legal status lay at the heart of many other problems. It was often status that was seen as preventing them from getting better jobs, from seeking help and from earning the money they needed to be able to return to China or build new businesses and economic opportunities in London. After questions about legal status, came the primary need to find work. As we have said, many times in this report, despite the complexity of migrant motivations, the ultimate need is to find work. With little formal, affordable, advice available, nearly all end up at the mercy of the 'agents' described in chapter 4.

Finally, 22% said that they would like to Chinese organisations to provide English classes. If questions of status and employment were easy to address then it is clear that many more

would seek to learn English. The reality is that for many, there are basic needs which are difficult to meet and that the task of learning English seems an impossible barrier.

Barriers and solutions

There are several barriers for new Chinese migrants when it comes to accessing services. There are practical barriers, such as those posed by language or lack of information. And there are psychological and cultural barriers such as the fear of being found without documentation or the perceived difficulty of crossing cultural boundaries to look for help. There are also barriers that come from the unique situations in which people find themselves. Rumours for example, can be more powerful than, say, leaflets, in spreading information. With the vast majority of those we interviewed saying that they found help and advice through friends, rumours take on a new importance. For example, one story of discrimination against a Mandarin speaker or a Fujianese could potentially prevent hundreds of people from seeking help from a particular service or centre.

When asked why they did not or could not access services provided by the Chinese community however, 75% cited 'lack of information' as the main problem. As the case study of the Chinese advice centre shows, once there is knowledge of a service, demand can be high, but dissemination of that knowledge can be difficult (see Table 21). A further barrier is created by the fact that most Chinese community organisations in Britain were originally set up by immigrants from Hong Kong and use Cantonese as their first language, thus excluding new migrants who speak Mandarin and/or other Chinese dialects. The London Chinese Community Network (2005) has already called for the staff of Chinese community centres to improve their Mandarin speaking skills, and to ensure that written information is provided in both traditional and simplified scripts, to make them accessible to new arrivals. Though, as Table 19 shows, written materials are perhaps not the best way of spreading information.

A Chinese advice centre in London

The centre deals with a multitude of different issues from legal advice about immigration, to dealing with applications for benefits. Legal Advice: This service provides advice and support for issues surrounding: visas for students, visitors and families; marriage entry clearance applications; British passport applications; leave to enter or remain in the UK, settlement and naturalisation.

On a typical day the centre will receive between 5 and 6 calls to discuss issues in relation to visa issues or immigration status. A handful of people will walk-in every day and staff arrange between 5 and 6 appointments with a voluntary legal advisor every Thursday afternoon. Advice is offered for free but the appointments with the professional legal advisor are chargeable: first 15 minutes free, then £75 per half hour. Most of the clients find the service via friends; or they are old clients coming back with new issues. Some find the service through newspaper advertisements and in a few cases they are there are referred by the local authority.

The cases presented are often complicated and varied. In one, a mother had a child who was studying in the UK, but was about to overstay her visa. There was a father who was applying for a refugee status but his son had already overstayed a different visa. One undocumented worker had been caught and fined, but was unable to pay. A woman had had a child with a man; the child was a British citizen; the father was still married to someone else in China. His visa was about to expire and the couple were seeking for better ways to apply for legal status. One woman, a victim of domestic violence, wanted to divorce but was worried about her child's dependent visa.

The staff at the centre say that the clients who came for help might face a mixture of difficulties, such as immigration issues over legal status, unfair treatment at work but that it is impossible to deal with all the problems in one go. Solving one may not lead to a solution for the others. Even when advice can be offered, staff say, the hardship of the client might not be significantly improved. For example, the

best advice may be to refer the clients to other services, but the services may not be affordable. In most cases the clients have very little knowledge about the law and many have no official documentation allowing them to live or work in the UK. They will put off their problems as long as they can. But, the staff say, when the situation is already desperate, often there is very little that can be done anymore.

Refugee & Asylum: Most of the clients that come to the centre for help or advice with refugee or asylum cases have been here quite a long time (often longer than 4 years). The longer they stay, the more reluctant they are to return to China. Staff say that most of the clients who came for help as refugee and asylum seekers are pregnant women. Some have heard a rumour that "if you want to stay, get pregnant; if you give birth to a child, they can't throw you out". In the past, there were cases where a mother had acquired legal status through her child. But this policy is no longer in place. In general, if the clients are qualified for benefits, they'll be successful in acquiring them. But there are significant delays and the policies change frequently.

Male clients who used to come for the service are doing so much less than before. They know there isn't anything they can claim for. Also, the male workers know if you apply for refugee status you still cannot work. You would only be able to acquire fixed benefits every month. Not being able to work is not attractive for them.

