UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Revitalizing Los Angeles Chinatown:
The Politics and Meaning of Change in an Urban Ethnic Enclave

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Planning, Policy, and Design

by

Laureen D. Hom

Dissertation Committee:
Assistant Professor Maria G. Rendón, co-chair
Professor Linda Trinh Vo, co-chair
Professor Victoria Basolo
Professor Scott Bollens
Professor Judy Tzu-Chun Wu

2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisors and co-chairs, Maria G. Rendón and Linda Trinh Vo. Without them, I would not have been able to do this research as effectively or with the sensitivity that I brought to the fieldwork and writing. I am especially grateful for Maria who always had an unwavering confidence in me and my work, while also pushing me theoretically throughout my research. I will continue to value all the nuggets of wisdom I received from Linda about community-oriented research and professional development from our many long conversations, especially the ones we had in the car rides across Orange County. I could not have imagined better advisors for me, and I am forever grateful that you both were able to provide a balance of mentorship and independence that allowed me to grow intellectually.

My dissertation committee provided the additional support and perspectives that made my dissertation a much stronger project. Victoria Basolo for her enthusiasm, insight, and advice about how my work and interests contributed to the field of urban planning. Scott Bollens for providing recommendations that still resonated years later and asking the questions that challenged me to parse through the complexity of my project, but to never lose sight of the big picture. Judy Tzu-Chun Wu for providing opportunities to share my work to new audiences and encouraging me to continue the tradition of community studies in Asian American Studies.

Along with my co-chairs and committee members, I would also like to acknowledge other members of the UC Irvine community. Tim-Allen Bruckner, Martha Feldman, Doug Houston, Jim Lee, Richard Matthew, and Rodolfo Torres provided feedback and opportunities to share my work, from the formative thinking to writing stages. In addition, I thank the School of Social Ecology and Department of Urban Planning & Public Policy staff for doing the administrative hard work for the students and faculty, especially Janet Gallagher, Jennie Craig,

and Cherry Yip. Lastly, I want to thank the School of Social Ecology and UC Irvine Graduate Division for providing financial support to complete this dissertation.

No words can capture how thankful and indebted I am to the people that I met in Los Angeles Chinatown. I learned so much that goes beyond what was written in this dissertation. Every conversation (from a quick hello to the four-hour conversation), piece of paper (sometimes boxes full of them!), enthusiasm to connect me with more people, pat on the back, and insistence that I take leftover food at the end of meetings was so critical. These relationships challenged me to dig deeper and double (and triple) check my first impressions. The support from the following people, from start to finish, was a constant source of motivation:

Dennis Arguelles
Linda Bentz
Lillian Burkenheim-Silver
Jean Chan
Scott Chan
Suellen Cheng
King Cheung
Deborah Ching
Phyllis Chiu
Chester Chong
Ruth Chu
Wendy Chung
Susan Dickson
Fenton Fong Eng
Rick Eng
Mike Fong
Stephen Fong
Gerald Gubatan
Maryanne Hayashi
Gilbert Hom
Gordon Hom
Bill Chun-Hoon
Susan Hum
Daniel Huynh
Frances Huynh
Vincent Huynh
Larry Jung
Alan Kumamoto
Munson Kwok
Collin Lai
Lawrence Lan
Wendy Lau
Judy Lee
Martin Lee
Patrick Lee
Peter Lin
Richard Liu
Don Loo
David Louie
Emma Louie
Ron Louie
Sharon Lowe
Lawrence Lue
Daisy Ma
Robert Ma
Tom Majich
Eugene Moy
Angelica Lopez Moyes
Peter Ng
Sophat Phea
Alexis Readinger
Gerry Shu
Kerry Situ
Al Soo-hoo
Edmund Soohoo
Cooke Sunoo
Don Spivack
Diane Tan
Paul Tea
Ted Tongsak
Don Toy
Jim Tsai
Connie Vuong
Bill Watanabe
Craig Wong
Dorothy Fue Wong
Martin Wong
Steve Wong
Mike Woo
Peter Woo
Wanda Wu
Annie Yee
Anson Yew
Cynthia Yparraguiree
George Yu
Gay Yuen
Bibiana Yung
Xiayi Shirley Zhang

In addition, I am grateful for the support from the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California and the Chinese American Citizens Alliance-Los Angeles Lodge. They provided parking and the occasional working space in Chinatown, two things I realize now are not so easy to find in Chinatown. I was extremely privileged to have access to both.

Several individuals outside of my committee and the Los Angeles Chinatown community were also critical to helping me with the project. I want to thank Phil Choy, for passing along what he had collected about the neighborhood early on in my research. He was a generous community leader and scholar who will be missed. The conversations with Oliver Wang were also extremely helpful in shaping my project when I began my fieldwork. I also want to thank Jenny Tseng who enthusiastically helped me with transcriptions during her final year at UCI.

I was extremely fortunate to have the support of my peers and friends throughout my time at UC Irvine. I am so glad to have met Santina Contreras (my twin and favorite 5-hour lunch date), Allison Laskey, and Asiya Natekal during my time here and to know that I can count on them as friends and not just as colleagues. I am also grateful to have gone through this journey with Elaine Andres, Victoria Lowerson Bredow, Lucy Carillo, Erica Cheung, Jaewoo Cho, Rafael Contreras, Brian Hui, Hiroshi Ishikawa, Aujean Lee, Pauline Leubens, Ray Vanjie San Diego, and Oscar Tsai. In addition, I want to acknowledge the friends who brought me to and continued me through UC Irvine: Jeehye Kim, Jeeyoung Kim & Allen Beck, Jaime Anno, Tammy Michel, Shekinah Elmore, Jen Lemberger, CJ Lee & Walter Quiroga, Kim Ma & Chris Wu, Lisa Blonder Ohlenkamp, Adrian Meza, Diana Kung, Christine Kao, and Jacky Wong. Thank you all for the unconditional, no effort friendship that provided the much needed encouragement, sympathetic ear, and fun times in between the research and writing.

I would not be here without the support of my family. Uncle Arthur, Uncle Young, Reed, Bear, and Swanya provided a place to rest, play video games, watch movies and basketball games, and explore Silverlake in between fieldwork (and making the commute easier for me). Aunt Pauline, Allen, Brian, Cindy, Derek, and Tyson made my holidays happy and trips to San Francisco and New York City feel like home. Elan for always making me laugh and roll my eyes at the same time, especially when he says he knows my research better than anyone in my family and that I would be "so bored" if he was not around. I will admit that this claim is probably true. Thanks for always "saving the day." My mom and dad, Lorraine and Marlon, have shaped me in ways that deserves its own dissertation. It was extremely daunting to venture down this path in their shadows, both in the university and the community. My writing and analytical skills and the constant reminders to think beyond myself is a product of their tough love that did not fit any stereotype of Chinese American parenting. A special thank you to my mom for being an extra set of editing eyes and talking me through some very rough patches where it felt like this was all so impossible to achieve.

I also dedicate this research to my grandmothers, Zem Ping Dong and Lin Choi Hom, who passed away as I was pursuing the PhD, the winters of 2013 and 2014. They both did not have more than a middle school education from China and, while supportive, did not seem to quite understand why I went back to school when I already had a job. A language barrier separated us, and I doubt I was their "favorite" grandchild, but I know they brought me to Los Angeles Chinatown. We were losing the generation that went through immense struggles to make the U.S. our home and did so in the Chinatown I grew up with, San Francisco. The changes I began to see in the different Chinatowns were changes I was seeing in my own family. It is true that the best research is personal, and I have learned to embrace that to its fullest.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Laureen D. Hom, MPH

Education

2018 University of California, Irvine, School of Social Ecology
Doctorate of Philosophy in Planning, Policy & Design, Asian American Studies emphasis

2008 Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health
Master of Public Health in Sociomedical Sciences, Urbanism & the Built Environment concentration

2004 University of California, Los Angeles, College of Letters and Sciences
Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Art History, *magna cum laude*

Fellowships & Distinctions

2018 Social Ecology Dean's Dissertation Writing Fellowship, University of California, Irvine

2017 Graduate Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, University of California, Irvine

2017 Ford Foundation Fellowship Dissertation Competition, Honorable Mention

2016 Featured Abstract Distinction for Paper Presentation at the *Society for the Study of Social Problems*

2016 Ford Foundation Fellowship Predoctoral Competition, Honorable Mention

2012 Graduate Opportunity Fellowship, University of California, Irvine

2012 Graduate Dean's Recruitment Fellowship, University of California, Irvine

2007 John & Kathleen Gorman Public Health Humanitarian Award, Columbia University

2003-2004 Dean's Honors List, University of California, Los Angeles

2002 Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society, University of California, Los Angeles

2001-2003 Provost's Honors List, University of California, Los Angeles

2001 Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society, University of California, Los Angeles

2001 Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society**,** University of California, Los Angeles

Academic Research Experience

2016-2017 *Graduate Student Researcher* for Needs Assessment for Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) in Orange County
University of California, Irvine, PI: Dr. Linda Trinh Vo
Overseeing qualitative research examining AANHPI social service and policy issues in Orange County. Co-authoring policy report for Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Orange County.

2013-2016 *Graduate Student Researcher* for Study on Social Mobility of Latino Young Men
University of California, Irvine, PI: Dr. Maria Rendón

Wrote case analyses on social mobility and neighborhood outlook of Latino young men from Los Angeles. Co-wrote manuscript on neighborhood exposure and perceptions of racialized criminalization.

2006-2007 *Research Assistant* for Korean American Family Oral History Project
San Francisco State University, PI: Dr. Grace Yoo
Conducted interviews with 2nd generation Korean Americans on family history and ethnic identity

2004-2006 *Research Assistant* for Quality of Life among Breast Cancer Survivors from Diverse Populations, PI: Dr. Grace Yoo
San Francisco State University & University of California, San Francisco, Dr. Grace Yoo
Conducted in-depth interviews and surveys and assisted in recruitment, data entry on SPSS, and interview transcription. Coordinated research team for data collection.

2003 *Research Intern* for California Asian American Artist Biography Project
San Francisco State University & University of California, Los Angeles, PI: Mark Johnson, MFA
Conducted primary research to develop a biographical sketch of photojournalist Wallace Fong, Jr for the *Asian American Art 1850-1970* textbook published by Stanford General Books.

Publications

Vo, L.T. & Hom, LD. 2018. (2018) *Transforming Orange County: Assets and Needs of Asian Americans & Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders*. Orange County, CA: Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Orange County.

Rendón, M.G., Aldana, A. & Hom, L.D. Latinos Framing Race in a Colorblind Era: Making Sense of Criminalization in the Inner City. In review for *Journal for Ethnic and Migration Studies*.

Hom, L.D. (2012). The Chinese Hospital of San Francisco: How the Early San Francisco Chinese Mobilized to Build the Chinatown Community. In G.J. Yoo GJ & M.N. Le (eds.), *Handbook of Asian American Health* (pp. 353-362). New York: Springer Publishing Co.

Sim, S.C., Zhou, X.D., Hom, L.D., Chen, C., & Sze, R. (2011). Effectiveness of pre-counseling genetic education workshops at a large urban community health center serving low-income Chinese American women. *Journal of Genetic Counseling*, *20*(6), 593-608.

Hom, L.D., & Kwon, S. (2009). Complementary and alternative medicine. In E.W. Chen & G.J. Yoo (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Asian American Issues Today* (pp. 301-306). Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Conference Presentations

Hom, L.D. (2018, March). Community Development in Orange County: Ethnic Community Formation & Expansion of Spaces to Serve Communities. Paper Presentation at the *Association for Asian American Studies Conference*, San Francisco, CA.

Hom, L.D. (2017, October). Symbols of Gentrification? Making Sense of New Developments in Los Angeles Chinatown. Paper Presentation at the *Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning Annual Conference*, Denver, CO.

Hom, L.D. (2017, August). Redevelopment in Post-1965 Los Angeles Chinatown: Transformations of Neighborhood Politics & Identity. Paper Presentation at the *Pacific Coast Branch-American Historical Association Meeting*, Northridege, CA.

Hom, L.D. (2017, April). Symbols of Change in Los Angeles Chinatown: Narrating Community through New Development. Paper presentation at the *Association for Asian American Studies Conference*, Portland, OR.

Hom, L.D. (2016, November). Framing Change in Los Angeles Chinatown: The Role of Place Identity in Community Debates about Neighborhood Revitalization in Ethnic Spaces. Paper presentation at the *Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning Annual Conference*, Portland, OR.

Rendón, M.G., Aldana, A. & Hom, L.D. (2016, August). Framing Race: Making Sense of Criminalization in a Colorblind Era. Paper presentation at the *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Seattle, WA.

Rendón, M.G., Aldana, A. & Hom, L.D. (2016, August). Latinos Framing Race in a Colorblind Era: Making Sense of Criminalization in the Inner City. Paper presentation at the *Society for the Study of Social Problems*, Seattle, WA.

Hom, L.D. (2016, April). Negotiating Representations of Neighborhood and Community Change in Los Angeles Chinatown. Paper presentation at the *Association for Asian American Studies Conference*, Miami, FL.

Hom, L.D. (2016, March). Revitalizing Los Angeles Chinatown: Redefining the Boundaries of Community & Neighborhood. Paper presentation at the *Urban Affairs Association Conference*, San Diego, CA.

Hom, L.D. (2012, November). The Origins of the Chinese Hospital of San Francisco. Paper presentation at the Symposium on International Migration and Qiaoxiang Studies at Wuyi University, Jiangmen City, Guangdong, China.

Zhou, X.D., Sim, S.C., Au, L., Hom L.D., et al. (2010, November). Assessment of barriers to physical activity among Chinese American youth in New York City. Poster presentation at the *American Public Health Association Annual Meeting*, Denver, CO.

Hom, L.D., Kwon, S., Park, J., et al. (2009, November). Identifying best practices for formative data collection in Asian Pacific Islander immigrant communities. Poster presentation at the *American Public Health Association Annual Meeting*, Philadelphia, PA.

Hom, L.D., Kwon, S., Sim S.C., et al. (2009, November) Understanding health information preferences of individuals with chronic hepatitis B infection. Poster presentation at the *American Public Health Association Annual Meeting*, Philadelphia, PA.

Kwon, S., Hom, L.D., Park, J., et al. (2009, November). B Free CEED Legacy Pilot Projects: Promoting best practices and capacity-building for hepatitis B programs in Asian American communities across the United States. Poster presentation at the *American Public Health Association Annual Meeting*, Philadelphia, PA.

Hom, L.D., Park, J., Sim, S.C., et al. (2009, September). Formative research planning for data collection in the Chinese and Korean communities in New York City. Oral presentation at the

California Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health across the U.S. (REACH US) Conference, Long Beach, CA.

Kwon, S., Hom, L.D., Park, J. et al. (2009, August). Developing a social marketing campaign: Understanding the health information channels used by Asian Americans in New York City. Oral presentation at the *Center for Disease Control & Prevention's National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media*, Atlanta, GA.

Hom, L.D., Kwon, S., Pollack, H., et al. (2008, October). A community-based participatory approach to a social marketing campaign that raises hepatitis B awareness in Asian American communities: Methodological issues and best practices for formative data collection. Poster presentation at the *International Society for Urban Health: 7th International Conference on Urban Health*, Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Teaching Experience

2013-2018 *Teaching Assistant* at University of California, Irvine
Naturalistic Field Research (undergraduate course)
Public Policy & Public Management (undergraduate course)
Qualitative Methods for Public Policy (graduate course)
Urban Sociology (undergraduate course)
Urban & Regional Planning (undergraduate course)

Academic Service

2016-2017 *Secretary* for Diverse Educational Community & Doctoral Experience (DECADE) Student Council
University of California, Irvine, Advance Program for Equity & Diversity

2007-2008 *Historian* for Group for Community Recovery
Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health

Professional Experience

2009-2012 *Research & Evaluation Manager*
Senior Research & Evaluation Associate
Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, New York, NY
Working with executive management, oversaw and designed evaluation activities for health programs and services across different departments. Managed junior research associates in data collection and report writing.

2008-2009 *Project Coordinator* for B Free CEED
Handbook of Asian American Health Intern
New York University School of Medicine, Center for the Study of Asian American Health
Managed formative data collection for social marketing campaign for hepatitis B education in Chinese and Korean communities. Facilitated relationships with community partners. Conducted demographic research and provided copyediting support for the *Asian American Communities and Health: Context, Research, Policy, and Action* textbook published by Jossey-Bass.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Revitalizing Los Angeles Chinatown:

The Politics and Meaning of Change in an Urban Ethnic Enclave

By

Laureen D. Hom

Doctor of Philosophy in Planning, Policy, and Design

University of California, Irvine, 2018

Assistant Professor Maria G. Rendón, co-chair

Professor Linda Trinh Vo, co-chair

Chinatowns are historic ethnic enclaves that have persisted as important neighborhoods in the urban landscape. They are evolving spaces of community belonging for Chinese Americans who do not always live there and vary across generation and immigration experiences. But Chinatowns have also been targets for urban revitalization efforts throughout their history and are now part of contemporary gentrification debates. These trends challenge how they evolve as ethnic enclaves and what control the community has in these changes.

Through a case study of Los Angeles Chinatown, I examine how ethnic communities engage in the politics of development in older urban ethnic enclaves and the implications of this engagement for the neighborhood and ethnic community identity. This research includes data collected from ethnographic fieldwork and draws from political economy, immigration, and race theories to analyze the transformation of community politics in ethnic enclaves and how an ethnic community maintains control over neighborhood change as they face urban revitalization pressures. The themes that emerged from this study show that the ethnic political engagement to

assert community control was expressed through the formation of new organizations, participation in spaces for community representation, and framings of neighborhood change and identity. Yet, differences that were complicating and redefining the understandings of the Chinese American community since the 1965 Immigration Act, especially in regard to class, generation, immigration cohort, and geography, were also expressed in this engagement, which shaped the planning and land use conflicts that determined the housing, economic, and cultural development for the neighborhood.

The community conflict over development in Chinatown is a part of a rearticulation of a Chinese American community identity that demands recognition of their socioeconomic and cultural complexities in policymaking. This has also led to a questioning about the community's ongoing relationship to Chinatown, particularly who has the right to represent Chinatown and benefit from its changes. The political dynamics in Chinatown show that older urban ethnic enclaves continue to matter for ethnic community formation and ethnic groups to assert a political voice; however, this rearticulation also reflects the limits and possibilities of community power in equitable development.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Chinatown has two or three percent of the Chinese population in [Los Angeles] County. So, does L.A. Chinatown matter as a community? Is it relevant? How important is it? ... Are we [Chinese Americans] going to knit ourselves into the fabric so that there's room for others?
>
> - Eugene Moy, former president of Chinese Historical Society of Southern California and Chinese American Citizens Alliance-Los Angeles Lodge

In July 2016, Los Angeles Chinatown celebrated the opening of Blossom Plaza, located in the heart of the neighborhood's commercial area. Blossom Plaza is a mixed-use development with retail and rental apartment housing, 20% of which is affordable. Plans for the plaza began as Chinatown was in the process of receiving a light rail station next to the former site of Little Joe's, an Italian restaurant that had not been in operation since the 1990s. Both the city and community wanted to use the Little Joe's site as pedestrian corridor that connected the neighborhood to the station, but also as a location for a monumental building that signified to visitors that they were entering Chinatown. The light rail station opened in 2003 and over ten years later, after several changes to its design, use, and property ownership, Blossom Plaza eventually followed. The ribbon cutting ceremony brought together elected officials, city staff, community leaders, and downtown developers who viewed the development as "a long-awaited victory." At the culmination of the ceremony, a traditional Chinese lion dance performance brought good luck to the building.

Outside of this public ceremony, other Chinatown community leaders expressed skepticism of the new development and its impact on Chinatown. While it provides direct access to the light rail station, some saw the building as physically out of place and uncharacteristic of the neighborhood, calling it "ugly" and an "eyesore." With its relatively modern and streamlined design, the five-story building stands out among the older buildings, especially neighboring

Central Plaza, the commercial plaza that established Chinatown in 1938 and home to old retail and restaurant spaces that have traditional Chinese architectural details and rooflines. Others recall the political struggles among the community, city council, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), and various property owners and developers. They spoke about the community benefits that were not realized or compromised in the process of negotiating the development, including a cultural center and a recognition of Little Joe's, one of the remaining physical remnants of the Italian immigrant community that predated Chinatown. Despite providing affordable housing, others were waiting for what new retail will go into Blossom Plaza and whether it will threaten the immigrant small business community. Given these concerns, it is perhaps not too surprising that less than a month earlier, as I walked through the neighborhood with an older community leader, he pointed to Blossom Plaza and without any hesitation said, "This is gentrification coming to Chinatown."

Chinatown is currently a site for new developments that are reshaping, and for some, threatening its physical and social identity. Along with Blossom Plaza, some of the most recent changes include the Jia Apartments, a mixed-use 100% market-rate apartment development that is home to Chinatown's first Starbucks, a Walmart Neighborhood Market, which closed after two years in operation, and the Los Angeles State Historic Park, which came after Chinatown community leaders fought against an industrial park proposed for that site. New retail and restaurants are also opening in older storefronts. These changes are all intended to "revitalize" the neighborhood, but they are also not neutral changes. They are politically contested sites over the meaning of Chinatown for the Chinese American community, many of whom do not live or work there but continue to be politically active in the neighborhood. The conflicts that emerge from these proposed changes reflect the different hopes and fears of change in a neighborhood

that is intrinsically a part of the history and identity of Chinese and Asian Americans.

Motivation for the Study

In this dissertation, I examine the ethnic community politics in Los Angeles Chinatown, an ethnic enclave that has experienced pressures of urban revitalization throughout its history, and how the Chinese American community asserts control over this space and its potential changes through their political engagement. Contemporary urban Chinatowns are often situated as ethnic enclaves because of its robust social and economic infrastructure that provide social capital, support, and resources for the Chinese American community (Marcuse, 1997; Zhou, 1995). Yet, traditional theoretical assumptions of ethnic enclaves do not always address how urban and ethnic community politics shape the neighborhood.

Traditional theories of ethnic enclaves draw from the ethnicity paradigms of race (Omi & Winant, 2014) and situate neighborhood change as "natural" stages of development and decline that reflect the eventual incorporation of immigrant groups into mainstream society (Park & Burgess, 1925; Schwirian, 1983). Based on this assumption, as Chinese Americans experience cultural, political, and economic assimilation, Chinatowns would lose their function as the community would no longer solely rely on this space for their socioeconomic mobility. Chinatowns would eventually disappear or, if they persisted, become tourist destinations (Lee, 1949) or symbolic sites that serve as voluntary spaces of community formation (Logan, Alba, & Zhang, 2002; Marcuse, 1997). The post-World War II Chinese American residential patterns indicate that Chinatowns were positioned to follow this trajectory as the community was becoming residentially dispersed and moving to suburban areas (Logan, et al., 1996; Massey & Denton, 1985; Massey & Denton, 1987; Zhou & Logan, 1991). However, Chinatowns have not simply become tourist destinations or symbolic neighborhoods, as they have persisted and

evolved alongside the changes in the Chinese American community.

Ethnic politics are critical to understanding Chinatowns today. These neighborhoods have a robust social infrastructure that originated from its history as a racialized space. Despite its contemporary framing as an ethnic enclave, Chinatowns were originally racially segregated urban ghettos that formed in the late 1800s when early Chinese immigrant laborers were socially and legally excluded from mainstream society. In the face of this exclusion, an internal social structure that included an ethnic economy and organizations developed in Chinatown (Chen, 2002; Lai, 2004; Zhou, 1995). These organizations not only governed the community, but also became sites for early activism that asserted their political belonging in the United States (Cheng, 2014; Wu, 2014). While Chinese Americans no longer face those legal exclusions, Chinatown remained a relevant site for Chinese Americans. Later generation Chinese Americans continue to be engaged in Chinatown, especially in political movements since the 1960s, to assert a political voice for the ethnic community who continued to be overlooked in mainstream politics (Kwong, 1996; Lin, 1998; Liu & Geron, 2008; Nee & Nee, 1984; Wilson, 2014).

Contemporary immigration trends further complicate the politics in ethnic enclaves. The ongoing Chinese American engagement in Chinatown also converged with the new wave of Chinese immigrants moving to Chinatown following World War II. The traditional arguments about change in ethnic enclaves were not only based on European immigration trends, but made during the exclusionary immigration era that restricted Chinese immigration and assumed that there would not be a new wave of Chinese immigrants. Post-World War II immigration policies, from the 1965 Immigration & Naturalization Act to the 1990 Immigration Act, opened immigration from Asian countries, primarily through family reunification, political asylum, and work visas. This contributed to an increase and diversification of the Chinese American

community, but also led to a new cohort of working-class Chinese immigrants moving to and working in urban Chinatowns as they still relied on ethnic networks (Lee, 2015; Li, 2009; Nee & Nee, 1986; Ong, 1984; Ong, Bonacich, & Cheng, 1994; Zhao, 2011; Zhou, 1995). Later generation and upwardly mobile Chinese Americans who did not live in Chinatown continued to economically invest in the neighborhood, which contributed to the maintenance of ethnic networks that facilitated social and economic mobility for new immigrants (Zhou, 1995). The new immigrant cohort also established ethnic businesses and organizations in response to community needs. These trends led to the persistence of Chinatown as not simply an immigrant gateway, but as a hub for a diversifying and geographically dispersed community. Chinatown now has a distinct ethnic community infrastructure that has served generations of Chinese Americans in the face of changing contexts of immigration and racial exclusion.

For this dissertation, I focus on the ethnic community politics that emerged from the changes in the Chinese American community and how these politics are responding to and being shaped by urban revitalization. Many urban Chinatowns across the United States are facing the pressures of urban revitalization, which has led to concerns about the displacement of working-class immigrant communities and businesses (Acolin & Vitello, 2017; Lin, 2008; Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Li, 2016; Pottie-Sherman, 2010). This is occurring as cities are also recognizing the diverse communities that make up the urban landscape through cultural development and inclusive planning practices (Qadeer, 1997; Umemoto & Igarashi, 2001). These pressures facing urban Chinatowns raise important questions about the neighborhood's positioning within these larger urban trends that threaten to exacerbate social and economic inequities and how community leaders seek to maintain, and in some cases, transform the neighborhood.

There is limited recognition of these place-based politics in urban Chinatowns,

particularly an examination of the relationship between ethnic community politics and urban development and the implications for equitable development practices. Studies on ethnic suburban development show that Asian Americans engage in planning and development politics which may challenge the white suburban identity (Horton, 1996; Lung-Amam, 2017; Saito, 1998) and assert new multiethnic urban politics (Hum, 2014; Saito, 1998). Among research on contemporary development politics in historical urban black neighborhoods, the black middle-class have been recognized as active placemakers, but scholars note that they are also moving back to the neighborhood due to racial solidarity and ongoing mainstream exclusion (Anderson & Sternberg, 2013; Boyd, 2008; Hyra, 2008; Patillo, 2007). Chinese Americans appear to differ. The middle-class may not necessarily be moving "back to Chinatown," and the contemporary immigration flows have been the primary mechanism sustaining Chinatown's residential character. Different segments of the community across class, generation, and immigration cohorts are converging in Chinatown, and their political engagement directly impacts the physical neighborhood. How the ethnic spatial politics of Chinatowns are being transformed given the contemporary pressures of urban development is a theoretical and empirical gap that I will address in this dissertation.

Through a case study of Los Angeles Chinatown, I examine how ethnic communities engage in the politics of development in older urban ethnic enclaves that are targeted for urban revitalization and its impact on the neighborhood and ethnic community identity. This project considers the diverse political players of the community, their political engagement, and how they make sense of the changes in Chinatown. The aims of the research are to examine (1) the transformation of community politics in ethnic enclaves given urban revitalization and development trends and (2) how an ethnic community that has become increasingly diverse

across immigration cohorts, generation, class, and geography since the 1965 Immigration Act seeks to maintain control in a neighborhood that has held cultural and economic value for them over time. The following questions guide this research:

1. How has the Chinese American community in Los Angeles participated in the contemporary development of the urban Chinatown in response to increasing urban revitalization pressures and community diversity since the 1965 Immigration Act?
2. How has the Chinese American political engagement in Chinatown shaped the identity and value of Chinatown for the Chinese American community and the city of Los Angeles?
3. What are the implications of the Chinese American place-based political engagement in rearticulating a Chinese American community identity?

I answer these research questions through an ethnographic methodology and by drawing from political economy, immigration, and race theories to examine the neighborhood's political culture that is steering neighborhood change and development. Using an inductive, grounded theory approach to analyze data collected from over three years of fieldwork in Los Angeles Chinatown (2014-17), I show how the ethnic diversity that has emerged since the 1965 Immigration Act has shaped the politics of place as communities are responding to the opportunities and threats of urban revitalization.

Literature Review

To guide this research, I drew from literature on political economy, immigration, and race as a lens to understand the relationship between ethnic community politics and urban development. I connect and build upon these bodies of literature, which provide insight on how and why changes in urban ethnic enclaves are a political and contested process. Older urban

ethnic enclaves have been impacted by urban revitalization that may change its residential, economic, and cultural character, but they also continue to matter for diversifying ethnic communities that are now segmented by geography, class, generation, and immigration cohorts. They persist as sites for community formation, but also economic and political power. The different segments of the ethnic community continue to make political claims that have implications for the development in these neighborhoods. Through this process, they are engaging in placemaking efforts that reconstruct the meaning of the neighborhood for the ethnic community and the meaning of the ethnic community itself.

Political Economy of Ethnic Enclaves: Urban Revitalization Tensions

According to political economy perspectives, neighborhood change occurs through the conflict over the production of space and to determine the value of place (Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991; Logan & Molotch, 1997). The conflicts in determining neighborhood values and who has the right to define those values ultimately contribute to the rearticulation of the neighborhood identity and whom it serves. When framed as a commodity, places are defined by its use-value, which represents the function and role of the space in providing basic services and goods, and an exchange-value, which is the monetary value of the land as determined through the market and expressed through rent and property values (Harvey, 2003; Logan & Molotch, 1997). Residents, who often have sentimental attachments to place, tend to shape the use-value of place, while developers and property owners tend to maximize the profits of the exchange-value of place through developments that are "the highest and best use of land" and are assumed to not have the same emotional attachments as residents and other community actors (Logan & Molotch, 1997; Zukin, 2010). Furthermore, land-based elites, such as developers, property owners, bankers, and other local business leaders, tend to form growth coalitions and engage in

competition with other elites to control changes and secure their economic interests.

This conflict over power to steer neighborhood change is linked to the "right to the city" arguments that critique urban policies as supporting capitalist production over human rights (Fraser, 2004; Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991; Marcuse, 2009). The rights to these spaces is a conflict over the access to resources and information, as well as the political power to shape the changes. Embedded within these arguments is the conflict between collective rights, which emphasizes social equity, and individual rights, which prioritizes individual choice in the creation of a "just city" (Fainstein, 2005). Critical urban scholars argue that collective rights prioritize the needs of those who have been historically disadvantaged and oppressed, while individual rights often ultimately prioritize those who have traditionally controlled space, the wealthy and property owners, in shaping the urban landscape (Harvey, 2003; Marcuse, 2009). In places like Chinatown, this "right to the city" can be complicated given the geographic dispersal of the Chinese American community that has an ongoing symbolic and economic attachment to the neighborhood that informs their political engagement.

Scholarship on urban revitalization further highlights how neighborhoods have been used towards urban economic growth to benefit the city and private developers over residents and workers (Fainstein, 2010; Hyra, 2012; Soja, 1998; Zukin & Braslow, 2011). These efforts seek to improve the vitality and quality of distressed and disinvested neighborhoods through physical and land use changes, often with the goal to stimulate economic and social activity in these spaces. However, critics point to how these strategies tend to favor economic growth that attract private investment and wealthier consumers, rather than creating opportunities for the social mobility of disenfranchised communities of color, such as housing and social services (Hyra, 2012; Kurashige, 2008; Parson, 1982; Smith, 1979). This criticism has characterized

revitalization strategies throughout time, from post-World War II federal urban renewal programs that encouraged large-scale commercial development to contemporary policies and programs, including business improvement districts and economic empowerment zones. A distinction between early and contemporary early urban renewal efforts is an emerging trend of "boutique" retail and creative industries upscaling residential amenities (Burnett, 2014; Florida, 2003; Grodrach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Hyra, 2012; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011; Zukin, et al., 2009). Regardless of scale and type, scholars continue to argue that these initiatives tend to favor economic growth and steer revitalization efforts away from housing and social services (Dávila, 2004; Hyra, 2008; Zukin, 2010).

Of critical importance are the issues of gentrification and cultural development, both of which have been linked to contemporary urban revitalization strategies in Chinatown today. These revitalization trends have implications for transforming the residential, economic, and cultural character of the neighborhood. An analysis of these issues also highlights the intersection of race and class in the ongoing engagement of Chinese Americans in Chinatown today and how ethnic communities are valued in the urban landscape.

Urban Displacement: Gentrification. The aforementioned trends in urban revitalization have led to concerns about gentrification. Gentrification is the forced displacement of poor and historically marginalized communities from urban areas through public and private investment (Li, 2016; Marcuse, 1985; Smith, 1979; Slater, 2011). It is part of an urban restructuring that is often framed as middle-class and wealthy whites moving "back to the city" and displacing poor urban communities of color who live near the downtown core (Hyra, 2012). While there have been critiques of urban renewal efforts throughout the 20th century in displacing many poor communities of color, gentrification remains a controversial term and has been a source of

contention within the academic literature. Research has been inconsistent in showing that tenants in gentrifying neighborhoods have been forcibly displaced (Freeman, 2005; Freeman & Braconi, 2004; Vigdor, Massey, and Rivlin, 2002) and that poor black and immigrant neighborhoods are gentrifying faster than poor white neighborhoods (Hwang and Sampson, 2014).

However, some argue that current methods and interpretations may not accurately capture forced displacement, the cornerstone of gentrification (Newman & Wyly, 2006; Slater, 2009). New developments that promote upscaling can create ripple effect rent increases that are often not direct or immediate (Hyra, 2012; Li, 2016; Newman & Wyly, 2006). Some changes also create disruptions to a sense of community and place among communities that have historically been excluded from mainstream institutions and have since developed strong symbolic and material attachments to the space (Fullilove, 2004; Atkinson, 2015). Thus, the historical and social context of the community matters in understanding how they identify gentrification and whether they have a "choice" to be in these neighborhoods, and relatedly, leave them. These arguments highlight how gentrification can be inclusive of different forms of displacement that are not always evident in short-term economic or demographic indicators.

The intersection of race, class, and globalism are further complicating straightforward narratives of the racial turnover that occurs through gentrification. Studies on redevelopment in historic urban black neighborhoods have documented how middle-class blacks are investing in these neighborhoods. This trend may help to sustain the neighborhood for the black community, but it also may still encourage development that does not directly benefit the urban poor and working-class blacks living in these neighborhoods (Boyd, 2008; Hyra, 2008). These studies highlight the limits of ethnic and racial solidarity in gentrifying neighborhoods. Similar tensions may play out in other urban ethnic neighborhoods and enclaves, like Chinatown. Chinatown has

been included in gentrification debates, especially regarding the role of new Asian economic investment in these spaces (Acolin & Vitello, 2017; Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Lin, 1998).

Scholars have noted that Asian ethnic business leaders have formed immigrant and ethnic growth coalitions to position ethnic spaces as unique sites of urban and global capital accumulation (Hum, 2014; Li, et al., 2006; Light, 2002; Lin, 2011; Oh & Chung, 2014). Much of the literature has focused on how global investment contributes to gentrification as ethnic neighborhoods have been positioned to facilitate the flow of global capital through ethnic networks (Hum, 2014; Hyra, 2008; Li, et al., 2006; Li, 2009; Lin, 2011; Park & Kim, 2008; Sassen, 1996). Furthermore, with the increasing prominence of multiethnic suburbs, or "ethnoburbs," Asian investors may invest in these areas through social networks among new immigrants in these changing suburbs (Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Li, 2009). This can contribute to economic competition among the older ethnic enclaves and newer ethnoburbs for global and local ethnic investment. Less is known about how new domestic Asian American investment transforming spaces like Chinatown and if they may have a similar impact. Regardless, Asian American activists have historically resisted outside investment in ethnic enclaves, including Asian overseas investment, that has threatened to displace older, working-class tenants (Lai, 2012; Toji & Umemoto, 2003). The pressures of gentrification demonstrate the limits to ethnic solidarity as co-ethnic investment may exacerbate internal class tensions and lead to displacement of low-income residents and small businesses.

Commodification of Ethnic Culture: Cultural Development. As cities continue to engage in urban revitalization efforts in ethnic neighborhoods, they are also increasingly employing cultural development strategies that promote and foster an image of diversity (Fainstein, 2005; Florida, 2003; Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Lin, 2011). Grodrach and

Loukaitou-Sideris (2007) categorized cultural revitalization strategies to distinguish their intent for the city and community. There are entrepreneurial strategies, which are large-scale monumental projects such as museums and theaters. Creative strategies upscale local activities and amenities to appeal to individuals in creative industries and with disposable incomes. Progressive cultural strategies are grassroots initiatives that encourage local cultural production among those living and working in these spaces. The former two encourage economic development by attracting new consumers and investors, while the latter builds community empowerment and capacity building among locals.

While there are different types of cultural revitalization efforts, much of the literature has focused on how cultural strategies are often used towards economic development, especially in ethnic spaces (Aguilar-San Juan, 2009; Dávila, 2004; Lin, 2011). Zukin (1995) argues urban growth is driven by a symbolic economy in which the production of space incorporates cultural representations to influence the consumption of space. The culture of places may be intentionally produced and managed to influence economic investment into urban spaces (Dávila, 2004; Hackworth & Rekers, 2005; Lin, 2011). Ethnic enclaves have been targets for cultural revitalization strategies that are linked to the production, and at times commodification, of ethnic culture. In contrast to the pathologizing of poor black and immigrant communities in past redevelopment efforts, these neighborhoods are now seen as cultural assets that should be preserved to maintain an authenticity of the neighborhood (Brown-Saracino & Rumpf, 2011; Anderson & Steinberg, 2013; Lin, 2011; Zukin 1995; Zukin, 2010). However, these strategies also may over-emphasize ethnic difference to promote these spaces as distinct destinations that boost both the local and regional economy (Aguilar-San Juan, 2009; Anderson & Sternberg, 2013; Dávila, 2004; Hackworth & Rekers, 2005; Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Lin, 2011; Shaw,

Bagwell, and Karmowska, 2004).

Cultural development has been integral to Chinatown's economic development. Throughout its history, business leaders have engaged in "strategic self-orientialism" in which they magnified an exotic Chinese identity to encourage economic development (Umbrach & Wishnoff, 2008). Cultural events, from the Miss Chinatown Pageant to contemporary night markets, have encouraged neighborhood tourism (Wu, 1997; Pottie-Sherman, 2010). These strategies that are meant to celebrate diversity and community also may paradoxically contribute to displacement by catering to the tastes of private investors and affluent consumers instead of long-term residents and business owners (Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Pottie-Sherman, 2010). These cultural strategies that celebrate ethnic identity may now be connected to the gentrification process occurring in ethnic enclaves.

Ethnic Enclave Political Structure and Players

Political economy perspectives also emphasize the importance and role of social actors in shaping neighborhood change. Hyra (2012) argues that contemporary urban redevelopment differs from the past because of ethnic community-based actors who stand to gain financially from the revitalization of low-income neighborhoods. There are now developers, property owners, real estate agents, and other for-profit business interests and political players within the community who have the potential to benefit from urban revitalization, some of whom may even transcend national boundaries (Hyra, 2012; Hum, 2014; Lin, 1998; Lin, 2011). In Asian American communities, business leaders often have political influence as they mediate between the community and mainstream institutions (Aguilar-San Juan, 2009; Katz, 2010; Smith, 2006; Vo, 2004). These business leaders, which include entrepreneurs, property owners, and bankers, have also been instrumental in forming immigrant and ethnic growth coalitions (Hum, 2014; Li,

et al., 2006; Light, 2002; Lin, 2011; Oh & Chung, 2014).

An understanding of the ethnic enclave social structure is critical to understanding the politics of change in Chinatown as this can provide insight to local power. Who holds and enacts political power within the social structure of the neighborhood matters to understanding both the persistence and changes in Chinatown. The community elite has historically consisted of older organizations that have been critical in the development of the political, organizational, and commercial infrastructure of these spaces. These organizations have also historically represented business interests in the community. Yet, through the ongoing engagement of ethnic communities across geography, generations, and immigrant cohorts, new forms of political leadership and voices have emerged in ethnic enclaves, which has contributed to local power conflicts and possibilities for cooperation that represents this diversity.

Because of their social isolation, ethnic enclaves developed a social structure that provide immigrants a sense of community. Ethnic organizations play a critical role in that structure (Park, 1950; Gans, 1982). Park (1950) originally argued that these organizations were meant to replicate the intimate "village" structure of the immigrants' homelands. These organizations were traditionally viewed as insular institutions that were meant to provide resources for immigrants who have yet to assimilate into the mainstream. Upon experiencing assimilation, these organizations would no longer be salient for immigrants as they would be able to use mainstream institutions for civic and political engagement. However, higher levels of "institutional completeness" within the neighborhood not only can encourage integration, but can maintain ethnic cohesion (Breton, 1964).

The organizations in ethnic enclaves thus have the potential to contribute to ongoing ethnic community formation across space. Immigration scholars have argued that the

neighborhood economy served as a distinct labor market and a mechanism for ongoing ethnic community formation in ethnic enclaves (Portes & Jensen, 1987; Zhou, 1995). In her analysis of Los Angeles Koreatown following the 1992 Los Angeles Uprising, Chung (2007) further argues that the organizations are an important mechanism. She explains that this is especially salient for ethnic communities that are residentially dispersed as the organizations in older urban ethnic enclaves provide "bridging" spaces for ongoing ethnic community formation. In these sites, they engage in ethnic politics. This engagement is a process of conflict and cooperation that contribute to a rearticulation of a politicized ethnic community identity, while also responding to the social and material conditions of the neighborhood. Ethnic organizations are thus also spaces to assert political power. They are critical in facilitating the political participation of Asian Americans, whether in accommodation or resistance to their political and racial positioning (Bonus, 2000; Espiritu, 1992; Vo, 2006; Wong, 2006).

Ethnic organizations are also often the basis for the community power structure in ethnic enclaves (Lai, 2004; Kwong, 1996). Today, there are generations of organizations in ethnic enclaves. Due to the history of xenophobia and racial exclusion from mainstream institutions, ethnic organizations were especially critical in the early Asian ethnic enclaves as a de facto structure of local governance and social control (Lai, 2004). While providing spaces of political inclusion for some, these also can be exclusionary institutions that serve the needs of elites (Kwong, 1996; Lin, 1998; Zhao, 2011). Kwong (1996) argues that Chinatown is a polarized community of "uptown" and "downtown" Chinese. The uptown Chinese are the Chinese Americans who left Chinatown after experiencing upward mobility but still have economic investments in Chinatown and are part of the older institutions that continue to hold political power in Chinatown. The downtown Chinese include the poor Chinese Americans who unable to

leave Chinatown and rely on housing and employment from the uptown Chinese. He argues that the downtown Chinese face "dual oppression" in which they may be oppressed by both mainstream society as well as within their community. Community elites also have hidden the neighborhood's social problems, including poverty, labor exploitation, and juvenile delinquency, to convey Chinatown as a presentable neighborhood (Kwong, 1996; Wu, 2014). The ethnic elite, and the organizations that they are a part of, have been important in presenting the ethnic community, but also may only represent specific interests and segments of the community.

In response to these inequities in Chinatown and other urban ethnic enclaves, Asian Americans have engaged directly in labor and housing activism on behalf of working-class new immigrants and seniors (Fujino, 2008; Kwong, 1996; Lin, 1998; Liu & Geron, 2008; Nee & Nee, 1986). This engagement led to new political leadership in Chinatown who focused on addressing issues of urban poverty and was a representative political voice for the immigrant working-class (Kwong, 1996; Lin, 1998; Nee & Nee, 1986; Wilson, 2014). Some of the grassroots organizing have become formal community institutions and non-profits that are now institutions that are part of the community power structure (Espiritu, 1992; Liu & Geron, 2008; Kwong & Miščevič, 2005). With the increasing reliance on Asian American professionals to navigate mainstream politics to bring resources to the community, the leaders in these contemporary organizations have emerged as political representatives on behalf of the community (Espiritu & Ong, 1994).

The neighborhood organizational infrastructure is a site for ethnic community formation and politics. Through this infrastructure, the ethnic community continues to develop attachments to place, while also enacting political power. The formation of new organizations reflects the diversification of local leadership and shifts in political power within the community. This dynamic is especially critical in places such as Chinatown which has a long-standing ethnic

community elite whose political and economic power has been challenged and possibly reshaped in the post-1965 context with the arrival of new immigrants and later generation political activism. The organizations and groups that form in ethnic enclaves serve as critical sites to understand how resources are distributed and community power is enacted in development and land use conflicts.

Ethnic Enclave Politics as a Spatialized Racial Project

An analysis of ethnic politics and Chinatowns also necessitates a broader conversation about race, which both the immigration and political economy literatures do not directly address. Chinatowns were neglected neighborhoods that formed in response to the racialization and segregation of early Chinese immigrant laborers who were treated as socially and culturally inferior. Today, Chinatowns are recognized as cultural assets as a part of the embracing of multiculturalism and diversity (Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Lin, 2011). The transformation of Chinatowns and their shifting values should be understood within a broader context of the racial formation of Chinese Americans.

Race theories consider how the cultural and political representations of ethnic groups contribute to ongoing social stratification and power inequities across groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Feagin, 2013; Omi & Winant, 2014; Saito, 2009). Defined as a structural force and relational process, race is an "othering" process and a concept that "signifies and symbolizes [historically-situated] sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies" (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 110). For Asian Americans, cultural and lifestyle markers associated with their ethnic identity have been significant to their racialization. While race is a persistent, structural force that stratifies groups, racial categories are unstable and politically contested. Individuals, groups, and institutions participate in historically-situated

"racial projects" in which groups reinforce or challenge current racial ideologies, meanings, and representations to organize and distribute cultural, economic, and political resources. As Lowe (1996) argues, the Asian American identity has been shaped by immigration policies and institutions, but it also has been used to resist the essentializing of ethnic groups and the racialized hegemonic structures in the United States. How the panethnic and individual Asian ethnic community identities are rearticulated concurrently rearticulates racial categories.

Racial projects vary across scale and type, but of importance for this research are "spatialized racial projects" (Lai, 2012). Within this perspective, the accommodation and resistance to racial ideologies are situated through the material and social conditions of a given space. Place-based activities, such as land use conflict and development, the segregation and migration of groups across space, and the social interactions and activities within a geographically defined space, not only shape the identity and material conditions of places, but also contribute to the production of race and community (Cheng, 2013; Lai, 2012; Liu, 2000; Neely & Samura, 2011). Through this place-based political engagement, different actors reinforce and resist the current dominant racial ideology and the racialized identity of their communities to assert power in shaping these spaces.

Scholars have argued that race plays a significant role in urban development (Anderson & Sternberg, 2013; Feagin, 2013; Lai, 2012; Pulido, 2000; Saito, 2009; Villa & Sanchez, 2005). Racialized understandings of ethnic communities can contribute to an uneven distribution of resources that reproduces and resists the social positioning and segregation of different communities within urban spaces (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1989; Lai, 2012; Pulido, 2000). Traditional top-down approaches to planning, such as urban renewal policies and practices, have been critiqued as pathologizing black and immigrant neighborhoods as socially disorganized to

justify these communities as blighted and in need of reinvestment (Gans, 1982; Lai, 2012; Saito, 2009). Contemporary debates on land use changes, such as affordable housing and conditional use permits among ethnic business owners, continue to draw from negative framings of the poor, immigrants, and ethnic groups to resist development and growth (Harwood, 2005; Nguyen, Basolo, & Tiwari, 2012). The framing of immigrants as racialized others has also been used towards the resistance of ethnic-oriented development in suburbs that paradoxically have been celebrated for their contemporary ethnic diversity (Cheng, 2013; Horton, 1995; Saito, 1998).

Ethnic enclaves have been critical sites where ascribed racialized community identities are reproduced, challenged, and rearticulated, especially for Asian American communities. In the post-World War II context, the racialized identity of Asian American communities has been the image of the assimilated, upwardly mobile "model minority" that valorizes them relative to other racial groups (Brooks, 2009; Kim, 1999; Kurashige, 2008; Lai, 2012; Maeda, 2009). This ascribed identity, while seemingly presenting a positive image of the community as model citizens, tends to homogenize the experiences of communities within the Asian American identity and obscuring the ongoing economic, cultural, and political oppression facing many Asian American communities, especially those still living in ethnic enclaves like Chinatown. Following World War II, when the "model minority" identity was extended to Asian Americans, community elites engaged in community development and established cultural events in Chinatown to present Chinese Americans as model citizens, emphasizing their possibility for socioeconomic mobility and assimilation (Wu, 1997; Wu, 2014). This was part of Chinatown's transition from an urban ethnic ghetto that formed through racial exclusion to an ethnic enclave facilitating assimilation.

However, the development of the radical and progressive Asian American political

ideology was also rooted in the activism in urban ethnic enclaves, especially Chinatowns (Fujino, 2008; Kwong, 1996; Lin, 1998; Liu & Geron, 2008; Maeda, 2009; Nee & Nee, 1986; Wilson, 2014). This activism resisted assimilationist perspectives and articulated an Asian American identity that was situated in anti-racism and anti-imperialist philosophies. Radical Asian Americans specifically protested urban redevelopment in ethnic enclaves as a part of the politicization. This resistance was not simply to preserve the historical importance of these spaces, but to highlight the urban poor and working-class Asian immigrants who still lived in these places and contradicted assimilation narratives. The social conditions and relationships in these spaces nurtured an oppositional political culture to openly question democracy and equality (Fujino, 2008). Ethnic enclaves have thus been critical sites for Asian Americans to develop politicized ethnic community identities that have broader implications for their racialization.

Methodology

For this research, I followed an ethnographic approach to examine the political culture of Los Angeles Chinatown. Ethnography is a qualitative research methodology that seeks to highlight the lived experiences of groups and the meanings behind those experiences (Agar, 1986; Emerson, et al., 2011; Geertz, 1973; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). Ethnographic research includes in-depth fieldwork and multiple methods of data collection to produce written and visual accounts of the social phenomenon of interest (Emerson, et al., 2011). I also relied on an interpretivist, grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis in which I developed empirically informed concepts and relationships and "lifted" the data to build upon the literature reviewed in the previous section (Glaser, 1965; Suddaby, 2006).

Fieldwork and Data Collection

In August 2014, I began my fieldwork on Los Angeles Chinatown, which lasted almost

three years (August 2014-May 2017). Following the interpretivist logic of theoretical saturation, I analyzed the data throughout my data collection (Small, 2009). This logic informed the number and type of observations and interviews I conducted, as I continued and adjusted my data collection based on emerging themes until I found no new information. The following section describes how I carried out my data collection, which included archival research, participant observations, informal interviews, and in-depth formal interviews.

Chinatown Boundaries. This study focuses on the "New Chinatown" neighborhood which was established in 1938 and has evolved into a roughly 1.2 square miles area located in the northeastern area of Los Angeles. I situate this neighborhood as a distinct physical geography that is not inclusive of the entirety of the Old Chinatown area (currently Union Station) or the cities in the San Gabriel Valley that have been labeled the "new suburban Chinatowns" (Fong, 1994). However, as explained in subsequent chapters, these areas are an external influence shaping the neighborhood. The area is roughly bounded by Cesar Chavez in the South, Spring Street to the east, Marview Avenue to the west, and Solano Avenue to the north. Chinatown's neighboring areas are Lincoln Heights to the northeast, Downtown to the south, and Echo Park to the west. Appendix A provides a map of Chinatown with the bolded boundary signifying the study area for this project. It also includes more information on the spatial layout of Chinatown and how the boundaries of the neighborhood were determined for this study.

Observations. I visited and observed a range of public meetings and events from different organizations and groups throughout my fieldwork. This included the Historic-Cultural Neighborhood Council (HCNC), Los Angeles Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID), Chinatown Community for Equitable Development (CCED), Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC), and Chinese American Citizens Alliance Los Angeles Lodge

(CACA). I ultimately conducted observations at over 90 events and meetings, in addition to weekly neighborhood visits (see Appendix B for breakdown of events).

Most of my observations were meetings and events that provided the Chinatown community a platform to deliberate about development in the neighborhood. These events provided an understanding of the governance and planning process of Chinatown in relation to urban development and revitalization issues. I also attended some organizational public meetings and events with the expectation that they would discuss these issues, which was not always the case. However, the absence of these discussions was also critical in understanding the community power structure, which will be explained in subsequent chapters.

I became a more active participant-observer at these events after a year of establishing a presence and trust with several gatekeepers. My role as a participant included recording minutes at HCNC and BID meetings, volunteering for events hosted by several organizations, and in the case of CACA, helping with mailing monthly newsletters. I also became a member of CHSSC and CACA. As a more engaged participant, I was able to identify the salient issues in the community that helped further refine my initial research aims to be both empirically and theoretically informed. In addition, through my attendance and participation at these various events, I became familiar to many in the community, which allowed me to interview a range of individuals for the in-depth interviews. As a participant-observer, I also reflect my own positionality as a researcher in my fieldnotes, which I wrote for all observations (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). I describe in more detail my positionality in the field in Appendix B.

I also conducted observations of the neighborhood. This included social and cultural activities and routine neighborhood visits. The events provided an understanding of the different cultural strategies used to revitalize Chinatown. Neighborhood visits provided additional

contextual understandings of Chinatown as I saw the ebbs and flows of foot traffic during different times of the day, the physical and spatial arrangement of the neighborhood, and the progress of new developments that were being proposed and constructed.

Interviews. I conducted both informal and formal interviews with 72 individuals who varied in their involvement and claims to Chinatown. Informal interviews included unstructured conversations with individuals at the beginning stages of my fieldwork, as well as during my observations throughout my fieldwork. Formal interviews were semi-structured interview sessions with community leaders in Chinatown.

At the beginning stages of my research, I conducted informal interviews with community gatekeepers at CHSSC, CACA, and the Chinese American Museum (CAM). These open-ended conversations provided a baseline understanding of the contemporary issues in Chinatown as I conducted my observations at community meetings and events. Furthermore, the informal interviews I conducted throughout the process of my fieldwork helped me to understand the general history of Chinatown, its organizations, and the Chinese American community in Southern California that was not available through archival research.

The formal interviews were conducted from May 2016 to May 2017. A total of 59 in-depth interviews were completed for this study. Since this study focused on the political culture of Chinatown, I limited my interviews to community leaders who were specifically engaged in development issues. Fifty-two of the in-depth interviews were with community leaders whom I identified as politically active in neighborhood development issues. I distinguished these individuals as community leaders from other stakeholders based on the following criteria: (1) acted as formal or informal representative on behalf of an organization or specific interest for the community; (2) actively engaged in a leadership role within a community-based organization;

and/or (3) engaged in community development issues related to social services, economic, housing, or cultural development. I used purposive and snowball sampling for my key informant interviews. I identified potential interviewees through observations and archives, as well as recommendations from community gatekeepers.

I chose interviewees according to three categories that distinguish individuals based on their initial interests in Chinatown: *residential* (n = 19), *business* (n = 19), and *culture* (n = 14). These three categories were chosen to create mutually exclusive categories across interviewees as my initial fieldwork quickly showed that other modes of engagement were not mutually exclusive (e.g., organizational affiliation or stakeholder claim). However, I categorized interviewees according to when they distinctly indicated they became more politically active in Chinatown as adults. The intersections of engagement and temporal changes to people's involvement and engagement are incorporated into the analysis and interpretations of my findings. Community leaders classified as representing *residential interests* include those who were involved in groups and activities that focused on improving the conditions for Chinatown residents and workers, including labor, housing, and immigrant rights. Individuals were classified as having *business interests* if they held economic investments in Chinatown and became involved with business and property-based organizations. Lastly, the *culture* category includes individuals who became engaged through cultural institutions and heritage projects and/or traditional organizations in Chinatown, such as the mutual aid associations.

As I conducted my initial fieldwork, generational differences in leadership also emerged as an important distinction. I thus further divided my interviewees by "engagement cohorts" in order to capture varying perspectives from older and newer stakeholders. The older engagement cohort included individuals who became more active in Chinatown up until 1990 (n = 28) and

the younger engagement cohort included individuals who became active in the community after 1990 (n = 24). I chose the year 1990 after it emerged in the formative data collection and analysis that this decade was a major post-1965 turning point in how community leaders and the media were beginning to frame Chinatown as a neighborhood that was in decline in relation to the growth of neighboring San Gabriel Valley. This also initiated internal political shifts and new leadership to address these changes in Chinatown which became formalized after 2000. These trends will be explained throughout the findings.

