

Dispersal of a community

With more than 145,000 individuals, the Latin American community is one of the biggest communities of foreigners in London, the demolition of Latin sites is leading them to a dispersal of their community around the capital.

By Henri Nanushi

The demolition of the market at Elephant and Castle and the Seven Sisters one being constantly at risk of facing the same fate has led the Latin community to not feeling as connected as it used to be.

“Elephant and Castle was a place where we could meet, hang around, eat together, we have also other places where to do that but after the demolition of the market, things are not like they were before,” said Luis Marcelo Quim, 48-year-old Ecuadorian chef referring to the demolition of the market in Elephant and Castle.

The market at Elephant and Castle got fully demolished in October 2021; it was one of the main meeting points for the Latin community in London. “We have always hanged around those markets: we go there to stay with our people, to guard our traditions, to stay connected with the families that we have in our countries, they were a meeting point for all of us,” Luis Marcelo Confirms.

Another important hotspot for the Latin community in London is the Seven Sisters Latin market in Tottenham. talks about demolishing this market went on for 15 years; they were finally being scrapped in 2021, after years of protests by the local community led by activist Marta Hinestroza.

When asked about the importance of the Seven Sisters market to the Latin American community in North London, local resident, Misael Montiel Muyudumbay, a 22-year-old telecommunication engineer from Ecuador said: “For the Latin American community, it was this spot where we can all meet, talk to our people as most of us, don’t talk to people during the week, either because we’re shy, there’s this culture barrier or either because we just don’t speak the language yet!”

new plans were arranged to re-evaluate the Seven Sisters’ area after the Haringey council held a conference in July 2022. The council remains committed to housing the market in a nearby site, although negotiations with the sites owners are not completed.

When informed about the most recent re-evaluation plans and asked if the Latin community is as much as connected as it was before Misael said “Latin America is not something you can just take away from us, there are more places where we can feel our culture. Latin America cannot and will never be taken away from us because it’s in our hearts”