Issues the staff cannot deal with:

The help and advice that the centre offer is mostly free. Some of the clients may keep calling back and asking for minor things, such as opening a bank account or checking their bills etc. Once they have a place to come and ask for advice, they will use it for anything. The most common problem clients face is communication, once they have found a place where they can communicate their problems easily, they may present every problem they have.

Women's support: The women's support team provides services for supporting victims of domestic violence; offering emotional support, referral

for refuge or temporary accommodation, referral to counselling services; referral to family or immigration solicitors; welfare benefits advice and they organise free workshops and seminars on domestic violence. About 96% of the clients are Chinese (including Hong Kong, Taiwan). Not many have arrived in the last 3 years though. It seems that it takes a while for the Chinese migrants to settle and to try all they can to solve their own problems, before searching for help from public services.

The team is currently trying to disseminate relevant information as widely as possible to help more women in need. But, staff say, even for women living with domestic violence, they worry more about their immigration status and fear to divorcing their husbands. Some of the information needed by clients is actually available online and accessible to everyone. But their clients either don't know how to check it or don't read English. The staff will have to check the relevant information for them and inform the clients.

Funding: Staff complain that it would be useful to have the government's support instead of them having to plead for help. They argue that if the policy makers were aware of the difficulties of the Chinese community and included them in some of their projects, the outlook for the service would be remarkably different.

The staff all recognise ongoing problems with funding. The centre relies on volunteers, but many of the tasks require full-time labour. There is a funding gap in providing the core services. There are also restrictions that can make administering much needed services difficult. For example, if a woman facing domestic violence lives in London, no problem, but if a woman calls from outside London, then funding does not cover the provision of service. More controversially, the staff say, there is inexplicit competition among different service providers. If similar services are provided by several community organisations then they will compete for the small amounts of funding available. And that is the case despite the need for all to keep providing services.

遷移，融會，凝聚

This linguistic barrier is perhaps what explains the fact, illustrated above, that Cantonese speakers find it so much easier to access services than those who do not. Cantonese speakers can find jobs in older businesses; they can speak to the settled Chinese community. They have access to a bank of knowledge that is more connected to settled British life and British bureaucracy. It also suggests that knowledge is disseminated more

For some, the division between the older settled community and the new migrants is more than just a question of language and culture. Rather, they say, there is an air of antagonism. Many respondents talked of being treated harshly by members of the settled Chinese community.

quickly around groups of people who speak the same language, raising the prospect of needing to see different linguistic communities, within the population of new Chinese migrants. We have already talked about the fact that there is a diversification in the types of jobs that new Chinese migrants are taking, and dispersal in terms of the places that they live. No longer can such a large proportion of London's Chinese life be found solely in Chinatown. Among others, Sales et al (2009) have described the very important role that Chinatown has traditionally played as a hub with multiple meanings for Chinese migrants, as a place to buy Chinese products and eat familiar food, to find social support from Chinese friends who may live in different parts of the city, to access community associations and services, and to find employment. Dispersal from this cultural centre may increase the isolation and social exclusion of new Chinese migrants as they move about the country and indeed around London,

in pursuit of jobs and ever-cheaper accommodation (Beck, 2007).

By way of contrasting the kinds of services available to the settled British Chinese community and the kinds of needs that are being filled, we have included a lengthy case-study of a Chinese community centre in London in the appendix to this report. It is useful to look at this case-study as a way of contrasting the needs of the new Chinese migrants discussed in this report and the ways in which the existing Chinese infrastructure is providing services (see appendix 1).

None of this is to suggest that members of the Chinese community are unaware of the presence or needs of new Chinese migrants. On the contrary, many centres have tried to take on staff who speak Mandarin, or have begun training their staff to speak Mandarin. Strategy meetings have been taking place within community centres that focus on the question of how to reach out to new migrants.

Efforts on this front may have been more sincere from sources than others. One very honest statement from a staff member of one of London's Chinese community centres said this:

We are having trouble providing a comprehensive service to the newest migrants since the Chinese third sector is not very strong in the mainlander community, and typically are composed of associations serving business or clan interests. We do not provide immigration advice, which tends to be the most pressing issue for new migrants. The management committee is by and large lax about the changing demographics...

More significantly, there is a profound lack of Mandarin and Fujianese speakers as well as cultural sensitivity and knowledge of mainlanders in most centres have led to an upsurge in demand for our service. Many have also come to me complaining of discrimination against mainlanders in other centres, not

just by service users but by staff also.

- Anonymous

At another centre, the long term ambitions to create a Chinese care home for the elderly is being put on hold in order to reconsider whether the money would be better spent on creating services for new migrants. They note however, that existing funding streams are often targeted specifically to serve the needs of the settled Chinese population and redirecting them towards new services for a population about which little has been known, may not be possible.