Of the 52 interviewees, 48 identified as Chinese American. Four of these interviewees were not Chinese Americans but were identified as individuals who have been actively engaged in the community and were important local figures in Chinatown. While all interviewees identified with at least one organization or institution in Chinatown, only 7 interviewees claimed to be current residents of Chinatown and 10 as past residents. This low percentage of resident representation is indicative of the limits of ethnic political power and representation in Chinatown that emerged as a major theme and will be explained in subsequent chapters.

A majority of interviewees are 1.5+ generation (n = 42).[1] I classify 1.5+ generation as individuals who either (1) were born outside the United States but immigrated before attending college or were of college age (roughly 18 years old) or (2) were born in the United States. In other words, I grouped individuals who spent their childhood or formative years in the United States into one category. I did not further break down the generational status because of the complex history of Chinese immigration that restricted Chinese American citizenship status and

[1] Generational status was an important community characteristic and dynamic for my project. Due to language limitations, I only interviewed individuals who were proficient in English. Thus, where many of the interviewees were not first-generation immigrants, e.g., individuals born outside the United States and immigrated as adults, I used archival research to supplement this gap. Additionally, this project focuses on Chinatown community leaders who engage with mainstream development politics, almost all of whom are bilingual and conversant in English. The lack of first generation community leaders in Chinatown may represent a general gap in political representation that will be further explained in the findings.

contributed to migration in and out of the United States across generations. Furthermore, the different interpretations from interviewees in answering this question about their background made this difficult to further breakdown.[2]

I also interviewed 7 outside partners in addition to community leaders. I defined these outside partners as city government staff (n = 2), former CRA staff (n = 3), and non-Chinatown community leaders (n = 2) who worked with Chinatown through the CRA and neighborhood council system. These interviewees were important in providing and validating contextual information about these institutions. In addition, two individuals were also classified as city government staff due to their occupation. I included them as community leaders rather than outside partners because they have been and are directly involved with local Chinatown organizations as opposed to other outside partners interviewed for the project.

I used a semi-structured approach to interviews. I had pre-determined questions based on broad topics relevant to answering my research questions (see Appendix C for Interview Topic Guide). The three broad topics included (1) personal history in Chinatown; (2) perceptions of changes, including the past, current, and future revitalization needs of the neighborhood; and (3) experiences and perceptions of community engagement in neighborhood planning issues. While I had preset topics, I followed the "active interview" approach (Holstein & Gubrien, 1995; Rubin & Rubin, 1996) and adjusted each interview so that I could draw upon their "stocks of knowledge." Most interviews averaged 2 hours. Apart from three individuals, all interviews were

[2] When I asked about generational status during interviews, several individuals responded by sharing how their family history spans several generations in the United States, with some sharing how they had family members who were born in the United States and moved back to China due to racial hostilities, but that they are considered one of the first generations to establish consistent roots in the United States. Because of this history, it was difficult to capture a consistent numerical response about a person's generational status as this varied in people's interpretation of the question. This complex immigration history and how it shapes people's understanding of their generational status is an important context and worth further research (see Rumbaut, 2004). But an analysis of individual ethnic identity is outside of the scope of this research.

audio recorded. They were transcribed or summarized as fieldnotes in lieu of an audio recording.

Every interviewee was informed of the option to be identified in this study, and almost all consented to be identified. However, as the findings address the various community perceptions of Chinatown and how they relate to issues of conflict and power, I decided to present some interview quotes as de-identified to protect the privacy of the few individuals who wanted to remain anonymous. I instead attributed the quotes to the organization or type of stakeholder they represented. I made exceptions when using quotes that were easily identifiable and purposely highlighted personal histories to provide important insight into community dynamics. These attributed quotes highlight and document the experiences of community leadership in Chinatown, while also providing empirical and theoretical contributions.

Archives. Archival research was critical to understanding the broader context and history of the neighborhood. The archives primarily consisted of media, community publications, government documents and reports, and census data (see Appendix B for breakdown of census tracts). The archival research served two purposes. The first purpose was to construct a social history of Chinatown to understand the trajectory and pattern of development. Limited academic work is available in this area, thus archival research served as important sources to understand the historical context. The second purpose was to understand how urban revitalization and neighborhood change in Chinatown has been publicly framed. I approached my archival research from an interpretivist and critical perspective. Smith (1973) argues that material objects, such as documents, are socially constructed entities and can provide insight into social relationships, and are not just neutral documents to present “truth." I recognize that the information I collected may reflect a specific institutional perspective and/or the person’s role in the community.

The sources for media, government archives, and community publications included the

Los Angeles City Clerk online database, ProQuest online newspaper database, and the CHSSC archives. In addition, several interviewees shared archives and documents throughout my fieldwork. I was granted permission to the personal archive of Dr. Munson A. Kwok, a CHSSC and CACA member, who was involved in the CRA Chinatown Community Advisory Committee (CCAC). His archive included select CCAC board and subcommittee meeting agendas, minutes, and materials, Chinatown CRA Project Area reports, CRA and CCAC correspondences, and proposed development plans. This archive was critical in providing an understanding of the CRA and CCAC in Chinatown.

Data Analysis

I used a variety of interpretivist techniques to analyze the interviews, observations, and archival data. These different techniques were used to ensure credibility and member validity of my analysis (Bloor, 2001). My analytic approach followed the concept of thick description which seeks to not only accurately capture the lived experiences in rich detail but to also accurately interpret the data to identify the underlying meanings (Geertz, 1973; Becker, 1996).

I first applied the constant comparison method of analytic coding (Emerson, et al., 2011; Glaser, 1965). Through this inductive method, concepts and themes emerge through the coding process and is done throughout the data collection process to guide the research. I conducted open coding with an initial set of fieldnotes and interview transcripts to develop codes that were grounded in the data. While coding subsequent documents, I compared and modified codes to identify patterns and variations that developed into broader conceptual categories. Using domain analysis, categories were created that grouped my open codes into broader conceptual categories through semantic relationships (Spradley, 1979). I wrote analytic memos as I coded to help interpret the patterns and relationships in my data to further identify and develop broader

concepts grounded from the data (Emerson, et al., 2011; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). All data coding and management was done through Atlas.ti 7 software.

With my coded data, I also applied additional interpretive techniques to understand embedded meanings in the text. First, I used narrative analysis, specifically a rhetorical analysis technique, to identify the underlying meaning of the discourses in interview and fieldwork passages (Feldman, et al., 2004). This analysis identifies the main storyline, oppositions presented in the story, and the logics, or syllogisms, that are implicitly and explicitly stated in that story. I also applied semiotic analytic techniques to understand the symbolism of physical spaces in the neighborhood. Through this analysis, I mapped the denotative and connotative meanings of these spaces to link them to broader understandings of community change. Both the narrative and semiotic analyses focused on uncovering the underlying meanings that are often not explicitly stated or shown in the data (Feldman, 1995).

My time and involvement in Los Angeles Chinatown strengthened both the external and member validity of the project. By spending several years in the field, I developed relationships and accumulated local knowledge that allowed me to build a credible reputation with multiple community leaders and gatekeepers who consistently shared information, resources, and opinions about neighborhood issues. I used traditional triangulation methods to crosscheck historical events and demographic figures across archives, interviews, and observations to ensure accuracy (Yin, 2009). I was also guided by interpretively informed triangulation to further assess the member validity of my data (Roth & Mehta, 2002). This process of triangulation considers how the context and background of individuals, including ethnicity, age, generational status, and stakeholder claims, help provide a deeper understanding of the social structure within the community. This process of validation was also a means to critically analyze my data as

reflecting specific individual perspectives and the implications of those subjective experiences and meanings in shaping the politics of Chinatown.

Summary of Chapters

The following chapters present the major themes that emerged from this study, highlighting the importance of spaces and narratives as key mechanisms in asserting control over the neighborhood amid both urban development pressures and ethnic community changes. Specifically, my findings highlight how community control was expressed through the formation of new organizations, participation in spaces for community representation, and the framings of neighborhood change and identity. These chapters explain how the politics of neighborhood planning and urban development have contributed to the persistence of Chinatown as a salient space for the Chinese Americans, despite being a geographically dispersed population in the county. The findings in each chapter also highlight that amid the ongoing engagement in Chinatown, there is variation in how community leaders make sense of the changes and define the value of Chinatown, which has implications for the community's political power in determining development in Chinatown and reasserting an ethnic community identity.

Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of the development of Los Angeles Chinatown. The chapter focuses on the macro-level immigration, regional migration, and urban planning trends in the pre- and post-1965 eras that have impacted Chinatown's physical and social composition over time. It provides the historical context that has led to the contemporary issues facing Chinatown that will be detailed in the subsequent empirical chapters.

Chapter 3 examines the ongoing political engagement of Chinese Americans in Chinatown through the contemporary organizational landscape. The neighborhood's organizational landscape reflects the different generation and immigration cohorts of Chinese

Americans who now have varying attachments based on their politics and understandings of their immigrant and racial identity. Their organizational engagement, whether through formal or informal organizations, contribute to community development, but are also ongoing responses to political, social, and economic gaps in addressing local need from the city, as well as the older community power structure. The ongoing formation of new organizations in Chinatown, as well as the efforts to sustain older organizations, reflect generations of political engagement and have been critical to maintaining and revitalizing Chinatown as an ethnic enclave that continues to hold political salience for Chinese Americans.

Chapter 4 builds on the prior chapter to examine how the political representation of Chinatown has expanded beyond traditional-ethnic based organizations and now includes new organizational forms. This includes spaces of political representation that emerged from both the city's revitalization strategies and initiatives to encourage citizen engagement in local politics. Through their varying engagement in these spaces, community leaders challenged both the legitimacy of city-initiated spaces and norms of participatory practices, as well as the established community power structure. This advocacy has led to shifts in political gatekeeping and leadership in Chinatown based on business and residential interests. It has also led to a perception of Chinatown as a politically active, but fragmented community as it also reshaped and challenged community relationships.

Chapter 5 examines a dominant narrative in housing and economic development conflicts that situate Chinatown as a neighborhood in need of "balance" and "diversity." This narrative reflects both an alternative way of discussing gentrification and the broader policy context to encourage social mixing. It is also a means of reshaping the value of Chinatown. Chinatown has been a space for poor and working-class immigrants; however, some felt that this was not

beneficial and are starting to advocate for change that would begin to steer Chinatown away from this identity. Community leaders' understandings of "balance" and "diversity" in Chinatown are situated temporally, spatially, and within the Chinese American community. Together, they provide insight on how the Chinatown leaders grapple with the concept of social diversity in an ethnic enclave and the tension of who has the right to benefit from these changes.

Chapter 6 examines how community leaders are defining a cultural identity of Chinatown that maintains it as a relevant ethnic space. While there are heritage organizations and community-oriented productions of culture, the neighborhood design and use are critical to the cultural identity of Chinatown and specifically for encouraging economic development. Business leaders and property owners tend to have the most power in determining the cultural identity of Chinatown and they vary as to whether they envision their spaces within a personal or collective understanding of culture and heritage. Furthermore, contemporary cultural strategies in Chinatown may be catering towards an upwardly mobile population that may be attracting Chinese Americans, but is not necessarily ethnic specific. These strategies to both maintain and reconstruct the cultural identity of Chinatown can paradoxically contribute to gentrification and its decline as a center for the Chinese American community.

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the overarching themes across the preceeding chapters. I explain how these findings contribute to an understanding of the community politics of urban Chinatowns and how these findings specifically connect to broader theoretical understandings of ethnic politics and urban development. This chapter also includes policy implications for urban planning practices that seek to be inclusive of ethnic communities in the planning process and to promote equitable development practices.

CHAPTER 2

A PLANNING HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES CHINATOWN

> Central City North is not only the birthplace of Los Angeles, but the symbolic cultural centers for three of the region's most prominent ethnic groups. The plan area encompasses Chinatown, parts of Little Tokyo, and parts of the original Mexican pueblo. Ironically, the majority of each of the major ethnic populations that settled [in] Central City North now live outside the plan area, yet each regards the original locations as the heart of their heritage in Los Angeles (City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, 2000).
>
> - Excerpt from the Central City North Community Plan, which provides the framework to guide development in Chinatown

Los Angeles Chinatown is one of the oldest urban Chinatowns in the United States. The changes that the neighborhood has faced since its original formation in the 1870s reflect both the changes in the Chinese American community in Southern California, both demographically and their positioning in society. The neighborhood changes reflect broader urban trends as well. The city has gone through various stages of revitalization to develop and maintain its power as a global urban economic and cultural center, but has also been reshaped by immigration trends that change the demographics of the city. Chinatown sits at the intersection of two major forces that contribute to the ongoing restructuring of urban spaces: Asian immigration and downtown revitalization strategies.

This chapter provides a history of Chinatown to understand the macro-level forces of neighborhood change. The historical eras are divided as following: Pre-World War II (1870-1940); World War II and Early Cold War (1940-1965); World City (1965-2000); and Back to the City (2000 to present). These eras were adapted and modified from Kurashige's (2010) periodization of Los Angeles as it become a "white spot" city to global city in the 20th century and Lin and Moy's (2006) historical analysis of Los Angeles Chinatown. This historical overview also provides a temporal analysis of the co-production of race and space (Neely &

Samura, 2012) that argues that neighborhood change reflects the racial positioning of the Chinese American community. As Lowe (1996) points out, immigration policies and regulations are intrinsically linked to the racialization of Asian American communities. The different stages of Chinatown's development as an immigrant gateway are a spatial expression of the changing racial ideologies and positioning of Chinese Americans as they transitioned from an era of racial exclusion of Asian immigrants to the current era that embraces global, multicultural identities. This has reshaped the value of Chinatown from a neglected urban ghetto to a cultural asset and a neighborhood grappling with the threats of gentrification today.

Furthermore, the findings highlight how the geographical context matters in understanding Chinatowns (Zhou, 1998). Los Angeles serves as a critical site that extend understandings of race beyond the black/white racial binary (Kurashige, 2008; Pulido, 2006) and the Chicago School arguments of concentric models of urban growth and immigration trends based on European immigration patterns (Dear & Flusty, 2002). Los Angeles has been characterized as a racially segregated, but also "fragmented city" of low-density, decentralized development (Dear, 1996; Fogelson, 1993). The history of Los Angeles Chinatown thus also follows the city's development pattern, as throughout its history, it has been one destination, albeit a very critical place, for Chinese Americans across Los Angeles.

Pre-World War II (1870-1940): From Old Chinatown to New Chinatown

By the early 20th century, Los Angeles matured into a major city with one of the most racially diverse populations in the United States (Avila, 2006; Brooks, 2009). Los Angeles was a major immigration gateway, especially for Asian immigrants, but it also attracted blacks who were leaving as a part of the Great Migration and middle-class whites from the Midwest (Brooks, 2009; Kurashige, 2008; Wachs, 2007). Despite the city becoming racially diverse, Los Angeles

was also a racially segregated city, specifically reflecting a white and non-white racial dichotomy (Brooks, 2009; Kurashige, 2008). Chinese Americans were clustered in Los Angeles and settled in specific spaces throughout the city with other non-white groups, making them vulnerable for the city's early redevelopment projects.

Structuring Asian Exclusion: The Intersection of Immigration and Land Use Laws

Early Chinese Americans were clustered together with other non-white groups in specific areas of the city due to exclusionary immigration, racial, and land use policies. Chinese laborers immigrated to the United States beginning in the mid-1800s. These early Chinese immigrants primarily came from the Guangdong (Canton) region in China, and more specifically the Siyi counties of Xinhui, Taishan, Kaiping, and Enping (Lai, 2004), which created the Cantonese dominant identity of Chinatown.[3] Chinese immigrants often arrived as manual laborers, which included work on the western railway construction, mining, and agriculture, as well as a select few who came as merchants and students. Xenophobia and racism towards Chinese laborers emerged as they were accused of stealing jobs from the white working-class. In addition to the everyday racism they experienced, different policies and practices legally excluded their rights in the United States.

Along with blacks and Mexicans, Chinese and other Asian immigrants were a racialized group deemed as non-whites experiencing both social and legal discrimination. The Naturalization Act of 1790 first established that the naturalization of immigrants was limited to those who were "free whites." The Exclusion Act of 1882 banned Chinese laborers from entering the United States for ten years and prohibited Chinese immigrants currently living in the United States to apply for citizenship. They were legally classified as "aliens ineligible for citizenship."

[3] For this research, I refer to the Guangdong (Cantonese) Chinese regional dialect as Cantonese. Otherwise, I use the Pinyin romanization of Chinese terms for consistency unless specified.

The Exclusion Act was not repealed until 1943. The Immigration Act of 1924 further restricted immigration to the United States by setting preferences for those who have at least one relative who was a naturalized citizen or for those who were merchants or skilled in a certain trade or industry, such as agriculture. Furthermore, the Page Act of 1875 restricted Asian women from immigrating to the U.S., deeming them "undesirable." This led to gendered immigration to the U.S. from China and the development of early Chinatowns as "bachelor societies."

Property ownership laws further shaped local community formation and neighborhood development. The California Alien Land Acts enacted in 1913 and 1920 further excluded Chinese Americans. The Alien Land Acts deemed any "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning and leasing property. While not as racially overt as the Exclusion Act, it still had racial undertones by further restricting the rights of non-citizens and aliens, which were primarily immigrants of Asian descent. These policies systematically placed Chinese Americans outside of mainstream society, socially and legally.

Local land use laws further contributed to the second-class status of Chinese immigrants. In 1908, Los Angeles implemented the Residence District Ordinance, which was a series of zoning ordinances enacted throughout the city to separate residential and industrial use spaces (Molina, 2005). The zoning patterns laid the foundation for a racially segregated city as the zoning decisions reflected the racial and class divisions within the city (Fogelson, 1993; Kurashige, 2008). Wealthier neighborhoods in the west enforced more restrictive zoning measures to ensure that they would remain low-density residential areas. The southern and eastern neighborhoods were unrestricted areas and tended to have industrial uses. These unrestricted areas were also home to racial minorities excluded from other areas. The Residence District Ordinance targeted Chinese American businesses by restricting laundry houses and other

businesses dominated by Chinese merchants to industrial zones (Molina, 2005). This ordinance rezoned certain industrial areas to residential areas, indicating the city's desire to contain Chinese Americans and their businesses within specific areas in the eastern part of Los Angeles.

While zoning segregated spaces by land use, restrictive covenants further contributed to segregation by restricting residential patterns. In 1917, the Supreme Court declared racial zoning ordinances illegal in their ruling of *Buchanan vs. Warley*. However, this ruling applied to legal statutes and not private agreements, which included restrictive covenants on private property. These covenants perpetuated racial segregation, barring Asian Americans, as well as blacks, Mexicans, and certain European groups, from renting and owning property in specific neighborhoods. In Los Angeles, this further influenced the clustering of Asian Americans, Latinos, and blacks to specific neighborhoods in South and East Los Angeles (Kurashige, 2008). In addition, nativist groups in the 1920s organized to block Asian Americans from moving into their neighborhoods (Brooks, 2009). By 1940, Los Angeles only had two residential districts that permitted Asian American residents to own homes (Li, 2009).

Development and Displacement of Old Chinatown

The restrictive policies against Chinese Americans shaped the formation of Chinese American settlements in Los Angeles. Old Chinatown formed circa 1870 and was in the Old Plaza near the city's eastern industrial area near the railway terminals. By 1910, the neighborhood included over 3,000 Chinese Americans, and by 1920, the community also included second-generation, native-born Chinese Americans (Cheng & Kwok, 2001). It is considered one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city as its formation predates most of the city's formal planning institutions and tools, including the establishment of the Los Angeles Planning Commission in 1924 and the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance in 1946.

While Chinese Americans were racially segregated, the settlement patterns of Chinese Americans in Los Angeles contrast with other cities, such as San Francisco where Chinese Americans lived and worked in a hyper-segregated Chinatown (Brooks, 2009). Old Chinatown was a racially segregated multiethnic space of Chinese, Mexicans, and blacks and was the largest Chinese American settlement in Los Angeles. Another major Chinese American settlement was the City Market on 9th and San Pedro, south of Old Chinatown. This was established in 1909 in partnership with Chinese and Japanese Americans produce distributors. The establishment of this market is considered one of the first satellite Chinatowns. Chinese Americans in Los Angeles were a racially segregated community, but lived in specific areas in proximity with other groups who were considered non-whites.

Old Chinatown was considered a slum. While other areas in Los Angeles received structural improvements and municipal services, Chinatown was mostly neglected and only had two paved roads by the 1920s (Lin & Moy, 2005). It also had dilapidated housing, gambling houses, opium dens, and gang wars. The city refused to provide basic services to improve the conditions of the neighborhood, and instead blamed the residents for their conditions (Molina, 2005). Chinese immigrants were also still vulnerable to racism in Old Chinatown. In 1871, Chinese immigrants were publicly lynched. This event has been deemed the Chinese Massacre of 1871, one of the largest mass lynchings in the United States, and a reminder that Chinatown was not always sanctuary spaces for the Chinese American community.

Because of its location near the downtown core and railyards, as well as the poor neighborhood conditions and the racial positioning of Chinese Americans as an "unassimilable other," Chinatown was vulnerable to early redevelopment projects. In the 1920s, Los Angeles began to develop its civic center core in the downtown area that aimed to modernize and beautify

cities by building grand monuments and open streetscapes. It would promote an image of a moral social order in contrast to the overcrowded slums that had come to characterize most cities. This City Beautiful movement was also a means for local government to continue the flows of capital and investment into cities (Foglesong, 1986). The city specifically built its major civic institutions near the Old Plaza, including City Hall in 1928. Furthermore, the city had plans to regulate the transit corporations, which were all privately-owned monopolies. One of the solutions was to develop a "union" train station near the Old Plaza area that would consolidate all the different independently owned terminals (Wachs, 2007). The Apablasa family, the major property owners of Old Chinatown, also began to sell to private investors in the 1910s. Through the course of over 15 years, private investors and corporations acquired the land, which paved the way for the area to be redeveloped.

By 1920, the *Los Angeles Times* declared that the old Chinatown spirit was "dead" and the neighborhood was now "slumbering in the path of progress" (Finney, 1920). Constructing a central railroad station on the Chinatown site was seen as beneficial because it would connect with other downtown civic center development projects, revitalize and beautify the Old Plaza area, and "the present unsightly Chinatown will be eliminated" (Park Official for Plaza Site, 1926). In May 1931, the California Supreme Court condemned all the property in Chinatown. The city ultimately used eminent domain to demolish the buildings in Chinatown and allow for the construction of Union Station. In 1933, the city began the eviction of Chinatown residents and business owners, which was overseen by the Plaza Development Association, a group of seventy corporations (Pulido, Barraclough & Cheng, 2012). The clearance of Old Chinatown led to the disappearance of one of the largest Chinese American settlements in the city.

The Chinese American community was forced to disperse, with some who were not

citizens migrating back to China. Others moved to areas where Chinese Americans were not excluded from, including neighborhoods near the City Market area. However, some would relocate near Old Chinatown as new Chinatowns were being developed near Union Station.

Developing a New Chinatown: Modernity and Tourism

Within less than a decade of Old Chinatown's demolishment, two new Chinatown developments were created that aimed to appeal to the tourists who would arrive through Union Station: China City and New Chinatown (see Appendix A). The area where these two developments were located is slightly northeast of Union Station and at the time was a European immigrant enclave and proximate to Mexican settlements. Remnants of the different European immigrant groups are still present today, including St. Anthony's Croatian Church, the French Hospital building, and Capitol Milling, which was one of the first Jewish-owned businesses in Los Angeles.

China City opened first in 1933 and was developed by Hollywood socialite Christine Starling. This development primarily catered to tourists and presented Hollywood images of China, including props and sets from the movie, *The Good Earth*. Despite the Hollywood and tourist overtones, it also served as residences for displaced Chinese Americans from Old Chinatown. This area was eventually devastated by a fire in 1949 and was gone by the 1950s.

The other development was "New Chinatown," which is the current site for Chinatown and the focus of this research (see Figure 2.1). This was established in 1938. The development consisted of a mixed-use plaza, planned and initiated from Chinese American business community leaders who came together as the Los Angeles Chinatown Project Association (currently known as the Los Angeles Chinatown Corporation). This development was designed to be a modern and open space that situated Chinatown away from the urban ghetto

characterization the neighborhood as an area of gambling, vice, and disease. New Chinatown consisted of several buildings that made up a one-square block plaza. The plaza was designed to have modern buildings infused with traditional Chinese architectural motifs, such as the pagoda awnings and gateways. This style of architecture has become a unique and quintessential physical identity of many urban Chinatowns, although as Chapter 6 details, these designs are shifting and being challenged by developments with relatively "modern" architecture. The roads were paved and allowed for automobiles to drive through the plaza, although this was eventually closed and is now a pedestrian plaza.

Figure 2.1. Central Plaza today. Photos taken by author, August and October 2015.

On the opening day of New Chinatown, Peter Soohoo, Jr. one of the business leaders spearheading the development, said that this would become the new center for the Chinese American community that was now scattered throughout Los Angeles (Cheng & Kwok, 2001). Similarly, a *Los Angeles Times* article from September 21, 1934 noted this new development would reflect the new assimilated second generation:

> Barbara Jean [Wong, descendant of the oldest living resident of Old Chinatown and child movie star] along with hundreds of other Chinese children whose American educations have made them more conversant with present happenings than are their parents, knows that their homes of her ancestors are passing away. But they will arise, clean, sanitary, carefully planned, when the new Chinese village, which will lie between Ord and College streets, Broadway and Alameda

> street, is completed a few months from now (Home for the Oriental Population Planned, 1934).

The New Chinatown development was envisioned to be for the community, who were still excluded from mainstream society, but also to present an image that they were a community that could emulate and assimilate into mainstream ideals of urban modernity. It also signaled that with this new generation of Chinese Americans, the community saw themselves as permanently settling and establishing themselves in the city. The New Chinatown development was a political claim of their identity as Americans that was spatially expressed.

While the development was community-led and framed as a community space that reflected the new generation of Chinese Americans, the development was also deliberately proposed as a tourist destination (Lin & Moy, 2005). During its development, the *Los Angeles Times* advertised New Chinatown as a "delightful bit of the Orient re-created in America." (Cohan, 1933). The establishment of New Chinatown, as well as the neighboring China City, coincided with the increasing fascination of "oriental" culture in Hollywood, and some Chinese entrepreneurs recognized this trend as an economic strategy that could justify a development to re-establish Chinatown (Brooks, 2009).

The current formation of Chinatown was not necessarily a "natural" development, nor was it simply established as a broader "community-serving" settlement for Chinese Americans. It was built in response to an early stage of urban renewal and designed from its inception to be a place of cultural tourism to serve non-Chinese Americans who were interested in experiencing some sense of "authentic" Chinese culture. By purposely establishing a tourism element to the neighborhood, the neighborhood's economic strategy was not exclusive to, but heavily relied on cultural consumption and maintaining a specific cultural identity of the neighborhood. This reliance on cultural tourism is a legacy of Chinatown that continues today.

World War II and the Early Cold War (1940-1965): First Life Cycle of New Chinatown and Suburbanization

The racial context began to shift as global relations were changing after World War II and into the Cold War era. The United States began to emphasize racial equality and liberalism to highlight the superiority of U.S. democracy over communism (Brooks, 2009; Cheng, 2006). As a part of these geopolitics, Chinese Americans were now shifting from being an "alien ineligible for citizenship" to a "friendly foreigner" and model minority. Wu (2014) argues that urban Chinatowns were "de-ghettoized" and framed as ethnic enclaves as a part of this shift in racial positioning. This was also the beginning of the striking down of exclusionary policies and changes in race relations, and Chinatown was situated to decline and become symbolic spaces as Chinese Americans were positioned as an exceptional group able to assimilate despite the history of racial exclusion (Lee, 1949). Chinese Americans and other ethnic groups were not accepted because their culture was seen as an integral part of American culture, but instead they would be accepted because of their potential to become similar to white middle-class Americans (Cheng, 2006). However, Chinese Americans were still facing discrimination and Chinatown continued to persist as an important cultural and residential hub for Chinese Americans.

The Growth of New Chinatown in a Multiethnic Immigrant Neighborhood

The New Chinatown area continued to grow and flourish through the war and after. The neighborhood was a hub for both Chinese Americans and tourists. Chinatown thrived as a destination neighborhood during these years. The United States was still closed to China, both in regard to tourism and immigration. Thus, urban Chinatowns were "the closest thing" to China for people in the United States. Central Plaza is often remembered as having an active nightlife through the 1960s. Al Soo-hoo, a community leader whose family operated a business in Central Plaza, shared his observations about Chinatown in the 1950s:

> Even [on] weeknights [in] Chinatown there would be people walking around. Tourists walking around. Up until past 11, 12. And then Friday and Saturday nights, it'd be 12, 1 o'clock. Very, very late. Because it was Chinatown. And it was a destination. And it was a place to go to. Because at that time, Chinatown was ... unique. Exotic. Mysterious. The closest thing to Asia that the Americans could get to. Especially during New Year Rose Bowl when all these people from the Midwest would come out to the Rose Bowl. You know, they couldn't go – there was no travel to China, to Asia. And so, this was the closest thing they could [get to]. So, they couldn't tell if that egg foo yung was real! [laughs] What's real Chinese food? And what's not real Chinese food?

In addition to how tourism created a lively neighborhood, many Chinese Americans who grew up in Los Angeles in the 1950s and 1960s remember Chinatown being the hub for the Chinese American community in Los Angeles. David Louie, who is active in the Chinatown Business Improvement District and the Chinese American Citizens Alliance – Los Angeles Lodge, grew up in the Crenshaw area in South Los Angeles, but recalls how Chinatown was a "hub" during this time that his family and other Chinese Americans would visit:

> Historically, Chinatown was the center − the cultural center, the religious center. All your professional services were here, lawyers, doctors. You did your grocery shopping here. When you had a celebration, the restaurants were here.

Other community leaders of the same generation shared similar memories of Chinatown and spoke about how they would visit on weekends to shop or visit the Chinatown banquet halls for weddings, funerals, and other special occasions.

However, Chinatown was also home to a working-class immigrant community. The neighborhood residents near the New Chinatown plazas included European and Mexican immigrants with an emerging Chinese immigrant family presence. One long-term resident, Mary Anne Hayashi who is of Croatian descent, recalled that there were few Chinese residents and the neighborhood was multi-ethnic with Italian, Croatian, and Mexican residents. Despite the different ethnicities, they were commonalities because they were all working-class immigrant families. She explains the sense of community along her block:

> This apartment house next door was that family. It was the only Chinese family on the block. And it's still the same family. They tore the house down and they built the apartment there years later. But it was interesting because we were all kind of the same socioeconomic [status]. All our fathers were blue collar workers.

The Chinese American community leaders who grew up in Chinatown during the time also recall growing up in a similar multi-ethnic immigrant neighborhood and that their neighbors and classmates at the local elementary school, Castelar, were a mix of different ethnicities. In addition, the ones who grew up with no connection to the families who ran the New Chinatown Plazas shared how they grew up not just in working-class families, but also faced challenges due to language barriers. One community leader, Don Toy, who grew up working-class in Chinatown described how he often had to translate for his parents, from Castelar teachers to the telephone company, as they struggled navigating mainstream institutions. Despite its public identity as a tourist area, Chinatown was home to a working-class multiethnic immigrant community.

Expected Decline of Chinatown: Weakening of Exclusionary Laws and Initial Suburbanization

As Chinatown became a robust and distinct neighborhood, exclusionary policies were also beginning to be lifted that impacted the demographics and legal rights of Chinese Americans. The Magnuson Act of 1943 repealed the Exclusion Act. Chinese Americans could now become citizens, which provided legal opportunities that were previously unavailable to them. In addition, the 1945 War Brides Act and 1946 Alien Fiancées and Fiancés Act allowed for initial family reunification as Chinese American bachelors could sponsor their wives to the United States. With the policy changes came demographic shifts. By the 1950s, over 40% of the Chinese American population in Los Angeles identified as female and there were more U.S.-born Chinese Americans (Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, 1984). The 1948 Displaced Persons Act and 1953 Refugee Relief Act allowed for educated and professional

Chinese to immigrate to the United States, many of whom were escaping communism from mainland China. With these immigration policies, Chinatown was further distancing itself away as an urban ghetto bachelor society and emerging as a family-oriented community

Suburban housing development also began to increase. The 1949 Fair Housing Act (FHA) was a major federal legislation that encouraged urban renewal in Los Angeles and other metropolitan areas to address post-war housing and economic concerns. However, it ultimately encouraged suburbanization as most of the loans financed through the FHA were new construction of single-family housing in the suburbs (von Hoffman, 2012). As suburban development increased, policymakers and the media began to promote these areas as a pathway for immigrant groups to assimilate (Brooks, 2009; Cheng, 2014). From 1955-58, the Commission on Race and Housing, an independent commission led by the University of Chicago, published a series of reports that examined housing problems facing racial and ethnic communities. To combat residential segregation, the Commission recommended immigrants and racial minorities to move to the suburbs to expose them to middle-class American values and discourage a continued distinct ethnic identity (Cheng, 2006).

The Chinese American community was positioned to support these assimilationist arguments about suburbia, and as a result, Chinatown was being framed as a neighborhood in decline. In 1952, the California Supreme Court deemed the Alien Land Acts illegal. Chinese Americans who had the financial means could now potentially become homeowners, which was available in the suburbs. The *Los Angeles Times* published an article on October 26, 1959 with the headline "Chinatown Changing as Suburbs Call Residents." The article notes that out of 22,000 Chinese residents in the city, only a few hundred remained in Chinatown. The article declared: "There is nothing startling about this. These are Americans. As which, they wish to live

as Americans – to own homes and breathe the fresh air of the suburbs, where there is greenery for their children to play" (Hulse, 1959).

However, housing discrimination persisted. While the Supreme Court decision for *Shelley vs. Kraemer* specifically deemed housing covenants illegal in 1948, all the different discriminatory practices would not be deemed illegal until the Civil Rights Act of 1968. State laws, including the Rumford Fair Housing Act of 1963, and the federal Civil Rights Act in 1968 outlawed housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, and family status. Most non-whites were still denied loans and other opportunities for home ownership in the suburbs (Brooks, 2009; Massey & Denton, 1993; Saito, 1998). Of the one million new single-family housing stock that was constructed in the suburban areas of Los Angeles between 1940 and 1957, only 1.5% was occupied by non-whites (Kurashige, 2008).

Chinese Americans were thus not residentially integrated but continued to live in areas with other non-white groups who were racially segregated. Other Chinese American residential settlements were present in Los Angeles, albeit not as prominent as Chinatown. The East Adams area in South Los Angeles also became another major settlement where they lived in proximity with black and Japanese American communities. Several of the community leaders interviewed for this project grew up near this area and in other South Los Angeles neighborhoods. The Silverlake/Echo Park area neighboring Chinatown was also home to a middle-class Chinese American community. Many of the business families and celebrities, like actress Beulah Quo, lived in this area. The younger generation from these families who are of the post-World War II "baby boomer" generation and grew up in the area spoke about how their parents moved to this area because it was an area of single family homes that permitted Chinese American residents and was close to Chinatown. These individuals grew up together as neighbors, forming a close-

knit community that carried over to Chinatown.

San Gabriel Valley, located in the northeastern area of Los Angeles County, was a unique space that was open to Asian Americans and Latinos as it included unincorporated cities that historically were not subject to municipal regulations. While it had a history of racial exclusion in the 1920s, San Gabriel Valley had relatively looser racial restrictions on property ownership, especially in the southern area (Fong, 1994; Cheng, 2013). In the 1950s, Monterey Park and other suburbs in the area experienced an increase in housing development, and veterans and ethnic immigrants began purchasing these homes (Fong, 1994). San Gabriel Valley was emerging as another node in the broader network of Chinese American settlements along the eastern and southern area of Los Angeles. The community's geographic dispersal was not a sign of assimilation, but one that reflected the pattern of racial segregation in Los Angeles.

Surrounding Downtown Redevelopment and Shrinking of Old Chinatown

While the internal infrastructure continued to flourish, the city's urban renewal projects around Chinatown continued. Along with federal policies that supported more housing development, urban renewal efforts were supported at the federal, state, and local levels to encourage economic growth in major cities that were beginning to decline with increased suburbanization. These renewal policies could determine neighborhoods as blighted based on the physical characteristics of the neighborhood to justify redevelopment.

The Los Angeles CRA formed in 1948 to oversee revitalization and redevelopment efforts in designated project areas. The agency initiated studies and surveys of areas to declare them "blighted," justify redevelopment, and assemble land in these areas to sell to private developers. The CRA project areas were supported through tax increment financing which was generated through property tax revenues from within the project area. Thus, the development in

CRA project areas tended to favor projects that would be the "highest and best use of land' that increased property values, which was often high density commercial and office developments. One of the first activities of the CRA was to work with the city planning commission to conduct a survey the inner-city area of Los Angeles, which deemed that 20% of the area as blighted and a drain on local resources, while also discouraging the development of public housing in further encouraging blight (Parson, 1982). In 1955, Chinatown's neighbor Bunker Hill was declared blighted, and houses were demolished for commercial development. The Mexican community in Chavez Ravine, which is the northern neighbor of Chinatown, were also forcibly displaced for the construction of Dodgers Stadium despite initial promises of public housing through redevelopment. Black and Latino communities were so disproportionately targeted for early urban renewal projects that critics of urban renewal efforts nicknamed the process "Negro Removal" and in Los Angeles, the government agency in charge of redevelopment, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), was known as the "Chicano Removal Agency" (Kurashige, 2008; Parson, 1982). Chinatown was not directly impacted by the CRA during this time – most likely because it already faced slum clearance two decades earlier and the business leaders had strategically positioned Chinatown as a modern neighborhood.

The city also began investing in the freeway system in the 1920s and it had grown fivefold between 1950-1954 (Kurashige, 2008). In 1941, the county adapted a Master Plan for Highways. In 1947, the Collin-Burns Act, a state law, would provide over $76 million to improve highway infrastructure and provided Southern California and Los Angeles funding to implement this vision. In 1949, plans for the Hollywood (101) Freeway expansion included constructing a major freeway segment through Chinatown and devastated the remaining buildings of Old Chinatown. Today only the historic Garnier Building, Old Chinatown's City

Hall, remains and is preserved as the location for the Chinese American Museum. The 110 freeway was also extended through Chinatown, and both freeways became physical barriers that spatially isolated Chinatown from downtown and other neighborhoods to the north and west. At the same time, this network of freeways also made Chinatown and other downtown neighborhoods even more accessible to the San Gabriel Valley by the 110 freeway, which will be home to man of the new suburban Chinatowns that gained prominence in the 1980s and 1990s.

Pacific Rim Global City (1965-2000): "New" New Chinatown

As policies continued to open immigration from Asia, Los Angeles was also emerging as a major global city and staking a claim in the global economy. Both forces shifted the role and value of ethnic spaces (Ong, Bonacich & Cheng, 1984; Soja, 1989). Asian countries were emerging as a global economic power, Asians in the United States were being further repositioned as "friendly foreigners" and model minorities who could contribute to U.S. society (Brooks, 2009; Kurashige, 2008; Lai, 2012). Chinatown and other Asian ethnic spaces were seen as important for urban growth to attract the emerging economically powerful Asian countries.

Concurrently, the city was also experiencing urban decline that contributed to inner-city problems, including poverty and gangs, and racial tensions. The Watts Rebellion in 1965 and L.A. Uprising in 1992 were two critical moments signifying the ongoing racial inequities in a diversifying Los Angeles. In Chinatown, new immigrants were moving in that reinforced it as a Chinese immigrant gateway and changed the composition of the Chinese American community. From these changes, a new urban poor community emerged which created a need for community development that focused on serving the needs of the new immigrant and refugees despite any potential plans to position Chinatown as a downtown neighborhood to facilitate global capital.

Opening of Immigration: Growth of Chinatown

The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, or Hart-Cellar Act, contributed to the persistence of major urban Chinatowns through ongoing Chinese immigration. The 1965 Immigration Act further built on the initial post-World War II immigration policies that opened immigration from China and other Asian countries. This act prioritized immigrants who were of professional work status and had higher education arriving to the United States, a stark contrast to the early Chinese immigrants who came as low-skilled laborers. The occupational preferences for Asian immigrants would change according to the decline and growth of the U.S. economy, such as declining domestic job opportunities and global competition (see Ong & Liu, 1984). It also further encouraged family reunification that began with the 1945 War Brides Act and 1946 Alien Fiancées and Fiancés Act. With this new policy, other family members could be sponsored, which further helped families that were once separated to rejoin each other in the United States.

In addition to the Hart-Cellar Act, subsequent policies, including the 1980 Refugee Act, brought in ethnic Chinese from countries other than the People's Republic of China. This included Hong Kong, which was a British colony at the time, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Malaysia. The new immigration of ethnic Chinese diversified the Chinese American community not only across immigration cohort, but national origin, as many who came from Southeast Asian countries immigrated as refugees. The passage of the 1990 Immigration Act further prioritized family reunification, along with encouraging professionals and skilled workers to the U.S. by increasing the number of work visas for certain professions. These post-1965 immigration changes contributed to the diversity of both Chinese and Asian America, as the new immigrants and refugees were segmented by socioeconomic status, national origin, and

immigration status and were migrating to the U.S. which now had several generations of U.S.-born Asian Americans (Lee, 2015).

Figure 2.2. Newer commercial plazas along Broadway. Right: Dynasty Center, which houses an indoor swap meet. Left: Chinatown Plaza, which is home to Chinese Cambodian-owned jewelry stores. Photos taken by author October 2016.

The new immigration policies had a direct impact on Chinatown as both a physical neighborhood and ethnic community. Appendix D provides an overview of key neighborhood demographics from 1960 to 2014. The overall neighborhood population increased by over 40% from 1970 to 1980 whereas the previous decade had a 10% decline. Similarly, the foreign-born population declined 26% from 1960 to 1970 and then increased 89% from 1970 to 1980. While the 1970 Census did not accurately capture different ethnic groups, Hirata (1974) notes that those with Spanish-origin last names were the largest group in 1970. By 1980 Asian Americans, specifically ethnic Chinese, became the majority of residents (68%), thus fully transitioning the space from a multi-ethnic immigrant space to a dominant Chinese immigrant enclave. It was also during this time the Italian and European immigrant businesses began to leave the commercial core along Broadway Street, and new Chinese American-owned commercial plazas were developed in these spaces. Some of these plazas would house the businesses of new Chinese immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia (see Figure 2.2). Because of this growth, in 1977 the *Los Angeles Times* declared that "Chinatown has gone Chinese," citing how the residential changes have made it a predominantly Chinese American residential neighborhood along with

businesses that were “serving the needs of Chinese” rather than tourists (McMillan, 1977).

This new wave of immigration did not simply grow and sustain the neighborhood as a Chinatown, but also created cultural diversity. The community itself began to recognize that while it had roots as a Cantonese Chinese community, the new immigration was shifting away and there was now an “internal diversity” by region and dialect. Some of the ethnic Chinese refugees and immigrants were not only immigrating from Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Malaysia, but their Chinese heritage was not always Cantonese, as some were from the Chaozhou and Fujian regions of China. Thus, while Chinatown was growing and sustaining as a Chinese ethnic enclave, it now was being shaped by multiple waves of Chinese immigrants and refugees with different migration and immigration histories.

Census data indicated that Chinatown was growing and it was indeed not just revitalized as a new immigrant enclave, but one that was also becoming a home to a new urban poor community. Post-World War II immigration policies also created a polarized flow of immigration to the United States, impacting the demographic, cultural, and political compositions of Asian American communities, including Chinatowns (Ong & Liu, 1994; Lee, 2015). The U.S. Immigration Services estimated “that the Chinese among who were poor and had no knowledge of English moved to Chinatown” (McMillan, 1977). Despite an opening of immigration, the settlement patterns showed a spatial segmentation of the Chinese American community. While there were Asian middle-class professionals immigrating to the United States and could directly move to the suburbs, low-skilled Asian immigrant laborers also continued to settle in urban Chinatowns, which were still home to low-wage and low-skilled jobs through the ethnic economy, as well as manufacturing jobs, such as garment factory work (Ong, Bonacich & Cheng, 1984). While the post-WWII immigration policies allowed for family reunification for

Chinese Americans, 49% of families in Chinatown in 1970 lived 200% below the poverty line, meaning that they were considered poor or struggling. This percentage has only increased throughout the years. During this time, urban Chinatowns, including Los Angeles, were being documented in the media for having high poverty, labor exploitation and increased gang activity, some of which was due to the lack of resources for many immigrant and refugee youth.

The population pressures in Chinatown impacted neighboring areas. While often not recognized as a major satellite Chinatown such as the areas in San Gabriel Valley, Chinatown's northeastern neighborhood, Lincoln Heights, is home to a Chinese American residential community, especially among those who came as immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asian countries. Prior to the 1970s, Lincoln Heights was a predominantly Latino neighborhood, but by the early 1980s the community began to see a growing Chinese and Vietnamese presence. By 1984, roughly one-third of the students were Asian (Hernandez, 1984). Some community leaders who saw this change note that this shift in Lincoln Heights was related to Chinatown's limited housing supply, so many Chinese immigrants moved to this area, which was still close to Chinatown. However, an ethnic infrastructure was developing locally. Along with new ethnic businesses, the America Vietnam Chinese Friendship Association and Buddhist temples that were developed for many of the Chinese from Southeast Asia were established in Lincoln Heights. With these changes came concerns about the new Chinese presence increasing housing prices and displacing the Mexican residents who were already displaced from other communities, including Chavez Ravine (Hernandez, 1984). These racial tensions stem from of the legacy of urban renewal and segregation in Los Angeles that has led to communities engaging in conflict as they claim their right to space to prevent future displacement.

Cities in the San Gabriel Valley also continued to grow, becoming a new economic and

cultural center for Chinese Americans. The city of Monterey Park was marketed as the "Beverly Hills" for Mexican and Asian Americans by the 1970s (Fong, 1994), solidifying it as an aspirational, symbolic role of the suburb for ethnic groups in establishing an identity of a successful American. However, unlike predictions that Asian Americans would incorporate and adapt to mainstream institutions, San Gabriel Valley was an "ethnoburb" that had a multiethnic residential and commercial character (Li, 2009; Saito, 1998; Cheng, 2013). This was further facilitated by the new immigration stream and the San Gabriel Valley ethnoburbs were not just multiethnic but also multigenerational. This was not a smooth demographic transition though as there was slow growth movements that specifically resisted many of the ethnic businesses and development, some of which came from overseas Asian investment (Horton, 1996; Saito, 1998). As these political and economic tensions unfolded, Monterey Park and other areas in the San Gabriel Valley were recognized as new spaces of political power for Chinese and Asian Americans. Monterey Park and Chinatown were both changing and growing from new immigration, albeit in different paths and facing different development pressures.

Redevelopment in Chinatown

During this time, the city was also trying to re-envision its growth, especially in the downtown area. In 1970, *Concept Los Angeles* was released to guide the city's new general plan. Recognizing the population growth and scarcity of land to develop, this plan envisioned a "polynucleated" city where there were different centers of activity, along with suburban, open space, and industrial areas, that were interconnected through a comprehensive transportation system. The downtown area was a regional core of Los Angeles with higher population density and intensity of uses and thus redevelopment of downtown focused on this vision.

Chinatown was a part of these broader revitalization efforts during this era. The Central

City North Community Plan was adopted in 1979 and was one of 35 community plans to provide more specific planning for individual communities. While the plan included parts of Little Tokyo and what is now the Arts District, Chinatown was the only neighborhood fully included in the plan. The neighborhood was designated as a community and high-oriented commercial area, as well as a high-medium residential areas. The rest of the planning area was primarily zoned for industrial use. However, in 1996, the city's General Plan Framework re-designated the Chinatown commercial core as a regional center that promoted higher density and mixed-use projects in anticipation of economic growth for the city. Chinatown's commercial core area was part of the downtown vision that planned for it to be a distinct destination center for the city. The description of a regional center was a place that "catered to many neighborhoods and communities and serve a population of 250,000 to 500,000 residents" with a variety of uses, including corporate offices and major entertainment and cultural facilities, and have buildings that were "six-to twenty-story (or higher)" (Los Angeles General Plan Framework, n.d.). Despite this vision, in relation to downtown, Chinatown's commercial core has remained a relatively low-density neighborhood. Many of these buildings are low-scale developments that do not exceed 5-stories with the majority being 2-3 stories with retail space at the bottom. The city's vision was for Chinatown to serve a much broader economic purpose beyond serving the neighborhood community. Yet, this projected growth for Chinatown has yet to be realized.

In addition to the Central City North being a major planning tool for the neighborhood, the CRA also had a major impact on Chinatown. In the 1970s, state policies, specifically Senate Bill 90 and Proposition 13, further incentivized local redevelopment agencies to expand the number of planning areas to generate more revenue through tax-increment funding as other financing options became limited. In Los Angeles, the CRA increasingly emphasized downtown

as a central area for corporate headquarters for global corporations and the surrounding neighborhoods as residential lofts for upwardly mobile professionals working in downtown (Davis, 2006; Lin & Moy, 2005). This specific type of reinvestment to the downtown core encouraged a reverse urban movement of attracting affluent individuals to the urban core rather than the suburban outskirts. This "back to the city" movement of the middle-class in most cities however threatened to forcibly displace the poor and working-class who historically lived in these areas and did not have the privilege of choosing where to live.

Urban Asian ethnic enclaves across the U.S., including Philadelphia and Boston Chinatowns, Los Angeles Little Tokyo, San Francisco Manilatown, and Seattle's International District were targets for urban renewal and modernization projects throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Liu & Geron, 2008; Wilson, 2015). In Los Angeles, the CRA oversaw the forced displacement of poor and ethnic communities around the downtown area. Japanese American senior citizens in Little Tokyo, Chinatown's neighbor, were forcibly displaced to build the New Otani Hotel, which was backed by overseas Japanese investors. These hotels proposed for the downtown area were targeting Asian businessmen, and thus were a part of the city's plans to focus on redeveloping the downtown infrastructure to cater to the global economy. In the 1970s, Asian flight capital led to land speculation in Los Angeles Chinatown that began to increase real estate values that some and position Chinatown for potential new development.

Chinatown was also designated a CRA planning area in 1980. For Chinatown, the CRA became akin to a neighborhood specific plan, and was referred to as such for Chinatown in the Central City North Community Plan text. Despite its past controversies, the CRA designation appeared to be beneficial for affordable housing development in Chinatown. This was due to state law requiring that redevelopment agencies allocate at least 20% of their budget to

affordable housing. Furthermore, project areas established after 1975 were required to have at least 15% of new housing affordable units developed by organizations and 30% of ones developed by the CRA be set aside as affordable units, with at least 40% of those units for very-low income households. The CRA provided funding for street beautification and loans for small business rehabilitation. They did not financially support major commercial development apart from Bamboo Plaza in 1989, a mixed-use parking and retail space developed by a prominent business family in Chinatown. However, these small projects focused on making Chinatown appear physically attractive place for investors. As one CRA staff explained, "It's a small project area. It never generated a lot of money. We weren't going to get big projects that had a lot of [tax revenue]. What we needed to do was to set the stage, to make it attractive for people to invest in Chinatown." These small economic development projects thus were initial steps to attract future investment into Chinatown.

Back to the City (2000 to today): "Gentrification" in Chinatown

The impact of downtown revitalization in Los Angeles continues today. The first three decades following the 1965 Immigration Act coincided with the growth of the global economy and a recognition of the diversity among Chinese Americans because of these immigration trends. Today, how this embrace of multiculturalism and diversity lead to social equity have become prominent topics of debate, especially as Los Angeles has become one of the most expensive urban areas in which to live. Issues of housing affordability, homelessness, and living wages are having immediate and material impacts on the livelihood of many communities. Questions continue around how urban development may be perpetuating and worsening inequalities through gentrification. In Chinatown, emerging demographic and physical shifts indicate that it is becoming a more "diverse" neighborhood, but have become points of debate

within the community about the potential impact and repercussions of these shifts within these broader debates of gentrification in Los Angeles. Chinatown thus is at a critical moment in its history as an ethnic enclave. The neighborhood, which has historically been driven by the cultural and social needs of Chinese Americans, may now be shifting towards a dominant identity as a downtown adjacent neighborhood, catering to an upwardly mobile population regardless of race or ethnicity.

Transitioning Away from an Ethnic Enclave?

The demographics in Chinatown today suggest that it is still an immigrant enclave, albeit one that may be slowly moving away from that identity. The Asian immigration to Los Angeles continues to grow, as it has even been outpacing Latino immigration (Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles, 2013). Chinatown also continues to experience steady population increases and is still a majority Asian American residential community. Over 60% identify as Asian and over two-thirds of Asians identify as Chinese.

However, the Asian American residential presence may be slowly declining. From 1980 to 1990 there was a 28% increase of Asian Americans, but the increases across decades have been less than 5% since then, with a recent decrease of 6% from 2000 to 2014. The number of Chinese and Vietnamese American residents has also been decreasing. From 1990 to 2010, Chinese Americans decreased by 11% and has continued to decrease since then. While there was an increase of Vietnamese during this time, there was a 27% decrease of Vietnamese from 2000 to 2010. In contrast, those who identified as Cambodian, while a smaller population, have been steadily increasing 3-4% during these decades. These differences of who is leaving and staying also may reflect socioeconomic differences, as Cambodian Americans tend to have higher rates of poverty and limited in their social mobility compared to other Asians (Lee, 2015).

Chinatown continues to persist as a poor and working-class immigrant community, but this demographic also may be shifting. Over 71% of adult residents still live 200% below the poverty line and the median household income is $22,417, while Los Angeles County is $55,870. Chinatown is home to a disproportionate number of Asian adults living in poverty. They make up 42% of this population in Chinatown, while overall in the county Asian Americans make up only 13% of this population. The foreign-born population has also decreased by 7% and family households by 9% from 2000 to 2014, whereas in prior decades these numbers were increasing. These changes combined with a 196% increase in professionals and decreases among those who work in blue collar jobs (28% decrease in production jobs and 34% decrease in service jobs) during the same period indicate that the neighborhood residential composition may be slowly shifting towards singles who work in professional occupations.

There have also been physical changes that signal both downtown and creative/artistic interests establishing a presence in Chinatown. The most noticeable change was in West Plaza, one of the original New Chinatown Plazas, in the late 1990s (Lin, 2008). Along Chungking Road in West Plaza, art galleries began to replace the old trinket shops, some of which were already vacant storefronts. This area is now part of the east side art gallery scene in Los Angeles. A few years later in 2003, along the southwestern border of Chinatown and downtown, Geoffrey Palmer, the infamous Los Angeles downtown developer, built the Orsini apartments. These apartments brought in over 1000 market-rate units to Chinatown. The Orsini's design is "inspired" by Italian architecture and has no nod to any traditional Chinese designs. There have also been more corporate businesses, including a Starbucks and a Walmart Neighborhood Market (which was only in operation for two years), as well as the emergence of new boutiques and restaurants that do not necessarily cater to the immigrant residents in Chinatown. These

physical changes have stood out as noticeably different from the original and contemporary Chinatown identity often shaped by Chinese immigrants and refugees.

The emerging residential and business changes have called into question as to whether Chinatown is becoming "less Chinese," one of the narratives about gentrification in Chinatown. The neighborhood culture and history is one of the main assets of the neighborhood drawing both residents and tourists and distinguishing it from newer settlements in San Gabriel Valley, which has now eclipsed Chinatown as a Chinese American residential center.

