Searching for an Authentic Chinatown: Studentification, Intangible Heritage, and Contentious Space

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Abstract

Toronto's Chinatown West is currently undergoing socio-spatial restructuring through intertwined processes of redevelopment, gentrification, and commercial change. In this Major Paper, I examine how the presence of urban universities are triggering much of this transformation. Building on recent global debates about universities and the role of students in neighborhood change, I unpack the effect of higher concentration of students on residential typologies and commercial change; and second, the politics of studentification in Chinatown West.

Our findings indicate that vertical studentification occurs on both the residential and commercial boundaries of Chinatown. Similarly, an analysis of changes in the commercial orientation and employment patterns of Chinatown shows a move away from employment in retail and offices, into food services and part-time job opportunities catering to youth. Finally, we discuss how the growing intake of international students–particularly from China– in proximity to Chinatown creates new tensions and diverse reactions to neighbourhood change within the existing Chinese community. While some entrepreneurial community members, particularly those representing the business community are pro-growth, other long-term residents are concerned about the displacement caused by studentification and organize to contest new developments. The community responses from the long-term Chinese residents and other members of Chinese diaspora raise important questions on the future of Chinatown, who is Chinatown for, and how might a historically marginalized neighborhood be preserved in a rapidly growing city. The findings also highlight the interconnected nature between higher education institutions (HEIs) and their locality, and the volatility of student-focused neighborhoods to urban politics.

Foreword

Searching for an Authentic Chinatown: Studentification, Intangible Heritage, and Contentious Space contributes to the fulfillment of the MES in Planning degree in many ways. The Major Paper allowed me to explore major high-level themes from my Plan of Study, such as dense cities and sustainable development on the hyper-local scale. This includes parsing out the often difficult and contentious stories that govern and mitigate space, and increasing challenge as we strive for compact and dense cities; what elements of the ancien regime fits within this global narrative? My Major Paper seeks to document this tension, by employing a data-informed lense and a detailed scan of archival newspapers, we find that Chinatown West is a highly political and hyper-local space, and at the same time, a transnational space that exists in the global networks of exchange.

Acknowledgements

Throughout this Major Paper, I have received a great amount of support, assistance, patience, and grace.

I want to acknowledge that Chinatown, and this Major Paper, is situated and written on the traditional territories of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. This Major Paper was written on Treaty 13, signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the unhonoured 1923 Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. The name “Spadina” is the Anglicized version of *ishpaadina* in Anishnaabemowin, which refers to the hill that leads up to the ancient shoreline of Lake Ontario (now Davenport Road). Dundas Street was named after Henry Dundas, a Scottish politician who opposed the immediate abolition of slave trading, and the continued subjugation of First Nations communities in Canada as Home Secretary. Spadina Avenue and Dundas Street, the agreed-upon heart of Chinatown West, reiterates itself into 士巴丹拿道 (*Shibadannadao*) and 登打士西街 (*Dengdashixijie*), but for most Mandarin Chinese speakers, we refer to Chinatown “唐人街” (*Tangrenjie*) meaning the street of the people from Tang[1] (Dynasty). It is on this site of multiple and conflicting histories, in fair Tkaronto, where we lay our scene.

I would first like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Luisa Sotomayor, whose expertise on student housing was invaluable to this paper. Your feedback on the themes addressed in this paper was crucial in weaving together the following narrative.

I would also like to thank the York Centre for Asian Research (YCAR) and Mitacs for their financial support. I especially would like to thank YCAR’s Canada-China Initiatives Fund (CCIF), whose generosity and support allowed me to fairly compensate interviewees,

1. An Imperial dynasty of modern day China (618 to 907) and considered the golden age of Chinese arts and culture. It is unknown why the Mandarin equivalent of Chinatown makes reference to such a distant dynasty, rather than the Qing (1644 to 1912). Multiple theories exist, but one theory is that the early Chinese settlers associated themselves with the glory of Tang, hence, still see themselves as citizens of Tang. i.e., Tangren is equivalent of saying ‘Chinese’ (citizenship). Although, the term as fallen out of use, and modern Chinese prefer the term ‘huaren’ (identity but not ethnicity). . .

especially students, for their time, expertise, and sharing of knowledge.

In addition, also like to thank my colleagues. First, in Dr. Sotomayor's advisory group for supportive writing sessions and productive discussions. Second, the planners and urban designers at the City of Toronto who had provided their initial feedback during the proposal stage, which helped me refine the research questions and narrow down the broad challenges.

I want to thank the interviewees for taking the time to share their knowledge and expertise and to answer sometimes difficult questions about this space.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends. I could not have completed this Major Paper without the support of Sonja Dobson, who transcribed all of the interviews with compensation; Alexei Kuzmin for the food journeys that inspired this story to begin with; and Zoey the cat, for being such a good emotional support animal.