For some, the division between the older settled community and the new migrants is more than just a question of language and culture. Rather, they say, there is an air of antagonism. Many respondents talked of being treated harshly by members of the settled Chinese community. Some community organisation leaders will recognise this too. They suggest that the older Chinese community feel threatened by the issues the new migrants are bringing with them, that they threaten to damage the reputation that the original migrants have spent generations building up. These tensions can lead to a lack of impetus when it comes to addressing needs.

When I first came I wasn't very hopeful with them; I think the Chinese organisations aim mostly at earlier settlers, who have legal status here (like the Hong Kong Chinese). They can get help there. Therefore for people like us who newly arrived in the country, we have to rely mostly on friends and agents for help. We come here mainly for earning money; we didn't bring lots of money with us; so the first thing for us was to find work as soon as possible, and to settle down as soon as possible.

- Ma Rong, male, thirties

One set of service providers that have perhaps been more proactive in their outreach to new Chinese

migrants and Mandarin speaking migrants specifically, are the Chinese churches. During the research, we spent some time in an evangelical Chinese church near Chinatown. At the time we had wanted to see the social club where Li Yan was spending time playing ping-pong and meeting up with other Mandarin speakers.

One of the church volunteers was a charismatic young man from Hong Kong. He had arrived several years ago and had struggled himself with integrating into London life. He had long since made good, but he saw that the greatest needs now lay among the new Chinese migrants. He had learned to speak Mandarin fairly fluently in an effort to be able to reach out to them. There is of course an agenda of wanting to preach as well as to help, but Li Yan was fully cognisant of that fact. Wen Ji and her husband too, spent most of their time off involved in church activities. They worked 6 days a week and only really had spare time on a Sunday. They belonged to a church in North London, and every Sunday there was a programme of activities that they were able to attend. The church had been a rock of support when Wen Ji's husband had been alone in London, and they were very loyal to the support it gave them.

For the most part though, the main source of support for the vast majority of those we worked with and interviewed, were the networks of friends that they could build. The stronger the community they could tap in to, the more they were able to find trusted routes into jobs, or find support in hours of need.

...you visit the places where most Chinese people gather, such as Chinatown and so on, and you communicate with people and look for friends...

- anonymous



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Conclusion and recommendations

In this report, we have compiled what we believe is a comprehensive overview of the lives of new Chinese migrants living in London. We have looked at a range of issues from the debts and losses of migration, the dangers of job searching, loneliness, isolation, fears about legal status, poverty and overcrowding and exploitation. We have also tried to show the ways in which people seek to overcome these problems and struggles they have in accessing services and gaining access to quality information. In this conclusion we focus on the future. What will all of this mean for the Chinese community in London? How will the Chinese population change and adapt in the future? And what can be done to help new Chinese migrants integrate and emulate the successes of those that came before them?

Changing Chinese, changing contexts, changing communities

We have already alluded to the differences in origin and background between the new Chinese migrants discussed in this report and the older settled Chinese community in London. Crudely speaking, one could divide the old community and the new Migrants by language. The older settled community tends to be Cantonese speaking and mainly from Hong Kong, Malaysia or Singapore, whilst the newer migrants tend to be Mandarin speaking, and from the Chinese mainland provinces. Such a distinction is admittedly crude; there were for example, many Cantonese speakers from the Chinese mainland within our sample. However the distinction can be useful in terms of thinking of the sharp divide between the existing Chinese infrastructure and the newer Chinese arrivals. The

contrast between our outline of the Chinese advice centre serving the complex needs of new migrants and the Chinese community centre focusing mainly on the settled community could not be more stark.

Amongst those we interviewed, it is also becoming apparent that differences are being drawn between two more sub-groups of Chinese migrants: those from the North of China, and those from Fujian. There is even some suggestion that those from the North-East of China (Ch. Dong Bei) could be a distinct group in London as well. In practice some of these distinctions do not hold up. They seem to be based much more on assumptions about education (or level of civility) and language rather than strict adherence to geographic boundaries and loyalties. Certainly however, the sheer number of Fujianese migrants means that they are increasingly seen, both by themselves and others, as a coherent community within London's Chinese population.

We could also suggest that there is another distinct group of Chinese migrants comprised of those who are here to study. These younger Chinese migrants, able to communicate with each other in Mandarin, may be more agnostic as to origin and not so troubled by regional differences. Their lives are not as entwined with those of other Chinese migrants as other different types of Chinese migrant are with each other. Their opportunities, and hence expectations, are higher than many others.