Planning for Chinatown in a Post-CRA Era

Today, Chinatown is a part of multiple plans and overlays that reflect its ongoing tenuous relationship with neighboring downtown growth. The CRA redevelopment plan structured and guided the development of Chinatown for over thirty years. However, in 2011, Governor Jerry Brown dissolved community redevelopment agencies across the state and thus the CRA plan for Chinatown, and the financial resources and political representation that came with it, are now gone. Of critical importance since the CRA dissolution for Chinatown and Los Angeles has been affordable housing development. The CRA was often viewed as the city's primary financing and policy mechanism to require affordable housing. With its dissolution there has yet to be a policy to replace this requirement for former CRA planning areas like Chinatown that is not related to developer incentives, such as density bonuses. Given the larger affordable housing crisis in Los Angeles, the development of new affordable housing and preservation of the current affordable housing stock have become critical issues in Chinatown

Along with the dissolution of the CRA, the city's official community plan and planning tools for Chinatown are also in the process of change. The city is in the process of revising its Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and Central City North Community Plan. The Central City

North Community Plan update have been included in the larger DTLA2040 initiative by the Department of City Planning (DCP). DCP estimates that by 2040 the downtown area, which includes Chinatown, will increase by 125,00 more residents, 70,000 more housing units, and 55,000 more jobs. They are thus revising the community plan to accommodate for this growth in the larger downtown vision. Chinatown is divided into three different place types in this vision, urban village, transit edge, and multi-unit residential community, which will ultimately guide revisions to its land use and zoning. Separating Chinatown into these different place types signifies that the city expects these areas within the neighborhood should experience different types of growth and changes. The floor to area ratio (FAR), which structures the potential for maximum building size and is an indicator of density, varies across these place types, from an FAR of 3:1 (lower density) in the western residential area and commercial core to an FAR of 8:1 (higher density) in the southern and eastern border of Chinatown. Similar to the 1970s, the city is once again planning for growth in Chinatown, but is encouraging incremental growth in the area that borders downtown and around the Gold Line Station that opened in 2003.

In addition to the Central City North Plan, the northeastern industrial area is included in the Cornfield-Arroyo Specific Plan (CASP), a major planning overlay adopted in 2012. The CASP was developed through participation of community representatives from the northeastern Los Angeles neighborhoods, including Chinatown, Lincoln Heights, and other surrounding communities along the Los Angeles River. This area has been historically targeted to support economic development in the downtown area, including a proposed industrial warehouse park in the mid-2000s that community leaders resisted and instead advocated for a park, which was a need in Chinatown. The CASP emphasized open space and pedestrian-oriented development, while also requiring affordable housing depending on the proposed FAR of the development. In

2017, the Los Angeles State Historic Park opened in the CASP area. Mixed-use developments providing market-rate housing and small retail space for restaurants and bars have been proposed in anticipation of the park becoming an economic booster for the neighborhood, but may be challenging the initial vision of the CASP. One proposed development, the College Station development, filed before the adoption of the CASP and is still in the development phase, has challenged its inclusion in the CASP, particularly the affordable housing requirements. These developments and changes occurring along the neighborhood border that may follow broader urban and downtown trends have the potential to be major forces of change in Chinatown.

Conclusion

As a neighborhood that is located near the downtown core, but has a core identity of serving the social, cultural, and economic needs of the Chinese American community across Los Angeles, Chinatown has consistently been shaped by both the ethnic community and city's downtown trends. This has led to ongoing threats and actual displacement of the immigrant residents for downtown economic needs. This began in 1930 with the displacement of Old Chinatown and continues today with the current concerns of upscaling downtown efforts as the plans for Chinatown have also positioned the neighborhood to support downtown growth and modernization. However, contemporary immigration has also sustained Chinatown as an immigrant enclave. As immigration policies shift to favor certain countries and professions, or in some cases shift to less open immigration policies, this will also have an impact on whether Chinatown is sustained as an immigrant neighborhood, and specifically, an Asian immigrant neighborhood.

Chinatown has also always been a networked community destination for Chinese Americans across Los Angeles County because of how residential segregation in the city was

historically structured Chinese Americans to reside with other non-white communities. Not only is the Chinese American community demographically changing, but how they continue to engage in the neighborhood, whether as residents, workers, business operators, property owners, and/or community organization members, is shifting in response to these demographic changes. The most recent neighborhood changes since the 2000s, both demographic and physical, suggest that Chinatown may be losing this identity. As these broader forces continue to converge in Chinatown, new and old community leaders are continuing to engage in Chinatown to steer the trajectory of change and ensure that there is local community control in these efforts. The subsequent chapters examine how they are attempting to steer these changes and how this changed both the Chinatown and Chinese American community in the process.

CHAPTER 3

GENERATIONS OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT: THE ORGANIZATIONAL LANDSCAPE OF CHINATOWN

> Chinatown has an abundance, I would say in my opinion, of organizations. There's no lack of organizations. … And these are all clustered within five blocks from each other. Literally! You can walk through 5 blocks – square blocks, and you would be able to touch each of these organizations. It's that easy.
>
> - Edmund Soohoo, community activist and co-founder of Los Angeles Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee

The Chinatown organizational landscape shows that the neighborhood is not just persisting, but transforming according to the evolving interests and material needs of Chinese Americans despite being a residentially dispersed community in Los Angeles. Chinatown has an "abundance" of organizations that provide the local community resources and a sense of belonging to the broader ethnic community. As the Chinese immigration to the United States diversified, new immigrant organizations in Chinatown emerged alongside the older organizations that established Chinatown. Concurrently, the U.S.-born Chinese and Asian Americans were also developing a new political voice and their activism brought them to Chinatown to "serve the people," which were both the new immigrants and the older immigrants who remained in Chinatown (Kwong, 1996; Lin, 1998; Liu & Geron, 2009; Maeda, 2009; Nee & Nee, 1986). These population and political shifts characterize the Chinese Americans in Southern California as an "institutionally centered community" (Chung, 2007) where the place-based infrastructure in Chinatown continues to draw the ethnic community across geography, generations, diverse interests, and immigration histories.

In this chapter, I examine the demographic, cultural, and political diversity defining the Chinese American identity following the 1965 Immigration Act and how it shapes the local organizational infrastructure. These organizational differences that have occurred since the 1965

Immigration Act are critical to understanding how contemporary development has unfolded in Chinatown and the capacity of the community to control these changes. These local organizations provide the infrastructure that act as sources of local power (Hustedde & Ganowicz, 2002) and as representatives to mediate with mainstream institutions (Guo & Musso, 2007; Levine, 2016). Within the context of ethnic communities, organizations are especially critical in providing an internal infrastructure of social support and capital in the face of alienation and discrimination from the mainstream and are often the political representatives and voice of the ethnic community (Bonus 2000; Chung 2007; Lai 2004). The engagement of Asian Americans in local organizations have also been an indicator of political participation (Bonus, 2000; Chung, 2007; Vo, 2004; Wong, 2006).

While the "abundance" of organizations would suggest that Chinatown is an "institutionally complete" (Breton, 1964) neighborhood in which these organizations maintain a sense of ethnic cohesion, the organizational landscape also physically symbolizes the differences within the community. The different organizations and groups in Chinatown have different approaches to community development in Chinatown as they vary not just in interest but form and generation, which is reflective of shifts in understanding of a politicized ethnic community identity. Many of these organizations formed in response to both community change and the ongoing, but shifting, political, social, and economic gaps from both the city and within the community. Yet, they have also rearticulated a place-based ethnic identity that reasserted an immigrant identity. The immigrant identity and culture has been critical in the ongoing racial formation of Asian Americans (Lowe, 1996). The presence of both new ethnic Chinese immigrants and the 1.5+ generation young Chinese American activists challenged a broader assumption that the Chinese American community was an assimilated model minority and a

culturally homogenous ethnic group. These new organizations reflected their identities, interests, and needs that both mainstream institutions and the older organizations in the community power structure were not necessarily addressing.

Appendix E provides a timeline and overview of key Chinatown organizations that are relevant to this research. This research does not provide a comprehensive overview of the organizational landscape in Los Angeles Chinatown. There are many different groups within the neighborhood providing various services and representing different interest groups. Instead this chapter provides an overview of the major community players across generation and immigration cohort that have a role in contemporary community development and the reasons for their formation, persistence, and decline from the perspective of the community leaders.

The Persistence of Pre-1965 Organizations: Contemporary Symbolic Power

Chinatown's organizational infrastructure dates back to the late 1800s and formed when Chinese Americans were politically and socially excluded from mainstream society. Because of this exclusion, they did not receive public services and relied on their internal social networks to develop a social and public infrastructure. These developed into mutual aid associations based on shared family name and regional origin in China. While these early organizations can be classified as "voluntary organizations" as their capacity is based on the work of volunteer members, the early Chinese American community developed these mutual aid associations as a means of survival. These early organizations evolved into a local power structure that served as a form of social control in the community, while also acting as mediators between the community and mainstream institutions (Lai, 2004; Kwong & Miščevič, 2005).

These early organizations were also critical in displaying how Chinese Americans were not socially disorganized, an assumption about many urban black and immigrant communities at

the time, and could contribute to mainstream society, economically, culturally, and politically. One of the major organizations in Old Chinatown during the era of exclusion was the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) and the Chinese American Citizens Alliance-Los Angeles Lodge (CACA). These two organizations were considered key leaders in Old Chinatown, both from the community and the mainstream, and were in the Garnier Building, which community historians often refer to as "the City Hall of Chinatown." CCBA is an umbrella organization of the first mutual aid associations that formed in Old Chinatown. It was critical in the formative years of Chinatown for resolving disputes within the community and was akin to a local governance structure in Chinatown. CACA, an organization included in CCBA, was established in 1912 and is one of the first Asian American civil rights organizations. Membership requirements require U.S. citizenship, a requirement that continues today. Their early advocacy included CACA member and prominent Chinese American lawyer, Y.C. Hong, testifying to Congress to overturn the 1882 Exclusion Act. Their political advocacy to overturn discriminatory immigration policies continued after World War II, even when Chinese Americans were no longer an excluded group (Cheng, 2014). Following World War II, new interest-based groups formed, including the founding of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese Drum and Bugle Corps, and the Chinatown Democratic Club. These groups were also critical in asserting a Chinese American identity, one that showed the community was politically active and could fit into mainstream society.

The pre-1965 Chinatown leadership in these organizations was primarily dominated by business leaders and professionals who were providing for the community. While formed as a civil rights organization, CACA is recognized by many community leaders as a space that was predominantly Republican and representing business interests in Chinatown, although over the

years the membership has diversified to include other interests and political leanings. The current Chinatown began with the development of Central Plaza in 1938, which was developed under the leadership of the Los Angeles Chinatown Project Association (now Los Angeles Chinatown Corporation), a partnership among Chinatown business leaders who planned the plaza after Old Chinatown was bulldozed. A prominent leader of this development who navigated the mainstream politics to develop the plaza was Peter Soohoo, Jr., a college educated U.S.-born Chinese American who was active in CCBA and CACA. Other members included community business leaders such as Soon Don Quon, Wah-Shew Lee, Ping Yuen Louie, and Y.C. Hong, whose families, along with Soohoo's, continue to be involved in the Chinatown business community. While it was a commercial plaza, Central Plaza was also a shared community space among key Chinatown business families who split property ownership of the development. This new Chinatown would follow government planning and sanitation regulations which is in stark contrast to the "squalor of Old Chinatown" (Home for the Oriental Population Planned, 1934). Thus, the New Chinatown development was envisioned by Soohoo and other Chinatown business leaders to show that the community was contributing to urban modernity, while also attempting to rebuild the community in the face of forced displacement.

Following World War II, the business leadership evolved to include first generation Chinese Americans who were not originally tied to the original founders of New Chinatown, such as Wilbur Woo and George Ching the co- founders of Cathay Bank, and Jack Lee who co-founded First Public Savings Bank and was the eventual owner of Yee Sing Chong, Chinatown's major grocery store. These newer business leaders not only became prominent leaders in organizations like CACA and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, but also played an important role in community development in Chinatown. They were instrumental in commercial

development and partnered to develop Mandarin Plaza in 1972, one of Chinatown's major commercial plazas that was home to some of the first Chinese immigrant businesses from Taiwan in the 1970s. Under their leadership, a more formal infrastructure to provide community resources emerged in Chinatown beyond the mutual aid associations. For example, Cathay Bank which was established in 1962, was the first Chinese American owned and operated bank in the United States and originally operated out of a small storefront on Broadway. These banks formed because of the continued racial exclusion by mainstream banks against Chinese Americans in providing home and business loans. Cathay Bank, along with other local Chinese American-owned banks that were located in Chinatown, provided many Chinese Americans the financial capital to own homes and start businesses in Chinatown, as well as other neighborhoods in South Los Angeles that did not have restrictive covenants or zoning against Chinese Americans. These business leaders helped in providing the financial capital for commercial development in Chinatown that made it an important economic and cultural hub for the Chinese American community following World War II.

Some of these older organizations, including CCBA, CACA, Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and the mutual aid associations are still present in Chinatown. Yet many current community leaders note that they are not as consistently active in the community as they once were. One 1.5+ generation community leader explained how the traditional mutual aid associations no longer have the same sense of urgency in helping their members since their mission and establishment was in response to the era of racial exclusion. He stated, "That kind of survival need was no longer there. … Many of the members have assimilated, you know, gotten jobs and … there's not a need for those kind of legal protections." He reasoned that this has led to the associations losing purpose for the younger generation and why his family association is

also shrinking in membership among U.S.-born Chinese Americans. Another 1.5+ generation community leader who is a member of his family association critiqued how the organization membership requirements were old fashioned as they were still based on shared family last name, which no longer holds the same sense of ethnic community belonging as it did for early Chinese immigrants. While CCBA is an umbrella organization and originally formed as a group that provided social control across the community, today, they primarily represent and assert control over the family and regional associations and older organizations such as CACA and the Los Angeles Chinatown Corporation. They have not had a new member organization for several decades, and many described these once service and politically-oriented groups as "social groups" for long-term members.

Despite these membership challenges, older organizations are still viewed as important power players of Chinatown. These early Chinatown organizations were both spaces of belonging and resources that allowed for the community to sustain and evolve in the face of racial exclusion. Because of the symbolic and historic power of these organizations, many of the interviewees also identified these older mutual aid associations as the institutions most likely to be preserved in Chinatown despite the current changes. While people acknowledge that these organizations will probably continue to physically stay in Chinatown, especially since many of the organizations and its members are long-term property owners, some question whether the older organizations will be more than the symbolic and historic markers of Chinatown. Some community leaders are skeptical if they can continuously attract Chinese Americans as members to sustain ethnic community engagement in Chinatown. This has become a critical question especially since new organizations have formed, and continue to form, in Chinatown that reflect the demographic and cultural shifts in the post-1965 Chinese American community.

Post-1965 Immigrants & Refugees: New Mutual Aid Associations and "Cultural Divides"

The post-1965 immigrants also established new organizations in Chinatown. Ethnic Chinese immigrants and refugees continued to move into Chinatown because it was recognized as an ethnic community space that had an established infrastructure and sense of community for Chinese Americans. Many had family and social ties in Chinatown that could provide them housing and resources. Peter Ng, who is the current CEO of CSC and CCBA, came to the U.S. as a youth in 1970 and has ties to the Taishan region of China, like many of the early Chinese immigrants. He explained how his family still relied on social networks in Chinatown when they first immigrated:

> My family came in as a refugee. But you still need to find a sponsor and, of course, they're so many old folks from the same area [region in China], right, so you know a lot of people. So, you find one of the - I call him uncle - he has the same last name as mine. He sponsored us and when we first got here, we lived with him in Pico Rivera. Then my parents had to work, as they cannot find jobs anywhere else besides the Chinese environment because they don't speak English. So, my dad and my mom found jobs in Chinatown.

Chinatown was still instrumental for Chinese immigrants because it provided the social networks that could connect them to jobs and resources as they adjusted to the United States.

However, the post-1965 Chinese immigrants to the United States also reflect a longer history of the Chinese diaspora.[4] Some Chinese arrived from Hong Kong and Taiwan in response to the growing political instability in China. There were also ethnic Chinese who came as refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia in the 1970s and 1980s due to the political turmoil in these countries. The immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia transformed the commercial character of Chinatown with the development of shopping plazas like Saigon Plaza. Many of

[4] Scholars in Chinese diaspora and transnationalism studies argue that the Chinese diaspora is not a recent phenomenon and predates the immigration shifts that occurred before the 1965 Immigration Act. Chinese immigrants and refugees across class and profession have migrated, both voluntary and forced, across the world that has sometimes been multi-directional and includes movement across multiple territories. The edited volume by Ma and Cartier (2003) provide a spatial perspective of the global migration of the Chinese.

them were entrepreneurs in their home countries who faced class divides and hostilities because they were ethnic Chinese (Rigg, 2003). These tensions carried over to their immigration to the United States, as within both the Chinese and Vietnamese communities, they were seen as a distinct group despite immigrating from the same country. As Ng further explains, "They come here to Chinatown because of the connection. These are all Chinese, they are not Vietnamese. The Vietnamese go to Westminster [Orange County] but the Chinese come here [to Chinatown]." Chinatown was now a space for the ethnic Chinese who were arriving from other countries as they did not necessarily culturally belong with the other immigrants and refugees from their homelands who were establishing ethnic enclaves elsewhere.[5]

While the new immigrants came to Chinatown because of a shared sense of ethnic community, they also have ties to different regions in China than the early Chinese immigrants who were predominantly from the Guangdong (Canton) region in China. Some of the ethnic Chinese refugees and immigrants from Southeast Asia were also Cantonese, but they also came from the Chaozhou and Fujian regions. The established ethnic-based infrastructure was still more familiar than mainstream institutions; however, different immigration histories and backgrounds created challenges for these new immigrants to rely on the old Chinatown organizational structure for resources and support.

Community leaders across the immigration cohorts often spoke of "cultural differences" among the different immigrant cohorts as the major reason why the new immigrants did not easily integrate into the existing Chinatown community organizations. One 1.5+ generation Chinese American who became involved in social services remarked on seeing class divisions

[5] Aguilar-San Juan (2009) provides an analysis of the ethnic differences among the Vietnamese refugees and how this has shaped the development of Little Saigons in Orange County, CA and Boston, MA as distinct Vietnamese spaces.

that was not easily recognizable at the time, especially to those outside of the community:

> I would say even now there's a separation between the Southeast Asian Chinese and the Hong Kong Chinese [among the new immigrants]. … [The Chinese from Southeast Asia are] not really a part of the community. They don't really join the family associations. I mean the infrastructure – the basic community – acknowledged community infrastructure is still either from Taishan [a region in Southern China] or Hong Kong. Alright? So that's all it is. I mean that – so it's all those folks and they control everything. They own everything. They are acknowledged by the city and all the public entities there you know cause it's the CCBA and the association. All of them. They are all Hong Kong people, old Taishan people. And so, all these Southeast Asians come in and do business and they [say], 'Hey, we're not a part of you, We're not a part of you anyway. We're just, you know, we just do business.'

Thus, there were class divisions among the ethnic Chinese immigrant business community in the United States based on these immigration differences based on country of origin.

These cultural differences were often discussed as language divides within the Chinese American community. CCBA did provide services to ethnic Chinese refugees from Vietnam who arrived in Camp Pendleton following the Fall of Saigon. However, CCBA is also an institution that is almost 150 years old and remains to this day a Cantonese-dominated organization, and for many of its early decades, a specific regional Taishan culture. One CCBA member explained that the primary language of communication within CCBA is still Cantonese Chinese, reflecting the early immigration history of Chinese Americans. Some 1.5+ generation leaders explain that the linguistic dominance of Cantonese in CCBA and other older mutual aid associations is a barrier for other Chinese Americans to become involved, whether new immigrants who speak another Chinese dialect or later generation Chinese Americans who are less fluent in Cantonese.

Other Chinatown organizations also presented language barriers because they were more English-dominated. One pre-65 first generation business leader involved with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce explained how unlike CCBA, they are a predominantly English organization, but this also made it difficult for new immigrants to engage in the organization:

> If you're coming early, like [1950] something, if you don't speak Cantonese you have a hard time! You know? And even the Cantonese, you know, [for] some, [it was] hard to communicate. Not to mention the Mandarin. And then as [the] Southeast Asian immigrants [are] coming in and of course they are culturally different from the ones from China. So, they have their own way of doing business. But of course, most of them when they come in, they settle in Chinatown…. But then meanwhile, not that many immigrants [are] from Taishan [an area in Guangzhou] or China. So, you can see the ratios, they change! And so pretty soon they more or less form their own organization, you know in South[east] Asia, their own. … We tried to solicit them too but you know I guess unfortunately the Chamber when they [are] meeting, they talk in English. And those immigrants coming in, they have – you know the English is limited. So, they, I guess they [are] probably limited. They would join the other organizations.

As an ethnic organization that primarily operates in English, they can work with mainstream organizations and city politicians, which was an important mission of these early Chinatown organizations. However, this has made it difficult for the new Chinese immigrants with limited English skills to actively participate in these spaces.

Those outside the community were also beginning to recognize these internal differences. The *Los Angeles Times* published several articles in the 1990s that highlighted the divides and tension between the old and new ethnic Chinese businesses and how this has led to a general lack of leadership and collaboration within the business community to help boost the local economy. One article was candid about the community divides:

> Chinatown is a community divided. A new wave of immigration over the last two decades has created a dual society of scrambling entrepreneurs from Southeast Asia and more assimilated, older merchants whose families emigrated from China more than six decades ago. They ply their wares on the same streets, yet remain miles apart in tradition…. This estrangement keeps Chinatown from confronting economic changes that threaten its existence…Chinatown sits unorganized and immobilized (Torres, 1996).

However, some business leaders have countered these narratives of a cultural divide and point to how it is simply difficult to engage merchants. A community business leader explained that they are focused on just trying to maintain their individual businesses, "Even if they spoke the same

language or dialect, they're [not] going to line up and say, 'Yeah, let's talk about unifying the community and figuring out what's best for Chinatown as a whole.' They were much more interested in making sure customers who come in, buy something." The cultural conflict characterizing the Chinatown business community may be masking the ongoing difficulties that all immigrant small businesses face in the competitive urban economy.

The new immigrants ultimately established new mutual aid associations in Chinatown in the 1980s, including the Teo-Chew Association of Southern California and the Southern California Fukienese Association.[6] These associations were based on a shared ancestry from the Chaozhou and Fujian regions in China, but the members were primarily immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asian countries. This was not unique to their immigration to the United States as similar mutual aid organizations were established in Southeast Asian countries to help these ethnic Chinese communities establish a sense of community and local base of power in these countries (Choi, 2006). These organizations and other new immigrant associations have a similar structure and intent of the traditional mutual aid associations which is to help new immigrants and maintain relationships with their home country. Like CCBA and the older mutual aid associations, the leadership in these new associations primarily consists of immigrant business leaders. However, these post-1965 new immigrant mutual aid associations are not a part of CCBA and operate independently from that community power structure.

While the organizations are separate, some individuals have navigated between the old and new organizations. A few post-1965 first generation immigrants have become members of the older organizations, such as CACA and the older mutual aid associations. Moving up in the leadership in these older organizations was often difficult because they had less personal

[6] For this research, I do not use the Pinyin romanization for the names of these mutual aid association names to reflect the actual organization name.

connections and at times were perceived as possibly diluting the resources available in these older community institutions. These individuals also expressed that they overcame the initial sources of tension by acting as facilitators between the different generations of ethnic Chinese immigrants.

The new immigrants to Chinatown thus reinforced the salience of mutual aid associations in Chinatown for a new generation. However, because of the perceived cultural divisions, they did not necessarily strengthen the current organizations, but instead created their own. They continue to be driven by the volunteer work and financial capital of its members and are recognized as important community institutions. Many community leaders specifically acknowledge the Teo-Chew Association as an important organization, as it is currently one of the most economically robust mutual aid associations, old or new. They were one of the major financiers of the Chinatown Gateway in 2003, a cultural monument that marks the neighborhood identity. There are now two Buddhist temples in the neighborhood, the Guanggong Temple, developed by the Teo-Chew Association, and the Thien Hau Temple, developed by Cà Mau Association of America, a fraternal association for Chinese immigrants and refugees who migrated from the Cà Mau area in Vietnam. Prior to the development of these temples, the major religious institutions in the neighborhood were Chinese Christian churches, such as the Chinese Methodist Church and Chinese Baptist Church. Several 1.5+ generation Southeast Asian Chinese interviewed for the project spoke of how they and their parents would visit Buddhist temples in Chinatown and in neighboring areas, which helped to build a sense of community and network with fellow new immigrants. Despite not being able to integrate with the existing community power structure, they have been able to assert their presence and claim to Chinatown.

The 1.5+ Generation Chinese Americans: New Politics of Ethnic Identity and Community Development

In addition to new ethnic Chinese immigrants revitalizing the economic, institutional, and residential character of Chinatown in the 1960s and 1970s, younger Chinese Americans, many of whom were 1.5+ generation, began convening in Chinatown. Their engagement was not simply due to a sense of ethnic heritage. They were motivated by new racial politics and asserting an Asian American political identity that challenged dominant understandings of Asian Americans as an assimilated group, both through their political actions, as well as highlighting the ongoing social needs of Chinatown (Liu & Geron, 2008; Maeda, 2009).

This group of leadership, which is the primary focus of the research, represents the segment of the Chinatown community that do not necessarily live in the neighborhood, but continue to have economic and cultural attachments to place, while also being the most vocal political advocates. Their involvement did not simply attempt to rearticulate a new ethnic community identity, but also reshaped the organizational structure and leadership for community development. The community elite were often business leaders who played an important role in bringing services and establishing neighborhood institutions, and through mutual aid associations, there was an informal support network to immigrant communities. This new generation of leadership brought a formalization of organizations and services in Chinatown, which not only created new leadership, but a more distinct generational divide between social services and business interests in the community. Despite Chinatown being a predominantly immigrant residential and business community, these 1.5+ generation Asian Americans, which now includes several cohorts of older and younger individuals, continue to shape immigrant community politics.

Challenging Assimilationist Perspectives of Chinese and Asian Americans

Following World War II, the legal restrictions against Chinese Americans were slowly lifted. A new generation of Chinese Americans were becoming attuned to the politicized Asian American identity which sought to challenge mainstream institutions for the continued invisibility of Asian Americans in political conversations. The Civil Rights, Ethnic Studies, and anti-Vietnam War movements in the late 1960s was a catalyst for bringing in young Chinese Americans, many of whom were 1.5 generation or later generation. In Chinatown, this new activism was driven by college students who were informed by radical politics that critiqued racial and class inequalities through an analysis of colonialism and imperialism as well as interracial solidarity with other communities of color (Maeda, 2009). This new generation of leadership was directly challenging the model minority assumptions that Chinese Americans were an assimilated group that did not need resources and services.

Debbie Ching, whose father was business leader George Ching and one of the founders of Cathay Bank in Chinatown, was a community activist in the early 1970s and became the Executive Director of Chinatown Service Center (CSC), a social service organization founded in 1971 that served the new immigrant and refugee population in Chinatown. She explained that working in Chinatown during this time was a way for young Chinese and Asian Americans like herself to try to make sense of how they fit in with these larger shifts in race relations and political representation. She explained:

> And so, in the Civil Rights Movement, it was always framed as black/white and many Asian Americans resonated with the issues and tried to find their place in the Civil Rights Movement. And so, we also – Chinese American students – were trying to find our path in the Civil Rights Movement. Because we knew it was a path for us. But we had to define it for ourselves. So, Chinatown was the place. There was no San Gabriel Valley at the time, you know, [no] other major enclaves. And so many Chinese American students from UCLA, from Cal State LA, even USC and other local campuses, came together in Chinatown. Asian

> American groups were coming together also from those campuses. We had our study groups. We had our women's groups. We had the whole thing. [We were] trying to think through, figure out. But the Chinese American students were also gathering. So, I was part of both. And in Chinatown, you know people like [California Congresswoman] Judy Chu and [Asian Americans Advancing Justice founder] Stewart Kwahu and [former California State Assembly member] Mike Eng, and others were trying to figure out how do we engage in our values in Chinatown? So, we organized.

As Ching also notes, many of these individuals who started in Chinatown would later become prominent Asian American political leaders in Southern California. Chinatown became an important space for that initial politicization and built a sense of community among future Chinese American political leaders.

These new activists were volunteers who organized as informal groups that developed programs and activities in response to what they saw as community needs, from English language classes to developing materials to promote workers' rights. Many local college students in the 1960s and 1970s were involved in youth development activities, including the Chinatown Youth Council (CYC) and the Asian American Tutorial Project, the latter of which still exists at Castelar Elementary School. Some formed new left groups including Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) and Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) that were part of a national network of progressive Asian American groups across the United States and political advocates for the working class. AAFE was an active political voice in the 1970s. They pressured the city to place stop signs in front of Castelar Elementary School after a student was killed by a car accident. They also spoke out against the Chinatown Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) designation, raising concerns about how the CRA was catering to the business interests, both in Chinatown and the broader downtown area. Some sat on different community advisory committees for the CRA designation and were highly engaged representatives of Chinatown, shaping its development. Their involvement is further explained in Chapter 4.

While many progressive activists were politically activated through their education, some who grew up working-class in Los Angeles and other Chinatowns were also motivated by their personal history. Sharon Lowe grew up in Philadelphia Chinatown but became involved in Los Angeles Chinatown when she moved in the 1970s to attend law school at the University of California, Los Angeles. She explained that there is a sense of community ingrained in Chinatowns that carried onto her activism and professional work:

> As far as my work, it's ingrained in me. I have it from my father. I have his legacy. He worked two jobs and he supported – our door was always open…. So, it used to crack me up when I would go home from college and from law school and I'd go back to visit him and he even after I had my sons, when they were babies, I'd come back to visit him and here he is and he'd go – he'd say, "Ok, give me baby. You go." "Where am I going?" "Oh, you need to take so and so to the social security. You take so and so to immigration. You take so and so to the doctor." "Oh ok." ... I mean I grew up with that. I looked at my father as a stray cat, stray dog, stray people. Somebody was on the outside and asked for a handout and a meal, he'd feed them and then he'd give them a job.

For Lowe and other community activists with a similar working-class immigrant family background, that sense of family and kinship informed their political activism.

In contrast to Lowe who displays a sense of pride in her family background in motivating her activism, Gay Yuen, another community activist from this time who later served as president of the Friends of the Chinese American Museum, recalls how growing up, she felt ashamed of her Chinese heritage. She immigrated to the United States as a child and grew up in Chinatown and struggled with how her family did not fit the mainstream narrative of white America that she saw on popular media. At UCLA, she became exposed to Asian American Studies and embraced her ethnic identity. She explains how her activism in the community was also about instilling that sense of ethnic pride among the Chinatown youth whom she recognized as experiencing similar ethnic identity issues:

> My roommate was coaching a girls' basketball team at Alpine playground and

> after winning a game, we said, "Ok we'll treat you girls to dim sum. We'll just walk over to where – I think Golden Palace or Golden Dragon – and we'll treat you girls to dim sum." So, we walked over and we sat down and then we ordered. And then one of the girls says, I need a fork. And I looked at her and I said – and she could barely speak English, right, so I said, "Why do you need a fork?" "I don't eat with chopsticks anymore." So, I said, "Then you don't need to eat because we're eating with chopsticks." And so again it's – that was me [when I was younger]. That was me, ashamed of being Chinese, wanting to eat with a fork, wanting to throw away the chopsticks. And so, as a role model, right, I think it was really important to engage in these kind of community activities.

The community engagement by this younger generation of Chinese Americans in the 1960s and 1970s was motivated by both political and personal understandings of ethnic identity. These early activists spoke about how their work was to help establish a sense of identity for the new generation of Chinese Americans who were "feeling outside of the mainstream." These activists were "cultural radicals" (Nee & Nee, 1986) who were embracing the traditions of everyday culture of Chinese Americans in Chinatown to inform their politics. Their motivations were often to resist an assimilationist perspective and to embrace their ethnic difference as not just a source of pride, but also recognized as distinct voices rather than incorporating into mainstream ideals.

Chinatown Community for Equitable Development (CCED) and the Southeast Asian Community Alliance (SEACA) continue to represent a politically progressive 1.5+ generation voice that seeks to provide representation for local resident and labor interests. These new groups are also continuing to respond to the ongoing political invisibility of the Chinatown community. Both SEACA and CCED were the most vocal Chinatown-based opponents of the opening of the Chinatown Walmart Neighborhood Market in 2012. While protesting in solidarity with city labor groups, through their resistance to the Walmart, they were advocating for the immigrant small business owners who were at risk of being displaced from economic competition. In addition to their efforts against Walmart, they attempted to engage Chinatown residents in neighborhood development issues to ensure that there is representation of local community members who live

and work in Chinatown.

While the older organizations are considered cultural institutions because of their historical importance, the organizational infrastructure also now includes groups that seek to preserve the history of Chinatown, as well as the broader Southern California Chinese American history. These community institutions reflect the first wave of 1.5+ generation Chinese Americans who become culturally engaged in post-1965 Chinatown as this local history was not part of mainstream narratives and teachings of history. The original members of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) explain that one of the original intent of the formation of this group in Chinatown in 1975 was to bring together these individuals who were coming to Chinatown with an interest in Chinese American history, both personally and professionally. Early members described how they joined CHSSC because they had personal and intellectual interests in historical preservation specific to their ethnic identity. Suellen Cheng was a UCLA graduate student from Taiwan interested in Chinese American women history which led her to the first meetings at CHSSC. She explains that the "Chinese Historical Society it was very, directly related to my own interests. It's because I was studying the history, the past, the preservation. And really to me, it's just learning about the communities." Similarly, Eugene Moy, explains that he was initially interested in historical preservation as an undergraduate student in California State University, Long Beach, which eventually led him to CHSSC and through his organizational involvement "became much more familiar with the Chinatown community." Both Cheng and Moy would become involved with other organizations, including CACA. This search for history brought young Chinese Americans to Chinatown and become politically engaged.

Institutions like CHSSC, and eventually the Chinese American Museum which was

established in 2003, ensured that the cultural gatekeeping, including the historical narrative and resources of Chinatown, is controlled from within the community. Munson Kwok, one of the original CHSSC members explains the organization was founded to protect the local history. He explains, "I really believe it was formed so we could define enough of our history to define our identity so that in turn we can tell then the governments, we count. We are here. We are not invisible."

Emerging Faces of Leadership

Through the formation of new ethnic organizations, a new generation of leadership which include women and youth, can potentially challenge the male-dominated ethnic power structure (Chung, 2007; Shah, 2012). Chinatown's traditional power structure was dominated by specific segments of the Chinese American community: Cantonese Chinese business leaders and men. While this still characterizes much of the Chinatown power structure today, the contemporary changes in Chinatown's organizational infrastructure have also provided spaces for women and non-Cantonese Chinese Americans to participate in community development and emerge as important community leaders.

Women Leadership. Chinese American women were becoming more prominent in leadership roles across different interest groups in Chinatown. While women volunteered for CACA, organizational membership was exclusively male until 1977. The CACA Los Angeles Lodge would have its first female president, Daisy Ma, in 2009, followed by Suellen Cheng in 2013. During my fieldwork, CACA had voted in its third president, Annie Yee (2016-17). Phoebe Yee and Dolores Wong were leaders in the Chinatown Democratic Club, and helped to establish social service organizations in Chinatown from the 1970s to the early 2000s. Along with Deborah Ching, Joyce Law and Irene Chu were professional social workers who were

critical to the establishment of CSC. There were other notable women voices in the progressive groups in Chinatown. Sharon Lowe, Diane Tan, and Phyllis Chiu, were members of AAFE who continue to be involved in political advocacy for Chinatown in the present day.

These female leaders spoke about having to navigate the male-dominated power structure and gender expectations. Lowe explains that being a lawyer gave her deference in the community, but she still had to be cautious of gender norms:

> I'd be representing somebody in a hearing and it's like one of the seniors would tell me cause I raised [my voice] …that out of respect you [don't raiser your voice because you're] young. "*A-nui!"* [Cantonese for girl and a term elders use when referring to a young woman.] You know, yeah [they] scold me in Chinese not to raise my voice, that I'm being disrespectful to the hearing officer or whatever. And I'm [thinking], "Really?" You know, but that's the culture! … It's knowledge of our own culture, recognizing that you know them at the same time. I'm always very appreciative. But I raise my voice, so I get scolded!

Ching similarly explains needing to conform to cultural gender norms when she led CSC. But at the same time spoke about how she could bring in a new cultural perspective as a 1.5 generation Chinese American woman in a leadership position:

> I consider myself now multicultural, but at the time [I was] an example of biculturality.… I'm in the meeting, I'm the youngest person. I'm the only woman, you know. All these old Chinese guys were there. And so, what I learned and understood is that there's a hierarchy and I have to wait my turn to speak. Okay. But when it's my turn I don't give up any points. You know, so it's knowing the lay of the land and using that as much to my advantage as possible.

As both a woman and 1.5+ generation Chinese American, Ching explained that she tried to act as a "bridge" in the community. While she respected the community power structure, especially as her father was a prominent business leader, she found ways to challenge it as a means to build capacity at CSC and to bring new perspectives to the Chinatown leadership.

Post-1965 Immigrant Cohort. While there was noted division between the old and new immigrant cohorts of Chinese American, the 1.5+ generation from the post-1965 cohort are

coming of age and becoming engaged in Chinatown. While they are still growing in presence, they appear to be similar to the other 1.5+ generation Chinese Americans from earlier immigrant cohorts. They are not necessarily joining the first generation community groups, and some are also drawn to more politically progressive groups. For example, SEACA is a youth empowerment group established in 2009. The founder and executive director is Sissy Trinh a Southeast Asian American who grew up in Chinatown. SEACA gained prominence in helping to develop the Cornfields-Arroyo Seco Specific Plan (CASP), a specific plan that includes Chinatown and its northern neighbors that was driven by community input and adopted by the city in 2012. Through SEACA, Southeast Asian youth from Chinatown and neighboring Lincoln Heights were a part of the planning process and remains an active organization for youth development among local Southeast Asians.

Sophat Phea, who identifies as Chinese Cambodian American and is a Chinatown resident, explained that he learned the basics of community organizing through SEACA and CCED that he would not have otherwise received in other spaces in the community. As someone who grew up in Chinatown and recognizing how the neighborhood is still an isolated community, he spoke about how his organizational involvement helped him build connections to other Asian Americans who helped him mature politically, "I feel so invested in CCED. And then the people I work with, I find them really inspiring." Other 1.5+ generation Chinese American CCED members whose families immigrated from Vietnam, but never lived in Chinatown also explained that their involvement helped them to learn about the history of Chinatown as a place that emerged from racial segregation. One CCED member explained that before she joined CCED, she only saw Chinatown as a commercial area based on her childhood visits, but is now learning about how Chinatown has been a home for working-class immigrants,

which informs her organizing work. These political groups have helped to continue the political engagement of young Asian Americans through community-based work in Chinatown that help to mediate how they construct a sense of self and community.

Several 1.5+ generation women with roots from Southeast Asian countries and who are becoming involved in Chinatown groups, including SEACA, CCED, the Chamber, and CACA, despite having less history and political ties to the community. Angelica Lopez Moyes, who is of Chinese and Filipino descent and used to work in Central Plaza ultimately became politically active as a parent volunteer for the group Friends and Alumni of Castelar Elementary School (FACES). She now serves as a Chinatown non-profit representative in the neighborhood council system. Connie Vuong, whose parents are ethnic Chinese but have roots in Vietnam, was the past Executive Director of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and is now involved with CACA and the Los Angeles Chinatown Business Council (LACBC) which manages the local Business Improvement District (BID). Both Moyes and Vuong spoke of bringing in new perspectives and ideas to the community. Vuong felt her role as a relative newcomer with few prior ties to the community was an asset, "I haven't been around [as long] you know? And that might be one of my weaknesses, but it can also be one of my strengths because I don't have the same – stuck in the same vision." The engagement of these young 1.5+ generation Chinese Americans suggests that the organizational infrastructure is continuing to shift and evolve to represent different voices across gender, immigrant cohort, and generation within the ethnic Chinese community.

From Voluntary to Formal Organizations: Expanding Community Infrastructure and Development

As Espiritu (1992) notes about the role of organizations in the development of the Asian American panethnic identity, ethnic organizations were not just shifting according to generational differences in racial identity, but shifting in capacity and form. While much of the

post-1965 services began as grassroots, volunteer projects to "serve the people," some of these groups became more formalized social service agencies. These organizations often received funding from government and other mainstream institutions that became available through anti-poverty and refugee policies.

A similar trend occurred in Chinatown. The post-1965 1.5+ generation community leadership in Chinatown from both the social service and business interests sought to bring external funding that created more formalized, structured organizations and infrastructure in Chinatown. These new organizations were not just bringing in new resources that intended to provide for the ethnic community, but were directly responding to gaps in services and investment within the Chinatown community. While this was primarily led by the new generation of leadership, there was still collaboration across generations of leadership, particularly with business leaders who often had financial capital and political relationships, to further develop Chinatown social service and public infrastructure.

Social Services and Serving the Growing Low-Income Immigrant Population. Post-1965 immigration trends created a demand for a more developed social service infrastructure in Chinatown. In 1970, an estimated 49% of families were considered poor as they lived 200% below the poverty line, meaning that they were poor or struggling. By 1980, over two-thirds of the population was considered poor. This percentage has increased throughout the years (see Appendix D). Despite the past work of community leaders to create a community infrastructure, the population increases and influx of immigrants and refugees created a major need for more social services and spaces to deliver those services. Former Castelar teacher and community activist Phyllis Chiu explained how there was a "push" to strengthen the community-based social service infrastructure in the 1970s because the current infrastructure was still inadequate:

> We didn't have anything. There was no [Chinatown] Service Center. There was no Cathay Manor [Chinatown's first affordable senior housing complex built in 1984]. Bilingual education was just getting started. But there was a very inadequate childcare in Chinatown. And so, compared to now, it was a time that was pretty minimal. Pretty bare bones.

This service gap provided opportunities for new organizations, particularly ones developed by the 1.5+ generation Chinese Americans who were volunteering in Chinatown. In addition to college activists, there were also social service professionals and other Chinese Americans working in local government who were volunteering in the community and instrumental in developing a new infrastructure in Chinatown. Unlike the mutual aid associations, this new infrastructure would not be bound to serving family and kin, but instead the broader ethnic Chinese community. This included serving the new immigrants and refugees who were seen as "culturally different" from the old Chinatown community.

The early mutual aid organizations and CCBA were critical in providing resources to Chinese immigrants in the era of exclusion. These organizations were based on a shared kinship, whether through family or region of origin. However, as previously noted, the traditional mutual aid associations were limited in providing for the new immigrants. In addition to cultural differences, one social service leader spoke about how both the mainstream and older Chinatown power structures simply did not want to highlight how Chinatown was an urban poor community, "All those folks [new immigrants] are coming in. You know, I mean, people don't like to admit that there's poor people. So, there's always that stigma to overcome. And so, I think that was a limitation. It's a limitation." This perspective confirms past scholarship that argues that the old Chinatown power structure and community leadership would sometimes not acknowledge labor issues facing the working-class and other urban poverty issues in order to present Chinatown as a presentable community to the mainstream (Kwong, 1996; Wu, 2013).

One 1.5+ generation community leader provided a more practical perspective for this perceived neglect. He explained that the mutual aid organizations simply did not have that capacity as a voluntary organization:

> Now you're talking about family associations who basically volunteered. Mutual benefit associations or organizations. They don't have a staff.…Whereas now there was too many people where you couldn't absorb it. Back in the 40s and 50s, people could absorb it being that uncle so-and-so is coming with his family. They could live here with us or they could – we'll find them a place and we could help to set their children up in school and we could help translation. Now what if you multiply that by 5 families. All of the sudden you can't absorb that.

The older organizations had a mostly informal structure and often relied on social networks to sustain their organization. Even to this day, the mutual aid associations, both old and new, and CACA are sustained through membership dues and fundraising. Whether it was due to ideological differences or capacity issues, it was clear there was a social service gap.

As they were responding to these demands, some of the college student and professionals, who began as volunteers providing social services in the community, began to seek financing outside of the community. This would help to formalize both organizations and spaces for social services in the community. For some, this was necessary to sustain the services in Chinatown. As one community activist who became involved in the 1960s explained:

> To me, if I were to read our generation of Asian American activists, I think somehow, we made a decision that we're going to fight it from the inside. We're going to learn the rules and we're going to fight it legally with the mainstream and learn how to play with the rules. … We fought [for our issues] from the inside and not bashing our heads against the wall.

While many of the activists came to Chinatown and were critiquing mainstream institutions and how they politically positioned Chinese and Asian Americans as invisible, some were beginning to see the value of trying to work with them to bring in more resources to sustain these services. Many of these volunteer programs that began in the 1960s were short-lived, but the ones that

sustained often drew from government and private funding (Espiritu, 1992). CSC received their first city grant in 1975 which allowed them to incorporate as a non-profit. Since then they have received funding from the United Way and the federal government to expand medical services. Another social service organization that was established in the early 1970s was Chinatown Teen Post, which evolved from the volunteer youth development activities. This was part of the city's larger network of Teen Posts funded through grants created from Johnson's War on Poverty that sought to provide opportunities for at-risk urban youth. The Chinatown Teen Post was the only one in the city that specifically targeted Asian Americans.

Funding was necessary for establishing physical spaces to deliver these services. Despite previous community efforts in developing the social service infrastructure of Chinatown without mainstream support, the physical infrastructure was still limited. These new groups were using other community spaces that were not necessarily designed for these services, such as the local churches, Cathay Bank, and the CACA lodge. This need was one reason why Cathay Manor, the first affordable housing development in Chinatown to be built during its time as a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) project area, was designed to be a mixed-use development that provided housing and social services. When it opened in 1984, both CSC, Chinatown Teen Post, and the Chinese Committee on Aging were located in the ground floor of Cathay Manor. As CSC began to grow, they eventually secured a permanent space elsewhere in the neighborhood.

While there were formal social service non-profits emerging in Chinatown, other organizations that formed through this original volunteering and organizing have resisted the formalization. The New Left Asian Americans groups that focus on progressive politics and advocacy, including branches of national groups like AAFE and CPA, dissolved by the 1980s. Los Angeles stands in contrast to other urban Chinatowns that have sustained these

organizations. In the case of AAFE in New York, it is no longer on the political fringe and has evolved to become a part of the Chinatown power structure (Kwong & Miščevič, 2005). Several progressive leaders cited that these groups were difficult to sustain in Los Angeles due to ideological clashes within the left and personal issues that made it difficult for individuals to volunteer outside of work and family. Furthermore, some who followed more radical politics were critical of contributing to a "non-profit industrial complex" that would oppress the community as they would have to respond to funding demands rather than community needs. Some scholars argue that this professionalization of ethnic organizations and the adoption of the state in using the Asian American label is emblematic of the state attempting to control more radical interests, leading to the further depoliticization of the Asian American identity in a competition over resources (Kwon, 2013). Many radical activists have thus resisted in engaging in these formal and mainstream structures in order to have more freedom and control in their community work (Kwong & Miščevič, 2005; Nee & Nee, 1986). This tradition continues with organizations like CCED which did not have any plans to incorporate as a non-profit representing Chinatown.

The emergence of these new non-profits in the organizational landscape also diversified the representation of Chinatown. Some of these organizations, like CSC, were originally seen as outside of the community power structure but now are recognized as important institutions that formally brought mainstream resources to the community. These new organizations were not just membership-based and driven by volunteerism, but now include non-profits that have employed staff, some of whom are college-educated professionals trained to manage organizations and provide social services. Don Toy, who was a community activist in the 1970s and the director for the Teen Post, became a prominent community leader by the 1980s through his involvement in

the CRA Chinatown Community Advisory Council (CCAC), despite having no past political connections to mainstream institutions or the old Chinatown power structure. In her work on Asian American panethnicity, Espiritu (1992) notes that through the professionalization of social work, Asian Americans working in social service organizations have become "de facto representatives of Asian American interests." This same argument can be applied to the organizational leadership in Chinatown.

Expanding Public Services through a Business Improvement District. Similar to the social service leaders, the business leaders in Chinatown were also responding to past neglect and gaps in the neighborhood infrastructure by creating more formalized services. As previously mentioned, the business leaders were instrumental in early community development that contributed to both economic development and social services in Chinatown. The business leadership is still strong in Chinatown; however, it is arguably no longer situated within older organizations like the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and CACA.

One of the more prominent voices of the community today is the Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID) which was established in 2000 and is managed by a non-profit, the Los Angeles Chinatown Business Council (LACBC).[7] The BID structure is supported by the 1994 California Business and Property District Law which enabled cities to create public/private partnerships to establish business improvement districts that would levy annual assessments. The Chinatown BID is one of forty-two BIDs in the city and is a property-based assessment district, meaning that property owners pay into the assessment. The commercial property owners are the primary leadership of the BID. Through the assessments, additional street cleaning, private security, and marketing are redistributed back to the neighborhood with the goal of promoting

[7] Unless specified otherwise, the research refers to this group as the BID rather than the LACBC. This reflects how the community spoke of this local entity.

local business and future investment. Thus, the BID provides a mechanism for neighborhood governance and resources, but one that focuses primarily on economic development.

The BID formation involved a new generation of post-65 business leaders. The BID was created with support from business leaders associated with the older institutions, such as Patrick Lee, a former president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and board member of Cathay Bank, and received $100,000 seed money from Cathay Bank, to initiate the formation. Some of the business leaders involved with the BID include the younger generation of the Old Chinatown families who are beginning to manage the Chinatown family businesses and properties. Other business leaders were relatively newer to the community. Kim Benjamin, a developer from New York, and Peter Woo, a first generation Chinese American and co-owner of Mega Toys, Inc., represented new outside real estate development interests, and became members of the Chinatown business community through their participation in the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The founding and current executive director of the LACBC, George Yu, a 1.5 generation Chinese American who immigrated from Taiwan, is a commercial property owner who became more active in the community in the late 1990s by managing private public safety campaigns and working with Benjamin to stop the development of adult entertainment venues in Chinatown. The current BID board roster includes the original families from the New Chinatown properties, as well as new commercial property owners such as Forest City and Red Car Properties, which are not Chinese American-owned companies. This space has brought together new and old generation of property owners, and some are not Chinese Americans.

A dominant community narrative about the BID formation and purpose is that it is a response to neglect. The BID board members have expressed how the neglect of Chinatown stems from both the city and community creating a “burden” on specific property owners to

address these issues. Several current and former board members shared that the BID formation was a response to the gaps in government and was not functioning properly. One of the founding board members who represented an institutional property owner explained why it was necessary to establish a BID in Chinatown:

> Chinatown was neglected, and [when] I say neglected, I mean in terms of public services. And there was a sense that it wasn't going to get any better. I mean, there's the iconic view from Chinatown of City Hall. And it's so close and yet so far. ... So, once again, we have to do it ourselves. And the way to get an infusion of money is the BID structure.

Other board members bluntly stated that the BID exists because of the "failure of government" in providing services. One board member explains that through the BID, the "city's responsibility in [ensuring] a clean and safe community" is now on the property owners, who pay the extra assessment. The community leaders' narratives about the BID formation reflects that there is ongoing sentiment that the city continues to neglect Chinatown and that the community still must find ways to take care of themselves. Similar to the social service leaders, the business leaders who helped to establish the BID were finding new mainstream mechanisms to bring resources into the community. They too were asserting a community identity in which Chinatown was neglected by the mainstream. While these explanations speak to how property owners are taking on more responsibility, the BID also provides a legitimate structure for the property owners to assert community power.

This criticism about responsibility and neglect now extends to some long-time stakeholders of the Chinatown community. Most community leaders recall the LACBC and subsequent BID formation as a response from local business leaders to the perceived economic decline in Chinatown that began in the late 1980s and 1990s. Several current and former members of the BID board explained that some of the older business organizations, such as the

Chinese Chamber of Commerce, were becoming less Chinatown-focused as San Gabriel Valley became the new economic center for Chinese Americans. Some business leaders, especially those with commercial property interests, felt it was important to have a group that specifically focused on economic development in Chinatown rather than the broader ethnic community to compete with these changes. Some criticize the long-time absentee property owners for "not stepping up" to take care of their properties, as well as shared public spaces. This has led some to feel that the BID is necessary to ensure the ongoing provision of local services that were once provided through informal relationships in the community are continued today, albeit in a more formalized manner. Because they perceive a disinvestment from Chinese Americans, especially in relation to San Gabriel Valley, this also led some in the BID to support the non-Chinese investment coming into the neighborhood as they reason that they are doing more to revitalize the neighborhood than Chinese Americans. Even though the BID was established through collaborative efforts of multiple generations of community leadership, there is still uneasiness about how they are changing the neighborhood.

Because the BID is managed by a local non-profit and its board consists of Chinatown property owners, many still see the BID as a mechanism of ensuring that control over Chinatown still stays within the community because the tax assessments directly fund the LACBC staff and BID activities. However, the accountability of the BID in distributing these public services across the neighborhood was a point of praise and criticism for many community leaders outside of the organization. These concerns may reflect how BIDs have also become powerful urban players as they are private entities handling public funds and thus have a larger collective responsibility for the community (Hochleutner, 2003; Hoyt & Gopal-Agge, 2007; Morcol & Wolf, 2010). Almost all community leaders note that the BID has helped to provide more

frequent street cleaning and visible security in the neighborhood. Some community leaders and property owners, however, have expressed concerns that some areas within the BID boundaries receive these services more than others. The Chinatown BID assessment structure is tiered, with some property owners paying less assessments than others depending on their location, which could contribute to the perceptions of the inequitable distribution of services. However, these concerns and perceptions of unequal treatment in the community also may reflect the expectations versus actual capacity of local groups to be able to respond to gaps in services that mainstream institutions continue to not provide for the community.

Many community leaders see the strengthening of the social service and public infrastructure as part of the longer history and success of the younger political engagement that began in the 1960s. They also recognize the financial capital among the older Chinatown leadership to be an asset. For example, social service and cultural leaders who were involved with the establishment of the Chinatown Public Library in 2003 often spoke about the importance of "community collaboration" across generations of leaders and interest groups, as they relied on the older generation of business leaders, like Wilbur Woo, for additional financial and political support. Furthermore, the older business leaders from Cathay Bank were instrumental in helping to form the BID. One member of the Friends of the Chinatown Library explained how this a tenuous characteristic about Chinatown, "While we're celebrating the so-called community and the government's collaboration to build this library, …other communities may not be financially able to do the same. And so, we're not necessarily the best model for other communities. But for the Chinatown community that was the best way we know how."

In addition to business leaders who had the financial and political capital to continue to help expand Chinatown's infrastructure in the post-65 era, the Chinese American professionals

who were new to the community also had experiences working with local government and mainstream social services which helped to provide knowledge and opportunities for grants to support these new groups and institutions. Emma Louie, who was married to fellow community leader Paul Louie and involved with the Friends of the Chinatown Library and the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, explained how their generation, the pre-1965 U.S.-born Chinese Americans used their personal connections to work together and bring resources in the community beginning in the early 1970s. She explained that community fundraising for the Chinatown Library was largely based on personal networks, "With our generation there are a lot of connections. People recommending other people and so forth. So, there was a lot of this kind of thing that was going on." Thus, the social and financial capital that Chinatown community leaders has and continues to be instrumental in community development.

Conclusion

Chinatown continues to fit the model of an "institutionally complete" ethnic enclave (Breton, 1964, Chung, 2007) as the current Chinatown organizations have and continue to provide resources and services to the Chinese American community. These formations are also critically linked to a sense of ethnic identity. As Vo (2004) argues, Asian American community organizations and leaders in these sites constantly engage in a "politics of resistance" and a "politics of accommodation" when they represent community interests as they must work within structures of power and legitimacy that ascribe identities onto communities. This argument can be extended to how place-based ethnic organizations serve as sites to reconstruct a spatialized community identity. Whereas the early Chinatown organizations were a response to racial exclusion and intended to show how Chinese Americans could assimilate into the mainstream, the post-1965 organizational shifts occurred due to both 1.5+ generation Chinese Americans and

new ethnic Chinese immigrants articulating a distinct, and sometimes contrasting, sense of ethnic identity and politics. Through the presence of both liberal and radical 1.5+ generation Chinese American activists and new ethnic Chinese immigrants, an immigrant identity specific to Chinatown was asserted, one that challenged the assimilationist perspectives. Instead, this was an ethnic identity that emphasized the internal diversity. These differences brought new understandings and challenges to community cohesion as the different generations of Chinatown leaders attempted to bring in resources to Chinatown.

Organizations play a critical role in asserting local control in community development as they are often key players in the community social structure and the source of local power (Hustedde & Ganowicz, 2002). For over a century, Chinatown's community structure has reflected an accumulation of generations of local leadership responding to the needs of the Chinese American community. Today, there are different types of organizations that range in interest and formality. Throughout the history of Chinatown, the business leaders continue to have a prominent role in community development. In the post-1965 context, this dominance is being challenged and reshaped as a new generation of community leadership that is not business-oriented emerge as prominent community leaders. They are responding to gaps from the city and traditional community power structure, and finding new means of capital to provide services which have transformed the organizational landscape. Whereas in the past, mutual aid associations provided services and benefits by pooling resources through a social network based on kinship, post-1965 organizations like the CSC and Teen Post not only were broader to serve the ethnic community regardless of kinship, but were backed by outside and mainstream funding to deliver those services. This further positioned the early post-1965 social service leaders to be the new mediators between the community and mainstream institutions, and assert ethnic

community needs. However, the formation of the BID has helped to strengthen and formalize the business interests in Chinatown and now includes individuals who are more aligned with downtown interests. As they are also considered a community group, this leads to possibilities of conflict over the community's political voice in steering development.