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1. Introduction

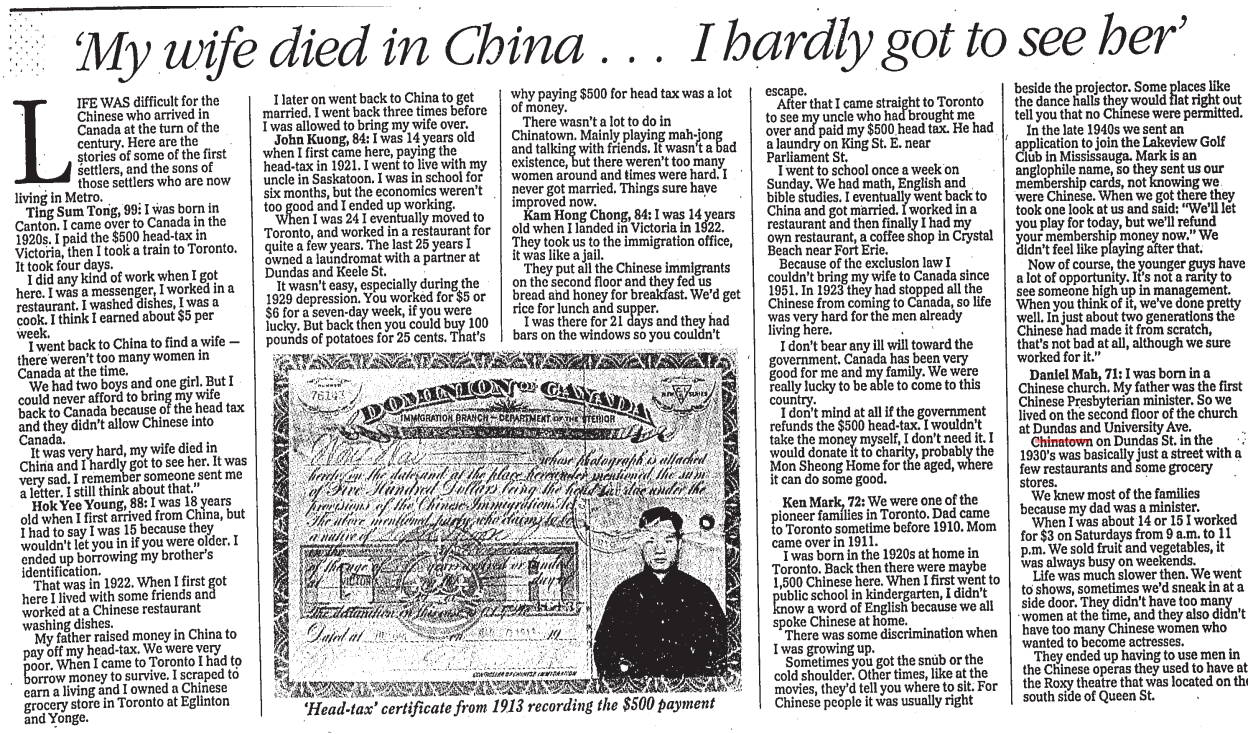
The search for, and the commodification of authenticity, is a challenge in most post-industrial cities; what is worth keeping, and what exactly contributes to a sense of place? Or rather, the construction of a place? Sharon Zukin theorized that for modern settlements to develop distinctive cultures, we must have three factors: first, the freedom of mobility, second, a local history that appeals to outsiders in its construction of a grand narrative or symbolic landscape, and finally, local entrepreneurs who market the space emphasizing some elements while suppressing others (Zukin, 2011). The framework of placemaking as delineated by Zukin, provides a baseline understanding on the constructed and political nature of all spaces, that is, what curated elements make up our urban landscape? Be the constructed nature of cities, of neighbourhoods, of education, of history, of students, of Chineseness.

Downtown Toronto has a massive blind spot in the form of the University of Toronto St. George Campus (UTSG). The campus, founded in 1827, is simultaneously a stagnant and dynamic actor in the creation of space, and the mediation of human experience. Neighbourhoods both historic and new grew around the university's campus boundaries. These spaces was and currently is home to a diverse demographic of residents and served as safe spaces for communities to access culturally appropriate foods, services, employment, and derive a sense of community.