And yet another distinction might be drawn between those who are documented and have rights and visas, and those who are without. Our figures suggest that in recent times, this distinction has begun to align with the division between students and non-students (see table 23). This may suggest that it is becoming increasingly difficult for economic migrants to obtain legitimate documentation in China to come to the UK to work, or that these new Chinese migrants are finding that the easiest way to come to the UK is as a student; and are finding new ways to do it.

	Arrived prior to 2007	Arrived in or after 2007
Percentage of documented migrants who hold student visas	27%	63%

Table 23. Percentage of documented migrants holding student visas prior to, and post, 2007

These different distinctions are recognised by the respondents, and increasingly job opportunities, opportunities to build social networks and the ability to build a social life in London are seen as being influenced by them.

The other thing is that I mentioned earlier about clubs. Lots of foreign people in London have their own social clubs. Even the Fujianese have their own. But people like us, those from Beijing and Shanghai [...] are yet to have our own club.

- Ding Hui, female, forties

It is we Chinese people killing each other among ourselves. In particular those from [place name mentioned in relation to some specific landlords who she felt had cheated her out of money]. They shouldn't have done this to us. Earlier I thought the Cantonese and the Fujianese were like this; but I don't feel that the Fujianese are so bad. The Fujianese may not be so well educated; they may seem a bit boorish when they speak; but at least they are not like those from...[etc]

- Zhao Zao, female, fifties

That's right.... Most of the illegal deeds are done by the Fujianese. We Northerners.... the majority of the Northern are law abiding; we are keen in finding permanently work; our aim is to improve the situation that our family (in China) is in, give support to our children... that is our aim...

- Ma Rong, male, thirties

Some of these comments may make uncomfortable reading for those within the Chinese community, but as yet they should not be seen as anything more than what they are; individual perceptions. Others speak more about a Chinese culture in which people help each other and hands of friendship are extended across boundaries

Well. I didn't have any close friends here. But since we are all Chinese and we are living outside China, we feel the need to help each other. If I met someone strange to me needing my help, I'll also help if I am able to.[...] I feel that Chinese living abroad are all keen to help each other.[...] Through the help of fellow-countrymen... Chinese friends recommended me [to an employer]...

- Wang Shu Jie, male, fifties

Since most of the bosses who employed us are from Hong Kong and speak Cantonese, we slowly pick up some Cantonese. Some Hong Kong Chinese can also speak a bit of Mandarin, so in the beginning we communicated in Mandarin with them. But when they spoke with their friends in Cantonese, we could also pick up some from there. We watched a bit of [Hong Kong] TV programme, too. That helped us to learn Cantonese. So sometimes when we began to work for a Hong Kong employer, we might speak Mandarin with them; later as time went by, we'd switch to Cantonese.

- Chen Liang, male, thirties

This diversification of the Chinese community, then, is not yet fixed. Many of the distinctions seem fluid. Students, for example, could come from any part of China; and respondents reported being treated kindly by those from different regions as well as badly by those from the same region. At the time of research, London's Chinese population still seems to be in a state of flux. The new migrants we studied have not yet settled, or formed permanent divisions. It is also worth noting that in China, whilst there are real cultural and linguistic differences between people from different parts of the country, such divisions can often be glossed by an overarching nationalist rhetoric that can be found in local and national media, coming from officials and indeed in ordinary people's constructions of their own 'Chineseness'. In other words, this particular division of migrants into different groups, to some extent is a migrant phenomenon, manifesting in a unique way in London. It comes about perhaps as a result of the struggle for jobs, for better living conditions and for access to services and opportunities.

In this period of flux and change however, those who lead are likely to be the ones who will shape the future of the Chinese population in London.

Will we be talking of different Chinese communities, speaking different languages? Will the new migrants settle and be as successful as those who preceded them? Will the new migrants find a way of integrating into British life? And which influences will shape the future of the community? Will it be the existing Chinese community organisations? Or the existing Chinese business infrastructure? Will it be policy makers at local or central government level?

There are those that are already trying to influence the direction the Chinese community takes. There are those who have already found ways of engaging the new Chinese migrants: The ubiquitous 'agents' who both help and exploit those who are vulnerable and looking for work, the Chinese churches who can provide solace and comfort to the lonely and the needy and the betting companies and gambling shops that have opened shiny new fronts in Chinatown responding to an increasingly desperate and in-debted population. Community leaders already recognise the inherent problems associated with gambling, for those who are destitute, but it is hard to prevent those who can see a financial gain in catering to new Chinese migrants from exploiting that opportunity.