Despite these internal differences, Chinatown is still a neighborhood that relies on its internal network for resources and services. Many efforts that were backed by mainstream policies and funding, such as the Chinatown Library and the BID formation, still relied on the resources and capital of the established community elite and mainstream political savvy of the younger generation of community leaders. These opportunities provided intergenerational collaborations across different interest groups to establish institutions and to further build the community infrastructure. The ongoing mainstream gaps may be an ongoing problem for Chinatown, but it also creates possibility for community development as the community continues to diversify.

CHAPTER 4

SPACES OF POWER: COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN CHINATOWN

> It occurs to me that there are a number of groups – mostly groups in Chinatown that really don't have a voice as far as what's going on in our community. Whether it's public safety, whether it's marketing, whether it's security, whether it's positions on development. ... How we handle our existing affordability of housing, the development of housing, market-rate housing, where development should occur. All those kinds of issues that are the full spectrum [of neighborhood development]. And so how do you manage that? How do you bring the community together?
>
> - David Louie, Executive Committee member of the Los Angeles Chinatown Business Improvement District and member of Chinese American Citizens Alliance-Los Angeles Lodge

Asian Americans have been politically active through their participation and civic engagement with local ethnic organizations (Bonus, 2000; Chung, 2009; Toyota, 2010; Vo, 2004; Wong, 2006) and organizing (Liu & Geron, 2008; Maeda, 2009; Wilson, 2014). This political engagement contrasts with other indicators of political participation, such as electoral politics and voting, that may indicate low rates of Asian American political engagement (Aoki and Nakanishi, 2001; Wong, 2006). Ethnic enclaves, which are often the home to ethnic organizations, are important sites providing spaces and opportunities for political engagement (Liu & Geron, 2008; Chung, 2009). As explained in Chapter 3, these political spaces in ethnic enclaves are often assumed to be local ethnic organizations, whether voluntary or formal social-service non-profit organizations (Espriitu, 1992; Chung, 2009; Wong, 2006). However, other types of political spaces and groups have emerged in neighborhoods that directly engage with planning and land use issues, including city-initiated spaces of citizen participation and managing entities of business improvement districts. These new spaces and groups complicate the neighborhood governance structure as they are not necessarily rooted in or are structured by grassroots efforts, nor are they always based on an ethnic community identity.

In this chapter, I examine these new organizational forms that became spaces of political representation and govern neighborhood development. I show how the engagement of community leaders in these spaces created an identity of Chinatown as a conflicted community, especially one of a clash between business and residential interests among the new post-1965 community leadership. This conflict represents how the evolution of class politics in the Chinatown social structure (Kwong, 1996) was expressed through land use conflict (Logan & Molotch, 1997), and specifically through the deliberation process of planning and development matters (Forrester, 1999). In the city-initiated spaces of citizen participation, politically progressive community leaders challenged expectations of community participation and engagement by displaying noticeable methods of resistance to the decision-making processes. Local leaders have responded to this conflict by creating new political spaces and groups to reassert community control, however this paradoxically has perpetuated community fragmentation. Appendix E provides a table of these different neighborhood groups.

Despite this image of a fragmented and conflicted community, the engagement in these spaces ultimately highlight how Chinese and Asian Americans are not just politically active through community organizations, the traditional forms of civic engagement. They are also engaged through participatory politics in neighborhood spaces externally designed to be a mechanism for community control in political decision-making. I further argue that this has impacted Chinatown's political structure and social relationships as these spaces were often perceived and situated as another group dominated by specific interests and individuals that community leaders had to negotiate among the other voluntary and non-profit organizations representing Chinatown. The trends of engagement across these spaces indicate that while there is and has been community control over development in Chinatown, this control is situated

within specific individuals and interest groups in the community planning process and has yet to be democratized across stakeholders in Chinatown.

Advising the City and Developers: Chinatown Interest Groups

Local organizations often act as political representatives when they are often mediators between the community, city, and other mainstream institutions (Guo & Musso, 2007; Levine, 2017). They thus serve as spaces for political gatekeeping and advising to those outside the community. This has been true for Chinatown as there were key community groups that represented the Chinatown community and were a home base for community leaders. However, as new opportunities for community participation and governance were being created in the city, local ethnic organizations are not the only neighborhood spaces where that advising role could be fulfilled. In Chinatown, there are spaces of citizen participation and a business improvement district that also have played a significant role in governing the neighborhood, especially in regard to land use and planning decisions.

Representation in City-Initiated Spaces of Citizen Participation

Since the 1970s, Chinatown has been included in the participatory governance structures in Los Angeles. This included the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)-initiated Chinatown Project Area Committee (PAC), which was later restructured to be the Community Advisory Committee (CCAC), active from 1978-2011, and the Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council (HCNC), formed in 2003 and still active today. These are "intermediary spaces" between communities and local government, bringing different social actors to engage and deliberate information to make decisions for the local community (Cornwall, 2002; Fischer, 2006). These deliberative spaces, the forums where information about the neighborhood and the planning process is shared, discussed, and negotiated, have the potential to empower

communities or lead to the reproduction of power (Forester, 1999). While they may encourage more local political participation and promote a rhetoric of community participation empowerment, but depending on how these spaces are structured and the practices in these spaces, communities may be politically tokenized and disempowered (Arnstein, 1969; Quick & Feldman, 2011).

Both the PAC/CCAC and HCNC were spaces that provide a form of "legitimate" community representation, but there were also limits to community power. They were purposely designed as advisory spaces to the city and were never meant to be a decision-making body. Most community leaders and CRA staff acknowledged that the limits to power in these spaces has been a source of contention. Furthermore, these spaces magnified political differences within the community, specifically based on residential and business interests, a key divide in the community that persists today.

Limits in Designing Community Participation. The first space of citizen participation in Chinatown was through its designation as a CRA project area in 1980. While not required unless there was a potential use of eminent domain, these committees created a formal mechanism for community engagement and input on local land use decisions. Chinatown had two different advisory committees. The first was the PAC, formed in 1978 during the designation process to approve the project area plan and to mediate the use of eminent domain. The PAC was an elected body decided by the community. It was restructured by City Councilmember Gilbert Lindsay in 1984 whereupon the committee consisted of half elected and half city councilmember appointments. This was again restructured in 1985 when it became a fully appointed body and renamed the Chinatown Community Advisory Committee (CCAC) until the CRA dissolution in 2012. The CCAC advised on all local land use issues in the project area, regardless if it was

funded through the CRA. The PAC/CCAC was Chinatown's first political formation that sought citizen participation from the city. It was intended to be an advisory space where the city and CRA could gather community input in the development process and served as the formal space of community representation to city council for over thirty years.

When the PAC formed, the limits of community power was one of the first issues raised. In an excerpt from the PAC meeting minutes in March 2, 1978 which was held to advise the CRA on the designation process, some committee members advocated to expand the role of the PAC to be more than an advisory space for the CRA and city:

> There was some discussion over the role of the PAC. Some felt it was to be an advisory committee with powers to review and revise the plans developed by the city planners. Others felt PAC should be more inclined to initiate [sic] the wants and needs of the community. Marianne Yee [the CRA community liaison] explained that the PAC's role is advisory in nature, [and] that [the] PAC serves as the formal means through which people participate in all stages with CRA during the formulation and execution of a redevelopment plan. [The] PAC participates in the decision-making process before final decisions are made by CRA and City Council.

Chinatown community leaders participating in the original PAC had already envisioned it as an actively engaged space where community demands could be made to the CRA and the city.

Some explained that the tension of how much power this space provided for the community was one reason why the PAC was immediately dissolved after the required three years of Chinatown's CRA designation and become the CCAC, an appointed body by the council member. By changing the PAC to a CCAC, the councilmember would be able to decide who would participate in this space. The CCAC membership structure was restructured again in 2006. While this was part of larger citywide efforts to standardize CRA advisory councils throughout the city, most said that this was to ensure that the space was not "dominated" by specific individuals in the CCAC, regardless of what interests they represented. While the CCAC

was a space of community engagement, it was still overseen and dictated by the city councilmember. The multiple restructurings of the PAC and CCAC by several city councilmembers were indicative of how they were always advisory spaces controlled by the city.

The HCNC is the current formal citizen participation space in Chinatown. This was formed in 2003. Unlike the CCAC, it is an elected body from stakeholders in the neighborhood. But because of how the HCNC was designed, it is not a council that is specific to the needs of Chinatown because it represents several communities. In 1999, the city reformed its charter to address growing alienation from communities who were threatening to secede from the city. In response, a neighborhood council system was developed with the intent to increase political representation and the voice of local communities. While the neighborhood council system was intended to increase political representation of individual communities, the HCNC is a coalition of six neighborhoods: Little Tokyo, El Pueblo, the Arts District, Solano Canyon, Victor Heights, and Chinatown. The small population size in each of these communities disqualified them to be independent neighborhood councils. Some also argue that Victor Heights is the residential area of Chinatown and that representation is split across two neighborhoods (see Appendix A). While this provides Chinatown more representation as each neighborhood has a set number of representatives, it also contributes to potential fragmentation within Chinatown by positioning these as separate neighborhoods.

The major subcommittee of HCNC is the Urban Design and Land Use Committee (UDLUC), which serves as an advisory role on development matters for all six neighborhoods. The UDLUC was a committee that formed circa 2014. One HCNC board member explained the need for "distance" from proposed development projects because the HCNC board included those who had real estate interests and were beginning to dominate the monthly board meetings.

At these meetings, board members vote to recommend letters of support to the HCNC board. Most of these projects presented need discretionary approval, however some "by-right projects" were presented that did not necessitate community support. While the UDLUC was meant to represent all these neighborhoods, this has primarily been a forum for the Arts District neighborhood as it meets in conjunction with their local association, the Los Angeles River Artists and Business Association. During my fieldwork, a majority of the projects presented at the UDLUC directly impacted the Arts District, which reflects the rapid pace of development that area of the city is currently experiencing.

Thus, HCNC is currently providing a legitimate deliberative space for Chinatown through the UDLUC meetings. But it is still not specific to the neighborhood because of how the HCNC is designed. Chinatown is one of six neighborhoods, each with its own distinct development issues and concerns. As a result, the HCNC is not resolving a gap in political representation as Chinatown was already one of many other neighborhoods in the other political jurisdictions, such as City Council District 1 and the Central City North Planning Area.

Magnifying the Business versus Residential Divide. Community leaders vied for power to lead the PAC/CCAC and HCNC to shape that community advisory voice to the city. Because these spaces were also designed to bridge different community interests, they were also perceived as highly conflicted spaces. Most community leaders have mixed to negative perspectives about these spaces, citing them as conflicted spaces of "business" versus "residential" interests as they engaged in these power conflicts.

As one community leader who observed the CCAC as an outsider noted, the conflict highlighted the different perspectives of what the land in Chinatown meant for the Chinese American community:

> I think there was this clash then, you could say, between the pro-growth folks who also recognized the value of Chinatown land – and land is fiscalized here in this country – and if there were a certain zoning density then we should all have the right to develop into its full potential. And then the pro-housing folks, of course, wanted to have housing developed that would have a cap on the rents or at least some restrictions.

This reflected the different political stances on how land should be managed and who should benefit from it, the property and business owners or residents. Both "sides" did lead the PAC/CCAC at some point. The original chair of the PAC was business leader David Lee, whose family owned one of Chinatown's well-known restaurants, General Lee, while the longest-running CCAC chair was Don Toy, who grew up in Chinatown and became involved in the community through progressive and social service activities. Toy and other community leaders who were considered progressive activists became so active in the CCAC that this space was seen as representing the residential interests. This was arguably a critical political shift in a place like Chinatown which had a history of class hierarchies, with business leaders and the older organizations often in control of not just the land, but political representation (Kwong, 1996).

The inclusion of the residential perspective was critical in ensuring that the development through the CRA would not lead to residential gentrification in Chinatown, which was a major concern at the time. In resistance to the CRA designation, the politically left group, Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE), submitted a letter of opposition to City Council, which critiqued the city's community engagement methods as only being inclusive of community business interests. In fact, AAFE was one of the few community letters of opposition to the CRA, as most family associations and business groups wrote letters of support for the designation. Some AAFE members would eventually be elected onto the PAC to represent residential interests. Toy, who was a former member of AAFE, explained that it was imperative to communicate residential interests that were specific to the Chinatown context, including a

more precise definition of affordable housing and ensuring translations that recognized the dialect differences within the Chinese American immigrant community. Thus, it was not simply about resisting outside development, but steering the resources to address the needs of Chinatown.

Speaking to the media after the PAC dissolution in 1984, Sharon Lowe, a former AAFE and PAC member also argued that the dissolution was the city's attempt to dilute the voice of residential interests. She shared to the press that the councilmember at the time, "wants to do for Chinatown what he did for Little Tokyo. We don't want our community displaced and replaced completely by business with empty streets at night and nobody around" (White, 1984). This response was in response to how community activists in Little Tokyo protested the CRA-supported commercial development, the New Otani Hotel which was backed by international Japanese investors, but displaced Japanese American seniors. Community activists who were elected into the PAC were aware of this history and saw similar pressures of Asian investment and flight capital arriving in Chinatown in the 1970s that were raising land values. This concern contributed to their activism in resisting commercial development and advocating for affordable housing. The impact of the affordable housing advocacy within the PAC/CCAC is explained in further detail in Chapter 5.

Chinatown community leaders, as well as those from the HCNC communities, describe Chinatown participation within the HCNC as a similar power conflict. A few suggested that the HCNC formation was originally dominated by business leaders because they were trying to find another legitimate space outside of the CCAC, which they saw as dominated by residential interests. One individual who had relationships with people on the HCNC board noted that this was unfair because the business interests "already had an outlet" through other organizations in

Chinatown, explaining, "it was wrong for these business interests to be representing communities for the HCNC, when that's what's supposed to be the pipeline to the city." Many noted the factions when recalling the first HCNC elections as they saw both sides bringing in different people to vote for them to be placed on the board. This "election fraud" was documented in an *LA Weekly* article which argued that this reflected a power conflict within Chinatown:

> Some blame the tension on two factions fighting for control of Chinatown: one led by [Don] Toy, a well-known player in Chinatown politics; and the other led by Interim Council president [George] Yu, the recently elected executive director of the Chinatown Business Improvement District and former property manager of Chinatown's Far East Plaza, and members of the business community, including Kim Benjamin, a newly elected business representative of Chinatown. It is simply a matter of two different groups in Chinatown that haven't had a great love for each other," said Dominic Ehrler, former treasurer of the HCNC's interim board and newly elected business representative for Victor Heights (Pelisek, 2003).

Community leaders engaged in a conflict over power in these spaces of citizen participation, which magnified the community divisions as one of residential versus business interests. This divide was now also being carried over across different political and organizational spaces.

Formation of New Spaces: Reasserting Community Control & Interests

Despite their assumed legitimacy as spaces of community engagement and representation, the PAC/CCAC and HCNC are ultimately seen as limited in their power in the community. The Chinatown community leaders have subsequently looked inward to continue developing new spaces to deliberate information and to serve as advisory roles. This aligns with Hum's analysis (2010) of an immigrant neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York that shows how these spaces do not necessarily foster collaboration within a community and that grassroots organizations are still critical in asserting a political voice. However, the findings in this study still indicate that there are still limitations among these community groups. While the formation of these groups and spaces continue the legacy of political engagement in Chinatown and asserts

community control, these spaces are not necessarily inclusive of the entire community.

Property Owner Interests: The Dominance of the Business Improvement District. Most community leaders cite the Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID) as the most prominent political gatekeeper in Chinatown today. The BID is identified as a community group in Chinatown, but it also part of the city's broader BID programs and thus has a mainstream legibility that other local groups do not necessarily have. BIDs have the potential to be community actors that can address social and economic needs of a community, but the democratic nature of the BIDs and how inclusive they are beyond local property owners is a major concern among critics, especially given their growing popularity and political strength in contemporary urban governance (Hoyt and Gopal-Agge 2007). As a stakeholder group that is considered part of the "ethnic growth machine" of Chinatown (Lin, 2011), the BID does not have a participatory structure, but it has emerged as a space where developers, city staff, and elected officials often visit and people who attend their meetings can thus directly engage with them. One person associated with the BID explained that this was a more legitimate community forum than the HCNC and other organizations because it represented the property owners, a key community stakeholder, "Everybody that's on the [BID] board has a business or has property in Chinatown. And we are always open to the public. … And I think that [our meetings] should be a forum. And it should be used as a forum."

The BID is the only community group that routinely holds meetings that provides presentations and updates about proposed developments and new businesses in Chinatown. The Los Angeles Chinatown Business Council (LACBC), the managing entity of the BID, holds bimonthly board meetings that include presentations and updates on upcoming developments in Chinatown. The LACBC operates similarly to the other incorporated community-based

organizations in Chinatown with regularly-held public board meetings. In contrast to the other community groups in Chinatown, the LACBC/BID's mission is focused strictly on economic development and always agendizes development issues for meetings since this is critical to the business climate of Chinatown.

During my fieldwork, the same projects presented at the UDLUC were also presented at the BID board meetings. However, the BID also included presentations for projects that were not presented to the UDLUC, including The Grand, a proposed condominium development on Cesar Chavez; the county's mixed-use development La Plaza Cultura Village; and multiple conditional use permit applications for new restaurants. In addition, the BID meetings included regular updates and check-ins about in-process developments. For example, the property owners of Blossom Plaza, a mixed-use development that opened in 2016, held a position on the BID board and would send representatives to provide continuous updates at each meeting from construction progress to the affordable housing application process, which included over 2300 applications for 53 units. During the January 2017 BID meeting, there was a presentation for a mixed-use development proposed along New High Street that would potentially demolish the King Hing Theater, a movie theater designed by Chinese American architect Gilbert Leong. While this news was reported in the same month by *LA Curbed*, a local real estate blog, community leaders outside of the BID did not become aware of the development until a few months later when a demolition notice was posted on the building. While one property owner and one business owner came back to present on their projects to ensure that they received a letter of support from the HCNC, in general, these updates and check-ins did not occur at the HCNC UDLUC meeting. A major reason for the abundance of information at the BID meetings compared to the HCND UDLUC is the composition of the BID. The board members are major commercial property

owners in Chinatown who have firsthand knowledge of the progress of new developments and changes.

The BID in Chinatown is not just a major resource for information about development in the community, but the entity has close relationships with City Council and other various city and county agencies. Staff from City Council to the Department of City Planning, as well as developers who presented at the HCNC UDLUC, would cite the BID and the executive director, George Yu, as one of their primary sources for community representation. At the BID board meetings, Yu would often relay information from his meetings with other city agencies, including different elected official offices, the Los Angeles Police Department, and the Department of City Planning, among others. While staff from various city agencies attend HCNC meetings to provide monthly updates, this does not routinely happen at other Chinatown organization meetings and events unless they are seeking an endorsement.

The LACBC/BID was not originally structured to provide a formal advisory space on behalf of the community, nor does the LACBC staff see the space as a "regulatory" space despite being a community source of information and mediation with the city and developers. The BID is also not intentionally designed to be a space of community engagement or participatory democracy the way that both the CCAC and HCNC UDLUC were purposely structured to provide for Chinatown. Decision-making stays with the Executive Director and the Board of Directors who are all property owners within the commercial core of Chinatown. This has led to some tension in the community as people recognize their importance as a powerful and active community voice, but are concerned about the group's accountability for including other community stakeholders beyond property owners. One community leader who has been active in several community groups in Chinatown, including the BID, explained:

> The problem with that voice [the BID], strong as it is, for a good pole in the storm as it is, it's not adequate because it does not [as a] whole reflect the needs [of the entire community]. It concentrates on the needs of the business sector creating greater land value, better developments, but it doesn't reflect social needs of the people. It doesn't reflect the educational needs of the people because it is not their mission. It does not reflect, for example, issues like affordable housing, job training, stuff like that. It cannot because it is not their mission. There is still something that is terribly missing here in defining a wholeness of community.

While the BID may represent an important space of community control in Chinatown, it is also limited as they represent only one key interest of Chinatown, the commercial property owners.

Other Community Spaces: Struggles for Legitimacy. Several community leaders have observed that developers have not made additional efforts to outreach to other organizations after visiting the BID meetings. Because of the perceived dominance of the BID, other community leaders have been attempting to develop spaces and find ways to strengthen other interests and voices in the community. As entities that are not always incorporated as non-profits or backed by city policies or programs, they are not always on equal footing as legitimate spaces of community representation.

Chinatown Community for Equitable Development (CCED), one of the newer neighborhood groups, has provided community forums for residents. At their community events, many residents have openly talked about their precarious housing situation, eviction and rent increase letters, landlords ignoring repair requests, and rumors about property ownership changes. At one CCED community meeting, the group designed a quick icebreaker to try to introduce everyone, which included over fifty people in the room. Rather than doing a simple introduction, the first few people began to speak about their housing concerns in detail, which prolonged the introduction activity, but also highlighted how residents needed a space to share their concerns. At another tenant outreach meeting in 2015, the group developed a map of all the different developments in the pipeline for Chinatown and held discussions about rent increases

and the legal rights of tenants. CCED is trying to educate current residents to prepare for and push back on potential changes. However, these public events are sporadic. CCED has also not been able to hold meetings or forums that directly interface with the city or developer to relay the concerns they have learned through their community work. They have instead attended public hearings and meetings, such as the UDLUC meetings and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) scoping meetings, to demand community benefits.

Older organizations remain important symbolic leaders in the community, but as ethnic organizations, their mission is not necessarily dedicated to neighborhood issues. Hence, their activities reflect that gap. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce used to host political town halls in the 1990s but this was no longer an activity after a change in leadership. CACA meetings include updates about the HCNC and BID meetings, but these updates only occur if there is a member who was present at these meetings. Sporadic debates about the future of Chinatown sometimes occurred, as members debated the current changes in Chinatown, especially the business turnover. However, these were not issues that required any follow-up action. A few developers and property owners presented at the CACA meetings to receive community support on these projects; however, these presentations were not routine or consistent for monthly CACA meetings like it was at BID meetings. The CCBA meetings are also primarily held in Cantonese, which for some U.S.-born Chinese Americans and new immigrant community leaders is not linguistically accessible. Furthermore, developers may not make the extra effort to visit these older groups because of the language barrier and will instead seek other organizations, such as the CACA and LACBC/BID, that are more English-dominant. CCBA members also confirmed that they do not consistently talk about neighborhood development issues during their meetings. This may be changing as the current CCBA leadership has shown an increased interest in these

issues when attending other community meetings.

Towards the end of my fieldwork, several community leaders representing CACA, CCBA, CCED, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, Organization of Chinese Americans-Greater Los Angeles, and Friends and Alumni of Castelar Elementary School (FACES) formed the Chinatown Sustainability Dialogue Group (CSDG) with the goal to directly address neighborhood issues. Despite representation from prominent older organizations, the CSDG still had to earn their legitimacy in the community. While city government departments, including representatives from the Department of City Planning, City Council Office, and Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, have visited this new group, developers have been more hesitant. During public outreach for a proposed mixed-use development, the representative for the developer was invited to present at a CSDG meeting. Because he saw this group as informal, he chose to present at a CACA meeting and the BID Board meeting twice, the latter of which he invited the CSDG members to attend since those are public. At that meeting, when asked about his outreach efforts, the representative noted that in addition to visiting the BID, HCNC, and CACA, he would be open to visiting any "legitimate community organization" in Chinatown. This example highlights that even as members of respected organizations collaborate to improve political representation, their legitimacy is not assumed and can still be constrained by the validation of external actors.

Challenging Legitimacy: Community Resistance and Disengagement

While the CCAC, HCNC, and BID appear to be legitimate advisory spaces of Chinatown, the engagement styles of the community within these spaces has also shaped how these spaces are viewed as an effective platform for Chinatown. Specifically, the CCAC and HCNC are seen as spaces dominated by community leaders who practice methods of resistance. This has led to a

framing of Chinatown as a community resistant to change, especially change specific to economic growth. These findings show these acts of resistance and disengagement are a means to reassert local power, but may cause factionalism. In these city-initiated spaces, Chinatown community leaders engaged in resistant acts to not simply challenge proposed developments, but to challenge the accepted forms of engagement. In contrast, the BID is not seen as a space of resistance, but as contributing to a paradox about community control. While they are an example of community control, as a "pro development" space, they also are contributing to a sense of uncontrolled growth among others in the community. Despite the power and legitimacy these spaces hold in Chinatown, community leaders have and continue to disengage from them because they tend to represent key interests rather than the entire community.

Questioning Participatory Practices: Resistance in the CCAC and HCNC

Most community leaders acknowledge the tension in the PAC/CCAC and HCNC as stemming from the conflict between business versus residential interests. Yet when explaining this conflict, they often spoke about how the engagement from those representing residential interests disrupted both the HCNC and CCAC's ability to "conduct business" at meetings. These community leaders were openly challenging assumptions about proper modes of community engagement. These were not deliberative spaces where only developments were being questioned; the participatory political process itself was also being challenged.

Absences and Breaking Quorums. The CCAC members who represented the residential interests were often described as "resistant" to the city, CRA staff, and the community leaders associated with the old power structure. People recall that they purposely engaged in conflict to make it difficult for other members to participate. In both the interviews and archival research of past CCAC meeting minutes, there are multiple examples of CCAC members yelling at each

other, questioning of the accuracy of meeting minutes and translations, and walking out before a vote to break a quorum and delay decision-making.

One example cited by individuals as an example of the resistance of the CCAC and their perceived power to "slow down" processes, and by extension development, was the community review process of Blossom Plaza in the early 2000s. One CCAC member who walked out on the first meeting to vote for the project, recalled how he felt that the process was "undemocratic" and not transparent to the community:

> Interviewee: The first or second meeting where Blossom Plaza was brought up, there wasn't even a set public hearing for the project. So, one of the members of the advisory board, as soon as it came up on the agenda, said "I propose that we recommend that the project be moved forward." And I said, "Where is the hearing?" You know? How can you even vote on a project that we haven't even heard what's being proposed or anything, you know?
>
> Interviewer: How did he respond? Did the person respond in any way? What was their justification?
>
> Interviewee: Well, it was fairly clear that there was a group of people with the intent on moving forward the Blossom Plaza project. And that they had met and they had gotten all their people to their advisory committee meeting and actually had the majority [to approve the project].
>
> Interviewer: Within the advisory [committee]?
>
> Interviewee: [nods head] They had the majority of the advisory council. If there was a vote held that day, as proposed, they would've won the vote. But what happened was I raised that this was totally undemocratic and if that we [were] to have a vote at this time, it'd be a total farce. And then a couple of other people stood up and said that. That this is not a vote. And they stood up and everybody walked out of the meeting. Not everybody, but the opposition [to Blossom Plaza] walked out of the meeting. So, they were left with no quorum. So, they said, "Well we can't discuss this."

There was eventually an open discussion about Blossom Plaza at a CCAC meeting. This meeting on May 6, 2004 lasted three hours and the Blossom Plaza proposal was the only agenda item discussed. While other CCAC meetings were primarily attended by board members and CRA staff, the meeting minutes stated that it also included Ed Reyes and his staff as well as

"over 150 community members 'standing room only' in attendance for the meeting. Community members including senior citizens, youth, adults, residents, businesses, benevolent groups, family associations, social service groups, business people, philanthropic groups, non-profit groups, etc. from Chinatown." After a 10-minute presentation from Larry Bond, the developer, a Q&A session convened that took up most of the three-hour meeting. CCAC members and community members questioned both Councilmember Reyes and Bond about the community benefits, including affordable housing, parking, and a cultural center, all benefits that have been demands from the community for over thirty years. Councilmember Reyes and Bond explained their vision for this project as a distinct landmark project and an eastern gateway for Chinatown to attract more visitors. The meeting minutes showed that several community members expressed resistance to this idea stating, "Chinatown's funding should only be spent to benefit Chinatown community members, not to subsidize private developers and victimize the community with higher housing and living costs." The resistance of this project also displayed the community's suspicion to outside developers and if they would provide community benefits.

These members who were highly engaged in the CCAC explained that they did not want to become a token participatory entity, or just part of a "rubber stamp" process. One CCAC member explained that his and others' engagement defied expectations that advisory boards were simply passive entities:

> Because people expect you to be advisory, therefore just advise and get out of the way. But [we were] more of an action-oriented advisory board. If we didn't like something, we were likely to pull a press conference. We were likely to demonstrate. Or if we supported something we were likely to come out strong in support of it. So that I think that was a little difficult for some people.

These new community leaders in the CCAC were also the 1.5+ generation Chinese Americans who were also part of the progressive Asian American activism that began in the late 1960s in

Chinatown. They brought in a new style of political engagement that used methods of conflict to advance issues and mobilized others to protest for their cause.

Like the CCAC, issues about the process of engagement and the HCNC's ability to "conduct business" as an advisory council has become a source of conflict. During my fieldwork, I observed multiple tense exchanges between board members from different neighborhoods over the lack of quorum at meetings, which members consistently expressed was a major issue that predated my fieldwork. For example, at the November 2015 HCNC board meeting, several Chinatown and Victor Heights representatives walked out in the middle of a vote that would decide where the upcoming HCNC election site would be held. The representatives, which included Chinese American senior citizens who travelled to the meetings together, left at the designated end time of the meeting, 8:00 p.m., despite no signs of the meeting ending. This one action broke the quorum and no decision was formally made on the election location nor on any of the remaining action items in the agenda. The HCNC board had discussions at multiple monthly board meetings about changing the bylaws and creating standing rules to address these quorum issues. Victor Heights and Chinatown representatives often questioned these attempts to change the bylaws by pointing out inadequacies in these changes to account for the needs of immigrant communities, such as lack of translations and physical accessibility for the older monolingual Chinese American seniors participating as HCNC representatives. They argued that more effort needed to be made to accommodate this segment of the community so that they could be full participants.

The Politics of Language: Fighting for Translations. Language accessibility is a common barrier when outreaching to and engaging with immigrant communities. In the CCAC and HCNC, Chinatown community leaders representing the residential interests constantly

insisted on Chinese dialect translations at meetings for community representatives and meeting attendees. As they advocate for translations, they often resisted or delayed meeting procedures and votes, citing the lack of accurate and consistent translations.

The HCNC and CCAC members who grew up in working-class families in Chinatowns and later educated in progressive politics, often spoke about their immigrant family background and discrimination due to language barriers to explain their stances. The CCAC members representing residential interests became especially focused on making sure accurate translations were provided by the CRA, even fighting for different Chinese dialects, despite this slowing down the engagement process in the Chinatown community. As one former HCNC and CCAC member explained, it looked like they were "asking for too much. But if you understand an immigrant community, you realize it's not. We take it for granted that, yeah, I got the minutes. I was able to read it online."

However, as this has become a reoccurring argument for the past four decades spanning two spaces of citizen participation, community leaders are now varying in their interpretations of what this fight for translations means for Chinatown. For some, the ongoing resistance has a negative impact on how the board members work together, which unlike the PAC/CCAC is not just different representatives of Chinatown, but now includes other communities that do not have the same demographic make-up and needs as Chinatown. Little Tokyo, another historic Asian enclave that is also experiencing neighborhood change and pressures of downtown growth, does not have the same internal ethnic tensions as the Japanese American community did not have the same large contemporary influx of immigrants as the Chinese American community experienced. The issue of language and translations is not as contentious for the Little Tokyo representatives as it was for the Victor Heights and Chinatown representatives. One HCNC member shared that

it was “embarrassing” that the “different Chinatown factions hold up legitimate HCNC business, which is advising the city on projects.”

Some in the community have even expressed that requiring different Chinese dialects beyond Mandarin and Cantonese by the city is an unreasonable request and not worth the continued resistance. Others have also expressed concerns as to whether translations are even necessary as they have heard rumors that those requesting the services may have enough English language skills, and in some cases Cantonese and Mandarin skills, to understand the different interpreters who have tried to assist the HCNC. Some felt that they are still resisting the translation attempts because of power plays within the HCNC. Thus, what would appear to be an issue that should potentially unite an ethnic community, language accessibility, has instead become a source of internal fighting.

Despite these internal politics and rumors that have yet to be formally substantiated, others still found it necessary to continue to challenge the city and HCNC board on the translation issue. This sentiment tended to be strongest among those who were newer to the community and had yet to learn about the history of community politics, and in some cases, actively avoiding it. One 1.5+ generation community leader who recently became involved in Chinatown explained:

> The non-English speaking stakeholders, the senior population, maybe they’re not as tech savvy. … [The HCNC has] very few postings about meetings or specific issues but they’re in English and not necessarily always translated. … How do we engage our community and have them become more active participants within our community? And then how do we actually get them to communicate so that government – not just local, but we can go to the city – we can have them be more responsive to our community?

This sentiment shows that despite the limitations in these spaces for community representation, community leaders continue to try to improve these spaces to ensure that Chinatown residents

can participate and provide better representation of the community.

Supporting Development, Questioning the City: Resistance in the BID

The conflict that characterized the CCAC and HCNC did not routinely occur at the BID board meetings during my fieldwork. One reason for the lack of conflict is that they do not have to engage in the same type of open decision-making across disparate interests. The presentations and updates at the BID tended to be informational for board members and guests. They were not agendized to be action items to vote on for a formal letter of support. Furthermore, some of these developments presented at the BID did not need discretionary approval by the city and did not have to formally go to HCNC or other community organizations for official support. Visiting the BID was a way for the developer to show that they visited a community space.

The BID is viewed as a "pro-development" space within the Chinatown community. This is a sentiment expressed by all community leaders, regardless if they are personally involved with the BID. Lin (2008) argued in his research on Los Angeles Chinatown that the LACBC/BID is part of the "ethnic growth machine" politics as they are not only a major community player, but one that is encouraging economic growth in Chinatown. The BID is both a speculative and structural place entrepreneur (Logan & Molotch, 1987) in Chinatown by creating a local space that is not resistant to development. It is an accessible space for developers who want to receive buy-in from a legitimate group in the community.

Individuals associated with LACBC/BID confirmed that they tend to support most of the new developments being proposed for Chinatown, which is primarily mixed-use market-rate housing and retail spaces. At meetings, board members ask the developers questions, including displacement issues and time frames for project completion. But overall, most have received very little resistance to their decisions and visions of their property. These new developments

and businesses presented at the BID meetings were viewed as benefits as they would activate spaces that were vacant or replace places in the community that they deemed as attracting external negative influences on Chinatown, such as graffiti and marijuana dispensaries that were illegal at the time. As fellow property owners, many BID board members often assert their rights as property owners to develop and use their spaces according to their needs and tastes. They appear to be extending that sentiment to these new developers.

The only notable resistance at the BID board meetings came in the form of questioning government projects, including improvements made to neighboring Union Station. The questions reflected many Chinatown property owner's unhappiness with local government in the management of their properties and communication with property owners. At several meetings, the BID board members expressed that several county and city-owned properties that were used as parking lots and public transportation resting spots were not the "best and highest use" of land in Chinatown. Many BID board members were concerned with an increased homeless presence that they saw as spreading from neighboring El Pueblo and Downtown. When government staff were present, they would often express the city's ineffectiveness in resolving homeless issues and questioned how they plan to resolve these issues for Chinatown and the city. Additionally, the BID has been active in monitoring the disability lawsuit abuses that appear to be targeting Chinatown business owners, who are often in older buildings that were built before compliance regulations. Executive Director George Yu has openly questioned how this appears to disproportionately immigrant communities who are receiving limited city assistance on this issue. Similar to the PAC/CCAC, the BID members show resistance to the city, but the resistance is less focused on the process of governance. The BID resistance tends to focus on asserting the shortcomings of the city and how that is impacting Chinatown's economic growth.

Disengagement from Dominant Spaces of Power

There was also disengagement from these different spaces, the PAC/CCAC, HCNC, and BID, despite the potential political power they provided. Most business leaders appeared disinterested in participating in the CCAC by the 1990s. One former CCAC member who participated in order to advocate for cultural and heritage interests observed how the business leaders in the CCAC lost influence, explaining, "I must say the progressives were all dedicated [to the CCAC] …. Frankly, I think the business element became somewhat therefore vulnerable. They were never able to press their issues successfully as maybe they should have." Another former CCAC member explained that the business leaders did recognize that the resistance from CCAC members was about the process, but they felt that most of the times it focused too much on "governance minutia" such as "correcting typos in meeting minutes," which they saw as an ineffective. He explained that "after non-productivity you can imagine that those people that were in the business [community], 'I've got better use of my time than just sit there and waste it.' So, they didn't stay involved." Many business leaders also criticize the CRA as being too bureaucratic and that the community resistance added to the layers of city bureaucracy.

Even though community business leaders were the most vocal advocates for the CRA designation, the CCAC was ultimately not a space for business interests, nor a space that could bridge different groups together. The CCAC was a space that helped to legitimize a new group of leadership who paradoxically were the ones who challenged the expected tokenism of participation in these spaces. At the same time, this power shift led to tension within the community because the city used the CCAC as their primary mechanism for community representation. One business leader explained that the CRA "ignored" them because of the dominant voices in the CCAC. Another business leader pointed out that this slowed down

economic development in Chinatown, explaining that "the city councilperson [was] looking to the CCAC to give their recommendations and... sending any developer to the CCAC to seek their recommendation, their approval. That was how nothing happened." The business leaders resisted and disengaged from the CCAC and formed new spaces to assert their political voice, which included the BID and HCNC.

However, most community leaders, including the business leaders who were active in the beginning, are also disengaged with the HCNC and do not see it as a true community voice despite being a part of the city's broader neighborhood council system. This sentiment was expressed across almost all interest groups. Some expressed that Chinatown has to constantly fight for representation, whether with the other communities or even within the community itself. As one older progressive activist explained:

> The neighborhood council is a great step in that direction [for community empowerment]. But the way it was configured for the Chinatown community, it's been very much a distortion of what a neighborhood council should be. It should be like a small city council. Sort of what you would have in a small town and be a mechanism for bringing that town together. But instead [the HCNC], it's another political turf fighting situation.

Several others also expressed this sentiment that HCNC represents a space that is a fight for power rather than a space to fight for the community. During the writing of this dissertation, plans to subdivide the HCNC has led to further contentiousness within Chinatown and across the different HCNC neighborhoods about power grabs in the community. The disengagement and resistance to this space is a critique of the city's efforts for community participation and, for some, the ongoing power conflicts within the community.

Furthermore, HCNC members themselves seem to be disengaged in the development review process through the UDLUC. Throughout the fieldwork, Chinatown and Victor Heights projects were presented at the UDLUC monthly meetings with no representatives from these

neighborhoods present. The absences of Chinatown and Victor Heights representatives at the UDLUC meetings may be due to the committee not requiring that board members attend the meetings, an issue that was debated at several board meetings, but never resolved.

Because of an absence of Chinatown representation at the UDLUC, representatives from the Arts District and Little Tokyo would cautiously provide input. Rather than asking specific questions and demands about how it would benefit the community, as they do with projects within their neighborhood, they would instead ask with whom in the community did the developer spoke and try to determine that he did appropriate outreach. All developers indicated that they have spoken to the BID, whose staff were HCNC members but did not regularly attend the UDLUC meetings. Upon mentioning the BID, the UDLUC members often did not question the developer further about their outreach. At one meeting, the Little Tokyo representative encouraged one developer to actively go to Chinatown and seek approval, stating that "a good developer" would do this regardless if they needed discretionary approval or if community members were present at the UDLUC meetings. It was not until after the 2016 HCNC election that one of the new Chinatown representatives began to attend meetings more consistently. However, as a newcomer learning about both HCNC and the community, she expressed discomfort in making a decision without conferring with more community groups and needing to see the projects in advance of the meetings so that she could do appropriate outreach. The minimal representation from both community leaders and other stakeholder at these meetings further situates the HCNC as a weak representative voice of the Chinatown community.

The pro-development stance of the BID has also led to criticism and disengagement from other community leaders and stakeholders. Many CCED members were critical of the BID for supporting a "specific vision" of Chinatown that was not inclusive of those beyond the

commercial property owners. They felt that this vision tended to favor maximizing profits for the property owners rather than community benefits or neighborhood preservation, suggesting that the BID was contributing to gentrification. This led to many of the CCED members, especially those who were younger and newer to the community, to take a very firm stance to not engage with the BID and to openly challenge them. Others who support the BID as an important entity providing much needed services to the neighborhood, did not necessarily feel that they could be a part of the BID. The board membership has lost representation from CCBA, CACA, and other institutional property owners in Chinatown and is now dominated by the commercial property owners. One long-time community leader explained how the BID is an important "anchor" but criticizes the lack of contentiousness within the group, hinting at the lack of diverse property owner voices on the board. This concern again speaks to how the BID is not necessarily a comprehensive voice of the community, nor a space that is deliberating information across interests.

Summing up the challenges of political representation in the community, one former member of the CCAC reflected how there is a need for "healthy conflict" in the community. He explained, "You want contentiousness. … So, you need a forum [today], where there can be enough give and take where you can get the contentiousness to materialize into finally a consensus." He realized that while there are strong voices in the community who could provide leadership, there is currently a lack of dialogue and spaces for healthy conflict among the different leaders to collectively steer development in Chinatown.

Limits to Political Engagement: Community Ties in Chinatown

As Umemoto (2001) argues in participatory planning efforts for ethnic communities, there are cultural norms and social relationships that must be considered in promoting

community engagement in planning efforts. Planners and policymakers have an ethical and moral role in how to engage with these dynamics as it can reinforce hierarchies and power differentials within the community. This tension was evident in spaces like the CCAC and HCNC. In some cases, they brought people who never interacted with one another, while in other cases, it brought people together who have preexisting relationships. As they have and continue to engage in these conflicts over power in and across these spaces, community leaders also reshaped the sense of community beyond these spaces by asserting the boundaries of stakeholdership and challenging the social relationships within the neighborhood. While these changes can be transformative, these changes may lead to the reproduction of power with different actors rather than empowering the most disenfranchised, which in the case of Chinatown are the residents and workers. Furthermore, the engagement in these spaces were embedded and shaped by the power relations within Chinatown, which appeared to clash with expectations of community participation and neutrality.

Boundaries of Community Stakeholdership

The definition of community stakeholdership was a contentious issue in determining who had the right to speak on behalf of the Chinatown. Community leaders engaged in symbolic boundary work around this issue of defining who was a community stakeholder. Symbolic boundary work is a process in which individuals mentally categorize groups and use those categorizations towards forms of domination to control resources that reproduce power and social inequities (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Local leaders engaged in boundary work to assert power over representation, and ultimately the type of resources to the community. These stakeholder categories not only determined who is a part of the community, but also structured the internal conflict over political representation in these spaces in Chinatown.

Everyone recognized that the primary stakeholders were the residents, workers, and business owners of Chinatown – the people who had a routine, everyday presence in Chinatown. However, beyond these individuals, community leaders wrestled with how organization members and, in some cases, property owners were legitimate stakeholders. These individuals were not always present in the neighborhood, nor necessarily interested in Chinatown beyond their organization or property interests. Yet, as explained in Chapters 2 and 3, Chinatown has historically been a networked neighborhood for Chinese Americans across Los Angeles. Thus, many of the individuals who have been community leaders were often associated with the organizations or were property and business owners. Because of this history, it is not always intuitive to exclude individuals who were not locals from the contemporary political leadership and representation of Chinatown.

However, some community leaders have been questioning the symbolic attachments that some may have to Chinatown as a means to de-legitimize those voices. Business leaders, especially those involved with the BID, were more likely to follow a narrower definition of stakeholdership when discussing political representation. As one individual associated with the BID explained:

> My definition of a stakeholder is skin in the game, right, whether you live there or work there or own property there. And for a stakeholder to be just anybody that cares about Chinatown, that can be anyone. That can be anyone. Not that it's wrong to care about Chinatown. I think it's great. You know the more people that care about Chinatown the more attention and voices that we're going to have for it. And that's great. But not when you're coming in and telling me I need to do this for my house and my community that I spend more time in than you.

This criticism was extended to both new organizations, like CCED, as well as older organizations, like CCBA and CACA. Those who took this stance explained that they tend to have less direct connections to the neighborhood and they should not be prioritized over property

owners whom the BID primarily represents, as well as those who live and work in the neighborhood.

These stakeholder tensions were especially apparent in the conflict over the Walmart Neighborhood Market that opened in Chinatown in 2012. Organizations like CCED, which formed to protest the Walmart, were often seen by many long-term community stakeholders as not representative of a Chinatown voice because most of the members were not only new to the community, but not Chinatown residents or workers. One long-time resident of Chinatown indicated that some of the Asian American student protestors of the Walmart "had a cause…but they didn't know the whole thing," not only hinting at how the community had planned for a grocery store in that space for over twenty years, but critiquing some of the political activism that happens based on political beliefs without knowing the community context. Many saw how Chinatown became a conflicted site for "outside" labor interests who were not necessarily engaged with Chinatown nor providing viable alternatives to address community needs.

This tension is aligned with the dynamics in many urban social justice movements. Marcuse (2009) explains that the composition of these movements includes those who are directly oppressed and the alienated, those who are not directly oppressed but are politically engaged due to a recognition of ongoing social injustice. These movements are often based on ideologies rather than shared material conditions. These movements and organizations that bridge people inside and outside of the neighborhood also may be critical for residents in low-income neighborhoods to understand broader implications of racial inequities (Shah, 2012). As Rendón (2015) argues, the segregated urban context shapes the racial and ethnic identity formation of children of immigrants living in these spaces who may draw from their immigrant identity and reassert narratives of the American Dream in response to their social and physical

isolation. The political activism in Chinatown was and continues to be driven by liberal and progressive ideologies that resist assimilation narratives of Chinese and Asian Americans and instead seek to highlight the inequitable conditions facing the poor and working-class. But this has led some to a critical view on the role of radical activism in Chinatown since much of that community work has stemmed from individuals with limited attachments to Chinatown. The class, educational, and political differences among community activists and the Chinatown residents and workers often lead to disconnects in developing a broader sense of ethnic solidarity to mobilize for these resources (Espiritu, 1992; Kwong & Miščevič, 2005).

The members of the different Chinatown organizations appear to be cognizant, and in some cases, self-reflective of their limited position in the community. Many acknowledged that they and their members were not residents and are hesitant on making public stances on behalf of the neighborhood. This hesitation could also explain why only a few groups in Chinatown are recognized as politically active in development issues. As a group that is driven by college students and older activists, many CCED members are self-aware that they are not the primary stakeholders of Chinatown, cautiously stating their role as "supportive" to the residents. One CCED member explained their philosophy of community work, which continues the early radical politics of "serving the people" and local empowerment:

> When we go into these like different situations where we're working with people, they will say, "Oh well why don't you just do it for us." We don't ever do that. We'll say, "We'll help you, we'll work with you, but you have to decide what you want to do. You have to decide your strategy. ... When we walk away from this, right, we want to leave you more empowered than when we came. If that doesn't happen, then we haven't really accomplished very much."

Another activist from the 1970s similarly observed that this has been an ongoing tension, "I think what became a challenge is ... to develop a philosophy [that] we're trying to organize a community to help themselves, not so much a, you know, missionary group that is sort of just

doing good in the community." Volunteers, both old and new to Chinatown, spoke about a similar delicate balance of trying to do political work that would build community capacity rather than engaging in work that benefits the individual or group.

Community Relationships and Inequities

In a small community like Chinatown, especially among those involved with major organizations and institutions, participating in highly politicized spaces can also reshape personal relationships and the informal bonds of trust. For some, having a close relationship with others was a positive experience because there was already a shared understanding and knowledge of how to work together. The interconnectedness of many of the older community leaders was described as a "family" and "village" dynamic. One community leader explained that that many outsiders and city government did not recognize or understand these "deep and long relationships" in Chinatown prior to the CRA being established in Chinatown. While this allowed for an ease for people to work together, there were also instances where individuals with these close relationships engaged in conflict as they represented the community. As one business leader explained, "So there's been a lot of good relationships and hard-fought disagreements…. Just that we had serious philosophical differences, but we sucked it up and we put aside the differences to do this together." With the close relationships came an understanding that they could disagree, but would be able to eventually overcome those differences. Several people who were in conflict when they first became involved in the community, which included sitting in the PAC/CCAC and being on "opposing sides," also shared that after thirty years of working together they now have positive working relationships.

Some also described the conflicts as "personal attacks." A few shared stories about knowing others since their youth and developing friendships, but their perceptions of those

individuals and relationships became strained over time through this political engagement. For example, through the CCAC, individuals who had personal and familial relationships criticized each other on how they maintained their properties. These discussions which would normally be private matters between family and friends, or community gossip, were now sometimes discussed in public forums and mediated through the city.

The community engagement in these spaces appeared to have impacted the relationships between the social service and progressive activist community leaders. Several individuals who worked in these areas spoke about distancing themselves from the CCAC, and as a result, the CRA resources, despite it being "dominated" by "progressive" voices. One former social services leader explained how the space became too political and less about addressing community need, "The whole process was just way too complicated. And too many people had their hands in the pot. ... So, we were just like, is there any reason why we really need to be a part of this?" Other progressive activists who never engaged with the CCAC were critical of its role in the community. They felt that regardless of their political orientation, CCAC members were influenced by the power that the CRA provided them, from information on proposed developments to direct access to developers and city council. As one older community activist suggested about some of the rumors of community corruption and power grabs that characterized the CCAC, "Being involved in CRA you start to see all the different opportunities that are available." For some, these state and city participatory structures transformed and legitimized the power of individuals rather than transforming the power structure to be more inclusive.

Through the PAC/CCAC, the CRA became one contributing factor in creating strained relationships among those who wanted to strengthen the political voice of low-income residents and workers in Chinatown. The breakdown of relationships and continued strained relationships

among some in the community also counters assumptions that this is a benefit of citizen participation in the planning process (see Florin & Wandersman, 1990). However, the findings support how urban policies have contributed to the breakdown of social relationships in a community (Fullilove, 2004). This breakdown is not necessarily due to a physical separation of a tight-knit community, but due to community leaders vying for power to speak for a community that continually struggles to be recognized by the city and mainstream institutions.

Some also did not have romantic views of community relationships and spoke openly on the history of power differentials. Historically, the community was represented by business leaders and professionals. The resistance from more vocal politically progressive members who came from a working-class background was a means of challenging this older power structure, as well as the city. But as one former HCNC member described, this hierarchy can be a barrier to participate in the PAC/CCAC and HCNC:

> And they [the community] don't go and complain unless someone teaches them you have a right to complain. You have a right to be at the table. And you know that's hard for people. Because that's conflict. Who likes to be in conflict? Who likes to go to walk in the [bank] and the manager that's sitting there was the person you were fighting against the night before? Doesn't make sense! …. And that's hard for people! That's hard for me!

This argument highlights how these participatory initiatives, especially ones initiated by the city, may try to flatten power differences by being inclusive of different interests, but there are still barriers due to social relationships in the community. These relationships may prohibit many from fully participating in these spaces as an individual may be designated as an equal in one space, but once outside of that space, they are no longer seen as equals.

The PAC/CCAC and HCNC were bringing segments of the Chinatown community together that did not just simply represent different interest groups, but at times were bringing people who were of vastly different backgrounds. One former CCAC and HCNC member,

Edmund Soohoo, who grew up in Chinatown in a working-class family explained how this was a new experience for him as he was interacting with people, such as prominent Chinese American business and political leader Wilbur Woo, who were not just part of the elite in Chinatown, but elite transnational Chinese American leaders:

> Our worlds are very different. A Wilbur Woo's world and Edmund Soohoo's world, at that time, light years away! He actually held a post in Taiwan government. I mean he was an advisor while he was still here. And so, he had dual roles and he was very enlightened in that way as a leader. … I mean, Cathay Bank and all that stuff. And all that is well known. See, so I can't say that I saw what he saw. … I only saw what I saw walking the streets from Chinatown.

The community leaders had contrasting life experiences that shaped how they situated Chinatown. Arguably, these different life experiences across stakeholders may have further complicated the conflict beyond a traditional business versus residential dynamic in land use conflicts. The business leaders may have focused on economic growth, but leaders such as Woo, would bring in a more global, transnational perspective to transform Chinatown, which was critical as Chinatown was positioned to facilitate overseas Asian investment. As a business leader, Woo's experiences and knowledge differs from other business leaders in the community who may not have been involved in global politics. Residential leaders, like Soohoo, provided a local, working-class perspective of Chinatown and were politicized by radical political ideologies that informed their engagement in these spaces to focus on conflict as a way to challenge power structures, both the city and community. The power differentials associated with having different class backgrounds in the community may have informed some of the interactions in the CCAC, HCNC, and other spaces of community representation.

The new Chinese immigrants from Southeast Asia who moved to Chinatown as residents and business owners have been less active in these new spaces, whether it be the CCAC, HCNC, or BID. This includes representatives from their new organizations that formed and have become

important spaces of leadership for this segment of the community. A reason for this may be due to language barriers, as the community leaders among this new immigrant cohort primarily speak their regional dialect, with limited English ability. As explained in the previous chapter, this has led to fragmentation within the Chinatown community. However, one first generation business leader also explained how he was perceived as an "outsider" because he was relatively newer to the community despite becoming politically engaged in Chinatown organizations. The "outsider" status is a part of the previously explained stakeholder tension in representing Chinatown. While there was participation from a few first-generation Chinese American business leaders and senior citizens, ultimately these spaces were dominated by the younger 1.5+ generation community leaders who became active in the 1970s and onward, as well as the leaders in the old Chinatown power structure.

Expectations of Community Neutrality

The community tensions did not go unnoticed as the media and former CRA staff described Chinatown as an especially conflicted neighborhood. One former CRA staff member described it as "in many cases [the PAC/CCAC was] very emotional. In many cases just at one another's throats and so it was very difficult to get anything accomplished." Another former CRA staff member recalled some of the tensions explaining that the older community leaders "weren't used to being in public and being yelled at" by the younger generation activists. Some community leaders also expressed similar "neutral" expectations of political engagement and representation in Chinatown. Reflecting about her involvement with the CCAC, one former member realized that she may have been approached by City Council because she did not have the same level of attachment as other members and thus could be a "neutral voice." Similarly, several younger individuals who were learning about the conflict in the community spoke about

the need for “neutral” spaces to do community-based planning, as they were aware of the politics and conflicts among the older generation.

These sentiments about neutrality, especially in spaces of community engagement and representation, indicate that there is an expectation that local leaders will engage in a traditional rational approach to the planning process. This approach assumes that personal and community values, as well as politics, should not be considered or put aside to make objective decisions (see Friedman, 1987). However, other scholars note that in spaces that promote community engagement they can become “emotional spaces” in which the practices and approaches that appears irrational and emotionally charged is to convey an authenticity of the issues being debated and to contest the underlying values that are constructing community identities (Barnes, 2008). These emotional responses of anger and resistance can be a reaction to structural and power inequalities that are often the basis for social movements and political mobilization. As Bonus (2000) also observed in how Filipino Americans practiced democracy in community spaces, these perceived conflicts may be magnified or misinterpreted because they are not neatly assimilating into norms of mainstream conduct and expectations of community unity. Instead, they are often dismissed as “messy” and lacking political control.

This same argument could be extended to how Chinatown has been framed since the creation of the PAC, which is also when the Chinatown community was diversifying from the post-1965 immigration shifts. The dynamics in Chinatown indicate that the deep personal relationships and pre-existing power imbalances in Chinatown, as well as the demographic and cultural diversity within the Chinese American community shape how they engage in the planning process, which may defy expectations and norms.

Conclusion

Chinatown continues to serve as a space of political participation for the Chinese American community. While the political participation is often assumed to be located in ethnic community organizations (Chung, 2007; Wong, 2008), the local spaces of community engagement implemented by cities are also important to consider in shaping contemporary ethnic political participation and representation. These deliberative spaces are important to consider in understanding political participation and engagement as they are spaces that are specifically designed to promote community participation in political decision-making processes. These spaces in Chinatown have shifted the power structure by providing a site for new leadership and challenging pre-existing community relationships and roles.