Recommendations and innovations

The following recommendations and innovations were developed over the course of two, day-long workshops, with delegates from a number of different Chinese organisations. ESRO put together a programme designed to present research findings and allow participants to consider a range of options for how to cope with some of the problems that are faced by new Chinese migrants. The proposals and recommendations outlined below are a product then, of Chinese community organisations themselves. They are aimed at anyone and everyone who might be interested in understanding the needs of new Chinese migrants and concerned with shaping the future of the Chinese population in London.

We hope that this report can be used as a tool to justify, with evidence, the measures proposed here and that we have gone a long way toward addressing the information gap that shrouds the realities and needs of Chinese migrants in London, and indeed the UK. For those who are concerned with social or community cohesion, and the integration of new migrants into British society, we urge that these recommendations are taken seriously.

1. Funding: Continuous funding, new funding, core funding

If the Chinese community and its various organisations are going to address the many and complex needs of new Chinese migrants, there needs to be a recognition that they are not going to be able to do so with existing levels of funding and support. Even if community organisations became successful in their outreach programmes (proposed below) the sheer number of new migrants and the level of need, is so great, that existing services would be swamped.

Currently, Chinese community associations in certain London boroughs receive no funding at all from their borough councils. Those that do are often dealing with relatively small amounts of money that is earmarked for very specific purposes. Even organisations such as Min Quan, which receive central government recognition for their work, can struggle to secure ongoing funding. Many Chinese organisations, some of which provided valuable services and research, are now little more than names and websites. They lie dormant without any funding provision.

Both central government funding streams and local government funding streams have been hard to come by, and competition for small pots has left Chinese organisations disunited.

Whilst it is important for the Chinese community to continue to lobby central and local government bodies on the issues presented in this report and to call for funding, we call on both local and central government

departments and bodies directly, to take seriously the findings presented in this report and consider providing support in the form of funds to Chinese community organisations and initiatives that aim to directly address the needs of Chinese migrants in London.

2. The establishment of a Chinese umbrella organisation

As in any community, the Chinese community and its organisations are home to different and competing interests, different politics and rival agendas. These differences are important as they represent different interests within the community. However, when it comes to the issue of lobbying for funding and innovating new services to deal with the problems of new Chinese migrants, there needs to be a central and neutral hub to coordinate these efforts.

Such an umbrella organisation needs to be seen to be neutral as to the various political issues that can divide the community. This organisation can act as an honest broker, holding meetings and forums which all are able to attend.

The organisation would serve three purposes: 1) It would create an inclusive network for the Chinese community in which information and ideas can be shared quickly between organisations and service providers 2) It would act as a forum for the development of over-arching strategic principles or aims for the future delivery of services to the changing Chinese community 3) It would act as the public face of efforts to promote and maintain the stability and success of London's (and Britain's) Chinese community.

3. The establishment of a national database of Chinese services and organisations

Though there are many directories of Chinese service providers, few of them outline exactly what services are provided and to whom. Furthermore, given the often precarious nature of the funding which gives life to some of these services, directories often contain information about organisations that no longer exist.

Because of this, there is no reliable, central source of information to which Chinese service providers can turn to get advice or make referrals when dealing with new Chinese migrants. A long-term goal of such a database would be to build a searchable online resource for both migrants and service providers alike.

The success of such a project would depend upon the ability of its creators to maintain the database over time, and would therefore require a long-term plan for any funding provided to set it up, and a sustainable business plan for the future.

4. The creation of a national information and advice telephone line for Chinese migrants

The creation of a national helpline has a number of advantages over the traditional model of disseminating information through Chinese community centres, when dealing with new Chinese migrants.

- Information can be given anonymously, without migrants having to give their names or details
- A phone number is easier to publicise than a list of services
- A small number of staff, or volunteers are needed to maintain a round-the-clock service
- A telephone service can be accessed from anywhere
- Telephone staff can be trained to provide a dedicated service of providing information and advice

5. English language training

A number of suggestions for how to develop the provision of language training for new Chinese migrants were developed during the course of our workshops. The suggestions below address the issue of learning English, with mind to migrant fears of going to formal courses, the lack of time in the day in which migrants have to formally study English and the perceived restrictions on providing services to certain types of migrant.

- The continuation of free English language courses for asylum seekers and refugees
- Workplace English: Many Chinese

migrants work in Chinese businesses in which the use of Chinese language is ubiquitous. Employers could be encouraged to promote the use of the English language through signage, or periods of the day or spaces in which English is used.

- Employers could be encouraged to incentivise English learning amongst staff
- Chinese community centres could provide language exchange courses or groups, in which English speakers can learn Chinese in exchange for Chinese language lessons
- The removal of funding and statutory restrictions on who may attend English courses aimed at Chinese migrants

6. Creation of a Chinese Volunteering database

There are existing volunteering databases and skills bases in the UK. These services could be replicated or adapted to serve as a resource for community organisations and to provide opportunities to settled Chinese, Chinese students or new migrants themselves to work with new Chinese migrants.

7. Development of a communications and outreach strategy

A strategy needs to be developed by and for Chinese community organisations to enable effective communication of information and services to the different networks of new Chinese migrants.

The research in this report is unequivocal that the two most prevalent sources of information about services, among new Chinese migrants was first through friends, and second through Chinese media, primarily newspapers and London's only Chinese language radio stations. Council information, leaflets and the internet were very rarely used.

A relatively small piece of communications research could be undertaken which aimed to develop a best-practise out-reach and communications guide for Chinese and local government organisations.

8. Active recruitment of Mandarin speakers

Chinese organisations are encouraged to take seriously their responsibility to deal with all parts of London's (and Britain's growing Chinese population). In order to do this, there needs to be an active drive to recruit Mandarin speaking staff in order to begin to create an environment in which Mandarin speaking Chinese migrants feel welcome.

9. Census drive

Chinese community leaders and frontline staff are well aware of the lack of political engagement amongst even the long-term settled British Chinese population. Lack of political engagement is perhaps beyond the scope of this report. However, one consequence of choosing not to deal with bureaucracy and national services, is that the Chinese population is under-represented in official statistics.

In 2011 the National Census will take place. For the first time this census will try to capture a snapshot of everybody who is in the country. Census returns in London are often marked by their lack of response. Westminster, for example, in which Chinatown is situated, has the lowest Census response rate in the UK.

Chinese community organisations are encouraged to create a census drive designed to raise the response rate in the Chinese population. Local councils too have a vested interest in helping Chinese community organisations to do this. Local councils can be lobbied to employ Chinese-speaking census enumerators, which will provide employment to Chinese, and help to gain a more accurate picture of the number of Chinese people living in London.

A better understanding of the scale of the Chinese community in London is likely to be a powerful tool for lobbying central and local government for funds and on policy issues.

10. Innovative training programmes / Best-practice database

One London Chinese community centre has had the idea of providing training in social care (with accreditation) to Chinese speakers in order to create a pool of Chinese speaking carers able to serve the ageing population of Chinese migrants in London.

This innovative idea has several benefits: 1) It connects the new and old Chinese migrants 2) It provides training and employment to those who need it most 3) It provides a solution to what is likely to be a growing question of how to provide care to elderly Chinese.

Best practice ideas like this need to be shared more widely throughout the Chinese communities. Chinese organisations should be encouraged to share knowledge of innovations and best-practice between themselves.

11. Further research into specific aspects of new Chinese migrant lives

Research into the specific nature of things like violence and exploitation, informal economies, social networks, reasons for coming to Britain, the role Chinese churches, the effects of gambling, sharing of information etc. should be supported and encouraged in order to better understand the Britain Chinese population and make appropriate policies aimed at social cohesion.

12. Consideration of policies affecting migrants

There needs to be an active and robust exchange of ideas between the Chinese community and policy-makers. Whilst calling for amnesties, or the regularisation of undocumented migrants may be beyond the cope of this research, the report does raise significant questions around the allocation of funds used to promote social cohesion. It also raises the question of whether some policies regarding restrictions on access to services help or hinder

the ability for new Chinese migrants to maximise their contribution to the British economy. The exploitation of undocumented migrant workers for examples, not only prevents migrants from achieving their ambitions, and returning home or starting businesses, it also prevents migrants from working through a formal payroll and contributing to the tax base.

Restrictions on, for example, access to healthcare and to language courses, and to legal advice and to job-centres, whilst all having justification, also push undocumented new Chinese migrants into the hands of unscrupulous agents and lawyers, prevent them from learning English and create an a network of ill-health. Similarly, requirements and restrictions on funding to Chinese organisations that want to address the problems of new Chinese migrants, simply discourages those Chinese organisations from providing services, and helps to perpetuate the problems described in this report.

Conclusion

At the end of our face-to-face survey, we asked respondents to provide a single piece of advice to Chinese who may be considering coming to the UK. Most of the advice, they proffered centred on the idea of making sure that migrants have established friends and networks in the UK before making the trip, on learning English, having realistic expectations, avoiding 'snake-heads', getting a student visa etc. Respondents also sounded warnings that it will be impossible to make money, that new migrants will live as 'ghosts', ignored by everybody and with no status at all. Many talk of the whole experience being demoralising, and depressing.

But perhaps most tellingly of all, one fifth of those we interviewed issued the same exact piece of advice: "Don't come." And this advice came from all kinds of respondents, including the wealthier students.