Community leaders acknowledge that the city-initiated spaces are necessary as a means of mainstream political representation, but they do not always accept and abide by the norms and expectations of participation in these spaces. Through both the engagement and disengagement in these spaces, the Chinatown leadership was not simply focused on what information was being shared to the community, but how it was being shared. Representatives who engaged in resistant means of participation and disengagement in the PAC/CCAC and HCNC reasoned that their actions challenged and highlighted the flaws in how the city assumes the process of local engagement and representation should unfold. While scholarship on Asian American politics often examines the radical politics of grassroots activism and organizing that show how Asian Americans are resisting democratic processes and their political positioning in society (Fujino, 2008; Liu & Geron, 2008; Maeda, 2009), the findings show that these acts of resistance are occurring in the realm of participatory politics and community engagement, which is becoming incorporated into the formal structures of urban governance.

This resistant engagement also created tensions that led to disengagement from other community members. The disengagement of community leaders from these spaces has not led to an apolitical community as alternative spaces representing different interests and missions have been created to address gaps in political representation, from the BID to the CSDG. These new groups and spaces help to reassert a sense of community control. But other than the BID, they have yet to have a strong voice in Chinatown's political representation. The dominance of the BID, however, raises important questions about what community control may mean as the group represents specific business interests, the commercial property owners. Furthermore, the power of business interests in Chinatown is being rearticulated through the BID structure rather than through an ethnic organization.

The tension over political representation in Chinatown has deepened divisions in Chinatown, specifically between community leaders representing residential and business interests, that is heightening the boundaries of community stakeholdership in Chinatown. In some ways, this may be interpreted as an empowering political shift for certain groups that have historically lacked a voice in the neighborhood. For example, the PAC/CCAC was characterized as being "dominated" by progressives who fought for affordable housing and the ongoing political tension has led community leaders to be reflective of their position as stakeholders who do not necessarily live or work in the neighborhood. However, most also felt that the spaces of community representation that began with the PAC have evolved to become another node in the local Chinatown power structure and ultimately a barrier to working together. This perception weakens the legitimacy and possibilities for these spaces to bridge the community, which was their original purpose and is arguably critical for the community to be empowered as a unified voice to control outside development.

CHAPTER 5

LOCAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF GENTRIFICATION: FRAMING BALANCE AND DIVERSITY IN CHINATOWN

> There is a balance that needs to be struck because it's sort of the question about diversity. … [Chinatown] is not going back to something that's not diverse. Chinatown has been diverse. It became diverse in the 70s when the first wave of Vietnamese Chinatown came from Saigon. … And then the Cambodian Chinese, you can see their signs all over, as well. And so, Chinatown is diverse. … So, what's the balance and what is the core of Chinatown?
>
> - Debbie Ching, former Executive Director of the Chinatown Service Center, explaining gentrification in Chinatown

In this current era of Chinatown's development, the neighborhood has been identified as an area that is gentrifying. The neighborhood is navigating what Marcuse (1985) argues are gentrification pressures as the changes in and around Chinatown may lead to ripple effects that will eventually cause physical displacement over time, as well as changes that disrupt a sense of place and community. This sentiment has heightened as Los Angeles is facing a major housing crisis, which has made housing increasingly unaffordable for the poor and working-class. However, the term gentrification has become a ubiquitous and politically contested term about how new people, developments, and investments are coming into a low-income community and perpetuating urban inequalities and segregation (Brown-Saracino & Rumpf, 2011; Newman & Wyly, 2006; Slater, 2009).

While there are scholars, political advocates, and the media who argue that gentrification leads to the displacement of the urban poor, concerns about the persistence of areas of concentrated poverty have also led to policies and approaches of reinvestment that focus on "social mixing" and "diversity" as a way to combat concentrated poverty and respond to neighborhood decline. This argument draws from the neighborhood effects research on poverty that argue that the conditions of economically deprived and socially isolated neighborhoods

contribute to the poverty of individuals and families (Manley, Van Hamm & Doherty, 2011; Wilson, 1987). Having a residential mix across income and housing type helps to de-concentrate poverty and discourage segregation. However, there is mixed evidence that policies that promote social mixing has had a positive impact on improving the socioeconomic status of individuals living in areas of concentrated poverty (de Souza Briggs, Popkin, & Goering, 2010; Crump, 2002; Lees, 2008; Manley, Van Hamm & Doherty, 2011).

Yet, throughout my fieldwork, I noticed that this concern of diversity and social mixing was an underlying logic that informed the gentrification narratives and debates among community leaders in Chinatown. As a result, many spoke about the need of striking a "balance" in the neighborhood, whether in resistance or accommodation to these changes. In my analysis of these narratives, I identified three major domains of situating neighborhood change, temporal, spatial, and ethnic community. From these domains, I identified core themes about the residential and economic identity of Chinatown, and at times the relationship of these identities to each other. The first theme focuses on the impact of the past, specifically Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) in Chinatown from 1980 to 2011. The CRA's focus on affordable housing development led to Chinatown's current state of "imbalance" of Chinatown as a neighborhood primarily catering to a low-income residential community, justifying market-rate housing and commercial development today. The second theme explores Chinatown's spatial positioning as a central city neighborhood within the city's larger debates about housing affordability. While business leaders saw this as alleviating housing scarcity and promoting diversity, residential and cultural community leaders are concerned about the physical and symbolic displacement of Chinatown. The last theme explains how perceived class differences within the Chinese American community are spatially expressed and how Chinatown's "imbalance" in housing and

economic development has made it vulnerable for competition with cities in San Gabriel Valley, the new "suburban Chinatowns."

I argue that these narratives ultimately show the community variations in framing the neighborhood identity to assert community control over development and change. Framing is a process in which individuals make sense and organize local experiences and, in the process, accept, resist, and reconstruct broader cultural ideologies (Benford & Snow, 2000; Goffman, 1974). Through these different framings, the community displays accommodation and resistance to neighborhood change that could potentially shift Chinatown away from its identity as a poor immigrant community. These framings not only show how community actors vary in how they make sense of change, but they are also a means to reconceptualize arguments about gentrification to assert control over the changes and identity of Chinatown. Frames about local community and neighborhood can selectively draw on race, class, history, or political leaning to advance specific interests and issues (Manzo 2006; Martin 2003; Schneider 1997; Small 2002). In neighborhoods that are experiencing gentrification, stakeholders may respond to changes by reconstructing the neighborhood identity and community boundaries in a way that legitimizes specific claims while excluding others (Hwang 2015; Fraser 2004). The framing of a place and its changes thus is an important means of asserting community control in development conflicts.

Replacing Gentrification with "Balance": The Inevitability of Change & the Need for Improvement

There was a lack of consensus on what the term "gentrification" means in Chinatown. Those who openly used the term "gentrification" in their community work were often those working on resident issues in Chinatown. They were firm that the new market-rate apartments and retail were indicators of gentrification because they appealed to a specific socioeconomic class that was not reflective of the residential community in Chinatown. One of the older

progressive activists explained his perspective of gentrification as those who already "have a great deal of money…and power…decide that they're going to transform the community…without consulting the people and the businesses and the traditional folks who are related to that community." His perception follows the "right to the city" arguments in which the changes in the neighborhood are being dictated by those already in power rather than empowering those who have been historically disenfranchised, which in this case was the working-class Asian immigrant community (Harvey, 2003; Marcuse, 2009). Another older community activist explained her take on gentrification and why it was especially harmful for Los Angeles Chinatown, which has a history of being displaced:

> It's a type of development that tries to erase the historical and cultural integrity of the community and then change the composition of it from low or very low or extremely low-income families to richer communities – people that are richer. … Chinatown was constantly moved ever since it started. ... And [current development] seems like another effort to change Chinatown again to eliminate it.

Given its history of displacement to build Union Station, the threat of displacement that is occurring through contemporary development of market-rate and commercial development appears to be part of this broader history of Chinatown as a place vulnerable for outside investment and displacement.

However, other community leaders were confused, resistant, and/or reconceputalized the term to talk about physical changes. When asked about gentrification during interviews, a few searched for an online definition. Some openly said that they do not use the term anymore because it has become meaningless, with one interviewee mentioning that it was an "elitist" term. Others were also critical of people being resistant to change because of their "nostalgia" of the neighborhood, with one younger community leader who became involved with some of the activism to help the residential community explaining that he felt that this current time was his

"golden age" in Chinatown and appreciated the mix of people and places in the neighborhood. They were not denying that certain changes were happening in Chinatown, but they were questioning the term as a way to define these changes in Chinatown.

Many saw it as synonymous with change and improvement, which everyone agreed was both inevitable and necessary. This led some to use the term towards arguments to support positive changes that would displace the bad aspects. As one younger business leader explained:

> Am I afraid that Chinatown will be gentrified? I mean no doubt it will…. You know I think change is inevitable. It's inevitable. … Somebody's going to come in and change it, you know. Whether it's to improve it, like what they say to gentrify it, or to make the way of life better. Anything is better than nothing. Cause if you don't do anything it's just sitting there and doing nothing.

Thus, when hearing other community leaders speak out against gentrification, it seemed that they were simply resistant to any type of change, and at times, impeding the possibility of improving Chinatown. The presence of vacant storefronts and lots in Chinatown further obscured the ability to pinpoint gentrification as these developments were primarily providing market-rate apartments, but was not direct displacement of affordable housing units. One community leader who worked in the local school, Castelar Elementary School, explained how gentrification is when developers "tear [housing] down and then build a new one on the same place" but that building market-rate apartments was not gentrification and "just change." Many in the community had a similar sentiment as they understood gentrification as displacement, but only a direct physical displacement of people and buildings.

As many valued individual property owner rights, it was difficult for some to fully critique the socioeconomic changes that came with rising land values that are associated with gentrification. Yet they also acknowledged that there should still be a sense of collective responsibility in ensuring that the character of Chinatown does not disappear. One business

leader explained, “Maybe a different way [to look at gentrification] is how do you allow evolution of the property and still keep some of the original stakeholders or the current stakeholders satisfied that their way of living is preserved?” A community leader who was from Chinatown expressed a similar sentiment, despite his past advocacy to bring affordable housing:

> I think gentrification – it’s just a word. … On one hand if gentrification or change means I can charge more for whatever I own, that’s a good thing. The bad thing is if you’re starting out and you’re a new family and you want to live in this area, maybe you can’t. Now is that my fault you can’t? Not necessarily. Because it’s not my job to have affordable housing for you. Not really. I think it’s the community to look at [and identify], do we want a nice mix of people?

In addition, there was a questioning and resistance to the traditional racial turnover arguments associated with gentrification – that Chinatown was emerging as a community for wealthy and middle-class whites. While there were some who advocated for Chinatown “to stay Chinese,” many pointed to this as a simplistic argument. Some explained that the cultural tourism that catered to non-Chinese was part of the neighborhood history, and the neighborhood was an immigrant enclave for Eastern and Southern European immigrants before it was a Chinatown. The young Asian American entrepreneurs opening restaurants, retail spaces, and art galleries in Chinatown, indicated that the neighborhood still had a Chinese and Asian American base, albeit a different one than what is traditionally assumed about Chinatowns. This is not a unique phenomenon in other communities of color. Middle-class, professional blacks have also contributed to neighborhood change that increases land values in historic black neighborhoods, which complicates a racial conflict assumption about gentrification, as they may be returning to a sense of ethnic solidarity but also may be contributing to displacement of the poor and working-class (Boyd, 2008; Hyra, 2008; Patillo, 2008).

Despite the varying responses to gentrification, there was a common theme in which many spoke of the need to obtain “balance” and “diversity” of people and uses in the

neighborhood through the changes being proposed to Chinatown. These narratives were a means of addressing the issue of gentrification when at times it was not explicitly stated. Yet this idea of "balance" was situated differently across community leaders, with some embracing the logic of social mixing to improve economic development and provide opportunities for residents, while others used this narrative to resist this logic to protect the low-income immigrant community in Chinatown. These framings spoke to their understandings of what defined the core residential and economic identity of Chinatown and whether the community had control over the current changes to maintain or challenge those neighborhood identities.

Reflections on the CRA and Affordable Housing Development

Many community leaders recognize that the city's CRA has had a major impact in shaping Chinatown today. While the CRA was a controversial institution that devastated many poor and working-class communities of color in Los Angeles through urban renewal, redevelopment was viewed as a major need in Chinatown following the 1965 Immigration Act. As explained in Chapter 3, community leaders who were active in the 1960s and 1970s recall that the pre-1965 physical landscape of Chinatown could not support the population increases. Poor housing conditions and lack of appropriate housing stock for the growing population also intensified the public perception of Chinatown as an overcrowded, dilapidated neighborhood that could easily be classified as "blighted" to justify redevelopment. Not only was there not enough housing, but real estate values were increasing due to flight capital from Asian countries facing political instability. The potential increases in land values placed low-income individuals and families in a vulnerable position to be displaced. While there was community mobilization as explained in Chapter 3, community leaders also recognized the need to draw from the city and outside resources to respond to these needs.

The CRA, for all its past criticisms, was one of the responses. The CRA was expected to be a force for economic development and encourage gentrification, but community leaders, as well as those working in local government, spoke of the CRA as playing a critical role in affordable rental housing development in Chinatown, especially for low-income immigrant seniors and families. Despite recognition that affordable housing is still a need in the city, this history of Chinatown has been a point of criticism and concern that there is not enough market-rate housing and commercial development to "balance" the neighborhood. Those who expressed this argument were not just business leaders, but community leaders involved with the CRA Chinatown Community Advisory Committee (CCAC).

"Stabilizing" the Community through Affordable Housing

Almost all community leaders across the different interest groups expressed that affordable housing development was the primary benefit of the CRA designation for Chinatown. This was a major community demand, especially among community activists who were originally resisting the CRA designation and consistently advocating for not just affordable housing, but for the affordability to consider the local household and family incomes, rather than the city or county median income. As one community leader who was a former member of the CCAC, the local advisory group formed through the CRA designation and appointed by the city council member, explained, "I really feel that [the CRA] was able to bring a lot of additional housing to Chinatown. It sort of stabilized Chinatown as a community." When Chinatown became a CRA Project Area, the CRA was transitioning as an institution that promoted housing development, especially for Chinatown. The neighborhood's redevelopment plan required that at least 15% of the units in new housing construction within the project area be reserved for affordable housing, 40% of which for very low-income households. If new or substantially

rehabilitated housing received CRA financing, this percentage of units reserved for affordable housing increased to 30%. A minimum of 20% of the revenue generated from tax increments was also reserved for housing development. Twelve affordable housing developments were built during its time as a project area, primarily with CRA funding, and ten of these developments were 100% affordable housing units (see Table 5.1).[8] The CRA designation helped to maintain Chinatown as a residential area for poor and working-class immigrants.

Table 5.1. New Rental Housing Development by Type, 1980-2016

	AFFORDABLE	MIXED	MARKET RATE
1980-1989	4	0	1
1990-1999	2	0	0
2000-2011	2	1	3
2012-2016	2	1	1
TOTAL	10	2	5
%	59%	12%	29%

Sources: CRA Implementation Plan 2011-2014; City of Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department Redevelopment Affordable Housing Roster (August 2016)

The CRA housing developments often focused on providing housing for senior citizens and families. Senior housing was necessary for the aging immigrant population who were living in substandard housing, including the single resident occupancy units in the older Chinatown buildings. In the 1960s and 1970s, community leaders were already providing senior citizen services and envisioning to develop new housing for senior citizens who were living in these single resident occupancy units before the CRA arrived in Chinatown. The very first project completed as a CRA project area was Cathay Manor, a 280 single-unit affordable housing apartment complex for seniors. Grand Plaza, another affordable senior housing complex would be built less than a decade later. These developments were also mixed-use developments with the

[8]This number is inclusive of new construction since 1980. It does not include (1) the CRA-funded rehabilitation projects which were included in CRA 5-Year Implementation plans to justify development and (2) older developments built before 1973 which are also considered affordable as they are protected from major rent increases by the rent stability ordinance (RSO).

intention to provide social services and retail for this population who were less physically mobile. Grand Plaza specifically was designed to have a supermarket on the bottom floor for the senior residents. It was the location for the Walmart Neighborhood Market, which was a controversial development in Chinatown that will be explained later in the chapter.

Affordable housing for families was also a major demand, and one that was culturally specific. Housing advocates in the CCAC pointed out that many Chinese immigrant family households were multi-generational and demanded the new housing reflected this family structure. One former CCAC member spoke emphatically about her pride in being able to work with the CRA and specifically pointed to Yale Terrace, an affordable family housing development built in 2009, as one of the major accomplishments:

> I think we were proudest of what I call the multi-generational apartments that were built on Yale Street. … And I still use that as an example of appropriate awareness for cultural needs because some of those apartments have 4 and 5 bedrooms. And so, if you look at the cultural habits of Chinese Americans, a family is not mom and pop, two kids, and a dog. A family is grandma, grandpa, and unmarried children [including] aunts and uncles [that is] in addition to mom and pop, and the kids. And so, to think, to develop neighborhood housing and set aside below-market housing to reflect the awareness for the different cultural habits of what a family is? That's really not just giving lip service [that] families come in all shapes and sizes. This is really saying, "Hey. We're building units because we know what your needs are." And then to have a courtyard where grandma can sit and keep an eye on the little kids that she ... is babysitting. I'm so proud of that project. I talk about it all the time.

The affordable housing development in Chinatown that occurred during its time as a CRA project area is an important accomplishment for many in the community. It is arguably a surprising legacy of the CRA as well, given its history and criticism of prioritizing economic development in other ethnic communities, including neighboring Little Tokyo, less than a decade prior to Chinatown's designation. In fact, one of the concerns since the dissolution of the CRA is that communities like Chinatown relied on it as an inclusionary mechanism to secure affordable

housing and that there currently is no replacement policy to regulate the inclusion of affordable housing in new developments beyond optional developer incentives.

From Stability to Mixing: Revisiting the Success of Affordable Housing

There is a general perception among almost all in the community that housing development in Chinatown in the post-1965 era up until the CRA dissolution in 2011 was dominated by affordable housing. While this may appear to be a past success for the Chinatown community, this is not necessarily a trend that many want to continue today. Business leaders, as well as former CRA CCAC members, are advocating for more demographic diversity to sustain the neighborhood. Many were concerned with Chinatown becoming an area of concentrated poverty with residents who lacked disposable incomes that could not support the neighborhood economy.

This has been the crux of the argument among those who support the new market-rate housing in Chinatown, with some stating that there needs to be at the very least a "50-50 balance" of housing in Chinatown. They often cite the CRA as over emphasizing affordable housing development for over thirty years. From their perspective, Chinatown has been the focus of affordable housing development to the point where it has been overburdened with this type of development, creating an imbalance in the neighborhood. One business leader who became involved in Chinatown in the 1990s noted this trend:

> We went through two real estate cycles and there was no market-rate development in Chinatown. … And I mean there's an argument to be made that what Chinatown needs is not more affordable housing. The community needs housing that has people that has disposable income and be able to spend in the community.

For the most part, this argument does speak to the development patterns when Chinatown was a CRA project area as most funding and community advocacy in the CCAC focused on affordable housing development. But current trends show that this argument may become

obsolete. When analyzing the number of developments from 1980 to 2016, affordable housing developments do appear to be the dominant form of housing development as 10 of the 17 developments were 100% affordable units and 2 were mixed-income developments (See Table 5.1). It was not until the early 2000s, with the construction of the Orsini that a 100% market-rate housing development was constructed in Chinatown, although most do not consider this to be in the "core" of Chinatown (see Figure 5.1). This was followed by Jia Apartments in 2013 and Blossom Plaza, which was a CRA-funded mixed-income development, in 2016. While there are fewer market-rate developments, these newer market-rate housing developments had more dwelling units. When examining the number of units constructed from 1980 up until the opening of Blossom Plaza in 2016 (the final CRA-funded project), there is almost an even mix of affordable and market-rate housing development. Approximately 44% of the total new housing units constructed from 1980-2016 are affordable housing units and 56% market-rate housing units. Since the CRA dissolution, Chinatown appears to be shifting away from being a neighborhood dominated by new affordable housing development, as a majority of the proposed plans of mixed-use developments in Chinatown by the end of 2016 provided predominantly market-rate housing (see Appendix F).

It is not just current business leaders who are advocating for more economic and social diversity. Many of the former CRA CCAC members also tend to be supportive of diversifying Chinatown. The CCAC business interests maintained that the CRA was too focused on affordable housing development. However, those who were advocates or allies for affordable housing when Chinatown was a CRA project area were also taking a stance of encouraging more diversity in future development. One former CCAC member who advocated for residential interests explained how he saw gentrification as a possible positive change:

> I think that the so-called gentrification of downtown area – Chinatown, in particular – doesn't necessarily have to be a negative thing. I think that there's a lot of advantages to having a more diverse neighborhood. That diversity includes economic diversity. I think though that the city is growing – creating a two-tiered city if they keep separating so-called market-rate housing from affordable housing.

He perceived the benefits of diversity from both a community and city perspective. He believed that the social mixing in Chinatown would be a benefit for the current residents in accessing different kinds of resources and creating local opportunity structures, but that it also would create a less stratified city that had areas of concentrated wealth and concentrated poverty.

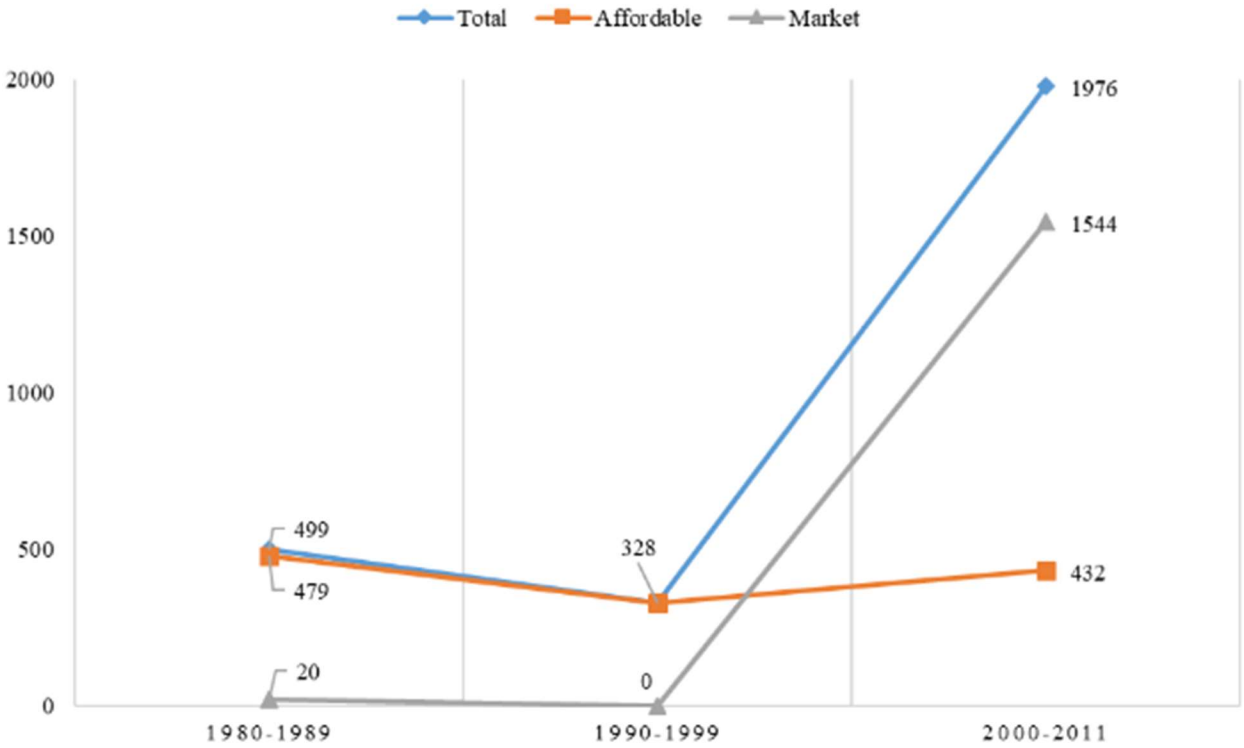

Figure 5.1. New rental housing unit construction by type, 1980-2016. Sources: CRA Implementation Plan 2011-2014, City of Los Angeles Certificates of Occupancy, City of Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department Redevelopment Affordable Housing Roster (August 2016)

While this framing of diversity may at first appear that those with progressive interests changed in focusing their advocacy for the poor and working-class in the neighborhood, their stances reflected their perceptions of community control. One CCAC member who was a strong advocate for affordable housing also explained that the community needs to be politically active

and mobilized to create a "nice mix" in the neighborhood that is defined on their own terms:

> How do we plan for that? We want the vitality of the immigrant spirit, of the immigrant families. They bring things to us that you know would be of value to us. So, you have to plan accordingly. Now who does that planning? So, is that planning up to the community? Well, then you have to train your communities. … You have to be vocal. Well, there are some communities that because of where they come from, they're not so vocal. They haven't been educated or trained. [And] there's not a forum for them to be able to articulate their thoughts.

Another former CCAC member who was also a community activist in the 1970s explained that she was confident that the community would be able to protect the most vulnerable in Chinatown:

> With gentrification, the fear is that we push out the labor class or the elderly. I don't think it's either/or. Unfortunately, I think that with the CRA, we were able to, maybe, provide more long-term income and services. But I think, we're [the community] smart. We can think about ways of taking care of our elderly and of taking care of our low-income people without cutting off our nose to say we don't want to gentrify. Let's [have] Chinatown continue to deteriorate and close its door at sundown and have people three blocks from here not wanting to come here to spend money to eat. I think that's a very narrow-minded [outlook]. You want gentrified people coming in. You want the balance. … You don't want to shoot yourself in the foot.

She has been a part of the leadership and grassroots organizing that provided community-based resources since the 1970s and thus recognizes the political strength they have built over time. Moreover, she recognizes the economic decline and the need for outside income and funding to support it. Thus, the balance in the community is one of maintaining insider community control and bringing in outsider resources. Because the CCAC included community leaders who are known for having a strong voice, it is perhaps not surprising that those who participated in the CCAC do not see the community taking a back seat to developers.

The segment of progressive activists, who were critical of the CRA designation and subsequently never engaged with the CRA or CCAC, continued to question the long-term positive impact of the CRA. They were supportive of the affordable housing construction, but

critical of how it lacked a long-term mechanism or solution to preserve the existing affordable housing and ensure the development of future affordable housing. Today, the city and Chinatown do not have an inclusionary mechanism for affordable housing beyond a few optional density bonuses for developers who request zoning variances or amendments. When asked about affordable housing development, many current and former city staff often respond by saying that the CRA was that mechanism and they no longer have any way to regulate affordable housing in new development. Thus, while the CRA helped to stabilize and support the poor and working-class immigrant seniors and families for several decades, it is unclear if Chinatown can continue to do so today given the broader pressures of development from downtown.

Proximity to Downtown: Negotiating Development Pressures in Chinatown

Community leaders also were aware that Chinatown is not an isolated community and is intrinsically linked to the city and especially the downtown core, its neighbor to the south. As one community leader stated matter-of-factly, "and unfortunately or fortunately Chinatown is part of that downtown community. And then so we have to be mindful of that." Within the spatial perspective of balance, community leaders often spoke about how Chinatown was being impacted by the changes in the neighboring downtown area and were more likely to clearly articulate matters of displacement. The changes that emerged from downtown pressures were linked to the tension of maintaining Chinatown as a space for working-class immigrant families and bringing in new investment and residents that many questioned in having any long-term investment in the community. Framing Chinatown in relation to the downtown urban growth pressures also highlighted concerns that community control was possibly weakening.

Questioning the Benefits of Market-Rate Apartments

Most of the proposed and in-process developments in Chinatown today include market-

rate housing apartment units. Recognizing this trend, one person who recently became involved in community work with residents, argued that, "It's $2,000 for one-bedroom [in the new market-rate apartments], right, for like a month. So, I feel like there needs to be balance right now. I feel like it's not a balance." Many saw this type of housing development as part of the larger downtown trends to attract young professionals with disposable incomes, a stark contrast to the CRA housing development in Chinatown which focused on affordable housing for families and seniors. Since the CRA dissolution, neighborhoods like Chinatown which relied on the CRA plans for affordable housing are now more vulnerable to be driven by developer-initiated trends, which often seek to maximize profits through market-rate development.

Most business leaders were supportive of this change as it added to the socioeconomic diversity of the neighborhood. Another younger business leader noted that the commercial occupancy rates are still high and reasons that this is due to the lack of disposable incomes among the residents:

> But look at the commercial vacancy rate. Clearly, we don't have enough disposable income in the community to support our businesses. So, until the commercial vacancy is on par with the residential vacancy rate that's when where we're balanced. Then that's where we could talk about, okay, let's build more affordable housing at the same time we build market-rate housing. But right now, I think there's a catch up that we need to do.

A commercial property owner also expressed his support for the new market-rate housing projects, explaining that a "healthy neighborhood is diverse." He explained his vision of Chinatown as a "cool community" with a mix of seniors, kids, and professionals, and unique shops and restaurants that will encourage people to walk around the neighborhood.

Business leaders also tended to frame this issue as a matter of increasing overall housing supply to address the city's broader housing crisis. From their perspective, the crisis was due to overall scarcity of housing of all types and levels of affordability. As one person who works

closely with the Chinatown business leaders simply stated about the housing affordability crisis, "you just need to build." From their perspective, which follows free market assumptions, building more market-rate housing would have ripple effects in lowering the rents of other market-rate housing by increasing the supply. A representative for College Station, a new all market-rate housing development being proposed to Chinatown, stated at public meetings that they were bringing "balance" to the community and responding to business leaders' concerns about the past CRA affordable housing development and the need to support Chinatown retail by bringing in residents with disposable incomes. In response to some initial criticism of the lack of affordable housing, they proposed to do off-site construction of affordable housing elsewhere in Los Angeles, although it was uncertain where that would be. While these arguments show that business leaders and developers are attuned to the collective need and demand for affordable housing, their approach also emphasizes their individual rights as developers to meet those demands.

These arguments tend to resist any type of regulations on development that is reflective of the Los Angeles and California context. There has been criticism of regulatory processes, such as those imposed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an environmental review is integrated into the local development public review process to identify and mitigate any potential environmental impacts and are subject to public review and hearing. This process has led to criticisms that it has slowed down development and increased overall housing costs. Many business leaders see these types of regulations that often protect neighborhoods and communities, from CEQA to inclusionary mechanisms for affordable housing, as de-incentivizing developers. A person who works in local government also explained that this tension about regulation is a major factor in ongoing gentrification in the city, "If the city council

puts in an ordinance saying, 'Hey, 100% affordable housing!' would that fly with the developer that eventually develops the project? Would the community want that? And so, it's very much a delicate balance."

However, others in the community tend to be skeptical of these supply-side housing arguments. As one cultural leader explained his view on land economics, these "natural" ripple effects that occur from building more market-rate apartments in the downtown area would simply lead to increases in rents and property values in Chinatown and adjacent neighborhoods:

> If there are rising land prices because people are paying for it, you know, paying certain prices for it and because people are willing to pay so much for housing or how much for a storefront lease, all of that has a ripple effect throughout the area. And we're still seeing the trickling down from the downtown area. But you see the trickling down and the ripple effect. And we are going to see higher rents and fewer low income people able to afford those rents. And so, if one can't afford those rents, then they're going to move further out.

His description fits what some argue could be a form of secondary displacement, in which the construction of nearby market-rate housing will eventually lead to increased housing prices (Li, 2016). This community leader also pointed out that even if the Chinatown community came together to agree on how to regulate and restrict specific types of development in Chinatown, it would simply have ripple effects in other working-class immigrant communities. He further explained, "So, let's say we impose some sort of restriction on development in Chinatown. Then suddenly the values in Lincoln Heights and Echo Park and Boyle Heights are going to rise to take up the demand." Thus, there is a tension of how to balance the "natural" forces that are outside of the control of the community. Even if the community can restrict changes, this may just ultimately negatively impact other neighborhoods, calling into question the broader collective responsibility that Chinatown has for other communities who are experiencing the same downtown pressures.

Some simply did not see these as "natural" changes but ultimately dictated by those who have economic power, including downtown developers and community leaders who have relationships with them. There was also a general concern among the community leaders representing residential and cultural interests that developers, especially those who were outside of the Chinatown community, see "opportunity" rather than a sense of community, heritage, or social equity. Those who are poor are still not prioritized to have choices and dictate the changes, and those with more wealth are ultimately prioritized with no guarantee that the benefits will trickle down to others in the community. One individual who was relatively newer to the community explained in her understanding of balance, that this includes the goal of "diversifying the economic base" but in doing so the "business-minded folks end up making decisions [that] cater to certain markets." She then mused out loud what many in Chinatown were wondering, "How do you leverage that in your favor to serve the community?"

Those who expressed this concern noted the need for advocacy groups to temper these changes and ensure that the changes are not purely profit-driven. As one person involved with cultural heritage and progressive groups explained:

> I'm open for change but if that change is kind of just purely for profit with developers coming in without community input then I see that as an issue. But I'm also looking at it not just as a NIMBYist, "not my backyard," because I understand that L.A. has a housing crisis and they need to build stuff in places. And I'm not going to say, "Just don't build in Chinatown." I understand that there's just a greater need and I can't be a NIMBYist by saying – you know, we want more housing but just don't do it in Chinatown. And then making sure that there's kind of, even if there's a market rate [housing], that there's spots for lower-income residents. And that is all negotiated with advocacy groups.

The increasing number of market-rate apartments became a symbol of less community control in negotiating development, especially among those who were representing low-income immigrant interests and needs. Control over changes in Chinatown was now tipping towards outside

interests, especially developers.

Downtown Impact on Chinatown Residential Amenities and Institutions

The growing downtown residential community is also creating pressures on Chinatown's economy and institutions. Since the CRA dissolution, most of the new housing developments were not simply market-rate apartments, but consisted of studio and one-bedroom apartments. A few of them even proposed micro units, small studios with limited amenities that are usually less than 300 square feet, which is a current trend in downtown developments. This bedroom trend signaled that these new developments were marketed to single young professionals who have disposable incomes. An older community leader explained that catering to this population would shift the type of amenities in Chinatown, making it an "extension of downtown":

> Chinatown becomes the backside of the ultra-development that is going on in downtown [that will] accommodate the young singles, anticipating people earning as much an average of $100,000 a year for high tech and excellent jobs down here. No need for good schools because they don't have any kids. There is a need now for nightclubs and upscale restaurants and things like that. But that doesn't speak of what Chinatown should be.

Those who worked on residential issues, social services, and cultural heritage were concerned that new development was favoring this demographic and creating new amenities that were disrupting the identity of Chinatown as an immigrant family-oriented community.

New restaurants and upscale retail boutiques have been opening in Chinatown. Many of these new businesses have opened in the older plazas and spaces in the neighborhood and was viewed as transforming the cultural identity of Chinatown, which will be further explained in Chapter 6. While this trend appeals to the "hipsters" and upper to middle-class tastes of those who are increasingly moving to downtown (Burnett, 2014; Grodrach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011; Zukin, et al., 2009), some saw this as balancing the broader downtown retail mix rather than replicating it. One business leader explained, "For the longest time when

all those things were being built downtown – where are you going to eat? You can't eat at Roy's every night. Or the Palm [two upscale restaurants]. I mean [you need] just real places." One new property owner similarly shared how he saw Chinatown evolving to provide everyday amenities for the broader downtown community, "It could be great though. You can have a lot of these like little corner groceries stores and things like that. If it really embraces the Broadway downtown community, it could be the place where people drive in from the Arts District and from Echo Park and everything to shop." From this perspective, Chinatown's economy should be serving not just the neighborhood residents and Chinese American community, but the downtown residential community. Thus, Chinatown's authenticity as a "real community" balanced the more expensive retail and restaurants of the downtown core.

In addition, there were arguments that the new businesses were also balancing the Chinatown retail mix. These new restaurants and retail were not just maintaining the small business character, but diversifying the offerings available in the neighborhood, rather than creating internal competition. One long-time community leader shared his conversation with one of the owners of the new restaurants, Little Jewel, which serves New Orleans-inspired sandwiches and cuisine. He explains how the owner has felt welcomed by his neighbors because he is not viewed as competition in the neighborhood:

> The owner of Little Jewel of New Orleans has said several times, … "The neighbors around me, the other Chinese restaurants, they said they were glad that I was not Chinese, not opening a Chinese restaurant because they didn't need that competition." Because there's 1, 2, 3, 4 immediately within – either across the street or on the same block, you know, 5 places. So, and then another block away there's more. So, that's a piece of market wisdom that maybe people ... should think about. ... How much can the market bear when you don't have the population density there to support it?

Therefore, some argue that these new businesses are helping Chinatown to "catch up" with the downtown trends while bringing a mix of different types of restaurants and retail in Chinatown,

both major concerns among business leaders.

While these developments and new businesses were helping to diversify Chinatown, there still concerns that they were ultimately attracting a transient population with no intention to be a part of the community. A former CCAC member explained that he now sees "that [the] balance is once again tilted" but in the opposite end of when Chinatown was a CRA project area because the new development caters to an affluent transient population, rather than poor immigrant families and seniors. He went on to say that these property owners are "making lots of money [by] turning it over. But that doesn't mean people would want to invest in the community anymore here. Because they come in and they leave … So that's no good!" One older community activist bluntly stated his concerns, "I think [we should] not let downtown take over Chinatown and turn it into like some hipster [area, with] more single people who have no roots. You know just moving around whenever you get a different job and go somewhere else." In contrast to the business owners who see this segment as helping to activate the neighborhood, these community leaders felt that this did not necessarily mean that they would build an emotional connection to the neighborhood and help the community in the long-term.

This concern about the emerging downtown residential community's tenuous relationship to Chinatown was also evident in the downtown charter school co-location of Castelar Elementary School. Castelar is considered a "community school" in which the curriculum and activities are tailored for those living in Chinatown, the working-class immigrant community, and a major asset that all community leaders across different interests acknowledge. One business leader explained Chinatown is a "real community with services" and "as downtown matures, where are those kids going to go to school? Castelar and Solano have incredible API [Academic Performance Index] scores. Castelar has a Mandarin Immersion Program." The

Mandarin Immersion Program has also attracted parents from other neighborhoods to enroll in Castelar. Some of them are U.S.-born Asian Americans who were not previously involved with the neighborhood, but saw the Mandarin program as a cultural and educational opportunity for their children to learn both the language and Chinese American heritage.

Even though it was seen as a community asset, Castelar was targeted for co-location with a downtown charter school in 2016. Because of Proposition 239, local public schools that had empty classrooms could be used for charter schools. Castelar was identified as having empty classrooms by the school district despite being used for extracurricular activities because a district teacher was not formally assigned to those rooms. Castelar parents and most of the Chinatown organizations were resistant to this co-location. Martin Wong and Wendy Lau were two parents who helped mobilize other parents and community groups against the co-location. They explained the socioeconomic exclusion it would have created:

> Martin: [The students wear] clothes from the swap meet over there [on Broadway], like bootlegged Mickey Mouse shirts and it's not fancy that way. You know, they're very, you know, you see the two-striped Adidas shoes and Ultraman backpacks. And I think that's cool. I love it. But you know that you know other kids from other demographics [from the downtown charter school], you know that's not the [norm] for them.
>
> Wendy: Well, that's not to say that their school [the downtown charter school] is not diverse cause you know that was one of their arguments. It's like, "Oh no, our school is very diverse. We have this many Title I [students]."[9]
>
> Martin: But those kids are not going to come to Chinatown.
>
> Wendy: Well, the problem is they were located far enough away [from downtown and Chinatown]. I'm like, "Well when they come here, are they going to bring those low-income kids? How are those kids going to get here?" Those kids are going to be forgotten over there and they're going to pick up a new set of low-income kids from our community, which would then take funding from our school.

[9] A "Title I student" refers to a student who comes from a low-income family. Title I is a federal program for K-12 public education that assists schools in providing additional educational support for students who are living at or below the poverty line.

> Martin: And one of the things we pointed out, you know, [Castelar] serves…the parents, the families. Not just the kids. Because if you go there in the morning, you'll see [a Castelar volunteer], she'll be outside, you know, translating bills and letters or notices for parents. They'll give clinics. Free flu shots. You know, all these different things. Nutrition. CPR. You know, all these things for the community as well. I think across the street with Alpine [Recreation Center], you know, you drive by there, you always see adults there. There's always seniors. It's not like other parks and schools where I feel like it's a real hub for the people to live there. And the resources are used. So, to slice it up and weaken it with outside forces that may suck even more out of it? It is really sad.

If the co-location occurred, the schools would operate separately in the same space and some likened this agreement to a "separate but equal" policy that would treat the current students who are from the local community as "second class citizens." There were concerns that the charter school would bring in more resources from families with higher incomes which the local students from working families could see, but not have access to despite sharing the same space.

As a means to not promote this exclusion and separation among the students, Wong, Lau, and other Castelar advocates encouraged the downtown charter parents to enroll in Castelar to support the local community and strengthen the public school infrastructure. The possible co-location of Castelar shows that while local amenities appear to be important and attractive to newcomers, those who are moving to the area are creating their own amenities, which threaten to weaken the existing institutions and create separation in the community. The co-location was one of the few issues where most community leaders agreed that this would have a negative impact on Chinatown because of its history and role as an immigrant community-serving institution. Ultimately, the co-location did not occur; however, community leaders noted that Castelar will continue to be vulnerable for possible co-location because of the empty classrooms and possibility of declining enrollment as the number of family households and youth are declining in Chinatown (see Appendix D).

The Walmart Conflict: An Example of Corporate Interests and Downtown Opportunity

Not all the changes in Chinatown are necessarily catering to the wealthy or middle-class moving to downtown. One of the most notable new businesses in Chinatown was the Walmart neighborhood market, a small urban grocery store concept, which was in operation from 2014 to 2016. This was heavily documented in national and local media given Walmart's past labor rights issues and what it would mean to have its presence in the city. Regardless of people's perspectives about the benefits and harms of having a Walmart in Chinatown, it ultimately placed a spotlight on the community and its positioning in the city's economic growth today.

The origins of the Walmart date back to when Chinatown was a CRA project area. A former CRA staff explained that there was a need to develop amenities to anticipate a growing downtown residential community:

> Chinatown, Little Tokyo, and Bunker Hill, the rest of downtown, we're all considered to be a part of downtown for the community redevelopment purposes, understanding [that] they had discrete needs and desires of their own. But in terms of trying to provide services, CRA's perspective was if we're trying to market downtown as a mixed-use, mixed-income residential community, it needs a certain amenity base. And a fairly common amenity is a supermarket.

Chinatown was chosen because it was the most residentially diverse community in the greater downtown area. Grand Plaza, a CRA-funded affordable senior housing complex that opened in 1992 was selected as the site. Grand Plaza is located on the southwestern border of Chinatown with Bunker Hill and Downtown, and arguably in closer proximity to the Chinatown residential community than Chinatown's commercial core along Broadway.

While a supermarket was planned in the original designs of Grand Plaza and promised as an amenity for the seniors living in that building, the storefront was vacant for over twenty years with different supermarket chains backing out at various points. It was not until Walmart signed a lease for the space in 2012 that a supermarket was officially secured in Grand Plaza.

Chinatown quickly became a contested site about labor rights in the city. At a later point in these debates, opposition to the Walmart neighborhood market argued that this would be a threat to the local small produce markets in Chinatown and was a form of commercial gentrification. Several current and former members of Chinatown Community for Equitable Development (CCED), a group that formed to resist the Walmart, explained that the arguments that Chinatown was a food desert was misleading and overlooked the history of Chinatown having smaller produce markets that served the local and ethnic community.

Many older community leaders remember the struggles to develop Grand Plaza and countered this argument, explaining that the Walmart was both fulfilling a longstanding need for a chain supermarket to serve the downtown area and bringing retail diversity to the neighborhood. One older community leader, who has been a long-time resident of Chinatown and has a family history of working with unions, explained that she supported the Walmart after being ensured they would do local hires. She felt that it "gave me my independence back," explaining that she could walk to a grocery store on her own, rather than asking for her family to drive her to grocery stores in neighboring Echo Park and Lincoln Heights. Another community leader shared his conversation with some Chinatown residents that the Walmart provided them choices, but was not necessarily competition with the existing Chinatown businesses:

> It's a transitional learning experience. In other words, they saw it as beneficial and educational. It was their opportunity to just not go necessarily to the same old place and buy the lowest – the least expensive item. But then they could see, "Oh gosh, here are these other choices and they can learn about that." So, it was probably educational for them. And but it doesn't necessarily shift enough customer loyalty to them, to the Walmart, to make it worthwhile.

He also noted that because it was not competition, the Walmart "may have expected [that] there probably wasn't going to impact all of Chinatown" and that they saw this vacant space as an opportunity to establish a "presence in this [urban] market."

This is perhaps one of the overarching takeaways from the Walmart's brief and tenuous presence in Chinatown regardless of the conflicting positions and stances of the different community groups and leaders. While it was providing an amenity, especially for the lower-income senior citizen community in the residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown core, in the end, the corporation was also looking for opportunity to expand and test its new model of small-scale grocery stores in the urban market. Chinatown was arguably one of many test markets across the nation, and when it left, both those in support of and opposition to the Walmart were surprised as it was closed just a few days after a public announcement. As one community leader who did support the Walmart explained, this was ultimately out of the control of anyone in the community, despite the community being impacted the most:

> Walmart came in because they had a new concept going, come hell and high water, to try it. And they didn't leave because it didn't work here. They left because suddenly Benton, Arkansas [location of the Walmart headquarters] decided that they had taken the wrong direction, and they withdrew the idea of the line of smaller markets, actually, all over the country. It was a national action, which was very deplorable.

Thus, the conflict over the Walmart highlights the ongoing tension that Chinatown must balance with new developers and investors: are these individuals committed to Chinatown in the long-term or do they simply see "opportunity" to be in the downtown market?

Leaving and Bypassing Chinatown for San Gabriel Valley: Attracting the Chinese American Community

While the post-1965 population growth in Chinatown made it a majority Asian residential neighborhood, the suburban Chinatowns in San Gabriel Valley was emerging as a new area for Chinese American community life. Chinatown was not the only Chinese American space in the county at the time, as there were residential clusterings in South Los Angeles and the neighboring Silverlake Echo Park area. However, the San Gabriel Valley residential boom has

arguably had the biggest impact on Chinatown as a space of residential, and in turn, economic competition. By the 1990s, cities in the western San Gabriel Valley, including Monterey Park, eclipsed Chinatown as the major residential area for Chinese Americans (Li, 1998).

Community leaders have recognized these community and spatial changes and have framed this relationship based on perceived class imbalances across space. Despite the socioeconomic and racial diversity within San Gabriel Valley (Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles, 2018), the area was positioned as the center for middle-class Chinese families in relation to Chinatown, which was home to the poor and working-class Chinese Americans, especially senior citizens. These perceptions of a spatial imbalance and class sorting of the ethnic community led to arguments about residential and economic competition with cities in San Gabriel Valley for the middle-class Chinese American community, especially among the Chinatown business leaders. Furthermore, this perception of class differences speaks specifically to Chinatown's relationship to San Gabriel Valley as other Chinese American areas, like Lincoln Heights, were not perceived as residential or economic competition to Chinatown the way in which San Gabriel Valley was, as they were also considered urban, low-income immigrant neighborhoods. These perceptions of the spatial sorting of the ethnic middle-class has led to tension as to whether Chinatown can and should be a mixed-income community, and the role of the Chinese American community in contributing to that identity.

The Limitations of Chinatown Homeownership

Beginning in the 1970s, San Gabriel Valley was positioned to be the new residential ethnic enclave for upwardly mobile Chinese Americans (Fong, 1994). During this time, San Gabriel Valley was developing from a rural to suburban area, which included the construction of single family homes (Cheng, 2013). These eastern suburbs of Los Angeles were made accessible

to Chinatown through new freeways and was appealing to Chinese Americans who wanted to live in proximity to Chinatown. One older community leader who grew up in Monterey Park recalls the real estate marketing of San Gabriel Valley during this time that attracted those living in Chinatown:

> One of the big events or phenomenon was the migration of long-time residents [in Chinatown] into San Gabriel Valley, and when Monterey Park and Alhambra and some of the other cities became magnets for the Chinese. And I just remember – because it happened right after I graduated from high school, I started to see a lot of the population. And I would ask my dad, I said, "Why are Chinese coming here?" And so, he was reading a Chinese newspaper and he showed me this ad. And it had like a home – pictures of homes and what they were offering. And he said, "They're basically telling people that are from overseas that Monterey Park is like the Beverly Hills for the Chinese." [laughs] My god! Talk about false advertisement! And boy, if I had a chance to talk to these people, [I would] say how they were being snowballed! But that was it. That was the appeal.

This community leader's facetious comment about how San Gabriel Valley was being labeled as the "Beverly Hills for the Chinese," speaks to how these narratives mask both its socioeconomic and racial diversity as a contemporary "ethnoburb" (Cheng, 2013; Horton 1996; Li 2009). While racially restrictive covenants were banned, Asian Americans still faced discrimination in San Gabriel Valley and were still racially steered to buy homes in the western area of San Gabriel Valley, closer to the freeway, where the land values were cheaper and not necessarily a welcoming place for Chinese Americans (Cheng, 2013).

Despite the growing ethnic tension in San Gabriel Valley that came with the migration of both U.S.-born and immigrant Asians (Horton, 1996; Saito, 1998), the image of Chinese Americans leaving Chinatown and moving to the suburbs in the San Gabriel Valley was a sign of spatial assimilation and acceptance of Chinese Americans into the mainstream, which included obtaining a middle-class lifestyle. As one person who grew up in Chinatown explained, "I have to wonder whether or not for most families that start out in Chinatown, mine included,

Chinatown is just a stepping stone. Like you come, you settle, you do what you need to do, and then when you can you move onto the San Gabriel Valley." Another younger individual who recently became involved with the Chinatown community explained how her parents' generation were not as involved because "they were part of the generation of learn the language, move to the suburbs, go to college. I mean, it was a different mentality back then." Several community leaders noted that Chinatown has historically been seen as a "ghetto" and that those who were raised in the neighborhood do not romanticize the local conditions that some community leaders may inadvertently do when they advocate for the community. They mention the difficulties and struggles of living in a depressed area and, that for a long time, being associated with Chinatown was not necessarily a source of pride, but a place that you wanted to eventually leave. The sentimental detachment of Chinese Americans to Chinatown became justified through this understanding of the neighborhood.

Others situated their understanding of Chinese Americans leaving or bypassing Chinatown as residential competition across these two areas. This was a sentiment across many community leaders, regardless of their interest in the community. Chinatown simply did not have the amenities to compete for the Chinese American middle-class families that the cities in San Gabriel Valley had and could quickly develop. One older business leader, who saw the economic growth and decline of Chinatown following the 1965 Immigration Act, explained that these economic trends were intrinsically linked to Chinese American families wanting single-family homes and moving to San Gabriel Valley for that reason:

> Well actually, since people [were moving] to Chinatown and it started booming. … And the real estate of course [was] getting expensive. But then I think in the early 80s… another influx of immigrants coming in from South[east] Asia…. But they'd be the families. Chinatown has no [single-family] housing, mainly is multiple housing apartments. So, some of these immigrants when [they] come in here, they may work in Chinatown but they get some housing outside, like

> Monterey Park, Alhambra. And then as time goes on people gradually moving out. So, in the late 80s or early 90s, Chinatown started getting downhill.

The concern about homeownership opportunities, especially among business leaders may not be surprising. This perception of a lack of homeownership opportunities in Chinatown is as much about the economic growth and stability of the neighborhood as it is about the residential character. Basolo (2007) notes that homeownership strategies may be used by cities as a development tool responding to inter-city competition rather than as a redistributive tool to improve the opportunities for low-income individuals and households. The narratives of Chinatown's decline position San Gabriel Valley as competition that provided the housing and amenities aligned with the immigrant dream for Chinese American families. These were amenities that San Gabriel Valley did not just have more of, but that Chinatown was slowly losing through the new housing development since the 1970s.

While it is currently a neighborhood with predominantly multi-family homes, Chinatown does have a history of having single-family homes. The 1960 Census indicated that 52% of the Chinatown area was single-family homes. However, these single-family homes were being converted to multi-family homes, most likely in response to the population growth and shifts. A 1982 Market Analysis Report of Chinatown for the CRA indicated that between 1970 and 1980, there was a net increase of 469 multi-family units with a net reduction of 21 single-family units in the primary residential area of Chinatown (Kotin, Reagin, & Mouchly, Inc., 1982). As previously detailed in this chapter, the CRA was one response to the population increases following the 1965 Immigration Act. However, the CRA focused primarily on housing development, and more specifically affordable rental units, from 1980 until its dissolution in 2011. This helped to develop and maintain spaces in Chinatown for renters with low incomes. Today, 86% of Chinatown are multi-family homes and 14% are a single-residence homes.

The lack of opportunities to own single family homes was also viewed as a reason why many middle-class Chinese families eventually left. Several younger individuals spoke of their parents temporarily residing in Chinatown before moving to San Gabriel Valley to buy a home. One person who grew up in Chinatown explained how Chinatown's housing stock did not fit her family's expectations for home ownership once they had built enough financial capital to leave, "They want a single-family home. They don't want a condo." This perception of owning a single-family home is a symbol of upward mobility and a part of the American Dream narrative for many immigrant communities. But it was a symbol that was difficult to obtain in Chinatown. As a predominantly multi-family housing neighborhood, Chinatown is physically antithetical to the American Dream.

However, given the population growth of the San Gabriel Valley, multi-family housing construction has increased in several cities along with the construction of large-scale mansions (Li, 1998), which may make ownership of single-family homes among the middle-class even rarer. One older community activist expressed her skepticism about the attainability of moving to the San Gabriel Valley. She noted, "You know people think that they can move to San Gabriel Valley, but then they're finding that it's not cheap over there." While San Gabriel Valley is recognized as a diverse place both in terms of race, ethnicity, and class, her comment speaks to how San Gabriel Valley, and thus an American Dream of homeownership, is still unattainable for many.

Uptown and Downtown Ethnic Businesses: Segmented Economic Tastes

The growth of San Gabriel Valley has impacted the local economy of Chinatown. While most academic literature tends to point to the new immigrant investment in shaping economic development in San Gabriel Valley (Chung, 2014; Horton, 1996; Oh & Chung, 2013; Saito,

1998), less attention is given to how established Chinese American businesses, particularly in Chinatown, adjusted to the rise of San Gabriel Valley. As one individual who grew up in Chinatown but whose family eventually moved to San Gabriel Valley explained, "[And] if they're going to be taking the bus to [the super market] in San Gabriel Valley anyway, why not just buy a house in San Gabriel Valley?"

Chinatown has historically been a destination for Chinese Americans across Los Angeles, as much as it has been a home for Chinese Americans. Before the 1960s when policies supported racial segregation, Chinatown had the largest concentration of Chinese businesses and restaurants in the Los Angeles area. These restaurants not only brought in tourists, but also served as spaces for Chinese American events, including family association events and wedding banquets, making Chinatown a destination area for many who grew up in Los Angeles. Community leaders who grew up in Los Angeles and visited Chinatown in the 1950s and 1960s recalled that in addition to weekly shopping trips, they would go to Chinatown to eat for special occasions, such as Chinese New Year's dinners, family association events, weddings, and funerals. Chinatown was one of the few places in the city with Chinese restaurants that can serve as banquet halls for these types of functions for the Chinese American community.

Most business leaders indicated that Chinatown has been losing their major consumer base, the Chinese American community, since the growth of the San Gabriel Valley cities. Even those concerned with the revitalization of Chinatown acknowledged that they were part of the problem. As one Chinese American who owns a business in Chinatown explained, "You don't have to drive to Chinatown and have Chinese food. I live out that way, so I go to San Gabriel area and I don't come to Chinatown to eat." Another business leader explained that the closing of Wing Hop Fung in Chinatown in 2016, a major Chinese American department store that first

opened in Chinatown but now has two locations in San Gabriel Valley, was due them following the Chinese American consumer base:

> I'm really sad that they're gone, but is that because of how Chinatown is changing? [Or] is that because of how San Gabriel Valley is changing which is outside of our control? Like they're going to follow their customers. And I don't think that's necessarily – it wasn't because of how Chinatown was changing, it was just because of how other places were changing.

She and others have reasoned that given the intergenerational success of the family who owns Wing Hop Fung, this was not a type of forced displacement. The move was a "business decision" to evolve their business by following their consumers to San Gabriel Valley.

Business leaders have been grappling with this trend for several decades and have cited several reasons why Chinatown could not compete. One former president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce explained that the businesses could easily follow the migration to San Gabriel Valley because there was more and cheaper land for development:

> Economic activity moved with the residents. ... More Chinese immigrants are residing over in San Gabriel Valley and more businesses are developing over there. You have better potential of developing business there because you have emptier [land]. Ample supply of land and parking. That marked the beginning of the – as you say downfall – less significance of Chinatown.

Chinatown, as a developed urban neighborhood, was an area that did not have opportunity to be built out further, making it physically impossible to compete. Oh and Chung (2014) also argue that the local political structure and population size of Asian Americans of San Gabriel Valley has also made it relatively easier for Asian-initiated development in this area than in the city.

Many business leaders spoke about the lack of disposable incomes among the Chinese American residents. They viewed the migration of middle-class Chinese American families to the suburbs as creating limited "buying power" in Chinatown, including a concentration of poor Chinese immigrant seniors. When discussing the commercial shifts in Chinatown that appear to

cater less to Chinese Americans, an older generation business leader explained that they had to expand their consumer base beyond the local Chinese American residents. Some that are new to the community echo this sentiment that current Chinatown retail is not competitive in attracting new and younger consumers. Business leaders, both old and new to Chinatown, emphatically spoke about the lack of "disposable incomes" and "buying power" among current residents to both support and innovate local businesses.

The areas in San Gabriel Valley overshadow Chinatown as an ethnic Chinese center because it has quickly developed to represent the post-1965 Chinese American community diversity. Chinatown remains a Cantonese-dominated space, thus appealing to that segment of the community. One community leader who works in cultural heritage issues in Chinatown explained how this lack of diversity has impacted Chinatown as a tourist destination, including tourists from China:

> [Other places] are not just focusing on Cantonese cuisine and so [tourists from China] want to see larger scales of varieties of food. And then even in San Francisco, Chinatown you see you have Chinese food, Sichuan food, you know all varieties of food now. [It is] no longer [just] Cantonese restaurants.

Yet, this narrative about the Chinese American diversity in San Gabriel Valley and that Chinatown is a Cantonese-dominated area does not account that there was a cultural shift in Chinatown businesses. In the 1990s, new Chinese immigrants were opening businesses in Chinatown. They began to establish businesses along the southern area of Chinatown during the time that San Gabriel Valley was growing as the new suburban Chinatown. Many of these new business owners, who were ethnic Chinese immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asian countries, including Cambodia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, were entrepreneurs and business owners. In fact, when walking through Saigon Plaza, visitors can hear shop owners talking in Cantonese Chinese and Vietnamese, among the different languages and dialects. In addition, Chinatown

now is home to Vietnamese restaurants, as well as Chinese Cambodian restaurants. These businesses included swap meets, which were primarily housed in the new Saigon Plaza, and "community-serving" businesses that sold cheap household goods, apparel, and ethnic entertainment. By the 1990s, a majority of the small businesses in Chinatown were owned by ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia, with the *Los Angeles Times* indicating that the number was as high as 90% (Torres, 1996). These businesses helped to maintain and revitalize Chinatown as an ethnic Chinese space for at least two decades (see Chapter 6 for more detail). The shops, which have relatively lower prices, appealed to those who tend to be of lower income, which is Chinatown's primary residential demographic, as well as for people who like to "bargain hunt."

But these ethnic businesses have also contributed to another critique about the imbalances of Chinatown's local economy as a place of "cheap goods." Chinatown business leaders have struggled to challenge this perception of Chinatown. One individual, whose family was part of the business leadership in Chinatown, explained how he learned about the economic difficulties of the Chinese restaurant industry and extended this to his understanding of Chinatown's economic decline:

> In Southern California, I think more than in other U.S. cities, the Chinese restaurant industry – it's in danger of getting into what I would describe as a race to the bottom. ... Chinese food is associated with cheap food and a lot of customers, including Chinese customers, [who] really don't believe in spending a lot of money on food. So, that encourages restaurants to basically compete on the basis of price instead of competing on the basis of, say, quality. And so that results in the quality of food in Chinatown restaurants going down and that promotes this idea that Chinese food is something that's not very good. It's just some place you go for cheap food. And that just sort of perpetuates who's patronizing the restaurants in Chinatown.

He went on to explain that this perception of Chinatown was one reason for the closing of Empress Pavilion, a major banquet hall and dim sum restaurant that opened in 1989. During its first decade of operation, it was a bustling restaurant and a major dining destination in

Chinatown. Today, it is a special events catering company with no daily operations. For many, Empress Pavilion was often cited as an indication of not just the economic decline of Chinatown, but of the competition with other restaurants in the San Gabriel Valley. He continued to say:

> When a restaurant like Empress Pavilion closes down,...that was an interesting milestone. Because sometimes people would hear that Empress Pavilion would close down, and they say, "I'm surprised! I'm surprised! The last time I was there for dim sum, the place was packed." But customers don't realize that because restaurant owners...can't charge high enough prices for dim sum to be able to really make money from dim sum. They really depend on either the banquet business that's based on people ordering expensive seafood or buying alcohol where there's a larger profit margin. But then as Monterey Park and the San Gabriel Valley opened up, and more and more banquets moved to the San Gabriel Valley, that took away that source of money from a lot of the restaurants in Chinatown that used to have kind of a captive audience for, you know, three or four months' worth of Chinese New Year's banquets. And that the guarantee that almost every night that those restaurants were going to have Chinese New Year's banquets made a big difference to the restaurant owners. So, you take that away, then that undermines the whole cultural rule of Chinatown as the place that you go for good Chinese food.

The closing of Empress Pavilion among other major businesses also indicated a decline and for some, a misperception about Chinatown products and business operations as inexpensive. Furthermore, as Chinatown was losing its identity as the only place for banquet halls to host various celebrations, the restaurants were also losing their core Chinese American consumer base that could help them sustain. This trend reflects class differences and the tension of social mobility among specific segments of Chinese Americans and its impact on Chinatown's local economy. For these businesses, they are following their consumer base whom many described as having "disposable incomes," which Chinatown residents do not have.

As attracting the Chinese American middle-class to Chinatown emerged as a narrative about Chinatown change and decline, it is important to acknowledge the limits of this ethnic community solidarity. Boyd (2008) argues in her analysis of gentrification in black neighborhoods that the black middle-class may specifically engage in "defensive development"

through a sense of racial solidarity and to protect the community from outside forces, but these projects may still cater to them and can still lead to exclusion and displacement of the poor in these communities. The presence of an ethnic middle-class does not necessarily equate to social equity in the community.

Maintaining an Imbalance for Equity? Reasserting the Immigrant Identity

There is a strong narrative about Chinatown's identity as a place for immigrant families, with many who work in tenant organizing and social services emphasizing that it is a home for working-class immigrant families. While some saw this as part of the Chinese American assimilation narratives and that Chinatown served as a stepping stone for these families, there were others who took a more critical stance that Chinatown was a home for those who had less opportunities and access to the mainstream. It was this segment of the Chinatown community that had the right to Chinatown and their needs had to be magnified as they are not just the ones who reside and routinely rely on the services and businesses in the neighborhood, but historically have not had a local political voice in the changes. They emphasized how the new and proposed developments were shrinking the housing possibilities for working-class immigrant families to remain in Chinatown.

One younger community leader explained how this character of Chinatown needed to be recognized when thinking of the strategies to revitalize Chinatown:

> The low-income, particularly immigrant families, that come here from elsewhere and don't have much, like they have very limited resources. I don't know where they're going to go. They can't afford to live here anymore. … How can we find that balance? Of course, we want to see Chinatown revitalized. We do want people to come in. I mean it was virtually a ghost town for significant periods. So how do we strike that balance of preserving our history and honoring it?

Some took a more critical stance of the new developments and did not necessarily want that balance in Chinatown. One older community activist explained her position in resisting most, if

not all, market-rate housing in Chinatown. She explained how Chinatown's core identity is "a place that welcomes early immigrants" and that the new developments would shift Chinatown away from this identity and become "another extension of downtown." She argued passionately about her views on gentrification as a form of social and economic erasure, and how the market-rate housing development contributes to that erasure:

> [The current pattern of development] is not fair because it's not as if we don't have enough market-rate housing, from what I could see. And yet they keep saying that there's a shortage of housing. But then there doesn't seem to be any real interest in making sure that everybody is given opportunity to live somewhere that they want to live. It's sort of like constant. … The problem is not everybody in this world has that much money to pay for housing. And so there should be some balance where people who need affordable housing have those opportunities as just as equally as the ones who have money, so that everybody can live together rather than saying, "Oh, this is exclusive, of like a gated community." This is a gated community for only people who are rich. And then you guys who are poor, you move out of here because you don't fit in. You're too poor for us. And the types of businesses. The type of services. "You demand too many social services, so therefore we don't want to serve [or] provide you with more."

Even those who owned property in Chinatown acknowledged that this may benefit only a select segment of the community. One long-term residential property owner explained:

> What's going to happen? It's happening in downtown. It's happening in Echo Park. It's very chichi now to move back into the inner city. … And of course, Chinatown is going to be the same way. So, people are going to move back in here who can afford it. And the people who live here are going to get displaced. The property values are going to go up – and hey that's okay. You know my property value's going up too! But that's not the way it should be. Because who's going to afford to be able to live here?

To these community leaders, Chinatown is one of the remaining neighborhoods where poor and working-class immigrants could afford to live in the city.

Individuals engaged in tenant organizing and social services were critical of these narratives that prioritize San Gabriel Valley as the center for Chinese Americans. While many see how the relationship and competition with San Gabriel Valley have arguably weakened

Chinatown's identity as an ethnic space, many in the community recognize that Chinatown is still a home for poor and working-class Chinese Americans across immigration cohorts and generation, and that housing and services need to be geared towards them. A member of CCED who grew up in San Gabriel Valley explained that the goal of community work is to try to make visible the local life and issues facing Chinatown that are being overlooked:

> And then at a certain point, [the] theory, or the assumptions are people are just skipping over Chinatown. They are just moving into these ethnoburbs [in San Gabriel Valley] as port of entry. … That narrative has kind of neglected the importance of Chinatown. People are like, there's no value to Chinatown anymore. I don't think so.

These perceptions about upwardly mobile Chinese Americans leaving or skipping over Chinatown for San Gabriel Valley, not only situates the neighborhood as a typical immigrant gateway, but also obscures the ability to disentangle the forced displacement that is occurring in Chinatown. Chinatown is mistakenly understood as a stepping stone and a space of voluntary out migration. In describing their work, individuals associated with CCED as well as the Chinatown Service Center, the neighborhood's major social service agency, shared stories about residents who are facing major rent increases and being served eviction notices from new property owners and current property owners raising rents. These concerns of evictions in Chinatown are also underreported as many of the tenants have limited English skills and do not always understand these notices, which are often sent in English. CCED has been active in trying to make these issues visible in the mainstream and Chinese press.

Chinatown is also one of the few places that provide resources for older Chinese immigrants who are of Cantonese background. Through her professional and volunteer work in Chinatown, one community activist pointed out that it is not so much socioeconomic divides, but intra-ethnic cultural divides among Chinese Americans who are spatially concentrated:

> In the San Gabriel Valley there's a big mixture of course, but I think it's more towards people that are Mandarin speaking. As opposed to Chinatown, there's still a lot of people – it's really surprising to me after all these years, there's still a lot of people that speak Cantonese. Not only Cantonese but Taishan, you know? There's a lot of people that still speak Taishan and I don't think that they could go to some of those agencies where the people are mainly Mandarin speakers. And I'm kind of surprised at that because to see all these old people – or I guess like now they're my age. I used to think they were old people! [laughs] But they're still speaking Taishan! I used to think that, "Oh everybody from China can speak Mandarin," because they learn Mandarin in school. But there are still a lot of people that aren't there yet.

While Mandarin is the official language of the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, many immigrants, both old and new, who come from impoverished backgrounds with limited formal education continue to speak their local dialects. As more Chinese-oriented services and businesses become predominantly Mandarin, older individuals who are not proficient in Mandarin may find it more difficult to obtain services and resources outside of Chinatown where there is still a strong Cantonese Chinese cultural identity, and in particular, a regional Taishan identity. The resistance to change reflects the need to keep a balance across space and class within the ethnic community that helps to maintain a space for poor and working-class immigrants and the older history of Chinese immigration, which is rooted in Chinatown.

Conclusion

The tension about gentrification in Chinatown is reflective of the broader controversies in defining gentrification in both the media and academia (Brown-Saracino & Rumpf, 2011; Freeman, 2005; Freeman & Braconi, 2004; Vigdor, Massey, and Rivlin, 2002; Slater, 2009). While not everyone embraces the term in Chinatown, gentrification is a contemporary issue that communities are grappling with, especially given the intersecting internal and external dynamics of shaping neighborhood change. With the inevitability of change, Chinatown community leaders are trying to discern what is "good" or "bad" for the neighborhood rather than preventing

change all together. Because gentrification has been publicly perceived as communities being resistant and anti-change, it would appear to be a strategic choice of community leaders to not always embrace this term. These narratives may have avoided engaging with the term gentrification and the political contentiousness that may come with using the term, but these counter narratives are still not apolitical as they reflect people's beliefs and understandings of the neighborhood. They also ultimately express concerns about how they perceive forced displacement, the cornerstone of whether neighborhood change can be labeled as gentrification.

There appeared to be as a consensus that most community leaders did not want Chinatown to be a disinvested area, either from the city or the Chinese American community. Instead of preventing change, they are trying to steer and navigate the changes coming into Chinatown by expressing their understandings of balance and diversity. These narratives ultimately reflect how the community wants to have more say and control in the changes rather than to have their fate be determined by outside interests. Community leaders were more likely to raise concerns that how the diversity being brought to the neighborhood was going to negatively impact the neighborhood if they perceived these developments were taking away community control.

These narratives highlight how community leaders are trying to specifically make sense of current revitalization trends to diversify neighborhoods, both in regard to people and uses, and what that means in the context of Chinatown, a historically low-income immigrant community. While concentrated poverty can have negative impacts on the social and economic livelihood of communities, many were still concerned that the changes would be steered by developers and the city. There was also concern that some within the community, especially business leaders, may be steering these changes to diversify the community out of economic interest, rather than in the

interest of the current low-income tenants. In Chinatown, the rhetoric of diversity has been used to advocate for more market-rate apartment housing and to bring back middle-class consumers, including middle-class Chinese Americans. While arguably important for the local economy, it moves the conversation away from the needs of the working-class and poor living in Chinatown and prioritizing resources to encourage opportunities for upward mobility.

The findings also highlight the persistence of an assimilationist narratives that has racialized Chinese Americans as an upwardly mobile community that has obtained socioeconomic assimilation. Not everyone agreed that the migration of Chinese Americans out of Chinatown was "forced" and that there is a perception that the community has choices (Logan, Alba, & Zhang, 2002; Marcuse, 1997). Currently, they are "choosing" to live and shop in San Gabriel Valley, which is perceived to have more desirable amenities than Chinatown. The assumption that Chinese Americans have experienced social mobility and moving out of urban ethnic enclaves to live in the suburbs is a prominent theme about Chinatown's decline. This also may obscure that gentrification may be an ethnic-specific problem, despite some working-class Chinese and Asian Americans who continue to rely on Chinatown due to both cultural and socioeconomic barriers.

CHAPTER 6

LOCATING THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF CHINATOWN

> Cultural development is fluid. You know, it all depends on the time, the space, and the people. And so, the time changes, the people change. So, space is always there, but even the usage of the space depends on the needs of the people, depends on the timing.
>
> - Suellen Cheng, community leader involved in different cultural heritage projects in Los Angeles Chinatown for over forty years

As U.S. cities compete in the global economy, they have increasingly embraced a multicultural identity that positions ethnic communities as assets for urban growth (Davila, 2004; Lin, 2011; Soja, 1996). Cultural strategies that promote and foster an image of ethnic diversity in a city have become integral in urban revitalization. Because it is both a historic neighborhood and ethnic enclave, Chinatown is considered a cultural and economic asset. The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) which guided development in Chinatown for over three decades, from 1980 to 2011, described Chinatown as a "cultural capital" for the city (Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles, 2010).

Since the establishment of Chinatown in 1938 through the CRA designation and to the present day, various ethnic cultural strategies, from small-scale festivals and events to large-scale monuments and developments, have been implemented to help maintain and build the cultural identity of Chinatown as a distinct ethnic enclave in the Los Angeles region. Scholars have examined the role of heritage institutions and events in the cultural identity of Chinatown (Lin, 2011; Pottie-Sherman, 2010; Sze, 2010; Wu 1997). Los Angeles Chinatown has heritage organizations including the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) and the Chinese American Museum (CAM). Furthermore, Chinatown is still home to many cultural activities. For example, the Miss Chinatown Pageant, Golden Dragon Parade for Chinese New Year, and the Autumn Moon Festival have become annual traditions in Chinatown that are for

the community and tourists. These productions of culture, and specifically ethnic culture, are critical to defining the physical and social identity of Chinatown, as well as promoting economic development. While these cultural activities are important for defining neighborhood culture, the physical environment of Chinatown that supports these cultural activities and act as anchors to physically express that culture also plays a critical role in understanding how cultural development and change unfolds in Chinatown.

In this chapter, I specifically focus on the physical environment of Chinatown, specifically the commercial core area (see Appendix A), to understand how neighborhood culture is expressed. Ethnic communities assert a sense of community and political presence by creating a distinct sense of place through the built environment (Aguilar-San Juan, 2009; Mazumdar, et al., 2000). Often, this physical expression draws from cultural representations and traditions of ethnic culture. Yet, in Chinatown defining the distinct physical anchors that mark the Chinese American heritage and identity has been tenuous. These cultural productions in Chinatown can assert a collective ethnic community identity or heritage, while also being driven by broader economic trends to encourage local and regional growth. As Zukin (1995) argues about the symbolic economy and the role of culture in cities, the production of space incorporates cultural representations to influence the consumption of space. This has led to a historic tension in Chinatown is how these assertions of culture through the built environment and activities can assert a sense of ethnic community, while also drawing from imaginaries of China to appeal to outsiders to promote economic development (Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Light, 1974; Umbach & Wishnoff, 2008; Wu, 1997). The contemporary heritage and cultural projects of Chinatown are also arguably part of economic growth strategies (Knapp & Vognovic, 2013; Lin, 2008; Lin, 2011; Pottie-Sherman, 2010; Sze, 2010).

I examine how community leaders have envisioned and negotiated the neighborhood design and use of Chinatown spaces to frame and control the cultural character of Chinatown specific to a Chinese American identity. Maintaining this identity has not only been seen as critical to maintaining the neighborhood as a Chinatown, but also is intrinsically linked to its economic development. While the perceived loss of a Chinese American presence in Chinatown is a critical issue, and one that may not necessarily be true given emerging business trends, I also argue that there are also limitations in situating Chinatown's neighborhood identity and value specific to a Chinese identity. The ethnic community identity that defines Chinatown is not always asserted as an effort for historical preservation, nor is it always inclusive of the class, generation, and immigration differences in the Chinese American community. Furthermore, there are differences in who has power to steer their cultural identity of Chinatown, which has implications for the built environment of the neighborhood. While there are community organizations and leaders active in heritage activities, business and property owners are ultimately the most powerful cultural producers of Chinatown as they control the spaces for cultural uses, as well as spaces that may be historically significant. As these spaces cater towards outside investment and upwardly mobile consumers, the changes may contribute to disparities in the neighborhood, despite the engagement of Chinese Americans in Chinatown.

The Challenges of Preserving & Building Spaces to Maintain Culture

Chinatown's asset is its culture and heritage, which is expressed through the built environment. Chinatown is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, and the buildings reflect this history. These buildings vary in design, from the plazas that established Chinatown in 1938 along Broadway to the industrial brick warehouses and pedestrian-scale retail spaces along Spring and Ord Streets (see Figure 6.1). Yet, there is a lack of historical designations to preserve

these buildings. Furthermore, a dedicated cultural facility, which has been identified as an important and historic community need to anchor and assert an ongoing ethnic identity, is also notably missing from Chinatown. The inability to secure either reflects an ongoing tension of whether community leaders and property owners will prioritize neighborhood spaces as shared community spaces or a means for economic development.

Figure 6.1. Older buildings in Chinatown. Central Plaza (left) and corner retail and residential building on Ord and Broadway (right). Photos taken by author, August 2015 and February 2018.

The Lack of Historical Designations & Property Ownership Power

While Chinatown is recognized as an important historical neighborhood in the city, there are a lack of designations to preserve the neighborhood. Historic and cultural designations are often seen as a means for communities to preserve their neighborhoods in the face of rapid development (Hurley, 2010). This form of place-based advocacy has also been used as a means of activism to address racial inequalities and increase the political visibility and legitimacy of marginalized communities (Cheng, 2009; Hodder, 1999; Lin, 2011; Saito, 2009; Vo, 2004). Contemporary efforts to preserve historically significant structures began when Chinatown was designated a CRA project area in 1980 and continue to the present day with Survey LA activities. One of the first activities of the CRA was to rehabilitate Central and West Plaza with the intent to nominate these sites for the National Register of Historic Places. However, the only

historically designated structures are the two entryway gates in Central Plaza. CAM is located in the Garnier Building in the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical monument, a building that is recognized in the National Register of Historic Places, because of its historical significance for the city. The Garnier Building is also the only remaining site from Old Chinatown, and CAM's presence in this building has helped to mark that space as a significant historical site for the Chinese American community within El Pueblo, which celebrates the city's multiethnic history.

The closest to a cultural designation that Chinatown has received was the national Preserve America designation in 2009. This was a panethnic Asian American collaboration with community leaders in Little Tokyo, Historic Filipinotown, Koreatown, and Thai Town in Los Angeles and initiated through the CRA. This designation was not a regulatory mechanism that protected historical sites. It was a program that helped to provide resources for cultural tourism to sustain these neighborhoods, thus prioritizing cultural tourism strategies for Chinatown. By 2017, the funding for this program was precarious due to the presidential administration and budgetary changes to support preservation efforts. The neighborhood does not have a planning overlay or tool that helps to preserve any of its potential historically significant sites nor to guide the aesthetics of future development to align with the historical structures of Chinatown. Because of the lack of these structural mechanisms and policies to protect Chinatown, local organizations, leaders, and other stakeholders have had to regulate development based on their understanding of how it will disrupt the cultural integrity and history of the neighborhood.

Community leaders active in these efforts have been skeptical that Chinatown can have historical and design overlays. Much of this tension is due to the power of property owners, especially commercial property owners, which includes the historic plazas of Chinatown, Central and West Plaza. One community leader who has worked in cultural and heritage projects

explained how Chinatown property owners may not envision their properties to be historical sites and instead be motivated by "an entrepreneurial spirit, not because of any moral obligation to maintain or protect a culture or community." Among the property owners who are concerned about how Chinatown is changing, they have indicated hesitation about the use of zoning overlays or specific plans that would limit their ability to develop their properties. Some commercial property owners and business leaders have even argued that from an architectural standpoint, there is no building worth historical preservation status that should restrict how property owners use or develop their properties.

Property ownership in Chinatown includes institutional property owners. In some cases, their property ownership has helped with historical preservation. CHSSC purchased two of the oldest Victorian houses remaining in the neighborhood built by Alsace immigrant Emerson Fritz in the late 1800s. The CHSSC ownership and use of these spaces is symbolic of the layers of immigration history in Chinatown that make heritage efforts often complex; they are preserving the older European immigrant history by maintaining the buildings in their original form, but also using it towards the promotion of Chinese American history.

The older organizations, such as the mutual aid associations, also own properties scattered throughout Chinatown. While not purposeful cultural organizations like CHSSC, these organizations are considered cultural anchors because of their history in Chinatown and the Chinese American community. As property owners, they also have the power to direct the changes by leasing their spaces to new tenants. An article from the *New Yorker* profiled the changes in Chinatown and specifically cited the mutual aid associations as a major reason why New York City Chinatown has been able to resist change and preserve its character (Taylor, 2015). However, there is mixed evidence that ethnic property ownership in Chinatown is

protective against gentrification, as they do attempt to maintain a sense of ethnic identity, but also are not necessarily preventing the displacement of working-class immigrants (Acolin & Vitello, 2017). In Los Angeles Chinatown, representatives of these organizations have openly expressed concerns that Chinatown is slowly becoming "less Chinese." However, there was no indication of any vision for their properties to preserve Chinatown beyond maintaining it as a space for their members. Overall, the community leadership in Chinatown has struggled to establish a historical preservation designation, leaving much of the preservation efforts in the hands of individual property owners.

Determining the Role of a Cultural Center in Chinatown

In contrast to other urban Chinatowns and its neighbor Little Tokyo, Chinatown does not have a cultural center. Establishing a cultural center in Chinatown was a major initiative for over three decades in Chinatown. This would have potentially been a monument that would have physically asserted the cultural identity of Chinatown, while also supporting cultural activities in the neighborhood. However, throughout the negotiations of determining the scope of this project, it was clear that there were different community visions for the purpose of this type of space in Chinatown that reflected the ongoing tension of whether spaces would support current residential needs or contribute to potential economic growth.

A cultural center one of the major projects proposed for Chinatown when it was a CRA planning area. However, it was never built despite receiving support from many community leaders, as well as from the city, because it could potentially be a draw for cultural tourism. The cultural center was proposed at a critical point for Chinatown. During this time, cities in the San Gabriel Valley were beginning to emerge as the "new Chinatowns" and threatening Chinatown as the only place for cultural, social, political, and economic activities centered on a Chinese

identity. The cultural center was also promoted as a space that could unite the diversifying Chinese American community. In a fundraising brochure, the Chinese Cultural and Community Center of Greater Los Angeles, the local non-profit that was preemptively formed to manage the proposed cultural center, explained the purpose of the cultural center:

> The recent expansion of the Asian American population with a common Chinese heritage led to the need for a spiritual home to celebrate common cultural traditions with a shared history grounded in an ancient civilization. Such a resource is also needed for saluting diversity in background and culture. Many persons come directly from China to settle in Southern California; others, more recently, from different countries the world over. Many are descendants of men and women who arrived several generations ago; others migrated from different places within our nation and the Western hemisphere.

The attempts to bring a cultural center to Chinatown, while on the surface was meant to distinguish Chinatown as an ethnic center, both in relation to San Gabriel Valley and in the downtown area, was also positioned as a space for the community to engage in cultural productions that would promote a unified Chinese American community.

Despite this vision of community unity, the CRA Chinatown Community Advisory Council (CCAC), the locally appointed group that advised the CRA and city council on development issues, was often not in agreement about the scope of the cultural center. Those representing the residential interests envisioned it as a multi-purpose community center, with spaces to support various types of recreational activities for the local community. Another vision was for it to be a cultural and entertainment destination, including spaces for a contemporary art gallery and theater, that would bring in those who were already visiting downtown for culture and the arts. This vision tended to be supported by those who had a business and cultural interest in Chinatown. Both were major needs in the neighborhood that spoke to the dual identities of Chinatown as a residential and tourist neighborhood, and the leaders of this effort attempted to negotiate all the potential uses but were ultimately seen as not having a unified vision. In

December 1987, the city council member representing Chinatown at the time, Gloria Molina, wrote an open letter to the community, urging them to "put aside their differences" and unite under "one agenda" and development proposal. The conflict and slow process of developing the cultural center was situated as an internal community conflict among community leaders representing different interests.

While the community conflict was often cited as the reason why the cultural center was not built, the cultural center was also never planned as a freestanding development. It was always tied to various commercial developments proposed to the CRA in the 1980s and 1990s that never came to fruition. One was a major commercial development designed by David Hyun who was the architect for Little Tokyo's Japanese Village Plaza, another CRA-initiated development that faced community resistance from Asian American activists because of concerns of small business displacement. While this development in Chinatown was proposed on a county-owned lot that was being used as a parking lot and was not directly displacing any small businesses, there was still concern from CCAC members that this would set a precedent in prioritizing economic development over housing development. The development was ultimately never built. Another commercial development proposed by Lippo Bank promised to house a cultural center, but never came to fruition as the bank faced financial losses and James Riady, the chairman of the Lippo Group, faced a political scandal regarding his campaign donations to the Democratic Party. Both these spaces are currently being utilized as surface parking lots.

The only physical remnant of the proposed CRA Cultural Center is in Blossom Plaza, the most recent development in Chinatown. Blossom Plaza has had a long and contested history in the community as it switched developers several times, faced resistance from the CCAC, and faced delays due to both the uncertainty of Chinatown as a viable market and the 2007 economic

recession. The CRA stepped in to help finance it after the recession, and the cultural center was proposed as a community benefit. However, throughout the years, the square footage of the cultural center diminished and the promise of an indoor space changed to an outdoor performance space, which is now a small patio area with a tree placed in the middle of the space, thus reducing its functionality. One former CCAC member reasoned that the absence of a cultural center was ultimately the developer responding to changing downtown trends:

> And do I blame the guy? The current guy? I think I understand his problem. He committed to a project which maybe doesn't turn a dollar good. And he just had to work hard to find a way to do so. And at the same time, meet the fast-changing environment and market viewpoint of downtown L.A. Think of it, in the last ten years downtown L.A. has changed enormously.

While a strong advocate for the cultural center, this community leader understood that the development was not just defined by the tastes or needs of the Chinese American community, but regional economic and political trends. As the cultural center was never proposed to be a freestanding development, but to be incorporated into other proposed developments, it was always vulnerable to change according to broader economic trends.

Furthermore, with the opening of CAM in 2003, a museum space dedicated to Chinese Americans in Southern California, a cultural center may no longer be relevant for the community. CAM was established by the efforts of some of the same community leaders who were active in the cultural center efforts. However, it is also not located in the current Chinatown neighborhood and is in neighboring El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical monument where Old Chinatown was located and has its own separate political governance.[10] Thus, a cultural institution within the current neighborhood boundaries may still appear to be a need, and several community leaders are still holding on to the vision of a cultural center in Chinatown. Towards

[10] The El Pueblo de Los Angeles is a separate department within the City of Los Angeles and has a special commission that oversees that area. In addition, El Pueblo is not part of the same Council District as Chinatown.

the end of my fieldwork, community leaders from CHSSC and the mutual aid associations were beginning conversations to initiate a new plan for a cultural center. The goal to bring a cultural center to Chinatown continues, but defining the salience of having a cultural center and its ultimate purpose for Chinatown remains an open question, especially as the Chinese American community's relationship to Chinatown continues to change.

The Economic Implications of a Chinatown Design

While Chinatown does not have a site that is specifically dedicated as a cultural center for the neighborhood or a historical zoning overlay, the architectural design and form have helped to create a sense of place that asserts a culture unique to Los Angeles Chinatown. In ethnic enclaves, design is critical for establishing and communicating a community identity (Mazumdar, et al. 2000). The design has drawn tourists and potential new property owners and tenants to Chinatown, which has led it to become a focus of community preservation debates on how to maintain Chinatown's cultural identity amid downtown change. The discussions about the design of Chinatown often raised questions about expressions of the cultural authenticity of an ethnic identity. These claims of cultural authenticity across different community leaders and interest groups were also arguably a means to steer neighborhood changes.

Given its proximity to downtown, Chinatown is currently experiencing new developments that community leaders recognize as not having any "unique Chinatown characteristics." These unique characteristics are often associated with Central Plaza, the first development establishing Chinatown, and its use of traditional Chinese architectural details, like the roofline (See Figure 6.1). The Orsini, Jia Apartments, and Blossom Plaza are the most recent mixed-use housing and retail developments in Chinatown that have been built since the 2000s and what many described as representing a more "modern" aesthetic that is in stark contrast to

older buildings and threatening the cultural character of the neighborhood (see Figure 6.2).

There are variations among community leaders about these design changes. Those involved with heritage and preservation efforts tended to be the most critical of the design of these new buildings. They often described them as massive and imposing. Blossom Plaza is jarring for a few who mentioned that while there were other high-rise developments that have already been built by downtown developers, such as the Orsini and Jia Apartments, they were all in the outskirts of Chinatown. These developments are on Cesar Chavez Boulevard, the major boundary between Chinatown and the rest of downtown. Some even see the Orsini development as not part of Chinatown and part of the "north downtown boundary." As one long-term community leader reasoned, those developments were "still palatable because it wasn't in the core location. But now with Blossom Plaza being literally, virtually in the heart of this core Chinatown neighborhood, ... we can see…major physical changes." The mass and design of these new buildings that are in the core of Chinatown are more likely to visually disrupt the current neighborhood character than those that are on the outskirts of the neighborhood.

Figure 6.2. New mixed-use developments built in the 2010s. Jia Apartments (left) and Blossom Plaza (right). Photos taken by author, March 2016.

Among business leaders, there appeared to be variation in supporting these new buildings. While all were concerned about economic development and cultural tourism, their reasoning reflected how they anchored ethnic culture and heritage – within local Chinatown history or contemporary China – and whether they were interested or professionally involved with real estate development. The business leaders who understood Chinatown from a real estate perspective often argued that Chinatown was not viewed as a modern urban ethnic neighborhood. These new developments do not necessarily match the physical identity of the downtown core, but of major Chinese cities and economic centers, such as Hong Kong and Shanghai. One younger business leader explained how Chinatown needed to modernize their look to be more aligned with both downtown and global Asian aesthetics:

> [In downtown], you have the Broad, you have the Walt Disney Concert Hall, you have MOCA…and then you come to our side [of Cesar Chavez] and you have nothing that's architecturally interesting. And I just feel like that's not fair to Chinatown. That all this development kind of stops at this individual boundary because of the way that everything was zoned. And going back to if you actually go back to China or Taiwan or Hong Kong, I mean those cities in Asia are marvelous. … Shouldn't we be the best of the Chinese culture and heritage and not the dumps?

Other business leaders have expressed similar sentiments of wanting Chinatown to have similar aesthetics to modern China, with some pointing out that Central Plaza not only represented that aesthetic, but was never an aesthetic of ethnic authenticity since it was designed to cater to cultural tourism and old Hollywood imaginaries of China.

The comparisons to these economically powerful cities in China was indicative of China's growing economic power and the precarious position Chinatown has been in attracting that investment. Urban Chinatowns have now become transnational spaces that facilitates the flow of global capital, especially from China (Lin, 1996). In the 1970s, Asian flight capital led to land speculation and what business leader Wilbur Woo felt led to a "false market' in Chinatown

(McMillan, 1977). However, since then, the overseas Chinese investment has been primarily located in San Gabriel Valley and downtown. Chinese investors have been credited for contributing to a major "building boom" in downtown, developing high-rise skyscrapers (Tabor, 2015). Questions of ethnic authenticity in the built environment spoke to issues of modernity and the economic power of the global Chinese community, to which some Chinatown business leaders argued that Chinatown symbolized neither about the ethnic community.

Other business leaders maintained that the "orientalist" architecture of Chinatown was not just a part of maintaining the local history, but helped maintain a traditional Chinese identity. This sentiment tended to be supported by business leaders who have economic interests in Chinatown through individual business and property ownership, but are not professionally involved in real estate development. One business leader remarked that the architecture is what continues to bring people to all urban Chinatowns:

> I think Chinatown is losing its uniqueness. I know there's others who disagree, but I know [several business leaders and I] are on the same page…. The only component that we wish that [these new mixed-use developments] would include is a Chinese roofline. … Because that is one of the few things that this Chinatown and other Chinatowns throughout the U.S. actually have. I mean people say, "When you look at Shanghai and Beijing – now look at Hong Kong – you don't see any of this!" ... If you take that component away, there is no more Chinese architecture left. ... When I was at the [CRA Project Area Committee] PAC, I argued [about] the library, "Can you put a Chinese roofline in it?" [Another community leader and I] got in a pretty big heated argument about the architect. … They didn't think it matters. And it does matter. That makes Chinatown unique. The Chinatown library will be the only one in this whole city system that has [that design]. That would have that. The apartments on Cesar Chavez and Broadway, Blossom [Plaza], you can have all the glass you want, all the modern stuff, just put a little of Chinese wrinkle on top. … And I think that's when all the Chinatowns, this Chinatown, San Francisco Chinatown, will lose their uniqueness. Then they will just blend into everything else.

This business leader saw Chinatown as a space of Chinese heritage through its architecture and viewed the architectural design as a unique asset that continues to attract tourists. While some

business leaders framed the modern architecture of new developments as indicative of economic progress in Chinatown to attract new investment, others saw these designs as a loss of history that would ultimately hurt Chinatown's economy, which was dependent on cultural tourism that is based on assumptions of Chinatown as a reflection of older, historical traditions of China.

Figure 6.3. Los Angeles Chinatown Gateway. Photo taken by author, August 2015.

The new Chinese immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia, particularly those who are a part of the Teo-Chew Association of Southern California, also developed other major cultural monuments in Chinatown that disrupted the traditional Chinatown aesthetic, while also establishing a sense of place. The Teo-Chew Association was the major financier for the Chinatown Gateway, a major neighborhood landmark built in 2003 with the backing of the CRA. Other donors included the Southern California Fukienese Association, CCBA, and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, but the Teo-Chew Association provided most of the funding and leadership. The establishment of these gateways in Los Angeles and other cities are considered important physical markers that identify the space as Chinatown, distinct from the rest of the downtown neighborhood. Chinatown gateways recall gateways that are entrances to villages in China. Yet, the Los Angeles Chinatown Gateway, which was designed by a Chinese American

of Chaozhou heritage, is considered a more modern design (see Figure 6.3). Some in the community have criticized the aesthetic, including some Teo-Chew Association leaders, as they note that it should have drawn from traditional Chinese designs, like other urban Chinatowns.

As many of these gateways are recent phenomena built in the post-1965 era almost a century after Chinatowns were built, these gateways are arguably part of the larger cultural tourism efforts that establish Chinatown as a distinct space that follow the traditions of self-orientalism in which monuments and design distinguish it as a foreign place of otherness in the city.[11] These gateways have also been built with the support from cities in China, further strengthening Chinatown's role in strengthening transnational links between the United States and China. In Los Angeles, the Chaozhou immigrants in Chinatown not only created spaces that both helped to maintain traditional practices from China, but asserted a modern identity. These developments symbolize their presence and economic power in the community. They are now contributing to the prior generations of Chinatown business community leadership by promoting cultural tourism in Chinatown through the design of the built environment.

Those working on residential interests were also mixed, if not ambivalent, towards maintaining the architectural heritage of Chinatown as they appeared to be more concerned with who would have access to these new spaces. Many did point to how these new architecturally distinct buildings were symbols of change, as one CCED member explained, Blossom Plaza was "a highly visible marker" that they could use as an example in their organizing to assess how residents felt about the changes in Chinatown. However, the design was not the focus of their criticism on how these developments could disrupt the community. One younger generation community activist noted that while Blossom Plaza looks different from other buildings in

[11]For example, the San Francisco Chinatown Gate was built in 1970, the Seattle Chinatown Gate was built in 2008, and the Boston Chinatown Gate was built in 1976.

Chinatown, he was mostly concerned that it housed market-rate apartments that would justify rent increases across the neighborhood, creating a secondary displacement of the current low-income immigrant families and disrupting Chinatown's history as a place for poor and working-class immigrants. There were concerns about how these spaces were signals for economic development and growth, but one that would exclude poor and working-class immigrants currently living in Chinatown. Framings of heritage in Chinatown emphasized an immigrant identity that is based on shared experiences of discrimination and racism.

Additionally, there are variations among newer property owners about maintaining the design and architecture of Chinatown. These newer property owners whose buildings are being criticized, appeared to be purposeful in distinguishing their spaces from the current community design. In some cases, this was seen as disrespectful to the community. The Orsini, a mixed-use retail and market-rate apartment development, was a contested site as many in the community have negative recollections of the developer and property owner Geoffrey Palmer. He disregarded almost all community requests, including minor requests, such as adding Chinese aesthetics to the pedestrian bridges that connected the different buildings.

While not considered as disconnected from the community as the Orsini, the Blossom Plaza design was also a deliberate move away from old Chinatown to an urban Chinese aesthetic (see Figure 6.3). The architect, Johnson-Fain, is a prominent U.S.-based architectural firm that has designed buildings in China. The firm partner shared that they purposely moved away from the orientalist architecture historically used in Chinatowns and drew inspiration from their own buildings in China. He explained that they wanted the building to be more "contemporary" and were not creating a "Disneyland for young adults" in the downtown area (Slayton, 2016). This sentiment shows how those outside of the Chinese American community were problematizing

the old orientalist aesthetics of Chinatown, distinguishing themselves from the "ethnic packaging" of these spaces that deem them "inauthentic" and not spaces of natural change or growth (Hackworth & Rekers, 2005). As Chinatown does not have a design overlay that provides for a vision on the aesthetics of Chinatown architecture, property owners and developers once again have more leeway to develop buildings that are aligned with their personal preferences for architectural aesthetics.

Yet, there are differences between the larger corporate developers, and individual property owners moving to Chinatown. The individual property owners are making changes to their properties, but they also spoke about the need to preserve the architectural integrity of the area. Alexis Readinger is one of the newer property owners in West Plaza. She jokingly identified as "that white girl" in the community and had no prior attachments to Chinatown before moving to the neighborhood. She shared that she was drawn to the architectural character and design of the building as a live-work space. She has since become engaged with the Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID) and has also noticed that there is speculative interest from developers who have been investing in other downtown neighborhoods. She, however, was protective of the neighborhood, and remarked, "How do you preserve a lot of aspects in the neighborhood? Cause it won't be as charming if it flips too much, you know?" An older community leader involved with cultural heritage projects similarly noted this trend in which Chinatown's aesthetics may be appealing to newer non-Chinese stakeholders:

> The evolution of your physical community towards a Hong Kong-like structure [of high-rise buildings], every time there was some opportunity to do that [in the past], it was shut down. Let's stay like a town or village, which is okay, very nice. But then you have to have people to populate that town or village. The people who are falling in love of [this low-density neighborhood character] … maybe increasingly, they aren't all Chinese.

Despite perspectives about non-Asian and other perceived "outsiders" buying property and wanting to change the community, these newer individual property owners did recognize the assets of Chinatown that made it a unique place in the city, especially within downtown. This sentiment reflects arguments about individuals labeled as the gentrifiers who are in search of the authenticity of places and becoming "social preservationists" who try to keep the characteristics that drew them to those spaces (Brown-Saracino, 2004). Readinger, as well as a few others who are both Chinese and non-Chinese, has been credited by community leaders as making concerted efforts to preserve their buildings while also attempting to renovate and modernize their buildings, some of which was not being maintained by past property owners. They are tenuously part of the efforts to preserve the character of the neighborhood.

New Generations and Uses of Old Spaces: Chinatown Commercial Character

Small businesses have been critical to the cultural identity of Chinatown since it was established in 1938, and arguably before it was a Chinatown as it was also home to European immigrant businesses. The commercial core continues to primarily consists of small-scale retail spaces and plazas that contribute to the commercial character of Chinatown as a pedestrian-oriented shopping area. While these commercial spaces have not physically transformed substantially and continue to be a defining part of Chinatown's cultural identity, the uses and operators of these spaces have been changing and been part of the commercial gentrification debates.

With the exception of a few chain stores, including a Starbucks and the Walmart Neighborhood Market which has since closed, Chinatown has remained a neighborhood of small businesses. Specifically, it is home to generations of ethnic and immigrant small businesses. The older generation of "legacy businesses" continue to persist as cultural assets, not necessarily

because they are competitive in the current economy but because of its sentimental value. The post-1965 generation of businesses include swap meet-style retail spaces many of which are operated by ethnic Chinese immigrants and refugees from Southeast Asia that cater to a relatively low-income consumer base. The most recent restaurants and retail, some of which are opened by later generation Asian Americans, reflect potential "new entrepreneurial businesses" of Chinatown in which they are appealing to more upscale tastes than current residential demographics (Zukin et al., 2009). Together, these different businesses contribute to the cultural identity and heritage of Chinatown, but are also part of the concerns about the possibility of commercial turnover and displacement that will threaten the cultural identity of Chinatown.

Becoming Cultural Institutions: Generational Turnover in Legacy Businesses

The history of small businesses in Chinatown provides insight on how immigrant family-owned and operated businesses sustain across generations. Among those who grew up in a small business family, they spoke about working as children in the family business as a part of their daily routine. Al Soo-hoo, whose father owned South China Gifts, a souvenir store in Central Plaza, explains how he was always a part of the family business, even though he was never officially an owner or employee:

> I never ran the business. [pauses] Let me say this. I never officially owned the business. I mean when we grew up, we were kids. We worked. We were expected to work the store, watch and help the customers. Watch the customers come in and make the sales and all that. All that kind of stuff. Help out with the family business. The kids have to learn how to do that. Wrap the stuff up without breaking it and collect the money and collect the tax. Learn how to make change and all that kind of stuff. So, operating the store, yes, [as] kids. But when my father passed and then when we finally had to vacate the store or vacate the location, I never really had the store owned in my name per se.

In these family businesses, it was assumed that the children would help since by extension it was helping their family, and that it would develop those initial business and customer service skills.

While Soo-hoo's family shop closed with the passing of his father, other Chinatown family businesses that were a part of the establishment of New Chinatown in 1938 have continued with the next generation. Some of the original businesses in and near Central Plaza still exist today, such as K.G. Louie, a souvenir gift store in Central Plaza and now the oldest Chinese American-owned business, and Phoenix Bakery, which was originally in Central Plaza but moved to a location around the corner from the plaza.

These Chinatown "legacy businesses" continue to be operated by the second and third generation of family members, but unlike their parents, operating the business is not their actual job or profession. Ron Louie, who was born and raised in Chinatown and shares the current ownership of K.G. Louie with his siblings, is an architect. Even though he has since moved to Pasadena to raise a family, he explained that has never "left Chinatown" because he and his siblings have always helped with the store. In contrast, Phoenix Bakery, which continues to be managed by the Chan family, has been able to expand their business and employ individuals outside of their family to operate the business. Ken Chan, the youngest son of original owner and prominent Chinatown business leader Fung Chow Chan, explained that like the Louie family, many in his generation became professionals and only a few family members remain fully committed to the business as their primary job. This has limited his family's ability to expand the business beyond Chinatown.

The generational shifts within the legacy businesses in Chinatown highlight how the small businesses in Chinatown have evolved as the economic anchors of cultural tourism to sites of heritage, both personal and for the community. These family businesses may not have been established with the primary intent of passing it down to the next generation, but helped to ensure the next generation had better life opportunities. However, both Chan and Louie

expressed hesitation in ending their businesses since it symbolized their parents' hard work that allowed for their generation to have a better life. Chan explains, "If we ever closed and then all the hard work that my parents, my uncle did was basically gone for nothing. … So, we think it's still a thriving business; it just needs to be tweaked here and there a little bit more." Louie explains a similar dynamic among his siblings and their motivation to keep the store:

> We all thank my mom and dad. If it wasn't for them, none of us would be – I'm an architect. My brother's a teacher. Another one is an engineer. If it wasn't for our parents, we wouldn't have had any of this stuff. And so that's why we're keeping the store there, is to just keep the tradition. Cause none of us really live on the store or business. It's just doing it for – keep the family name going and tradition.

Property and business owners like the Louies may not always rely on their stores as the primary source of income and are not necessarily driven purely to gain profit from their businesses. They have continued their parents' interest in business, but represent some Chinatown storeowners who may not necessarily be entrepreneurs who have the business and marketing skills to innovate and survive in the competitive urban economy.

These older Chinatown businesses remain in business because they are now important cultural stakeholders of Chinatown as much as they are economic stakeholders. Chan explains that while Phoenix Bakery may not appeal to the new Chinese immigrants, it has a loyal customer base that consists of the older Chinatown consumers and their families:

> I mean there is truth to what you say, if you look at the Phoenix [Food] Boutique, or you look at Diamond Bakery or I think its JJs or Jim's Bakery, and I might be wrong, but I think that most of their clientele is basically more the … [new Chinese] immigrant customer base. Our customer base is basically more of the Americanized ABCs [American Born Chinese], more *lo-fan* Caucasian, more Hispanic. … But we still have people coming in from way up from Inland Empire, from all the way down from Orange County. I mean they still drive that distance. They still wanted it for, you know, the grandkids coming in and say, "My grandparents say, 'It has to be a Phoenix cake,' they don't want a Costco cake. This is not – I'm driving 15 miles one way and my grandparents insist I get it." Or, "My parents insist I get it." So, we still have that [consumer base].

These legacy businesses provide and maintain a shared heritage for the community that helps to maintain Chinatown as a destination across generations.

While these legacy businesses have become sites of cultural heritage, and arguably preservation, in the community, the lack of entrepreneurs within the next generation of these family businesses has contributed to different tensions over change in the community. Some business leaders have noted that as the second and later generation family members keep properties and businesses but not necessarily to use it as their primary source of income, this has led to inconsistent operating hours across neighboring businesses and vacant storefronts. Because of this, they argue that it has been challenging to activate the street and recreating a night life in Chinatown because only a few stores may be open at a given time. In addition, these older businesses persist because they define a symbolic cultural identity of Chinatown despite the limited economic profit and contributions they have for the neighborhood. While there is an expectation that Chinatowns will have specific businesses that fit an image of Chinatown, such as souvenir trinket stores and restaurants, it is questionable if tourists will continue to spend money in these spaces to sustain them as viable businesses.

In contrast to these concerns about economic development, community activists who work with the residential and business tenants have pointed out the possibilities of the "changing of hands" of older property and business owners. Several community leaders spoke about how the younger generation who will inherit these spaces often have no interest to keep the business or property because they are in a different profession and/or lack the sentimental attachment as they are too emotionally and physically distant from Chinatown to motivate them to maintain these businesses. As these older businesses begin to leave, Chinatown may lose the spaces that have contributed to its cultural identity.

Creative Class Revitalization in the Retail Plazas

Chinatown is also experiencing a potential shift that may move it away as an economy historically for immigrant and family businesses and towards an economy that is catering to the creative class. Florida (2003) argued that individuals involved in "creative" industries are the drivers of urban growth. Strategies that target this population include establishing art galleries and other artistic spaces, and upscaling the types of retail and restaurants in the neighborhood, and these spaces have become indicators of potential gentrification (Burnett, 2014; Grodrach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011; Zukin, et al., 2009). Chinatown has also seen a growth of these types of businesses and strategies. The creative class amenities sit side-by-side with old Chinatown trinket shops and restaurants. While the changes have often been cited as attracting "non-Chinese" who do not engage with the larger Chinatown community, these creative class amenities also appear to be inclusive of Chinese Americans, while not necessarily directed towards them.

New Cultural Uses in Old Plazas. Central and West Plazas are the historic sites that established the Chinatown neighborhood. Because of this legacy, they often are the anchors for cultural tourism and events. The CRA prioritized cultural tourism as the major economic development strategy for Chinatown, and with the Project for Public Spaces, developed a plan in 2009 for Chinatown that focused specifically on these older plazas as an anchoring point for cultural tourism. Today, many of these businesses and events in the plazas are not necessarily engaging in cultural tourism that celebrates a Chinese American heritage. Instead, they are appealing to creative class tastes, which some argue may be threatening the cultural identity of Chinatown.

The opening of art galleries on Chungking Road in West Plaza, which began to replace

the old Chinese trinket stores and vacant storefronts in the late 1990s, is often labeled as one of the initial signs of gentrification in Chinatown (Lin, 2008). Many of the new property owners are not Chinese Americans, and are famous art gallery owners and musicians. They fit the model of many gentrification narratives that pinpoint artists as the first to move into places that have been disinvested and to revitalize the neighborhood as a "hip area" that eventually displaces low-income tenants (Zukin, et al., 2009). These new property owners often spoke of having to substantially rehabilitate these properties, which were not being taken care of by the previous owners, and relocating the older tenants. Despite the displacement that occurred, many in the community see these artists as being so separate from the community that most feel they have not much of an economic or social impact on Chinatown beyond the plaza. This was a sentiment that cut across people of different interests and backgrounds. The art galleries are not consistently open and host events in the plaza that are more specific to the city's broader art gallery scene. One commercial property owner who was supportive of the art galleries in Chinatown because it would bring diversity, also recalled that the art gallery scene also had a short-term impact because of the 2007 Recession, noting how Chinatown's economy is impacted by larger economic declines and trends. The presence of artists in West Plaza seems to be contained within that space, and contributed to the community's fragmentation.

In addition to new businesses, these plazas have been sites for cultural events. These plazas are the hubs for the Chinese New Year and Autumn Moon Festival activities, which are the major ethnic festivals in Chinatown. However, Central Plaza has also hosted venues for punk rock and hip hop concerts since the 1980s, which is when Chinatown to often cited to have started to decline. Angelica Lopez Moyes, a Castelar parent and representative for the Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council, was a waitress at Grand Star in Central Plaza when it hosted an

underground hip hop club, Firecracker, and recalled it as an "unintentional" revitalization of Chinatown as people converged to the area because they were drawn to the music.

However, there have been intentional cultural planning for these plazas. As a part of the 2009 plan for cultural tourism, the CRA partnered with the BID and the business and property owners in Central Plaza to develop Chinatown Summer Nights in 2010. The event includes a live band stage, beer gardens, and food trucks, as well as family activities in the early evening and a late-night dance stage (see Figure 6.4). Chinatown Summer Nights was part of a "re-branding" of the plazas as a "lively public multi-use destination that brings people back again and again" (Maciver, 2010). As it has become a popular event. The activities and programming of Chinatown Summer Nights including the live band stage and food trucks have since been blended with Chinese heritage events, including the Chinese New Year and Autumn Moon Festivals. In addition to asserting ethnic Chinese culture, the heritage events are now using creative class strategies to draw a younger audience to Chinatown.

Figure 6.4. Chinatown Summer Nights. Photo taken by author, July 2015.

The success of Chinatown Summer Nights has brought mixed feelings in the community, highlighting tensions of who is included and excluded to benefit from these events. The event is another form of cultural tourism in Chinatown that is benefitting businesses and not residents, as it does not necessarily cater to their interests. Some of the property owners at Central Plaza have praised the event for bringing in business on weekend evenings, with older business owners sharing that it reminded them of Chinatown in the 1950s when it had an active nightlife. Others have criticized these events as helping select businesses, some of which are not even from the community. Some older community leaders critique the use of food trucks, explaining that it takes away business from the brick-and-mortar restaurants in Chinatown. Furthermore, while the older plazas in Chinatown are open spaces that provide pedestrian corridors through the neighborhood, they are deceptively not public spaces and remain privately owned. While still owned and controlled by Chinese Americans with a history and commitment to Chinatown, over time these spaces have the potential to become more exclusionary as they begin to cater to more upscale tastes to attract those with disposable income.

Despite the criticism of these changes in the old plazas, there are young Chinese Americans who are bridging the changes and history as a part of their engagement. There were some artists who were a part of the art gallery scene in the late 1990s whom some in the community would not necessarily label as "gentrifiers." Steve Wong, a U.S.-born Chinese American artist routinely visited Chinatown during his youth was one of the new property owners in Chungking Road during this time and provides a counter-narrative to the art gallery scene as purely driven by economics. Wong was part of a group of Asian American contemporary artists who were also converging in Chinatown during this time and trying to contribute to the community through arts and culture. He explained how they formed a short-

lived group called the Bamboo Collective in the early 2000s:

> We tried to start this kind of momentum of not only just kind of white artists and gallerists being in Chinatown but Asian Americans. And so, I really had this vision of creating Chinatown as a place where young people would want to come back. You know that it would be this cool hip creative place and look there's a group of Asian Americans trying to make kind of this cool creative space that's different from the galleries. But then we were aware and conscious of displacement and gentrification.

As a curator at CAM, Wong developed an exhibit that displayed Chinatown postcards from Castelar students and tourists who wrote on the backside about what Chinatown meant to them. Wong explained that the exhibit was to show the "symbiotic relationship between the outside and community" in which Chinatown is both a tourist and residential space, while trying to question the tourism identity ingrained in Chinatown, as writing on the postcard, rather than keeping them pristine, would "de-commodify a commodity of postcard[s]." Through this creative work, Wong and other artists engage in cultural productions to challenge public perceptions of Chinatown.

Martin Wong, who was the founder and editor of *Giant Robot*, an Asian American pop culture magazine, has also become politically engaged in Chinatown as a parent at Castelar Elementary School. When discussing how he can contribute as someone engaged in media and the arts, he says that he recognizes the "layers" of culture and history:

> I'm really familiar with bands, underground music culture. And Hong Kong Café and Madame Wong's [in Central Plaza] is where a lot of cool bands played in the 70s. Like The Germs and X and Weirdo's. So, there's these three different or levels of culture in Chinatown. You got the locals, immigrants mostly. And then you have art galleries. And then there's this heritage of cool music. And [my wife and I] have a foot or finger in all three I guess. So, we can build a bridge.

Despite not being residents of Chinatown, he and his wife Wendy Lau have become parent leaders bridging these different cultures of Chinatown, including hosting punk rock concerts at Central Plaza as part of their fundraising efforts for Castelar. Thus, younger Chinese Americans are not only identifying with some of the culture of Chinatown that is not necessarily ethnic-

based, but trying to creatively engage with neighborhood culture and issues to help build community capacity.