There will be many people in Britain who will be glad to hear that kind

of advice being given, but the considered reality is that it leaves us with some uncomfortable questions. Given the extent to which the advice Chinese migrants give to each other constitutes a warning about how difficult life in London is, how confident can we be that London is succeeding as a place in which there are equal opportunities for all and the idealistic goals of social cohesion and integration are being met? It should also give us pause for thought when we consider the messages that are going back to China from the Chinese that are living and working here. Is the message that Britain wants to send to Chinese people: "Don't come"?

In the foreword to this report Steve Lau, reminds us of the contribution that Chinese migrants have made to British and London life. In the context of China's growing influence in the world, this report should both remind of the richness, ingenuity and indefatigable spirit that Chinese migrants have to offer, and caution against ignoring their plight.

Appendix

Case study:
A Chinese community organisation
by Zhang Hui



Roughly, the services provided by the Chinese community organisation can be divided into four parts - Adult learning, Youth club, Elderly support and Advisory services. Most of the elderly have been here for quite some time (from southern China or Malaysia and other countries) and they use the centre as a place to hang-out with other friends, playing bridge, Chinese chess or having lunch (Mon-Thurs every week).

For adult learning, there are music, painting, dancing and language classes. For those classes that were supported by the local authority, participants needed to be qualified as home students, and small fees are charged. If they are not home students, overseas students fees will be charged, which might be too much and as one of the staff put it, "don't even bother to think about it". Money-wise, it's not that good for new migrants. To be qualified as home students, one has to stay in the UK for at least three years. In other words, new immigrants are not qualified for the free English classes offered by the centre.

During the time of research, both music and dancing classes, the teachers were Mandarin speakers (one from Beijing and one from the Northeast of China), but the students were almost exclusively Cantonese speaking. The songs for dancing classes were popular in mainland China and the painting class was on Chinese traditional painting. These settled migrants seem attracted by what is deemed to be 'Chinese'. The painting class teacher is originally from Beijing and has been here for more than 10 years. She taught two classes, one at this centre and one somewhere else. The music teacher is from Hong Kong and has been here for more than 30 years. The size of the classes range from 5 to 10. In general, if there are less than 10

students, the centre will lose money. In most cases, the fees charged are just enough to pay teachers.

On Sundays there are coaching classes for kids. The centre doesn't have enough volunteers, otherwise it would like to cover more subjects or take more kids in. One of the volunteers said that actually there were many mandarin speaking Chinese. They just spoke to each other and the volunteers don't understand what the youngsters were talking about. Mainly they were 14-18 years old. The main concern for those youngsters was not knowing which school to choose or that they needed help with their study. They often stayed with their other Chinese friends or watched online Chinese TV. The volunteer tells them, "don't do that, it won't be good for your English learning". But at least it's good that they're not alone and have other Chinese friends. Some of the young people came to the UK with their parents, others say they are here on their own. This is difficult to believe, but they may be keeping a secret if their parents are undocumented.

Advisory services are offered in both Mandarin and Cantonese. There was a list of benefits that Chinese immigrants can apply for, on the wall. In general, we were confirmed other things we have learned. For instance, pregnant women were able to get formal status before 2003 but not any more. The conditions for asylum seekers were much better in the past. For instance, they lived in spacious rooms, get subsidies every month and more than enough food, milk were delivered to their home. All these have been changed since the tightening of the immigration policy.

The centre was acknowledged by word of mouth. It is promoted through networks of friends and old participants keep coming back or they

came for one service and found other useful ones as well. The advantage of this is that holistic services proved to be really useful for the Chinese immigrants (when they need help, they may need a number of different kinds of help) while the disadvantage of this is that snowballing is often limited to one specific group. It's hard to include other types of Chinese, such as the new Chinese immigrants. In the monthly meeting, they do mention the problem of how to attract more new Chinese immigrants to use the service. But they have little success.

Other activities they have, such as boat cruise, Moon festival celebration or Christmas lunch are quite similar to the ones at [the other Chinese advice centre]. Some of the advice services overlap too but they hardly have any communication with each other and are not fully aware of what the other was doing. There's quite a lack of cooperation or referral within these Chinese community services.

Youth Club: It's for Chinese Youth aged between 14-21 although younger children come too. It's a place to try new things, to learn Chinese culture, a meeting place for friends and a place to play sports. On Sundays, they have a team of volunteers to help youth members with homework and revision and also to prepare for GCSE's & A Level's.