New Restaurants: An Asian American Revitalization? A major force of change in Chinatown are the restaurants, which have historically been a major component of Chinatown's economic base (Ong, 1984). However, by the 1980s, Chinatown was no longer the only place for Chinese restaurants, as restaurants opened in San Gabriel Valley and other areas in Los Angeles. Yet Chinatown's reliance on restaurants as a core of its economic base has not necessarily declined. There are new restaurants opening in Chinatown and replacing older spaces. These new restaurants have become the center of gentrification debates in the neighborhood today. With the growing popularity of these new restaurants, the identity of Chinatown is now catering to a contemporary "foodie" scene rather than maintaining its identity as a center for Chinese food.

Most people see these restaurants as signaling how Chinatown is becoming "less Chinese" as they are not traditional Chinatown Cantonese restaurants. While there are non-Asian operators that serve non-Asian food, such as Little Jewel of New Orleans and Howlin' Ray's Nashville Chicken, some are Asian American-operated and serve contemporary Asian food. The first of these new restauranteurs in Chinatown was Roy Choi, a Korean American celebrity chef who opened Chego. He was followed by Filipino American Alvin Cailan, head chef of Egg Slut in Grand Market Plaza in Downtown Los Angeles who opened Ramen Champ, a restaurant that serves contemporary Japanese ramen noodle bowls. Lasa is also a contemporary Filipino American restaurant owned and operated by Filipino American brothers Chad and Chase Valencia. Eddie Huang, a Chinese American who is also famous for creating the Taiwanese Chinese American sitcom *Fresh Off the Boat*, opened up Baohaus which provides a contemporary take on the Chinese bread rolls or *bao*. These new restaurants are not just bringing

in younger Asian American entrepreneurs, but ones that are famous within the restaurant scene. These new entrepreneurs also contrast with the younger generation of Chinese Americans who are taking over family businesses and have a prior stakeholder claim to Chinatown. Many of these Asian American entrepreneurs have limited to no prior claims to Chinatown.

Many of these Asian American restauranteurs have found a home in Far East Plaza, a commercial plaza dedicated to restaurants. The plaza has a history of bringing in new types of cuisine that were not Cantonese, the dominant cuisine in Chinatown. This included Mandarin Deli, which has since closed with a new location in Monterey Park. These restaurants are arguably part of the longer history of Far East Plaza introducing new cuisines to both Chinatown and the city. Instead of reflecting the regional differences in China, these newer restaurants in Far East Plaza now appeal to general shifts in consumption of ethnic food. George Yu, the Executive Director of the Los Angeles Chinatown Business Council which manages the BID and whose company, Macco Investments, owns and manages Far East Plaza, explained how young Asian American entrepreneurs are "re-investing" in Chinatown by opening new businesses:

> Fifteen years ago, Leonard Chan [Chinese American entrepreneur from Orange County] would not be back here investing in [Apiary Food Hall at Jia Apartments]. Every penny he has in a 10,000-square foot space that's going to employ, I don't know how many people. The Wu Sisters [of Building Block Design Studio in Mandarin Plaza] are not going to be here. And I'm just specifically thinking of Chinese [Americans]. David [Chang, Korean American restauranteur from New York] is not going to be here. … I love seeing the next generation…with their friends – of all ethnicities – hanging out in Chinatown. They're not here cause of CCBA, CAM [Chinese American Museum], Chinatown Service Center. I can go on and on. They're here because there's some place – something for them to do. And they want to be here. And without that evolution, these Chinese Americans will not be coming back. So, then what?

This trend has not only helped to motivate him as a Chinese American property owner in Chinatown, but he sees how they can help to reinvent Chinatown to cater to the tastes of other young Asian Americans. For business leaders like Yu, the strategy to maintain Chinatown as an

ethnic space is to have the new generation of Asian Americans be both the producer and consumer of Chinatown that help to maintain Chinatown as a destination.

Yu, and by extension the BID, have been supportive of these new restaurants and retail. The new restaurants have been publicized through online media including *Downtown News*, *LA Weekly*, and *LA Eater*, which is one of the marketing strategies of the BID. They see the "return" of young Asian American entrepreneurs and consumers as critical to the revitalization of Chinatown that maintain its Chinese American identity. By doing so, they also emphasize Chinatown's identity as a downtown neighborhood that is up-to-date with current trends, while catering to upwardly mobile Asian Americans. They also explain these new business owners follow regulations and help to upkeep their spaces, which helps to create a clean and attractive image of Chinatown, another major goal of the BID.

A few of the older generation leaders interested in culture and historical preservation are open to this trend. They view it as a part of the evolving "entrepreneurial spirit" of the community and how Chinatown has historically served as a site for Chinese American small businesses, which can now be extended to Asian Americans. One older generation stated that he was open to younger Asian Americans coming to Chinatown to "put a stamp" and "their spin on what was our culture." He explains how this will help to continue to make Chinatown a center for cultural tourism, "If people want to make this a destination as a laboratory for experimentation, especially in food and stuff like that, I personally would welcome that. I think that would be exciting." They also point to how many younger generation Asian Americans are a part of the larger "foodie" culture and that Chinatown may have to change alongside these broader trends to attract the younger generation. Situating the foodie trend within a contemporary Asian American identity speaks to how the community leaders understand that culture is not just

fluid, but that this fluidity is linked to changing tastes and consumption patterns.

However, there are other community leaders, and even among some older business leaders, who have been more hesitant in embracing this trend. They feel that it is not a continuation of the Chinatown identity and see them as exclusive and separate from the community. While they recognize that San Gabriel Valley has more options for Chinese restaurants, their shift away from the Cantonese Chinese restaurants, a major anchor and reason why they visited Chinatown in the past, is an indication of Chinatown continuing to lose its distinct ethnic identity. Among those who work with residents, they feel that they have not seen the new restaurant owners benefit or engage with the current community and question why they decided to invest in Chinatown. A member of Chinatown Community for Equitable Development (CCED), a tenant rights group, criticized the Asian American restauranteurs:

> When Roy Choi [Korean American celebrity chef] opened his restaurant in Inglewood, he deliberately tried to emphasize that, "I'm doing it for the community. I want to provide with healthier food." … But when he opened Chego, he didn't do that for Chinatown. And I kind of feel it's really contradictory to say, "I want to help this community [in Inglewood], but then this community I'm in [Chinatown], that I'm not doing anything to really get involved or give back to the community." And to me it's super hypocritical to do that. Cause by doing it in Inglewood is like him doing it where I grew up. And trying to change the eating habits, and the attitude of the people that lived there to be more open to other types of, I guess, food. But then in Chinatown I didn't see that happening. You don't see him coming to Chinatown and actually meeting with other groups in Chinatown and saying, you know, "What can I do to help improve things here?"

From her perspective, there may be a sense of ethnic solidarity or cultural resonance for Asian American entrepreneurs to open a restaurant in Chinatown, but it does not necessarily mean that the sense of ethnic identity extends to an active engagement in addressing the social and economic disparities within the community. There also may be a lack of recognition that Chinatown has the same problems as other low-income neighborhoods in Los Angeles, which

may influence how new business owners engage with the community.

Swap Meets and "Reminders of Home"

In addition to the old Cantonese and creative class businesses, there are new immigrant businesses established from the 1970s through the 1990s. These businesses represented the arrival of ethnic Chinese immigrants and refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and other Southeast Asian countries. While also Chinese American, they were different from the older businesses, especially the ones in Central and West Plazas that were specifically designed in the 1930s to be orderly and appealing in contrast to the disorganized and blighted image of Old Chinatown.

These new immigrant businesses include swap meets that are densely packed stalls spread across several buildings in Chinatown's commercial core, including Saigon Plaza, Dynasty Center, The Shop, and Chinatown Plaza. They sell a range of goods at cheap prices, including apparel, homewares, toys, jewelry, cellphone accessories, and tourist trinkets. These swap meets are reminiscent of the market in different Asian countries. One second generation Chinese American whose family immigrated from Vietnam explains that these are the places her family would visit for "bargain shopping" despite living in Monterey Park, the first "suburban Chinatown" in San Gabriel Valley. Her mother saw these stores as reminiscent of old Hong Kong, making it unique from places in San Gabriel Valley.

Amid the concerns of gentrification in Chinatown, the *Los Angeles Times* published a profile of the swap meets in July 2017, questioning whether they would be able to survive with the shifts in the local and urban economy. The article not only highlights how these are simply immigrant-owned businesses at risk of being displaced, but expressed a similar sentiment that these are places reminiscent of Asian countries, reminding first generation immigrants of "home." They noted this sentiment was something across different Asian Americans:

> Even though there are no Filipino shops [in Saigon Plaza], Lizette Dejesus, 38, of West Covina said the meets make her feel as if she's back in Manila shopping in the open-air Divisoria Market. On a recent weekday, she sipped iced sugarcane juice as she browsed the markets with her children, one of whom was clutching a new toy, a shiny plastic gun Dejesus bought for $17. "It's way cheaper than you can find anywhere else," Dejesus said. "And it kind of reminds you of home" (Shyong, 2017).

These swap meets bring a different type of cultural authenticity to Chinatown that reflects the contemporary urban working-class markets in Asia. In addition to being places for the local community and new immigrants, they have become a distinct tourist draw.

There have been "cultural clashes" about how these new businesses contribute to the image of Chinatown. In addition to the new swap meets, other small businesses operated by the Chaozhou Chinese who immigrated from Southeast Asian countries have been subjected to criticism because of the business practices that are reminiscent of the Asian markets. *The Los Angeles Times* documented the new immigrant businesses in the 1990s and noted the generational differences among the older Cantonese and newer Chaozhou businesses. The new immigrant businesses were described as so densely packed that their goods are "piles on tables" that "spills into pedestrian corridors," creating an image of disorganization that some of the older Chinese American business owners did not support (Torres, 1996). More recently, some associated with the BID have been critical of these swap meets and densely packed stores for creating unsafe conditions. While BIDs have been instrumental in revitalizing urban areas, they also may be doing so in a way that presents an image of an orderly, clean community, which may contradict the cultural authenticity of the local community (Davila, 2004; Zukin, 2010).

As new upscale businesses have been moving to Chinatown, there are concerns that these immigrant-owned businesses are at risk of displacement, losing that specific cultural identity of Chinatown. These new immigrant businesses have not been included in some of the new

revitalization strategies in Chinatown, including Chinatown Summer Nights. Chinatown Summer Nights is localized to Central and West Plazas, as well as Bamboo and Mandarin Plazas. Stores in other plazas, including Saigon Plaza, did not extend their hours past 6:00 p.m. to accommodate the event, which starts at 5:00 p.m. and lasts until midnight. Some business leaders argue that it is a personal business decision of shop owners to not engage with these events, citing that, in general, they do not have long-term plans for their businesses to compete with the changes in Chinatown. But given that these cultural events and changes are catering to a relatively affluent consumer, these business owners may also feel that they are unable to participate because of cultural and socioeconomic differences. As the 2017 *Los Angeles Times* article points out, the swap meet owners are aware of the changes in Chinatown, but do not personally know anyone who is a part of these changes, with one swap meet owner stating, "We don't have English, so we don't have those dreams" (Shyong, 2017). As much as Chinatown is home to different businesses, there is still fragmentation that position the newer, less established immigrant businesses to be particularly vulnerable to displacement from the changes.

Conclusion

Culture, heritage, and economic development are deeply intertwined in Chinatown. Chinatown is no different than other communities that employ cultural strategies to encourage economic development (Aguilar-San Juan, 2009; Davila, 2004; Lin, 2011). These strategies ultimately contribute to a rearticulation of the Chinatown identity, its meaning for the Chinese American community, and for whom does the neighborhood serve. While past literature on multicultural planning and neighborhood culture have raised concerns about authenticity (Fainstein, 2005; Zukin, 2010) and the homogenization of neighborhood culture (Cheng, 2013; Lowe, 1996; Mazumdar, 2005), these findings highlight how community leaders are all resisting

the homogenization of Chinatown, but for different reasons. While some efforts were community-driven in hopes of creating a unifying identity and to mobilize the community, other expressions of diversity are used to justify economic development.

Furthermore, contemporary cultural tourism efforts are beginning to be intertwined with creative strategies that tend to cater to a more upwardly mobile population, including Chinese Americans. As explained in Chapter 5, business leaders are concerned with attracting both Chinese Americans and tourists with disposable incomes to Chinatown. By using cultural strategies as a tool to attract this segment of Chinese Americans "back to Chinatown," business and property owners are focusing on creative class strategies that upscale neighborhood restaurants and retail. As these strategies are more aligned with the tastes of younger and upwardly mobile Chinese and Asian Americans, as well as non-Chinese, business leaders are trying to "diversify" the amenities of the neighborhood that distance the neighborhood from an identity as a depressed area in decline. However, these strategies prioritize the needs of those with more wealth and purchasing power and do not necessarily resolve the living and working conditions of poor and working-class immigrants in the neighborhood who rely on Chinatown because of cultural and economic barriers.

The findings in the chapter highlight the limitations of community power in steering the cultural identity of Chinatown. Currently, there are no historical overlays or plans that can secure a broader collective right to Chinatown that asserts and recognizes the history of Chinese Americans in that space and the broader region, one that is still considered in the outskirts of mainstream historical narratives. The successes and failures of cultural activities and heritage projects in Chinatown show that the community's "right to Chinatown" disproportionately lies with property owners, many of whom are Chinese Americans. This theme is aligned with Acolin

and Vitiello (2017) who suggested that ethnic property owners may be important cultural preservationists in Chinatowns. In this research, they appear to have more power than the community leaders actively engaged in these heritage and cultural efforts because of their control over the physical spaces in the neighborhood.

But having a presence of Chinese American property ownership, or business owners, in Chinatown is not a guarantee that this will preserve the ethnic culture in the neighborhood. These property owners range from commercial to institutional property owners and represent varying interests, especially regarding understanding Chinatown within a lens of following real estate development trends, and with different opinions about maintaining Chinatown as an ethnic space. Some property owners may continue to hold onto their properties and businesses for sentimental reasons and appear to have an understanding that their spaces have broader cultural relevance for the community. As these businesses and properties are passed on to subsequent generations, these sentimental attachments to Chinatown may be strained as the younger generation's may have less personal attachments to the neighborhood.

However, young Chinese Americans may not necessarily be culturally detached to Chinatown and finding new ways to embrace neighborhood culture. Gentrification scholars often argue how newcomers in a community are often in search of an abstract sense of cultural authenticity, and thus that culture paradoxically leads to the gentrification of the neighborhood (Zukin 2010; Brown-Saracino, 2004). However, these arguments are complicated when considering co-ethnics who are returning to the community. For these younger Chinese Americans engaging in Chinatown, this search for authenticity can also be more personalized and politicized, helping to challenge public perceptions of Chinatown and build community capacity. Their work has the potential to bridge these different cultures that define Chinatown.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF ETHNIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLITICS

> It almost requires a dismantling of old types of organizing, old types of thinking, and implementing new ideas, new directions. I think people have to start talking about how can we work together more, talk about the things that unite us rather than the things that are dividing us. You know, these are highfalutin themes, but I think they're such basic things that I think it's unavoidable to progress without them.
>
> - Gilbert Hom, community activist who worked with Teen Post and the CRA Chinatown Community Advisory Committee and current board member of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

Urban Chinatowns persist as a space of community belonging for Chinese Americans. The ongoing importance of Chinatown for the Chinese American community is not simply based on cultural heritage that informs a voluntary preference to be engaged in Chinatown, although that is undoubtedly an important meaning of Chinatown that drives the attachments of Chinese Americans. In this dissertation, I argue that Chinatowns important sites for Chinese American political engagement, and the built environment of the neighborhood are sites of power and conflict in asserting a politicized ethnic community identity. Chinatowns persist because of this ongoing political engagement of Chinese Americans, who are now geographically dispersed and diverse across immigration cohort, generation, class, and political interests.

The Chinese American community engagement in Chinatown has become especially critical given the broader urban context. Chinatown is one of many low-income urban neighborhoods in the city facing revitalization pressures that are contributing to concerns about the forced displacement of residents and businesses that will contribute to Chinatown's eventual disappearance. The community is attempting to control these changes to sustain the neighborhood as a center for the ethnic community, as well as to provide resources to improve the living conditions for the low-income residents. Given the continuing salience of Chinatown

as an important, but politically contested space for the Chinese American community, this research sought to examine (1) the transformation of community politics in ethnic enclaves given urban redevelopment trends and (2) how an ethnic community that has become increasingly diverse across immigration cohorts, generation, class, and geography since the 1965 Immigration Act seeks to maintain control over changes in a neighborhood that has held cultural and economic value for them over time.

In this chapter, I provide a summary and discussion of the key findings that emerged from my ethnographic research on Los Angeles Chinatown and its implications for ethnic studies and urban planning literatures. I explain how this project contributes to an understanding of ethnic enclaves that focuses on how their place-based political engagement is responding to contemporary pressures of urban revitalization and rearticulating a neighborhood and ethnic community identity. This research continues to move the analysis of neighborhood change away from traditional theoretical assumptions rooted in immigrant incorporation and towards an analysis of the ethnic politics of place. While this study provides broader theoretical and policy contributions, it also highlights the perspectives rooted in the urban Chinatown experience and to ensure that these communities are included in theoretical and policy conversations.

Ethnic Community Power and the Political Economy of Chinatown

This research extends the political economy perspectives of place in which neighborhood change unfolds through a conflict of power in determining neighborhood values (Logan & Molotch, 1987). I build upon these understandings by showing how the ethnic community context complicates how that power is situated. Chinatown has been a site of land use conflict to maximize profits for the city, developers, and property owners and growth coalitions have formed to steer changes towards this direction (Hum, 2014; Li, et al., 2006; Light, 2002; Lin,

2011; Oh & Chung, 2014). These growth coalitions include business leaders from Chinatown, as well as others from the Chinese American community. Furthermore, the use and sentimental value of Chinatown is not just defined by the local Chinatown community, but also the broader Chinese American community in Southern California. This dynamic in Chinatown complicates the internal/external and insider/outsider opposition about the forces of change often common in understanding land use conflicts, as well as gentrification. It raises important questions about who is defining the collective "right to the city" (Fraser, 2004; Nicholson-Smith 1991; Marcuse, 2009), or in this case, "the right to Chinatown," as it is not necessarily just in the interests of serving current residents but reflecting a politically engaged Chinese American community across space.

This project underscores the importance of developing a more nuanced understanding of the political players in these land use conflicts in ethnic enclaves. I argue that it necessitates an examination of the ethnic enclave social structure, which has evolved to serve the changing Chinese American community (Kwong, 1996; Zhou, 1995), and extending an understanding of these changes towards political economy perspectives of place and urban development politics. The political engagement in Chinatown highlights the internal diversity within the Chinese American community which also complicates assumptions of ethnic cohesion and brings new possibilities of ethnic community.

Considering Intersections of Community: Class, Immigration, and Geography

The findings across all chapters emphasize the need to better understand the internal diversity that defines ethnic communities. The diversity within the post-1965 Chinese American community led to the formation of different organizations, informed the conflict in spaces of political representation, and shaped the variations in framing the neighborhood identity and

changes. Yet, Chinese Americans still appear to be seen as a culturally homogenous community, especially in regard to political representation and community engagement practices. Community leaders are resisting this understanding of the community identity, whether through their methods of political engagement or the narratives they assert to control the physical identity of Chinatown. In the process, this highlights the diversity of the community, but also the conflicts and divisions that may come with this diversification.

Class divisions in the Chinese American community are salient in understanding community power, and this was expressed in the conflict between residential and business interests in Chinatown. Similar to other Chinatown studies, business interests held the most political power in Chinatown (Kwong, 1996), and specifically major property owners in the commercial area, which is distinct from the new immigrant small business owners who do not always own their properties. In this research, they held power across economic, housing, and cultural concerns. Business leaders and property owners continue to be prominent in organizational leadership. In Chinatown, the Business Improvement District (BID) represents that interest group and is considered one of the most, if not most, powerful voice in the community today. BIDs have become an increasingly popular revitalization tool for urban neighborhoods that have become an important player in urban governance (Hoyt, Morcol, & Wolf, 2010). In Chinatown, the BID has provided a platform to strengthen the business voice.

However, given that Chinatown is seen as a neighborhood in economic decline, especially since the growth of the San Gabriel Valley, it is important to acknowledge the limits of those business interests in Chinatown. An unexpected finding is the emergence of strong community leadership representing residential interests, specifically those who were low-income Chinese immigrants, through the Chinatown Community Advisory Committee (CCAC). This

was a space that formed through the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) designation. This finding goes against common assumptions that these voices are usually weak in the decision-making process and historical assumptions about the CRA as a tool for economic development and business interests. While this may be interpreted as a form of empowerment in Chinatown, the conflict and fragmentation that emerged from the struggle for political power paradoxically contributed to disempowerment, disengagement, and at times, distrust from others in the community. These redevelopment conflicts contributed to a questioning of community belonging and relationships both across business and residential interests, as well as among those working on residential interests.

While this study confirms past literature on urban redevelopment that highlight class differentials within the community (Boyd, 2008; Hyra, 2008; Patillo, 2007), the Chinatown case highlights the importance of understanding how immigration trends and regional migration patterns shape redevelopment politics. Chinatown is still seen as a specific type of Chinese American settlement that reflects the early immigration stream from the Guangdong regions of China. This is the ethnic community identity that is often asserted in Chinatown, from the traditional Cantonese restaurants to the old political power structure of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA), and the mutual aid associations.

Post-1965 immigration diversified this Cantonese neighborhood identity as Chinese immigrants who were from other regions in China, especially the Chaozhou region, settled in Chinatown as both residents and business owners. They brought a different narrative of Chinese immigration to the United States, as they often immigrated from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and other Southeast Asian countries, and established a physical presence through the development of

temples, the Chinatown Gateway, and the swap meets in Saigon Plaza. Toyota (2010) examines how post-1965 first generation Chinese American professionals in Los Angeles contributed to ethnic politics that reflect changing ethnic interests and continue to respond to racial exclusion through their work in political organizations. This specific segment of first generation Chinese Americans who established a presence in Chinatown differs in professional status and thus did not have the same mainstream political impact. But they did contribute to an politics of place in Chinatown. They were not always recognized or a part of the mainstream or older community power structure and created new organizational spaces of belonging that have since grown to be important community organizations. These spaces formed in response to "cultural divides" when they arrived in Chinatown, which stemmed from regional differences in China and prior experiences of being othered in their home countries. An understanding of these global ethnic conflicts and how they are reconfigured as neighborhood conflicts may be necessary to understand the politics of development in ethnic enclaves that now have layers of history of immigration, especially from the same ethnic group.

This project also begins to capture the experiences of the 1.5+ generation Chinese Americans whose families immigrated from Southeast Asian countries. They are now coming of age, with some becoming politically engaged in Chinatown. The findings suggest that they may be developing similar claims and attachments to place, with some being situating their perspectives within progressive politics of race and labor, as 1.5+ generation Chinese Americans in the 1960s and 1970s did as well. However, as they have a different immigration history and story, they also bring a unique transnational perspective to community and place that expands the immigrant and refugee identity of Chinese Americans who immigrate directly from mainland China and Taiwan. An in-depth analysis of the experiences and perspectives of this segment of

the Chinese American community and their political impact on Chinatown will be critical in understanding how the neighborhood will evolve as an ethnic space.

Lastly, the geographic dispersal of the Chinese American community has had an impact in determining who has the right to control changes in Chinatown. Unlike studies on gentrification in black communities where scholars have documented that the black middle class are returning to live in neighborhoods through a sense of racial solidarity (Anderson & Sternberg, 2013; Hyra, 2008), Chinatown is a networked neighborhood where the Chinese Americans who are the most politically active in Chinatown are not necessarily residents, nor moving to Chinatown. This has led to a major gap in Chinatown's organizational infrastructure: a robust organization that does not just simply represent the voice of tenants, but is led and driven by them. The residential interests have mainly been voiced by politically left formations steered by younger Chinese and Asian Americans who are often driven by ideologies of social justice and a shared sense of ethnic identity. The lack of material stakeholder claims often puts these groups at a disadvantaged position about the "legitimacy" in representing the community.

Yet in immigrant communities in Chinatown, residents are not just low-income, but often have limited English proficiency, which prevents them from mainstream political participation. The experiences of immigrants and refugees who arrived from politically tumultuous countries, such as Vietnam and Cambodia, may further act as barriers. Because of these community dynamics, these informal advocacy groups are critical in ensuring that this specific voice of the community is heard. As representatives, and not always direct stakeholders, these community leaders are constantly challenged to ensure that their work reflects community interests, and not personal interests or abstract understandings that lack a grounding in the lived reality of the community. Developing and nurturing spaces where tenants can be in leadership positions

remains critical for these advocacy organizations to have that legitimacy in the community.

The Evolution of Spaces of Power in Ethnic Enclaves

The political power that Chinese Americans continue to hold in Chinatown can be seen in the ongoing formation of new organizations and groups that represent the different interests in Chinatown and the ethnic community. These findings build upon contemporary immigration scholarship that re-examines the salience of ethnic enclaves for a geographically dispersed and demographically diverse ethnic community through its organizational infrastructure (Chung, 2007). It is through these organizations that Chinese and Asian American political participation is often most evident (Espiritu, 1992; Bonus, 2000; Vo, 2004; Wong, 2008).

I further expand upon these arguments about ethnic politics and organizations by showing how the current place-based political engagement is not limited to ethnic community organizations. As explained in Chapter 4, an analysis of the planning and development issues in Chinatown highlights how the strategies for revitalization in the neighborhood created new political spaces. The CCAC emerged as a powerful space for community representation, which led to new community leadership. The CCAC, as well as the Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council, further complicated the power structure by establishing "legitimate" community advisory spaces for the city. Community leaders were not passively accepting these structures of local governance and participatory democracy. Their modes of engagement and disengagement questioned the legitimacy of these spaces as an authoritative voice of the community.

While Chinatown is recognized as having a wealth of organizations and mechanisms for community engagement, it was still viewed as a community that is lacking mechanisms to act as a unified community controlling its development and future, such as a grassroots community council, a community development corporation, and/or a community land trust. This was a

concern expressed by individuals from within the community as well as outside partners and CRA and city staff. At various points, community leaders and organizations have tried to develop these groups or initiatives within their organizations, but they have been fleeting.

This organizational gap may be suggestive about the tenuous relationships within the community and their perceived inability to mobilize as a unified voice given the community diversity, but in the context of Chinatown, it also speaks to the extent to which the community relied on external institutions to shape its development. Arguably, the CRA provided both a local council and affordable housing development for over three decades, albeit with some imperfections. This is a surprising finding given past negative perceptions of the CRA and their relationship to ethnic communities (Kurashige, 2008; Parson, 1982), but it also raises important questions about whether these external interventions can lead to community empowerment and capacity building. While the CRA was instrumental in providing some stability to the Chinatown community through affordable housing development, as well as a platform for political representation to the city councilmember, Chinatown, and the city, relied on this institution for these inclusionary mechanisms and did not have alternative mechanisms in place since the CRA dissolution. The CRA and its dissolution is a reminder that communities may still need to rely on its own infrastructure and capital to steer development on their own terms and cannot rely on the city or other external mechanisms for resources and platforms to assert a political voice.

The BID has also become a powerful voice of the community in their efforts to revitalize the neighborhood. Despite their structure as a quasi-public/private entity, in Chinatown they are positioned as a legitimate community group, despite some also recognizing that they not only represent just long-time Chinese American commercial property owners, but new downtown interests. The BID, like any other community group, can be a space of possibility that is

inclusive of different interests. The history of Chinatown has shown that the business elite in Chinatown have advocated and provided for the broader community, from the establishment of the early social service agencies, including Chinatown Teen Post, to the Chinatown Public Library. But for now, it is viewed by many in Chinatown as the community's "pro-development" space that directly benefits property owners and contributes to the "ethnic growth machine" politics in Chinatown that is supporting development and infrastructure changes to follow broader downtown trends (Lin, 2008). These findings contribute to emerging scholarship on BIDs that note their growing popularity as an urban revitalization tool and transforming neighborhoods to attract outside investment and consumers (Dávila, 2004; Zukin, 2010).

These political structures directly associated with urban revitalization efforts did not simply have an impact on the physical environment. They also impacted the political environment of the ethnic enclave, which historically consisted of ethnic organizations as the primary spaces of political power. This political disruption to the community power structure is worth further investigation in future studies on urban redevelopment in ethnic neighborhoods, especially in the Los Angeles and California context where the CRA has since been dissolved.

Rearticulating the Limits and Possibilities of Community in Chinatown

This research situates Chinatown as a "spatialized racial project" in which it is a site of conflict that reflects the ongoing shifts in the racial formation of Chinese Americans (Lai, 2012; Neely & Samura, 2012; Omi & Winant, 2014). Chinatowns formed as urban segregated spaces that reflected the racial exclusion of Chinese Americans, a history that is not always recognized, or in some cases, shared given the different immigration histories in the community. They are now seen as cultural assets as the role of Chinese Americans in shaping the multicultural urban fabric is becoming recognized and valued because the community and neighborhood has the

potential to contribute to urban growth (Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Lin, 2011).

I expand upon prior research that examine how race informs urban planning and development (Anderson & Sternberg, 2013; Lai, 2012; Pulido, 2000; Saito, 2009; Villa & Sanchez, 2005) by providing an Asian American, and more specifically Chinese American, perspective to an ethnic community's relationship to place. The neighborhood continues to be a site where Asian Americans engage in politics that rearticulate a Chinese and Asian American community identity and their political positioning and power in society. This rearticulation of community reflects how Chinese American community leaders respond to the social and material conditions of place (Cheng, 2013). These conditions have allowed for ethnic solidarity in resistance to racialized framings of Chinese Americans, but has also led to the possibilities of "co-ethnic" gentrification, an emerging tension facing many communities of color (Anderson & Sternberg, 2013; Boyd, 2008; Hyra, 2008; Patillo, 2007). This tension has implications for understanding who has the right to control and benefit from the changes in Chinatown as it complicates assumptions of racial and ethnic solidarity in development issues.

Persistence of Assimilation: Displacement and Resistance

The persistent conditions of Chinatown as a working-class immigrant community draw attention to the complexities and contradictions within the Asian American identity that positions them as socioeconomically, assimilated "model minorities" (Kim, 1999; Liu & Geron, 2008; Maeda, 2009) in which Chinese Americans no longer need or rely on spaces like Chinatown. Chinatown community leaders grappled with the spatial assimilation narrative of Chinese Americans in understanding the politics and trajectory of neighborhood change. While I did not test if Chinese American residential patterns in Los Angeles reflected spatial assimilation assumptions, the findings in this research showed that this was a dominant logic shaping how

many viewed the relationship between Chinese Americans and Chinatown. This is aligned with what Omi and Winant (2014) describe as the ethnicity paradigm of race in which racial status is seen as voluntary and identified through cultural and lifestyle markers. While this paradigm has been challenged over time, it is still a dominant way of thinking about race and space (Neely & Samura, 2012).

The narratives in Chapter 5 indicated that not everyone agreed that the migration of Chinese Americans out of Chinatown was "forced" which obscured how gentrification may be an ethnic-specific problem. Scholars have debated how displacement has either been missing or difficult to measure in gentrification research, which can lead to misperceptions about this process of change (Li, 2016; Marcuse, 2009; Newman & Wyly, 2006; Slater, 2009). This research shows how the movement of Chinese Americans in and out of Chinatown is not always viewed as a type of forced displacement because of racialized understandings of Chinese American relationship to place, and specifically ethnic enclaves. The assumption that Chinese Americans have experienced social mobility and moving out of urban ethnic enclaves to live in the suburbs is a prominent theme about the perceived decline of Chinatown, and is still pertinent to the racial formation of Chinese Americans (Cheng, 2014).

The work of Chinese American radical activists and social service professionals are constantly challenging the assimilationist perspectives by highlighting the salience of Chinatowns for the immigrant community. They work has advocated for those who remain in Chinatown and cannot leave due to economic and cultural barriers. This was part of the emergence of new organizations in the 1960s that continues today. Their counter narrative of Chinatown is one of ongoing urban poverty and an immigrant community that has been overlooked in the broader policies that sought to address the conditions of impoverished

neighborhoods. This continues the longer history of contemporary Asian American activism that challenged assimilationist perspectives of the community that both highlight the experiences of the working-class immigrant community and challenge the assumption that Asian Americans are assimilating towards whiteness (Liu & Geron, 2008; Maeda, 2009). The politics of radical activists in Chinatown have resisted these logics, and through their political practices in both community organizations and spaces of citizen engagement also question the norms of participatory democracy in continuing to exclude the most marginalized in the community.

New Chinese American Investment and Co-Ethnic Development

Business leaders also appear to be resisting the perspective that Chinatown is an irrelevant neighborhood for Chinese Americans. But they are not directly addressing the conditions of the working-class Asian Americans, nor encouraging preservation efforts to maintain this relevancy. Instead, they are trying to reposition Chinatown as an important space within a regional and global ethnic economy. In response to Chinatown's potential decline, they are positioning it as an "ethnic growth machine" to facilitate urban and global capital (Li, et al., 2006; Light, 2002; Lin, 2011; Oh & Chung, 2014). This has informed the justification for various proposed developments, from commercial developments to the cultural center.

While this may attract "outside" downtown investment, some of these strategies have centered on facilitating co-ethnic investment that would target middle-class consumerism within the Chinese American community, as well as Asian American entrepreneurs. In addition, some have embraced a global "modern" Chinese identity to inform Chinatown's development and position the neighborhood for that investment. This contrasts with the "strategic self-orientalizing" of Chinatown past that heightened exotic imageries of China to attract tourists (Umbach & Wishnoff, 2008). Anderson and Sternberg (2013) also note that there is a similar

trend in historical black neighborhoods where the marketing of the neighborhood focuses on appealing to blacks to reinvest and stay in the community for the long term. In Chinatown, there is a framing that Chinese Americans are disinvested in Chinatown, but attracting overseas Chinese investment and a middle-class ethnic consumer base to Chinatown can "keep Chinatown Chinese" in the face of growing ethnic suburban settlements. This re-framing of Chinatown still emphasizes the importance of the ethnic economy in maintaining ethnic enclaves (Portes & Jesnsen, 1987; Zhou, 1995), but it shifts its function away from assisting in immigrant incorporation. Instead, it emphasizes the growing economic contributions of upwardly mobile, entrepreneurial Asian Americans and Chinatown as a potential site for that economic power.

While this may appear to assert a sense of ethnic solidarity and the salience of Chinatown for the Chinese American community, the class dynamics that are not always overtly discussed in these changes can have implications for gentrification. For example, the new Asian American entrepreneurs are moving into spaces that old Chinatown businesses have since left. They contrast with the Asian immigrant small businesses in Chinatown, especially from the post-1965 immigrant cohort, and are contributing to the potential upscaling of Chinatown's commercial identity and local amenities (Burnett, 2014; Grodrach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Sullivan & Shaw, 2011; Zukin, et al., 2009). For some, this is a positive diversification of the neighborhood retail and maintenance of a Chinese and Asian American identity, while for others this is contributing to the gentrification pressures of Chinatown in which the new businesses will slowly no longer be serving working-class immigrant residents. This "defensive development" (Boyd, 2008) where co-ethnics may develop in the neighborhood to prevent "outside" investment and development to maintain community can paradoxically lead to displacement in the community. Furthermore, this research shows that this "defensive development" is not just to

resist gentrification, but it also is in response to competition from new suburban ethnic spaces. This perceived competition between the urban and suburban Chinatowns and how it shapes "co-ethnic" gentrification should be explored in other urban contexts.

Ethnic Community Control: Property Ownership and Collective Rights

The debates about the ongoing engagement and investment of Chinese Americans in Chinatown further reflect a tension of property rights in shaping the relationship to space. A key finding across all the chapters is not just the role of business interests in shaping Chinatown, but specifically property owners and whether they are using the land to maximize individual profits at the expense of poor and working-class tenants and ethnic community heritage. Urban planning efforts have historically engaged with this broader tension over individual or collective rights over space in which property owners are often situated as asserting individual rights to maximize exchange-value of their property (Fraser, 2004; Harvey, 2003; Lefebvre & Nicholson-Smith, 1991; Marcuse, 2009). There is a similar dynamic occurring in "the right to Chinatown."

Yet, in examining this tension, it is important to consider the racialization of property ownership. Land ownership has been one method of excluding racialized groups from national belonging. Chinese Americans were historically excluded from owning properties as "aliens ineligible for citizenship." Owning property, especially in Chinatown, potentially holds cultural and historical meaning as much as an economic purpose. In the case of Los Angeles Chinatown, shared property ownership of the older plazas was a mechanism to keep the community together in the face of forced displacement and racial exclusion. These plazas are not simply a space of tourism that catered to outsiders. The development of New Chinatown in 1938 took the political savvy and ingenuity of both Chinese immigrant and U.S.-born Chinese American business leaders to secure that property. The property ownership and shares were eventually split across

different families, indicating that this was a collective strategy of ownership in New Chinatown. This strategy was integral to the community's survival in the face of racial exclusion.

As Chinese Americans across generation and immigration cohorts continue to be commercial, institutional, and residential property owners in Chinatown, they will play a powerful role in shaping Chinatown. They may begin to view it as a space of economic investment where they can maximize profits rather than developing these spaces so that they address ongoing community needs, regardless of economic profit. This possible trend is especially critical in housing debates as property owners may try to maximize, or even speculate, rent values that reflect neighboring downtown values. Some Chinese Americans who inherit property in Chinatown may simply not want to be property owners because they have limited connections to the community, but this also situates tenants at risk of displacement that may come with new property ownership. Because they are in this position in the neighborhood, property owners are critical actors who are not simply just part of the tension of gentrification, but can shape its trajectory, whether intentionally or not.

While the racial positioning and legal rights of Chinese Americans has since shifted, it may be important to revisit the history of ethnic property ownership and its possibilities in the current context of gentrification pressures. The concerns about gentrification rest on the argument that the poor and working-class across different communities of color are excluded and forcibly displaced from major cities. While some situate the legacy of Chinatown within an evolving Chinese American identity, it is also important to understand that Chinatown formed when Chinese Americans were overtly excluded from mainstream society. The neighborhood continues to serve a predominantly low-income immigrant community that may not necessarily be legally excluded, but face barriers to mainstream resources and political participation.

Reasserting the history of Chinatown as a space that serves those who are vulnerable to social and political exclusion can reshape local race relations and political power.

Chinatown remains a majority Asian American community, over 60% of the population, but close to a quarter of the population identifies as Latino, particularly of Mexican origin (see Appendix D). Throughout the course of this research, there was no evidence that there was a Latino political voice or representation in Chinatown, despite other Latino communities, such as neighboring Boyle Heights, becoming politically engaged in similar issues of gentrification. This once again emphasizes the gap in political representation among residents in Chinatown. Not only is the leadership in Chinatown among those who are non-residents, it is also primarily Chinese American leadership. Their political power raises questions about how they continue to act as stewards for the current and future Chinatown community, regardless of ethnic background. Immigrant and ethnic communities in both urban and suburban ethnic spaces are engaging in cross-racial alliances to assert political power (Hum, 2014; Saito, 1998). Similar issues are facing other Asian ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles, such as Koreatown, where Korean American groups are advocating for Latino laborers and challenging the older Korean power structure because of class solidarity that crosses racial lines (Chung, 2007). This has yet to emerge in Chinatown, but given the Los Angeles context, future research should examine if the place-based ethnic eventually extends beyond racial lines to be representative of the changing neighborhood and urban demographics.

Chinese Americans are not passive political players and the tension of neighborhood change in Chinatown will reflect how Chinese Americans are responding to ongoing urban economic and racial exclusion. Their political engagement will not only respond to racialized assumptions about Chinese Americans. Their engagement has the potential to extend beyond

racial lines to promote equitable development in Chinatown and the city for the next generation.

Learning from Chinatown: Considerations for Urban Planning Practice

This study has broader implications for how urban planners, policymakers, and communities engage in the planning process and promote equitable planning practices in urban ethnic neighborhoods. These recommendations ultimately emphasize the importance of understanding how power is enacted and reproduced in the planning process (Forester, 1989) and to consider the cultural norms and relationships in communities in shaping that power (Umemoto, 2001). As Bollens (2002) argues in his study of cities that have histories of ethnic conflict, planning efforts that are situated as neutral endeavors and do not engage with these power differentials will most likely not lead to equitable development. The same argument can be extended to immigrant neighborhoods that now have a history of inter- and intra-ethnic differences. These recommendations emphasize that different actors, from elected officials and planners to community members, should critically analyze who is prioritized and heard when attempting to address the diverse needs of an ethnic community. While these recommendations focus on the planning process, it will ultimately inform how the physical planning of the neighborhood addresses community needs

1. **Recognize community needs and assets in neighborhood planning strategies, but with an understanding of the power relations and history that led to both.** Like other neighborhoods, Chinatown has both assets and needs. Along with identifying community needs, community plans have been following an assets-based approach that recognize the contributions that ethnic communities have made to the urban fabric. This approach will seek to strengthen those assets. However, to successfully address needs and to not perpetuate internal inequities within the community, there must be an understanding of

how those assets originally developed in the community, as it is often held within the local community elite. Blindly strengthening those assets without consideration to local history and power dynamics may paradoxically create greater disparities and new needs.

2. **Develop more nuanced, context-driven understandings of "diversity" in planning practices that extend beyond cross-racial and ethnic differences.** The dominant perspective of neighborhood diversity and social mixing in redevelopment practices needs to be critically reconceptualized to address equity and histories of inequity to ensure that poor and working-class communities are not displaced as neighborhoods diversify. The findings of this research repeatedly emphasize the need to incorporate the cultural diversity of an ethnic community across immigration cohort and generation. This is not simply for strategies for cultural development and revitalization. It is critical in understanding how an ethnic community is represented in political decision-making and can provide a more nuanced understanding of why a community may appear to be "conflicted."
3. **Continue to build capacity for ethnic and local organizations, which are still critical for community representation and resources even as more formal practices and spaces of community engagement are adopted by cities.** Los Angeles has changed the structures of urban governance that sought to encourage local representation in neighborhood planning matters. However, these spaces have their limitations as representative spaces of the community. While it may be a convenient mechanism for elected officials, city staff, and planners to engage with the community, it is not necessarily convenient or appropriate for the community. These spaces are simply not enough for community representation in the policymaking process. Policymakers and

planners should continue to engage with local ethnic organizations to understand community nuances that will inform better planning practices and tools. Concurrently, ethnic organizations, especially older organizations, should be engaged with the local community even if members are not living in the neighborhood and/or if the neighborhood demographics are not reflective of their membership. As institutional stakeholders, they can still establish a sense of place and community, while providing much needed resources that mainstream institutions continue to not fulfill.

4. **Incorporate an understanding of the ethnic community networks across space in neighborhood planning.** While ethnic communities may become less geographically concentrated and more residentially dispersed, they still are maintaining relationship across spaces that is shaping the development of individual neighborhoods. These spatial relationships need to be considered in community planning efforts. This may even have implications for regional planning in ethnically diverse areas like Southern California where ethnic communities are often recognized as contributing to specific neighborhoods and cities, but less recognized in how their engagement may impact development across spaces. An understanding of how communities are networked across places is not to give more legitimacy to those who do not live in the neighborhood to speak for the community, but to provide a more critical perspective of who may be representing communities and how that is shaping development in these spaces.

REFERENCES

Acolin, A., & Vitiello, D. (2017). Who owns Chinatown: Neighbourhood preservation and change in Boston and Philadelphia. *Urban Studies*, 1-21. doi: 10.1177/0042098017699366

Agar, M. H. (1986). *Speaking of ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Aguilar-San Juan, K. (2009). *Little Saigons: Staying Vietnamese in America*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Anderson, M. B., & Sternberg, C. (2013). 'Non-white' gentrification in Chicago's Bronzeville and Pilsen: Racial economy and the intraurban contingency of urban redevelopment. *Urban Affairs Review, 49*(3), 435–467. doi:10.1177/1078087412465590

Aoki, A. L., & Nakanishi, D. T. (2001). Asian Pacific Americans and the new minority politics. *PS: Political Science and Politics, 34*(3), 605–610. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1353547

Arnstein, S. R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, *35*(4), 216-224. doi:10.1080/01944366908977225

Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles. (2013). *A community of contrasts: Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in Los Angeles County*. Los Angeles, CA: Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles. Retrieved from: https://advancingjustice-la.org/system/files/CommunityofContrasts_LACounty2013.pdf

Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles. (2018). *A community of contrasts: Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the San Gabriel Valley*. Los Angeles, CA: Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles. Retrieved from: https://advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/A_Community_of_Contrasts_SGV_2018.pdf

Atkinson, R. (2015). Losing one's place: Narratives of neighborhood change, market injustice and symbolic displacement. *Housing, Theory and Society*, *32*(4), 373-388. doi: 10.1080/14036096.2015.1053980

Avila, E. (2006). *Popular culture in the age of white flight: Fear and fantasy in suburban Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Barnes, M. (2008). Passionate participation: Emotional experiences and expressions in deliberative forums. *Critical Social Policy*, *28*(4), 461-481. doi: 10.1177/0261018308095280

Basolo, V. (2007). Explaining the support for homeownership policy in U.S. cities: A political economy perspective. *Housing Studies*, *22*(1), 99-119. doi:10.1080/02673030601024648

Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (2000). Framing processes and social movements: An overview and assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *26*(2000), 611–639. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/223459

Bloor, M. (2001). Techniques of validation in qualitative research: A critical commentary. In R. Emerson (Ed.), *Contemporary field research* (2nd ed.), (pp. 383-395). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Bollens, S. (2002). Urban planning and intergroup conflict: Confronting a fractured public interest. *Journal of the American Planning Association, 68*(1), 22–42. doi:10.1080/01944360208977189

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). Racial attitudes or racial ideology? An alternative paradigm for examining actors' racial views. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *8*(1), 63–82. doi:10.1080/13569310306082

Bonus, R. (2000). *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the cultural politics of space*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Boyd, M. (2008). Defensive development: The role of racial conflict in gentrification. *Urban Affairs Review, 43*(6), 751–776. doi:10.1177/1078087407313581
Breton, R. (1964). Institutional completeness of ethnic communities and the personal relations of immigrants. *American Journal of Sociology*, *70*, 193-205. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2775209
Brooks, C. (2009). *Alien neighbors, foreign friends: Asian Americans, housing, and the transformation of urban California*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Brown-Saracino, J. (2004). Social preservationists and the quest for authentic community. *City & Community*, *3*(2), 135-156. doi:10.1111/j.1535-6841.2004.00073.x
Brown-Saracino, J., & Rumpf, C. (2011). Diverse imageries of gentrification: Evidence from newspaper coverage in seven U.S. cities, 1986-2006. *Journal of Urban Affairs, 33*(3), 289–315. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9906.2011.00552.x
Burawoy, M. (1998). The extended case method. *Sociological Theory*, *16*, 4–33. doi:10.1111/0735-2751.00040
Burnett, K. (2014). Commodifying poverty: Gentrification and consumption in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. *Urban Geography*, *35*(2), 157-176. doi: 10.1080/02723638.2013.867669
Chen, Y. (2002). *Chinese San Francisco, 1850-1943: A trans-Pacific community*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Cheng, C. I-F. (2014.) *Citizens of Asian America: Democracy and race during the Cold War*. New York: NYU Press.
Cheng, S., & Kwok, M. (2001). The Golden Years of Los Angeles Chinatown: The beginning. In S. Ling (Eds.), *Bridging the Centuries: History of Chinese Americans in Southern California* (pp. 33-43). Los Angeles, CA: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.
Cheng, W. (2013). *The Changs next door to the Diazes: Remapping race in Southern California.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. (1984). *Linking our lives: Chinese American women of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles, CA: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.
Choi, Y. P. (2003). Association divided, association united: The social organization of Chaozhou and Fujian migrants in Hong Kong. In K.E. Kuah-Pearce and E. Hu-Dehart (Eds.), *Voluntary organizations in the Chinese diaspora* (pp. 121-140). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
Chung, A. (2007.) *Legacies of struggle: Conflict & cooperation in Korean American politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning. (2000, December 15). *Central City North Community Plan*. Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles Department of City Planning.
Cohan, C. C. (1933, October 22). New colorful oriental town projected here. *Los Angeles Times*, p. 19, 21.
Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles. (2010, August 5). *Chinatown Redevelopment Project Area, 5-year implementation plan 2010-2014.* Los Angeles, CA: The Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles.

Cornwall, A. (2004). Introduction: New democratic spaces? The politics and dynamics of institutionalised participation. *IDS Bulletin*, *35*(2), 1-10. doi:10.1111/j.1759-5436.2004.tb00115.x

Crump, J. (2002). Deconcentration by demolition: Public housing, poverty, and urban policy. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *20*(5), 581-596. doi: 10.1068/d306

Dalton, L. C. (1986). Why the rational paradigm persists: The resistance of professional education and practice to alternative forms of planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 5*(3), 147-153. doi: 10.1177/0739456X8600500302

Dávila, A. (2004). *Barrio dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the neoliberal city*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Davis, M. (2006) *City of quartz*. London, England: Verso.

de Souza Briggs, X., Popkin, S. J., & Goering, J. (2010). *Moving to opportunity: The story of an American experiment to fight ghetto poverty*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Dear, M. J. (1996). In the city, time becomes visible: Intentionality and urbanism in Los Angeles, 1781-1991. In A. J. Scott and E. W. Soja (Eds.), *The city: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century* (pp. 76-105). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dear, M. J., & Flusty, S. (2002). Los Angeles as postmodern urbanism. In M. J. Dear (Ed.), *From Chicago to L.A.: Making sense of urban theory* (pp. 61-84). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (2011) *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Espiritu, Y. L. (1992.) *Asian American panethnicity: Bridging institutions and identities*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Fainstein, S. (2005). Cities and diversity: Should we want it? Can we plan for it? *Urban Affairs Review, 41*(1), 3–19. doi: 10.1177/1078087405278968

Fainstein, S. (2010). Redevelopment planning and distributive justice in the American metropolis. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 244–80. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=1657723

Fainstein, S., & Fainstein, N. (1989). The racial dimension in urban political economy. *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, *25*(2), 187-199. doi:10.1177/004208168902500201

Feagin, J. (2013). *The white racial frame: Centuries of racial framing and counter-framing*. London, England: Routledge.

Feldman, M. S., Sköldberg, K., Brown, R. N., & Horner, D. (2004). Making sense of stories: A rhetorical approach to narrative analysis. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *14*(2), 147-170. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muh010

Feldman, M. S. (1995). *Strategies for interpreting qualitative data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Finney, G. W. (1920, February 22). Wanted: New Chinatown site. *Los Angeles Times.* p. II1.

Fischer, F. (2006). Participatory governance as deliberative empowerment. *The American Review of Public Administration*, *36*(1), 19-40. doi:10.1177/0275074005282582

Fong, T. (1994). *The first suburban Chinatown: The remaking of Monterey Park, California*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Florida, R. (2003). Cities and the creative class. *City & Community, 2*: 3–19. doi:10.1111/1540-6040.00034

Florin, P., & Wandersman, A. (1990). An introduction to citizen participation, voluntary

organizations, and community development: Insights for empowerment through research. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 18*(1): 41-54. doi:10.1007/BF00922688
Fogelson, R. M. (1993). *The fragmented metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Foglesong, R. E. (1986). *Planning the capitalist city: The colonial era to the 1920s*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Forester, J. (1988). *Planning in the face of power*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
Forester, J. (1999). *The deliberative practitioner: Encouraging participatory planning processes*. Boston, MA: MIT Press.
Fraser, J. (2004). Beyond gentrification: Mobilizing communities and claiming space. *Urban Geography, 25*(5): 437–457. doi:10.2747/0272-3638.25.5.437
Freeman, L. (2005). Displacement or succession?: Residential mobility in gentrifying neighborhoods. *Urban Affairs Review, 40*(4), 463–91. doi:10.1177/1078087404273341
Freeman, L., & Braconi, F. (2004). Gentrification and displacement: New York City in the 1990s. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, *70*(1), 39-52. doi: 10.1080/01944360408976337
Friedmann, J. (1987). *Planning in the public domain: From knowledge to action.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Fujino, D. C. (2008). Race, place, space, and political development: Japanese-American radicalism in the 'pre-movement' 1960s. *Social Justice, 35*(2): 57–79. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/29768488
Fullilove, M. (2004). *Root shock: How tearing up city neighborhoods hurts America, and what we can do about it*. Baltimore, MD: One World.
Gans, H. (1982). The *Urban Villagers*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
Glaser, B. G. (1965). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. *Social Problems*, *12*(4), 436-445.
Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
Grodach, C., & Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2007). Cultural development strategies and urban revitalization. *International Journal of Cultural Policy, 13*(4), 349–370. doi: 10.1080/10286630701683235
Guo, C. C. & Musso, J. (2007). Representation in nonprofit and voluntary organizations: A conceptual framework. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 36*(2), 308–326. doi:10.1177/0899764006289764
Hackworth, J., & Rekers, J. (2005). Ethnic packaging and gentrification: The case of four neighborhoods in Toronto. *Urban Affairs Review*, *41*(2), 211-236. doi:10.1177/1078087405280859
Harvey, D. (2003). The right to the city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *27*(4), 939-941. doi:10.1111/j.0309-1317.2003.00492.x
Harwood, S. A. (2005). Struggling to embrace difference in land-use decision making in multicultural communities. *Planning Practice and Research, 20*(4), 355–371. doi: 10.1080/02697450600766746
Hernandez, M. (1984, December 4). Lincoln Heights: Once again, the old neighborhood sees change. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. 1-2

Hirata, L. C. (1975). Toward a political economy of Chinese America: A study of property ownership in Los Angeles Chinatown. *Amerasia Journal, 3*(1), 76–95.
Hochleutner, B. R. (2003). BIDs fare well: The democratic accountability of business improvement districts. *NYU Law Review, 78*(1), 374.
Hodder, R. (1999). Redefining a southern city's heritage: Historic preservation planning, public art, and race in Richmond, Virginia. *Journal of Urban Affairs, 21*(4), 437–453. doi:10.1111/0735-2166.00030
Holstein, J., & Gubrium, J. (1995). *The Active Interview.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Home for the Oriental Population Planned. (1934, September 21), *Los Angeles Times*, p. A10.
Horton, J. (1995). *The politics of diversity: Immigration, resistance, and change in Monterey Park, California*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Hoyt, L., & Gopal-Agge, D. (2007). The business improvement district model: A balanced review of contemporary debates. *Geography Compass, 1*(4), 946–958. doi:10.1111/j.1749-8198.2007.00041.x
Hulse, J. (1959, October 26). Chinatown changing as suburbs call residents. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. 2, 22.
Hum, T. (2010). Planning in neighborhoods with multiple publics: Opportunities and challenges for community-based nonprofit organizations. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, *29*, 461-477. doi:10.1177/0739456X10368700
Hum, T. (2014). *Making a global immigrant neighborhood: Brooklyn's Sunset Park*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Hurley, A. (2010). *Beyond preservation: Using public history to revitalize inner cities*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Hustedde, R. J., & Ganowicz, J. (2002). The basics: What's essential about theory for community development practice? *Community Development*, *33*(1), 1-19. doi: 10.1080/15575330209490139
Hwang, J. (2015). The social construction of a gentrifying neighborhood: Reifying and redefining identity and boundaries in inequality. *Urban Affairs Review*, *52*(1), 1–31.
Hwang, J., & Sampson, R. J. (2014). Divergent pathways of gentrification: Racial inequality and the social order of renewal in Chicago neighborhoods. *American Sociological Review*, *79*(4), 726-751. doi:10.1177/1078087415570643
Hyra, D. S. (2008). *The new urban renewal: The economic transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Hyra, D. S. (2012). Conceptualizing the new urban renewal: Comparing the past to the present. *Urban Affairs Review*, *48*(4), 498–527. doi:10.1177/1078087411434905
Kim, C. J. (1999). The racial triangulation of Asian Americans. *Politics & Society*, 27(1), 105-138.
Knapp, A., & Vojnovic, I. (2013). Rethinking the growth machine: How to erase a Chinatown from the urban core. *Urban Geography, 34*, 53–85. doi: 10.1080/02723638.2013.778634
Kotin, Regan, & Mouchly, Inc. (1982, December 17). *Market Analysis of the Chinatown Redevelopment Project*. Los Angeles, CA: Kotin, Regan & Mouchly, Inc.
Kurashige, S. (2008). *The shifting grounds of race: Black and Japanese Americans in the making of multiethnic Los Angeles*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Kurashige, S. (2010). Between "white spot" and "world city": Racial integration and the roots of multiculturalism. In W. Deverell and G. Hise (Eds.), *A companion to Los Angeles* (pp. 56-71). Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers.