The Youth club takes place mainly in English but most of the kids go to Chinese schools every Saturday, some go to Cantonese schools, some go to Mandarin schools. Very occasionally there are newly-arrived kids. They don't have friends, and don't know how the education system works here. Their parents were worrying about their performances at school, while the kids themselves were worrying that they might let their



parents down. Or, their parents are busy at work, and they don't have time for the kids. Some parents may just come to the centre for advice service and find out about the youth club for their children. The activities normally carried out twice a week with volunteers from the same community (Cantonese speaking, going to English schools or Universities) The young people enjoyed their time at the centre very much and some are fast friends.

There was a young boy who had just arrived 2 years before. He had finished 4 year of primary school education back in China. He speaks Cantonese at home and learnt Mandarin at school in China. He wasn't at all like other Children or young people at the centre. He was pretty much alone during the day, playing computer games at the beginning and making slingshots while other young people played football or poker.

At the centre, it's not only the language proficiency that make the division between new immigrants and those old ones, but the cultural references. For instance, what the young boy was playing was perfectly normal in China among school kids, and the way he behaves and makes friends is also very normal, but it all seems to be a bit strange or awkward for the rest of the group.

Youth Summer Holiday: As claimed by the pamphlet, this project aims to enable children aged 11-19 to develop their social skills and improve their understandings of Chinese British Culture, whilst having a fun summer holiday. Most of the participants are frequent users of the centre. 2 are the children of staff of the centre, 1 had joined the summer holiday camps since the beginning of the project in 2006, and some came here for the last 2 or 3 summers. 90% of the participants are also the members of the youth club. There are new kids coming in but only a few. They normally learn about it through friends or personal connections. Some of the parents work in the restaurants of Chinatown.

Activities include Chinese cultural workshops, film making workshops,

sports activities, ice-skating and a variety of other outings. There are more boys than girls and the staff said they don't know why, maybe girls don't like those kinds of activities, such as sports or other outings. (I did notice that there are more girls in music and painting classes). Family backgrounds of the kids are quite varied. Mostly, through the photos they took for the food trail activity, it can be seen that some of the families are not well off but there are also some who are.

Stacy is 9 years old and has one younger brother (6 years old), one step-brother and one step-sister who is already 31 years old. Her mother comes from Hainan and father from Guangzhou. Her mum speaks both Mandarin and Cantonese but wants her to speak Mandarin. She goes to Mandarin school, wants to improve a little bit of her Chinese but not a lot. Her father is quite old (over 60s), not working and her mother is a house-wife (don't know whether has any income though). Her best friend at school is a half-Japanese girl. There're 5 girls and 13 boys in her class. She said she wants two children but not a husband. I asked why and she said because boys are mean. She said she's heard that a 19-year-old girl was just having a baby.

Tian: One specific activity only happened every Friday and only about 6-7 participants from the younger group of kids attended. Those older ones were not interested in taking part. Andy was there for the last two Fridays of the activity when they already finished the session of taking photos of home cooking and prepared questions for interviewing shop owners.

Andy was 9 years old and just arrived in the UK. He hadn't started schooling in London yet but has finished 2 years of primary school back in China. His father is a chef in the nearby restaurant and he has a younger sister. So his parents also too busy to look after him, so have sent him for the youth summer holiday.

The activities were all carried out in English and Tian could not understand at all what was going on. There was a 15-year-old young boy

helping with translation but he wasn't that effective at including Tian. The other staff just seemed to ignore him [Researcher's notes: After the first couple of minutes of translation and knowing more about each other, there was a bond between Tian and me. He trusted me and shared a lot of his feelings with me. He constantly asked, "what did they say?", "what does it mean?", "how to say 'truck' in English?" which showed clearly how insecure he was in the group but at the same time curious about what's going on. On the way to do those interviews, he always came over to me, asking me to explain why do we do this and that. I helped with his interview questions but it was a shame that the dumpling place we planned to interview turned down our proposal.

We tried also for Tian to interact more with other kids but with the language and other differences, it wasn't that easy. As Tian said, "They all speak English, how can I talk to them (other kids)?" But after half a day of translating and engaging in the activities, the rest of the group started to take the initiative to talk to Tian. But they teased. When having coffee, Tian said, proudly, that he actually speaks three languages, Chaozhouhua [a regional dialect], fluently, Mandarin, fluently, and also English! The implication of this actually was that he's not at all stupid as other kids have been jokingly accusing of him.

He was quite alone and vulnerable in the new settings too. At one point, he came over and held hands whilst start to sing the Chinese national anthem and other songs he had learnt from his school back in China. Certainly the rest of the group did not understand what's happening or what he was doing. Apparently Tian was quite amazed to find a researcher, who clearly can share lots of similar cultural experiences as him and he even asked "are there any other Chinese in London?". It can be easily seen that Tian was being marginalised even within the Chinese community and his needs were being greatly overlooked.

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