Kwon, S.A. (2013). The politics and institutionalization of panethnic identity. *Journal of Asian American Studies 16*(2): 137–157. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/article/513455
Kwong, P. (1996). *The new Chinatown* (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Hill and Wang.
Kwong, P., and Miščevič, D. D. (2005). *Chinese America: The untold story of America's oldest new community*. New York, NY: New Press.
Lai, C. (2012). The racial triangulation of space: The case of urban renewal in San Francisco's Fillmore District. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 102*(1), 151–170. doi:10.1080/00045608.2011.583572
Lai, C. (2013). Saving Japantown, serving the people: The scalar politics of the Asian American Movement. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 31*(1), 467–484. doi:10.1068/d1210
Lai, H. M. (2004). *Becoming Chinese American: A history of communities and institutions*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology, 28*(1965), 167–195. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3069239
LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (2010). *Designing & conducting ethnographic research: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
Lee, E. (2015). *The making of Asian America: A history*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
Lee, R. H. (1949). The decline of Chinatowns in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology, 54*(5), 422–432.
Lees, L. (2008). Gentrification and social mixing: Towards an inclusive urban renaissance? *Urban Studies*, *45*(12), 2449-2470. doi:10.1177/0042098008097099
Lefebvre, H., & Nicholson-Smith, D. (1991). *The production of space*. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing.
Levine, J. R. (2016). The privatization of political representation: Community-based organizations as nonelected neighborhood representatives. *American Sociological Review, 81*(6), 1251-1275. doi:10.1177/0003122416670655
Li, B. Y. (2016). Now is the time!: Challenging resegregation and displacement in the age of hypergentrification. *Fordham Law Review, 85*(3), 1189–1242. Retrieved from https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol85/iss3/11/
Li, W. (2009). *Ethnoburb: The new ethnic community in urban America*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
Li, W., Dymski, G., Chee, M. W. L., Ahn, H-H., Aldana, C. & Zhou, Y. (2006). How ethnic banks matter: Banking and community/economic development in Los Angeles. In D.H. Kaplan & W. Li (Eds.), *Landscapes of the ethnic economy* (pp. 113-133). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
Light, I. (2002). Immigrant place entrepreneurs in Los Angeles, 1970-99. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *26*(2), 215–228. doi:10.1111/1468-2427.00376
Lin, J. (1998). *Reconstructing Chinatown: Ethnic enclave, global change*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Lin, J. (2008). Los Angeles Chinatown: Tourism, gentrification, and the rise of an ethnic growth machine. *Amerasia Journal*, *34*(3), 110–126. doi:10.17953/amer.34.3.v545v63lpj1535p7
Lin, J. (2011). *The power of urban ethnic places: Cultural heritage and community life*. New York, NY: Routledge.
Lin, J. & Moy, E. (January, 2005). *The removal and renewal of Los Angeles Chinatown: From the exclusion era to the global era.* Paper presented at the American Sociological

Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA.
Ling, S. (2001). Our legacy: History of Chinese Americans in Southern California. In S. Ling (Eds.), *Bridging the Centuries: History of Chinese Americans in Southern California* (pp. 12-29). Los Angeles, CA: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.
Liu, L. (2000). The place of immigration in studies of geography and race. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 169-182. doi:10.1080/14649360020010185
Liu, M., & Geron, K. (2008). Changing neighborhood: Ethnic enclaves and the struggle for social justice. *Social Justice, 35*(2), 18–35. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/29768486
Logan, J. R., Alba, R. D., McNulty, T., & Fisher, B. (1996). Making a place in the metropolis: Locational attainment in cities and suburbs. *Demography, 33*(4), 443–453. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2061779
Logan, J. R., Alba, R. D., and Zhang, W. (2002). Immigrant enclaves and ethnic communities in New York and Los Angeles. *American Sociological Review, 67*(2), 299–322. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3088897
Logan, J. R., & Molotch, H. L. (1987). *Urban fortunes: The political economy of place*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Los Angeles General Plan Framework. Chapter 3: Land use. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cwd/framwk/chapters/03/03205.htm.
Lowe, L. (1996). *Immigrant acts: On Asian American cultural politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
Lung-Amam, W. (2017). *Trespassers?: Asian Americans and the battle for suburbia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Ma, L. J. C., & Cartier, C. (2003). *The Chinese diaspora: Space, place, mobility, and identity*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
Maeda, D. (2009). *Chains of Babylon: The rise of Asian America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Maciver, M. (2010, September 23). "Chinatown summer nights lights up LA's after-dark scene." *Project for Public Spaces*. Retrieved from https://www.pps.org/article/la-chinatown-summer-nights.
Manley, D., Van Ham, M., & Doherty, J. (2011). Social mixing as a cure for negative neighbourhood effects: Evidence-based policy or urban myth. In G. Bridge, T. Butler, & L. Lees, *Mixed communities: Gentrification by Stealth* (pp. 151-168). Bristol, England: Policy Press.
Manzo, L. C. (2006). Finding common ground: The importance of place attachment to community participation and planning." *Journal of Planning Literature, 20*(4), 335–350. doi:10.1177/0885412205286160.
Marcuse, P. (1985). Gentrification, abandonment, and displacement: Connections, causes & policy responses in New York City. *Washington University Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law, 28*, 195-240. Retrieved from https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_urbanlaw/vol28/iss1/4
Marcuse, P. (1997). The enclave, the citadel, and the ghetto: What has changed in the Post-Fordist U.S. city. *Urban Affairs Review, 33*(2), 228-264. doi:10.1177/107808749703300206
Marcuse, P. (2009). From critical urban theory to the right to the city. *City*, *13*(2-3), 185-197. doi: 10.1080/13604810902982177

Martin, D. G. (2003). “Place-framing” as place-making: Constituting a neighborhood for organizing and activism. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *93*(3), 730–750. doi:10.1111/1467-8306.9303011

Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. (1985). Spatial assimilation as a socioeconomic outcome. *American Sociological Review*, *50*(1), 94–106. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2095343

Massey, D. S., & Denton, N. A. (1987). Trends in the residential segregation of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians: 1970-1980. *American Sociological Review, 52*(6), 802–825.

Mazumdar, S., Mazumdar, S., Docuyanan, F., & McLaughlin, C. M. (2000). Creating a sense of place: The Vietnamese-Americans and Little Saigon. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *20*(4), 319-333. doi:10.1006/jevp.2000.0170

McMillan, P. (1977, September 18). LA’s Chinatown turns from tourists to the Chinese. *Los Angeles Times*, p. B1.

Molina, N. (2005). *Fit to be citizens? Public health and race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Morcol, G., & Wolk, J. (2010). Understanding business improvement districts: A new governance framework. *Public Administration, Review, 70*(6), 906–913. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2010.02222.x

Nee, V., & Nee, B. (1986). *Longtime Californ': A documentary study of an American Chinatown*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Neely, B., & Samura, M. (2011). Social geographies of race: Connecting race and space. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 34*(11), 1933–1952. doi:10.1080/01419870.2011.559262

Newman, K., & Wyly, E. K. (2006). The right to stay put, revisited: Gentrification and resistance to displacement in New York City. *Urban Studies, 43*(1), 23–57. doi:10.1080/00420980500388710

Nguyen, M. T., Basolo, V., & Tiwari, A. (2012). Opposition to affordable housing in the USA: Debate framing and the responses of local actors. *Housing, Theory and Society*, *30*(2), 107-130. doi:10.1080/14036096.2012.667833

Oh, S., & Chung, A. (2014). A study on the sociospatial context of ethnic politics and entrepreneurial growth in Koreatown and Monterey Park. *GeoJournal*, *79*(1), 59-71. doi:10.1007/s10708-013-9478-x

Omi, M. & Winant, H. (2014) Racial formation in the United States From the 1960s to the 1990s (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ong, P. (1984). Chinatown unemployment and the ethnic labor market. *Amerasia, 1*, 35–54.

Ong, P., & Azores, T. (1994). Asian immigrants in Los Angeles: Diversity and divisions. In P. Ong, E. Bonacich, & L. Cheng (Eds.), *The new Asian immigration in Los Angeles and global restructuring* (pp. 100-129). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University.

Ong, P., Bonacich, E. & Cheng, L. (1994). The political economy of capitalist restructuring and the new Asian immigration. In P. Ong, E. Bonacich, & L. Cheng (Eds.), *The new Asian immigration in Los Angeles and global restructuring* (pp. 3-35). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University.

Ong, P., & Liu, J. M. (1994). Pacific rim development and the duality of post-1965 Asian immigration to the United States. In P. Ong, E. Bonacich, and L. Cheng (Eds.), *The new Asian immigration in Los Angeles and global restructuring* (pp. 74-99). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University.

Park Official for Plaza Site. (1926, April 22). *Los Angeles Times*, p. A1.

Park, R. E. (1950). *Race and culture*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
Park, R. E., & Burgess, E. W. (1925). *The city*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Parson, D. (1982). The development of redevelopment: Public housing and urban renewal in Los Angeles. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *6*(3), 393-413.
Patillo, M. (2007). *Black on the block: The politics of race & class in the city*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Pelisek, C. (2003, February 6). Voting fights. *LA Weekly.* Retrieved from http://www.laweekly.com/news/voting-fights-2135925
Pierson, D. (2016, August 16). They built towering cities in China. Now they're trying it in downtown L.A. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-0825-china-dtla-snap-story.html#
Portes, A., & Jensen, L. (1989). The enclave and the entrants: Patterns of ethnic enterprise in Miami before and after Mariel. *American Sociological Review, 54*(6), 929–949. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2095716
Pottie-Sherman, Y. (2010). Vancouver's Chinatown night market: Gentrification and the perception of Chinatown as a form of revitalization. *Built Environment, 39*(2), 172–189. doi:10.2148/benv.39.2.172
Pulido, L. (2000). Rethinking environmental racism: White privilege and urban development in Southern California. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 90*(1), 12–40. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1515377
Pulido, L., Barraclough, L., & Cheng. W. (2012). *A people's guide to Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Qadeer, M. A. (1997). Pluralistic planning for multicultural cities: The Canadian practice. *Journal of the American Planning Association, 63*(4), 481–494. doi:10.1080/01944369708975941
Quick, K. S., & Feldman, M. S. (2011). Distinguishing participation and inclusion. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, *31*(3), 272-290. doi:10.1177/0739456X11410979
Rendón, M. G. (2015). The urban question and identity formation: The case of second-generation Mexican males in Los Angeles. *Ethnicities*, *15*(2), 165-189. doi:10.1177/1468796814557652
Rigg, J. (2003). Exclusion and embeddedness: The Chinese in Thailand and Vietnam. In L. J. C. Ma and C. Cartier (Eds.), *The Chinese diaspora: Space, place, mobility, and identity* (pp. 97-115). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
Ross, C. L., and N. G. Leigh. (2000). Planning, urban revitalization, and the inner city: An exploration of structural racism. *Journal of Planning Literature, 14*(3), 367-380. doi:10.1177/08854120022092719
Roth, W. D., & Mehta, J. D. (2002). The Rashomon effect: Combining positivist and interpretivist approaches in the analysis of contested events. *Sociological Methods & Research*, *31*(2), 131-173. doi:10.1177/0049124102031002002
Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Rumbaut, R. G. (2004). Ages, life stages, and generational cohorts: Decomposing the immigrant first and second generations in the United States. *International Migration Review*, *38*(3), 1160-1205. doi:10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00232.x
Saito, L. T. (1998). *Race & politics: Asian Americans, Latinos, and Whites in a Los Angeles suburb*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Saito, L. T. (2009). *The politics of exclusion: The failure of race-neutral policies in urban America*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Sassen, S. (1996). Cities and communities in the global economy: Rethinking our concepts. *American Behavioral Scientist, 39*(5), 629–639. doi:10.1177/0002764296039005009
Schneider, C. (1997). Framing Puerto Rican identity: Political opportunity structures and neighborhood organizing in New York City. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, *2*(2), 227-245.
Schwirian, K. P. (1983). Models of neighborhood change. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *9*, 83–102. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.09.080183.000503
Shah, B. (2012). *Laotian daughters: Working toward community, belonging, and environmental justice*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University.
Shaw, S., Bagwell, S. & Karmowska, J. (2004). Ethnoscapes as spectacle: Reimaging multicultural districts as new destinations for leisure and tourism consumption. *Urban Studies, 41*(10), 1983–2000. doi:10.1080/0042098042000256341
Shyong, F. (2017, July 10). Chinatown's swap meets once opened a door to the American dream. Now, their future is uncertain. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-chinatown-swap-meets-20170710-htmlstory.html.
Silver, C. (1997). The Racial origins of zoning in American cities. In Thomas, J. M. & Ritzdorf, M. (Eds.), *Urban planning and the African-American community: In the shadows* (pp. 23-42). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Sing, B. (1980, April 13). Chinatown struggles to balance dual community roles. *Los Angeles Times*, pp. 1, 16.
Slater, T. (2009). Missing Marcuse: On gentrification and displacement. *City, 1*(2–3), 292–311. doi:10.1080/13604810902982250
Slater, T. (2011). Gentrification of the city. In G. Bridge and S. Watson (Eds.), *The New Blackwell companion to the city* (pp. 571-585). Oxford, England: Blackwell.
Slayton, N. (2016, September 15). Finally, Blossom Plaza blossoms. *Los Angeles Downtown News*, Retrieved from http://www.ladowntownnews.com/news/finally-blossom-plaza-blossoms/article_5ce009f4-7ada-11e6-9868-abfa8f0ea23a.html.
Small, M. L. (2009). 'How many cases do I need?': On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research." *Ethnography 10*(1): 5–38. doi:10.1177/1466138108099586
Small, M. L., Harding, D. J., & Lamont, M. (2010). Reconsidering culture and poverty. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 629*(1): 6–27. doi:0.1177/0002716210362077
Small, M. L. (2005). *Villa Victoria: The transformation of social capital in a Boston barrio.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Smith, D. (1973). The social construction of documentary reality. *Sociological Inquiry*, *44*(4), 257-268. doi:10.1111/j.1475-682X.1974.tb01159.x
Smith, N. (1979). Toward a theory of gentrification: A back to the city movement by capital, not people. *Journal of the American Planning Association 45*(4): 538-548. doi: 10.1080/01944367908977002
Soja, E. (1989). *Postmodern geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London, England: Verso Books.
Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Fort Worth, TX: Hoyt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.

Suddaby, R. (2006). From the editors: What Grounded Theory is not. *Academy of Management Journal,* 49(4), 633–642.
Sullivan, D. M., & Shaw, S. C. (2011). Retail gentrification and race: The case of Alberta Street in Portland, Oregon. *Urban Affairs Review*, *47*(3), 413-432. doi:10.1177/1078087410393472
Sze, L. (2010). Chinatown then and neoliberal now: Gentrification consciousness and the ethnic-specific museum. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power, 17*, 37-510-529. doi:10.1177/1078087410393472
Tabor, N. (2015, September 24). How has Chinatown stayed Chinese? *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2015/09/how-has-chinatown-stayed-chinatown.html
Toji, D. S., & Umemoto, K. (2003). The paradox of dispersal: Ethnic continuity & community development among Japanese Americans in Little Tokyo. *AAPI Nexus: Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Policy, Practice & Community*, *1*(1), 21-45.
Torres, V. (1996, March 31). The great wall of Chinatown; Merchants who cater to other Southeast Asian immigrants now outnumber older businesses. *Los Angeles Times*. Accessed from http://articles.latimes.com/1996-03-31/news/mn-53310_1_teo-chew.
Toyota, T. (2010). *Envisioning America: New Chinese Americans and the politics of belonging*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Umbach, G., & Wishnoff, D. (2008). Strategic self-orientalism: Urban planning policies and the shaping of New York City's Chinatown, 1950-2005. *Journal of Planning History 7*(3), 214-238. doi:10.1177/1538513207313915
Umemoto, K. (2001). Walking in another's shoes: Epistemological challenges in participatory planning. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, *21*, 17-31. doi:10.1177/0739456X0102100102
Umemoto, K., & Igarashi, H. (2009). Deliberative planning in a multicultural milieu. *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 29*(1), 39–53. doi:10.1177/0739456X09338160.
Vigdor, J. L, Massey, D. S., & Rivlin, A. M. (2002). Does gentrification harm the poor? [with comments]. *Brookings-Wharton papers on urban affairs*, 133–182. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/25067387
Villa R. H., & Sanchez, G. J. (2005). *Los Angeles and the future of urban cultures*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press.
Vo, L. T. (2000). Performing ethnography in Asian American Communities: Beyond the insider-versus-outsider perspective. In M. F. Manalansan (Ed.), *Cultural compass: ethnographic explorations of Asian America* (pp. 17-37). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Vo, L. T. (2004). *Mobilizing an Asian American community*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
von Hoffman, A. (2000). A study in contradictions: The origins and legacy of the Housing Act of 1949. *Housing Policy Debate*, *11*(2), 299-326.
von Hoffman, A. (2012). History lessons for today's housing policy: The politics of low-income housing. *Housing Policy Debate, 22*(3), 321-376.
Wachs, M. (2007). Autos, transit, and the sprawl of Los Angeles: The 1920s. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, *50*(3), 297-110. doi:10.1080/01944368408976597
Warren, C. (2001). Gender and field work relations. In R. Emerson (Ed.), *Contemporary field research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 203-223). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
White, B. (1984, February 22). Development fight brewing. *Los Angeles Times*.

Wilson, K. (2015). *Ethnic renewal in Philadelphia's Chinatown: Space, place, and struggle*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Wong, J. (2006). *Democracy's promise: Immigrants and American civic institutions*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Wu, E. (2014). *The color of success: Asian Americans and the origins of the model minorit*y. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Wu, J. T-C. (1997). "Loveliest daughter of our ancient Cathay!": Representations of ethnic and gender identity in the Miss Chinatown USA beauty pageant. *Journal of Social History*, 5-31. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3789855
Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
Zhao, X. (2010). *The new Chinese America: Class, economy, and social hierarchy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
Zhou, M. (1995). *Chinatown: The socioeconomic potential of an urban enclave*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
Zhou, M & Logan, J. (1991). In and out of Chinatown: Residential mobility & segregation of New York City's Chinese. *Social Forces*, 70(2), 387-407.
Zhou, Y. (1998). How do places matter? A comparative study of Chinese ethnic economies in Los Angeles and New York City. *Urban Geography, 19*(6), 531–553. doi:10.2747/0272-3638.19.6.531
Zinn, M.B. (2001). Insider field research in minority communities. In R. Emerson (Ed.), *Contemporary Field Research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 159-166). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
Zukin, S. (1995). The cultures of cities. Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishers.
Zukin, S. (2010). *Naked city: The death and life of authentic urban places*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
Zukin, S., & Braslow, L. (2011). The life cycle of New York's creative districts: Reflections on the unanticipated consequences of unplanned cultural zones. *City, Culture and Society, 2*(3), 131–140. doi:10.1016/j.ccs.2011.06.003
Zukin, S., Trujillo, V., Frase, P., Jackson, D., Recuber, T., & Walker, A. (2009). New retail capital and neighborhood change: Boutiques and gentrification in New York City. *City & Community*, *8*(1), 47-64. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6040.2009.01269.x

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA AND NEIGHBORHOOD MAPS

Figure A1 outlines the neighborhood boundaries for this study. The boundaries were chosen using a range of methods. I drew from (1) neighborhood observations and noting physical boundaries, (2) archival research on past policy reports on Chinatown to assess the different political boundaries of Chinatown, including the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Project Area (Figure A2), Business Improvement District (BID) (Figure A3), and Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council (HCNC) (Figure A4)), (3) interview responses from a sample of community leaders across interest groups to define the neighborhood boundaries, and (4) analysis of census tracts to identify which tracts currently had over 30% Asian American residential population.

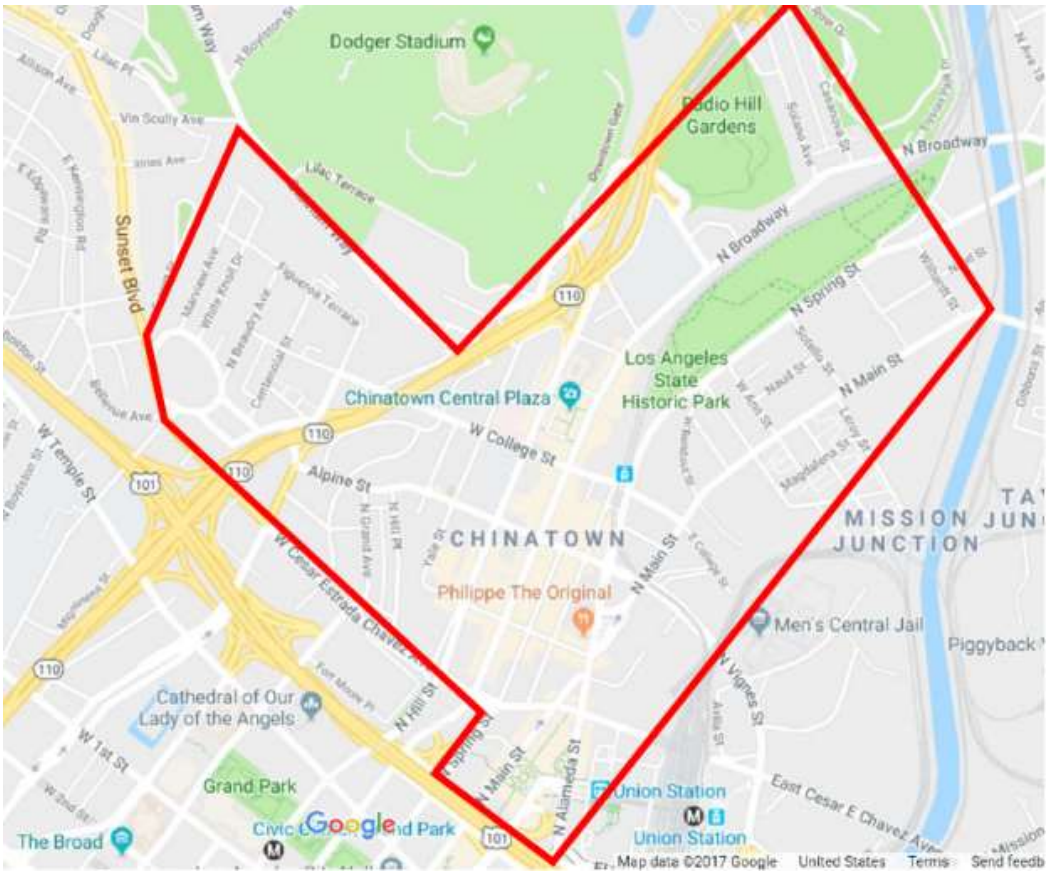

Figure A1: Map of Study Area. Image source: www.maps.google.com

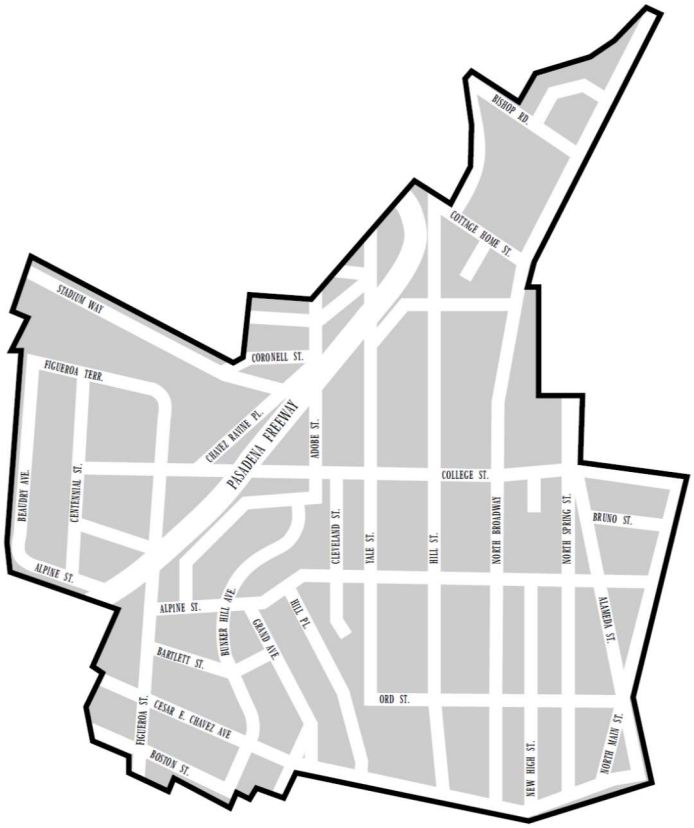

Figure A2: Community Redevelopment Agency Chinatown Project Area Map. Source: CRA/LA Successor Agency (http://www.crala.org/internet-site/Projects/Redevelopment_Plans_and_Maps.cfm)

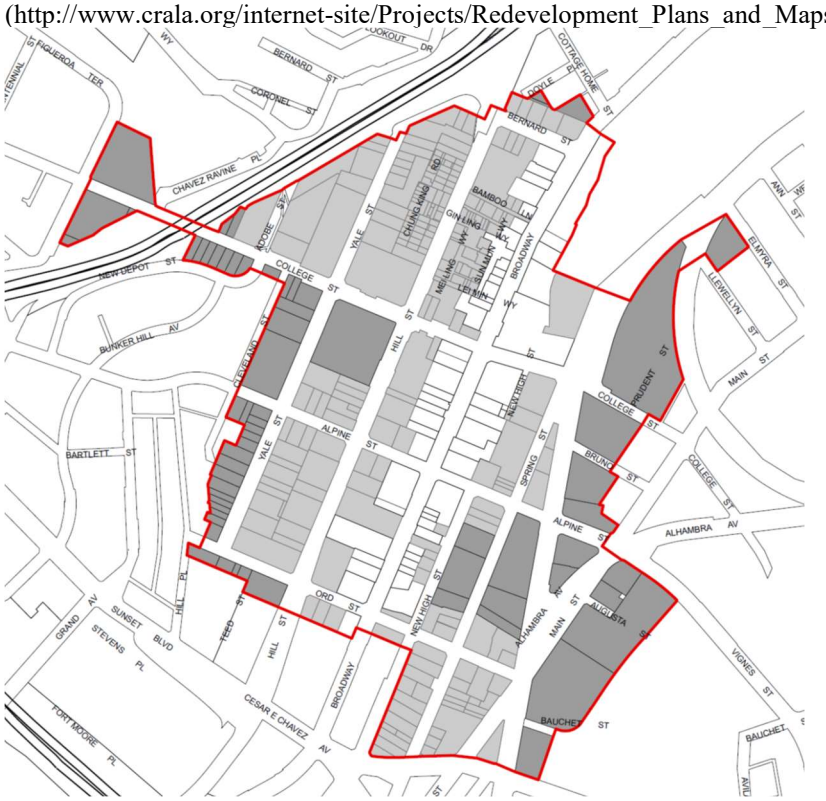

Figure A3: Chinatown Business Improvement District boundaries. Approved for 2011-2020 renewal. Source: Los Angeles City Clerk files for Ordinance: 181226, Council File: 10-1159.

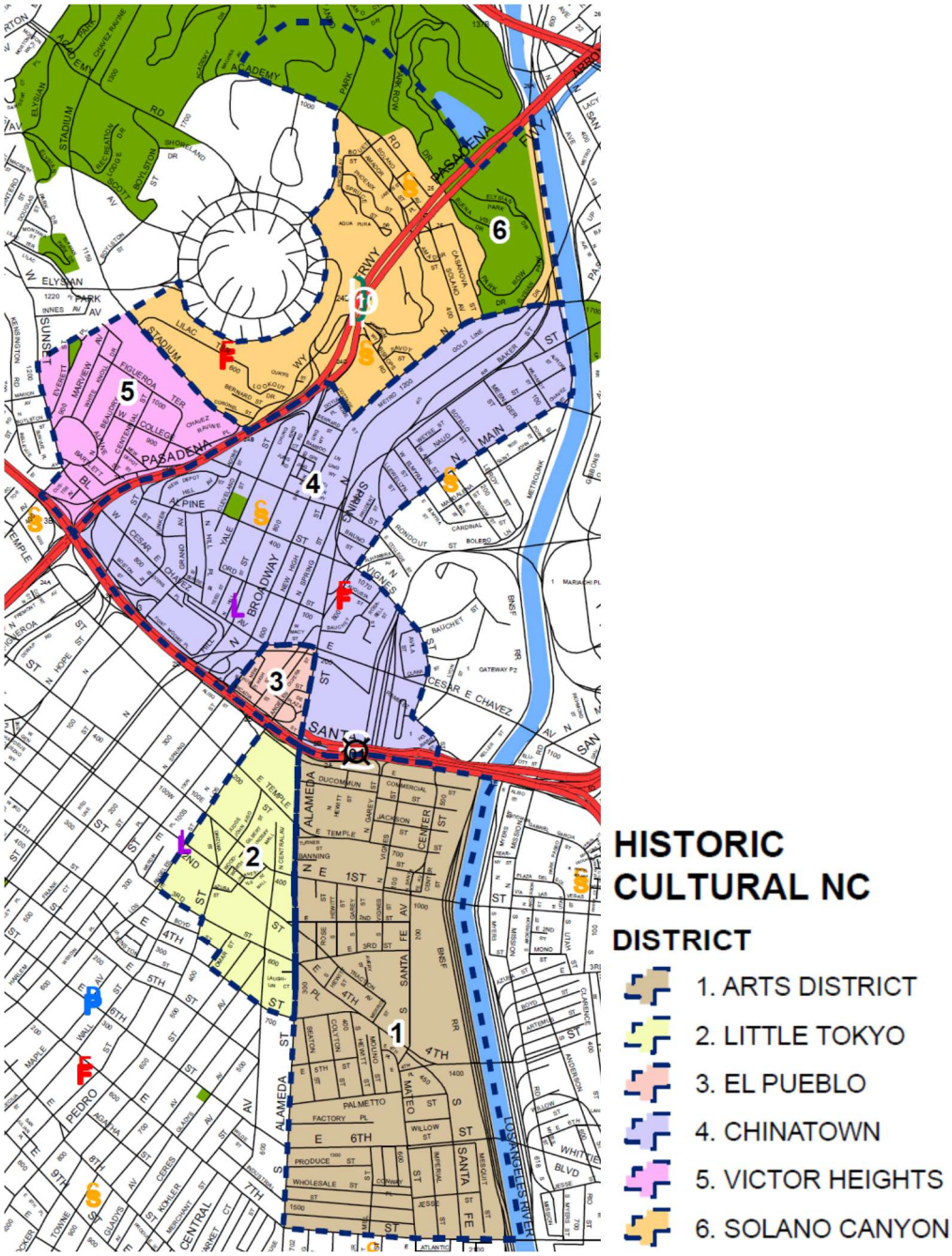

Figure A4: Map of Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council. Chinatown, Victor Heights, El Pueblo and the southeastern area of Solano Canyon are included in the study area's boundaries. Source: Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council (http://hcncla.org/)

Within the boundaries of the study area, Chinatown has key commercial, institutional, and residential areas. The commercial and institutional core of Chinatown runs primarily along Broadway, Hill, Spring, and New High Streets. The BID boundaries best reflect the boundaries of the commercial core of Chinatown (Figure A.3). The commercial core reflects the generations

of immigration into the neighborhood. In the northern end between Broadway and Hill Street are the New Chinatown Plazas, Central and West Plaza, which are the historical anchors of the development of this new Chinatown. Spring Street, in the southern area of Chinatown is what one community historian identified as the physical link to Old Chinatown, which is now located in the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, and is home to some of the oldest buildings in the city that housed older European businesses prior the New Chinatown and China City developments in the 1930s.

Among Chinese Americans who grew up in Chinatown and routinely visited the neighborhood, they note a north and south divide within the commercial area. The commercial area north of College Street includes the "legacy businesses" associated with the New Chinatown Plazas that cater to tourist and had "special occasion" restaurants and banquet halls. The area south of College Street was the community-serving area with retail stores and smaller restaurants. Linking the north and the south along Broadway and Spring are small retail stores and swap meets, many of which are operated by post-1965 Chinese immigrants and refugees, and community-serving institutions such as Cathay Bank. Chinatown's commercial area has many commercial plazas that provide public spaces but are privately owned. There are also residential units in this area, specifically single residency occupancy units atop the ground level retail, a remnant of Chinatown's old bachelor society. Most prominently along Broadway, the major commercial street, is Cathay Manor, a 16-story affordable senior housing complex. Other recent mixed-use residential spaces along Broadway, include Jia Apartments, across from Cathay Manor on the southern border of Chinatown, and Blossom Plaza, which some consider to be located in the "core" of Chinatown.

To the west of the commercial core are clusters of neighborhood institutions. The

institutional core of Chinatown is located along Hill & Yale Street and includes most of the neighborhood's public institutions, including Castelar Elementary School, Chinatown Library, and Alpine Recreation Center. Religious institutions, both old and new, such as the Tien Hoa Temple and Chinese Baptist Church are also along Yale Street. The major social service spaces, such as the Chinatown Service Center and Pacific Alliance Medical Center (formerly French Hospital), the latter of which closed in December 2017, are also along this street.

Most of the residential area of Chinatown is on a hillside that begins on Yale Street and continues westward to Marview Avenue. The area is primarily multi-family apartment dwellings with a few single-family homes. This area also has the most porous boundaries. Figueroa Street, which follows the 110 Freeway is often seen as a physical boundary of Chinatown, and thus the residential area. However, the CRA project area was extended a few blocks beyond Figueroa Street (Figure A.2). The area past Figueroa up until Marview is currently labeled "Victor Heights," a name created for the HCNC (Figure A.4). The interviewees who were either past or current residents and/or had relatives who lived in Chinatown considered this area part of the neighborhood. Thus, I included Victor Heights as a part of the residential area of Chinatown in my analysis.

The northeastern area of the downtown core is often referred to as Cornfields or Dogtown and is primarily an industrial area that was home to many warehouse and distribution centers, many of which are Chinese-American owned. The remnants of the Chinese American ownership can be seen in the bilingual signs on the warehouses. While it is often seen as a separate neighborhood, many community leaders include this area in conversations about Chinatown development.

In addition to the Chinatown neighborhood that is the focus of the study, several other

Chinese American settlements in Los Angeles county were mentioned throughout this research. Figure A.5 provides a map of these different areas to provide a visual of how these settlements were spatially distributed throughout the county.

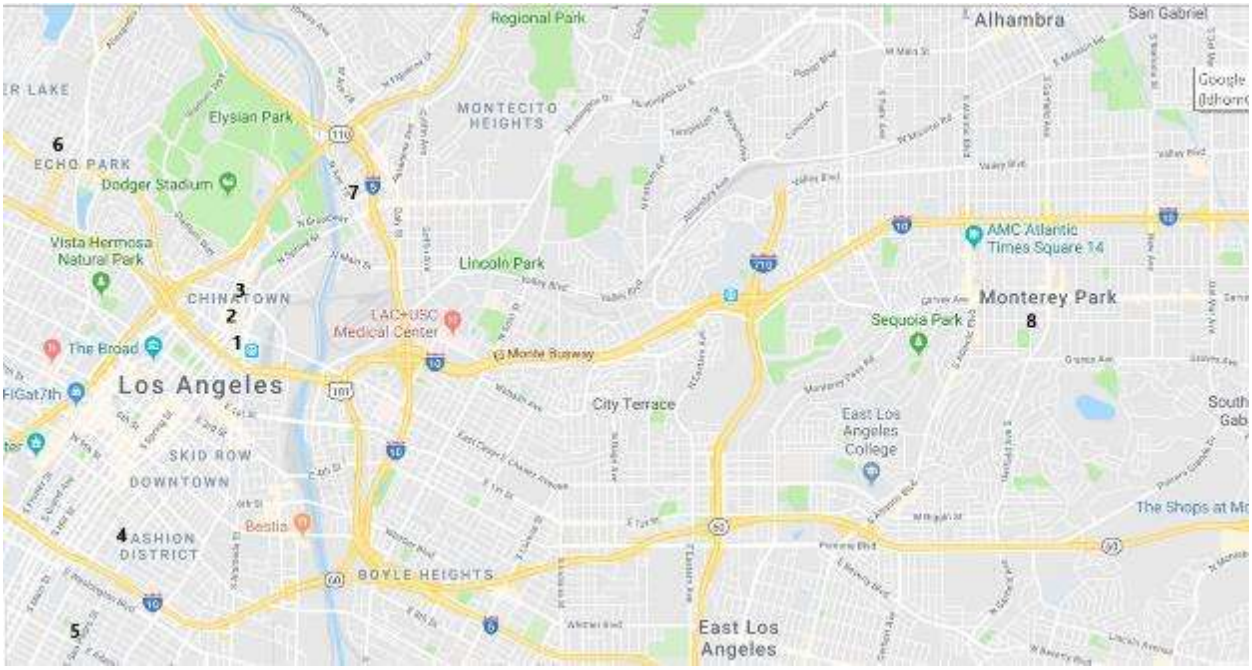

Figure A5: Map of different Chinese American settlements. 1 = Old Chinatown; 2 = China City; 3 = New Chinatown; 4 = City Market Chinatown; 5 = East Adams Area; 6 = Silverlake/Echo Park; 7 = Lincoln Heights; 8 = San Gabriel Valley cities. Information drawn from interviews and Ling (2001). Image source: www.maps.google.com.

APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY

Following the reflexive science approach of participant-observation, I situated myself as an active participant in meaning making and the construction of knowledge during my fieldwork (Burawoy, 1998). As a 2.5 generation Chinese American woman (one parent born in China and immigrated as a teenager, and the other born in the United States) who has family members who have been involved in Chinese American heritage and cultural activities in San Francisco and Los Angeles, I was aware that my identity and background would place me at certain advantages, and at times disadvantages, as a researcher entering the community. Some community gatekeepers had prior knowledge about my family without ever meeting me, which created a sense of familiarity and trust from the very start of my fieldwork, while others viewed me as a complete stranger and were hesitant to engage with me until some time had passed. I was and continue to be cognizant of my positionality in the Los Angeles Chinatown community, how it may have changed over time, and the ways it enhanced and limited my research.

Despite how I was able to develop relationships and trust in the community, I still do not situate myself as a complete insider or outsider to the community (Vo, 2000; Warren, 2001; Zinn, 2001). I was perceived as a co-ethnic and that I would have some predetermined insight into the community. Yet, my gender, age, generational status, occupation, language skills, and background as a non-native to Los Angeles also influenced my access and ability to develop rapport with different stakeholders. These various aspects of my identity both enhanced and limited my understandings in the field. In addition, my identity as a student situated me as a perceived "neutral" entity in the community. This perception of my neutrality was further magnified as I visited different community leaders and stakeholders simultaneously, often

without a consistent gatekeeper introducing me. While I regularly attended meetings, and would help out on occasion, I was neither in nor out of any one organization. This position allowed me to navigate the different organizations with the same amount of depth, but concurrently limiting my ability to be an insider with any one organization. Even as a member of some organizations, I was not always privy to insider information because I was not in a leadership position. I was also considered a "young person" still learning the ins and outs of both the Chinatown community and Southern California Chinese American community, with the expectation that my participation would be limited.

My relationships were not static and tenuous at times. I was in contact with individuals and groups that were at times in conflict but often not in direct contact with one another. As someone who was in a privileged position to learn and gather information about the community that was often not shared or easily accessible across spaces, I quickly realized that I was also situated within the community social structure and had a source of potential power: information and technical knowledge about urban planning that could have implications for the neighborhood (Forester, 1989). I was asked by several people about my opinions about the new developments in Chinatown, advice on interpreting land use policies, and even if I had initial policy recommendations based on what I learned so far. I was constantly reflective about how to share and present information when I was asked by others as I not only did not want to jeopardize my relationship and trust with different individuals, but I also did not want to contribute to the reproduction of community conflict and power struggles as this became more evident as a major theme in my project.

Given my language limitations, I could not fully capture perspectives from various segments of the community who were not comfortable communicating in English. I was able to

capture some Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese during my fieldwork, but I could not read materials written in Chinese, nor steadily converse with members of the community who spoke those dialects. Chinatown is an immigrant community and a diverse community that is home to different ethnic Chinese, Southeast Asians, and Latinos, many of whom are monolingual, first generation immigrants who speak a variety of languages and dialects that are not just Cantonese or Mandarin Chinese. Thus, regardless, I would have not been able to comprehensively reach all the different segments of the neighborhood given these language differences.

This project, however, ultimately focuses on the political culture of Chinatown and its leaders, almost all of whom are bilingual and conversant in English. Throughout the course of my fieldwork, community leaders provided perspectives based on their community work that recognize the interests of other members of the neighborhood and community as well as their own. While I was critical of these perspectives, as they were not necessarily opinions or perceptions that came directly from residents or workers of Chinatown, this limitation ultimately provided insight into the social relationships and community leadership in Chinatown.

The following tables also provide a breakdown of my data collection. This includes key characteristics of my interviewees and events I observed during my fieldwork, as well as the census tracts I drew from for the archival research.

Table B1 Breakdown of community leader interviewees

	Engagement Type	Engagement Cohort	Generation Cohort	Immigration Cohort
1	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
2	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
3	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
4	Business	post-1990	1	post-1965
5	Culture	post-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
6	Business	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
7	Business	post-1990	N/A	N/A
8	Culture	post-1990	1.5+	pre-1965

	Engagement Type	Engagement Cohort	Generation Cohort	Immigration Cohort
9	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
10	Culture	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
11	Culture	pre-1990	N/A	N/A
12	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
13	Business	pre-1990	1	pre-1965
14	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
15	Culture	pre-1990	1	post-1965
16	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
17	Business	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
18	Business	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
19	Business	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
20	Business	post-1990	1	post-1965
21	Culture	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
22	Culture	post-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
23	Culture	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
24	Business	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
25	Business	post-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
26	Culture	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
27	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
28	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
29	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
30	Business	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
31	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
32	Culture	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
33	Business	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
34	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
35	Business	post-1990	1	post-1965
36	Business	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
37	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
38	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
39	Business	post-1990	N/A	N/A
40	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
41	Residential	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
42	Culture	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
43	Culture	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
44	Culture	pre-1990	1	post-1965
45	Culture	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
46	Business	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965
47	Business	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
48	Residential	pre-1990	N/A	N/A
49	Business	post-1990	1.5+	post-1965

	Engagement Type	Engagement Cohort	Generation Cohort	Immigration Cohort
50	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	post-1965
51	Business	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965
52	Residential	pre-1990	1.5+	pre-1965

Table B2 Fieldwork and archival events

	Neighborhood Planning Events	*Cultural & Community Events*
Observations	▪ Community-based organization meetings and community outreach events (as announced) ▪ City Council District 1 outreach events (as announced) ▪ Historic-Cultural Neighborhood Council General Board Meetings (monthly) ▪ Historic-Cultural Neighborhood Council Urban Design & Land Use Committee Meetings (monthly) ▪ Los Angeles Chinatown Business Improvement District Board Meetings (bimonthly) ▪ Los Angeles Department of City Planning Community Plan Update events (as announced)	▪ Chinese New Year Parade ▪ Autumn Moon Festival ▪ Chinatown After Dark ▪ Chinatown Summer Nights ▪ Community-based organization meetings and special events (as announced)
Archives	▪ CRA Chinatown Project Area Committee/Community Advisory Committee and Sub-Committee meetings (1977-2005) ▪ Historic-Cultural Neighborhood Council General Board Meetings (2003-2014) ▪ Los Angeles City Planning Commission Meetings (as needed) ▪ Los Angeles City	

	Neighborhood Planning Events	*Cultural & Community Events*
	Council Meetings (as needed)	

Table B3 Chinatown census tracts

Area	**Year**						
	1960	**1970**	**1980**	**1990**	**2000**	**2010**	**2014**
Chinatown Core	2071	2071	2071	2071	2071	2071.01	2071.01
						2071.02	2071.02
						2071.03	2071.03
Chinatown West	1977	1977	1977	1977	1977	1977	1977
Chinatown North	1971	1971	1971	1971	2060.1	2060.1	2060.1

Note: These census tracts closely match the neighborhood boundaries described in Appendix A. These boundaries were not consistent in the previous decades, however I attempted to match the overall area each decade by examining past census tract maps. In addition, Census categories were not always consistent throughout these decades. Most notably, the race and ethnicity categories shifted throughout the years and Chinese and Asian Americans were classified as "other" until 1980. This led to gaps and limitations in tracking demographic trends and interpreting those changes. I did not modify the data as it was used primarily for descriptive and contextual purposes to supplement my qualitative data. These discrepancies were considered in the analysis.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

The following interview topic guide was used as a foundation for all interviews. Following the active interview approach, questions were modified according to each interviewee's background and responses during the interview.

Background

1. When were you born?
2. Where were you born and where did you grow up?
3. Where do you currently live?
4. What is your ethnic background (and specific family ancestry from China if appropriate) and what is your generation?
5. What's your professional background?
6. How are you currently involved in the Chinatown community today?

Personal History with Chinatown

1. What is your personal history with Chinatown, if any?
2. If you grew up in Chinatown or visited as a youth, what was it like?
3. About what time in your life did you feel that you became more active in the neighborhood? What motivated your involvement?

History of Neighborhood Needs & Revitalization Issues

1. What were some key community issues that you thought were especially critical as you started to become more involved in the neighborhood?
2. In your opinion, what were some key developments you thought were important to Chinatown, regardless if they were built or not? Why were they important? What changes did they bring?
3. What is your opinion about how the CRA impacted Chinatown? What was the CRA successful in bringing to Chinatown? What were they less successful in bringing to Chinatown?

Opinions about Current Neighborhood Change

1. What do you think are the major community needs now? How much has stayed the same vs. changed?
2. What is your opinion about the current changes? How do you think they will transform the neighborhood?
3. What are your opinions about describing the current changes in Chinatown as gentrification?

Opinions about Community Engagement

1. What were some key organizations or individuals that you think are most engaged? How have they been engaged? Has this changed over time?
2. How would you define a community stakeholder for Chinatown?
3. What are the different ways that you see the younger generation of Chinese Americans contributing to the neighborhood?
4. What do you think have been some of the challenges in community engagement?
5. What are your opinions about the spaces of citizen participation in Chinatown (e.g. Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council and CRA Project Area Committee/Chinatown Community Advisory Committee)?

Neighborhood Future

1. How do you envision Chinatown in the next 20 years?
2. What do you think needs to be preserved in Chinatown? What do you think needs to change?

APPENDIX D

SELECT NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS 1960-2014

Table D1 Select demographic characteristics and trends of Chinatown residents (1960-2014)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014
	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop	# (% of total pop)
Total Population	**8,875**	**8,001**	**11,287**	**12,846**	**14,546**	**15,907**	**15,388**
Gender							
Male	4,821 (54%)	4,154 (52%)	5,691 (50%)	6,521 (51%)	7,018 (48%)	7,716 (49%)	7,086 (46%)
Female	4,054 (46%)	3,847 (48%)	5,596 (50%)	6,325 (49%)	7,528 (52%)	8,191 (52%)	8,302 (54%)
Age							
Under 18 years	2,835 (32%)	2,369 (30%)	3,236 (57%)	3,067 (24%)	3,493 (24%)	2,947 (19%)	2,629 (17%)
18 to 34 years	2,097 (24%)	2,104 (27%)	3,386 (60%)	3,910 (30%)	3,559 (25%)	4,475 (28%)	4,676 (30%)
35 to 64 years	3,069 (35%)	2,643 (33%)	3,312 (59%)	4,019 (31%)	4,994 (34%)	5,825 (37%)	5,558 (36%)
65 and over	874 (10%)	885 (11%)	1,353 (24%)	1,850 (14%)	2,500 (17%)	2,660 (17%)	2,525 (16%)
Household Characteristics							
Total Households		2,481	3,256	3,951	4,887	5,955	5,691
Family Households		1,750 (71%)	2,372 (73%)	2,779 (70%)	3,377 (69%)	3,500 (59%)	3,080 (54%)
Non-Family Households		731 (29%)	884 (27%)	1,172 (30%)	1,510 (31%)	2,455 (41%)	2,611 (46%)

Source: Social Explorer Tables for U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census for 1960-2000 and American Community Survey 2009-2014 5-Year Estimates

Table D2 Race and ethnicity characteristics and trends of Chinatown residents (1960-2014)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014
	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop	# (% of total pop)
Total Population	**8,875**	**8,001**	**11,287**	**12,846**	**14,546**	**15,907**	**15,388**
Race							
Asian			7,648 (68%)	9,779 (76%)	9,616 (66%)	9,773 (61%)	9,283 (60%)
Hispanic or Latino			2,488 (22%)	2,386 (19%)	3,969 (27%)	4,330 (27%)	3,951 (26%)
Spanish Surname	4,225 (48%)	3,142 (39%)					
Non-Hispanic White	6,854 (77%)	3,854 (48%)	652 (6%)	520 (4%)	439 (3%)	1,061 (7%)	1,530 (10%)
Black/African American	58 (0.7%)	11 (0.1%)	64 (0.6%)	292 (2%)	241 (2%)	470 (3%)	485 (3%)
Asian Ethnic Groups							
Chinese			6,004 (53%)	7,903 (62%)	7,021 (48%)	6,783 (43%)	6,129 (40%)
Cambodian				722 (6%)	598 (4%)	730 (5%)	1,163 (8%)
Vietnamese			1,496 (13%)	712 (6%)	1,030 (7%)	753 (5%)	636 (4%)
Taiwanese					26 (0.2%)	71 (0.4%)	67 (0.7%)
Immigration							
Foreign Born	6,101 (69%)	4,527 (57%)	8,543 (77%)	9,497 (74%)	10,139 (70%)		9,450 (61%)
Recent Immigrant (Arrived <10 years prior)				5,877	4,073 (40%)		3,623 (38%)

Source: Social Explorer Tables for U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census for 1960-2000 and American Community Survey 2009-2014 5-Year Estimates

Table D3 Socioeconomic characteristics and trends of Chinatown residents (1960-2014)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014
	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop)	# (% of total pop	# (% of total pop)
Income							
Median Family Income			$10,832	$19,992	$21,508		$24,175
Median Household Income			$9,090	$17,837	$18,285		$22,247
Individuals Living 200% Below Poverty Level (Poor or Struggling)			7,318 (67%)	8,053 (63%)	10,688 (74%)		10,892 (71%)
Occupation							
Production	981 (29%)	1,041 (29%)	1,391 (33%)	1,272 (25%)	1,516 (32%)		1,101 (18%)
Service (including food service)	818 (24%)	1,028 (29%)	901 (22%)	1,073 (21%)	1,379 (30%)		907 (15%)
Sales and Related	128 (4%)	137 (4%)	390 (9%)	562 (11%)	592 (13%)		662 (11%)
Office and Administrative	440 (13%)	582 (16%)	583 (14%)	692 (14%)	481 (10%)		677 (11%)
Professional and Related	146 (4%)	360 (10%)	186 (5%)	320 (6%)	428 (9%)		1,268 (20%)
Management, business, and financial operations	215 (6%)	186 (5%)	264 (6%)	367 (7%)	269 (6%)		566 (9%)

Source: Social Explorer Tables for U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census for 1960-2000 and American Community Survey 2009-2014 5-Year Estimates

Table D4 Chinatown housing unit trends (1960-2014)

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2014
	# (% of total units)	# (% of total units)	# (% of total units)	# (% of total units)	# (% of total units)	# (% of total units)	# (% of total units)
Total Housing Units	3,139	2,599	3,292	4,164	5,112	6,387	6,440
Owner Occupied	698 (24%)	514 (21%)	507 (16%)	539 (14%)	515 (10%)	562 (9%)	522 (9%)
Renter Occupied	2,265 (76%)	1,967 (79%)	2,702 (84%)	3,410 (86%)	4,372 (90%)	5,393 (91%)	5,169 (91%)
Housing Units in Structure							
1	1,637 (52%)	908 (35%)	847 (26%)	714 (17%)	919 (18%)		907 (14%)
2	429 (14%)	276 (11%)	246 (8%)	305 (7%)	279 (6%)		276 (4%)
3-4	384 (12%)	361 (14%)	369 (11%)	546 (13%)	438 (9%)		538 (8%)
5 or more	689 (22%)	1,054 (41%)	1,827 (56%)	2,517 (61%)	3,476 (68%)		4,719 (73%)

Source: Social Explorer Tables for U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census for 1960-2000 and American Community Survey 2009-2014 5-Year Estimates

APPENDIX E

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS

Time Period	Organization Name	Type	Current Status	Place-Specific
Pre-1965	Chinese American Citizens Alliance-Los Angeles Lodge (CACA)	Political	Active	No
	Chinese Chamber of Commerce	Business	Active	No
	Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA)	Political, Cultural	Active	No
	Chinatown Democratic Club	Political	Inactive	No
	Family & Regional Associations	Cultural, Social Services	Active	No
	Los Angeles Chinatown Corporation	Business	Active	Yes
1965-1990	Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE)	Political	Inactive	No
	Chinatown Service Center (CSC)	Social Services	Active	No
	Chinatown Teen Post	Social Services	Inactive	Yes
	Chinatown Youth Council (CYC)	Social Services	Inactive	Yes
	Chinese Committee on Aging	Social Services	Active	No
	Chinatown Community Advisory Committee (CCAC)	Political	Inactive	Yes
	Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC)	Cultural	Active	No
	Chinese Progressive Association (CPA)	Political	Inactive	No
	Family & Regional Associations (Chaozhou Association, Fujian Association)	Cultural, Social Services	Active	No
	Friends of the Chinatown Library	Social Services	Active	Yes
	Friends of the Chinese American Museum (CAM)	Cultural	Active	No
	Los Angeles Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee (LACFRC)	Social Services	Active	Yes
1990-present	Chinatown Community for Equitable Development (CCED)	Political	Active	Yes
	Chinatown Sustainability Dialogue Group (CSDG)	Political	Active	Yes
	Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council (HCNC)	Political	Active	Yes
	Los Angeles Chinatown Business Council/Business Improvement District (LACBC/BID)	Business	Active	Yes
	Southeast Asian Community Alliance (SEACA)	Political	Active	Yes

Notes:
1. This table is not inclusive of all organizations in Chinatown. They are inclusive of the organizations that were observed or discussed among interviewees for this study.
2. I also define “place-specific” organization as a Chinatown organization that currently focuses on Chinatown residents, business, and/or organizations versus an ethnic or immigrant-specific organization that serves the community across geography. Some organizations started off place-specific but have since expanded in response to demographic and residential shifts.

APPENDIX F

NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS 1980-2016

	Date	Type of Housing	Total Housing Units	Affordable Housing Units
CRA-Funded Rehabilitation Projects	1981-1987	Rental & Ownership	246	246
Cathay Manor	1984	Rental	270	270
TC Apartments*	1986	Rental	20	20
Angelina Terrace*	1988	Ownership	60	15
Hillside Villa Apartments*	1988	Rental	124	124
Bartlett Hill Manor*	1989	Rental	65	65
Buena Vista	1989	Rental	20	0
Grand Plaza*	1991	Rental	301	301
Casanova Gardens	1996	Rental	27	27
Castelar Apartments	2003	Rental	101	101
Cesar Chavez Gardens	2003	Rental	47	40
Orsini I	2003	Rental	297	0
Yale Terrace Apartments*	2008	Rental	55	55
Orsini II	2010	Rental	566	0
Orsini III	2011	Rental	210	0
Chinatown Metro Apartments*	2013	Rental	134	134
Jia Apartments	2014	Rental	280	0
Lotus Garden	2014	Rental	60	60
Blossom Plaza	2016	Rental	237	53
Proposed in 2016				
The Grand		Ownership	299	?
College Station		Rental	770	?
La Plaza Cultura Village		Rental	350	70
Stadium Way		Rental	151	0
Velvet Turtle Lot		Rental	162	0
Riboli Development		Rental	937	?
Johnson Fain Development		Rental	124	0

Sources: CRA Implementation Plan 2011-2014, City of Los Angeles Certificates of Occupancy, City of Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department Redevelopment Affordable Housing Roster (August 2016)
Notes:
1. Updated as of March 2017. Developments noted with * received funding from the Community Redevelopment Agency tax increment Low and Moderate Housing Funds. (Source: http://hcidla.lacity.org/system/files_force/documents/cra_ab987_aug2016_0.pdf?download=1).
2. Proposed developments with ? in the Affordable Units column indicate that the developer may put in affordable housing but has only officially proposed market-rate housing.