In response to the rollback of public sector investment for higher education institutions (HEIs) by the Ontario provincial government, HEIs became increasingly entrepreneurial actors reliant on private sources, such as tuition fees and P3s to fund operation costs. In the balance sheets of HEIs, the onus for providing student housing, while historically invested in by the federal government, has been increasingly relegated to the private sector in the last 20 years. As urban HEIs open satellite campuses and expand student enrollment, the main constraint remains, the question of space and how do HEIs and their students contribute to the potential *tabula rasa* of existing communities? Or do HEIs and students contribute to vibrant and multigenerational communities? One such neigh-

bourhood in which this tension is playing out in real time is Chinatown West, located immediately south of UTSG. Employing both academic and grey literature, this Major Paper seeks to delineate how Chinatown West exists in Toronto's new global economy, the multiple scales and temporal dimensions of this old space, and how the expanding HEI section clashes with the community's visions of Chinatown. In August 2019, these processes surfaced in the redevelopment of a low-rise commercial building at Spadina Ave and D'Arcy Street, displacing a number of small and ethnic businesses, including the iconic Rol San Restaurant. The proposed development of a 13-storey mixed-use rental development (315-325 Spadina Ave) is presumed to be targetting students, and during its initial public consultation, Chinatown was not mentioned in the developer's presentation. This erasure, and impending displacement forms the context that Friends of Chinatown Toronto (FOCT), a grassroots activist organization, emerged.

FOCT's campaigning and activism mobilizes the history of Chinatown, and specific legacy of legislative racism and exclusion by the Canadian state, as a crucial narrative in the preservation of Chinatown. As such, understanding and unpacking the history of the space is important for contemporary discourse. The head tax era (1885-1923) penalized Chinese economic migrants who entered Canada, and the Chinese Immigration Act (1923-1947), commonly referred to as the Chinese Exclusion Act, directly impacted the family structures and familial bonds of Chinese economic migrants and their families. Families were separated for 24 years, creating a generation of lonely Chinese bachelors pining for their wives, children, parents, siblings, and relatives, while working long, arduous hours. The next page contains an excerpt from the Toronto Daily Star documenting the stories of head tax payers. To this day, Chinatowns can still be identified by this affect, and the power of these stories makes any potential erasure of Chinatowns so much more taboo. While the *Lo Wah Kiu*, the old-timers, are dying, a new generation of Chinese and Chinese-Canadians are taking ownership over the history of the Chinese in Canada, and claiming the affect as a piece of the collective history and experiences of the Chinese diaspora in Toronto. Ownership over the head tax stories, while keeping the history alive, also functions as an important link of Chinese-Canadians in their search for identity and belonging in Canada. A process of affirmation and accepting the head tax stories as qual-



'My wife died in China . . . I hardly got to see her'

LIFE WAS difficult for the Chinese who arrived in Canada at the turn of the century. Here are the stories of some of the first settlers, and the sons of those settlers who are now living in Metro.

Ting Sum Tong, 99: I was born in Canton. I came over to Canada in the 1920s. I paid the $500 head-tax in Victoria, then I took a train to Toronto. It took four days.

I did any kind of work when I got here. I was a messenger, I worked in a restaurant. I washed dishes, I was a cook. I think I earned about $5 per week.

I went back to China to find a wife — there weren't too many women in Canada at the time.

We had two boys and one girl. But I could never afford to bring my wife back to Canada because of the head tax and they didn't allow Chinese into Canada.

It was very hard, my wife died in China and I hardly got to see her. It was very sad. I remember someone sent me a letter. I still think about that."

Hok Yee Young, 88: I was 18 years old when I first arrived from China, but I had to say I was 15 because they wouldn't let you in if you were older. I ended up borrowing my brother's identification.

That was in 1922. When I first got here I lived with some friends and worked at a Chinese restaurant washing dishes.

My father raised money in China to pay off my head-tax. We were very poor. When I came to Toronto I had to borrow money to survive. I scraped to earn a living and I owned a Chinese grocery store in Toronto at Eglinton and Yonge.

I later on went back to China to get married. I went back three times before I was allowed to bring my wife over.

John Kuong, 84: I was 14 years old when I first came here, paying the head-tax in 1921. I went to live with my uncle in Saskatoon. I was in school for six months, but the economics weren't too good and I ended up working.

When I was 24 I eventually moved to Toronto, and worked in a restaurant for quite a few years. The last 25 years I owned a laundromat with a partner at Dundas and Keele St.

It wasn't easy, especially during the 1929 depression. You worked for $5 or $6 for a seven-day week, if you were lucky. But back then you could buy 100 pounds of potatoes for 25 cents. That's why paying $500 for head tax was a lot of money.

There wasn't a lot to do in Chinatown. Mainly playing mah-jong and talking with friends. It wasn't a bad existence, but there weren't too many women around and times were hard. I never got married. Things sure have improved now.

Kam Hong Chong, 84: I was 14 years old when I landed in Victoria in 1922. They took us to the immigration office, it was like a jail.

They put all the Chinese immigrants on the second floor and they fed us bread and honey for breakfast. We'd get rice for lunch and supper.

I was there for 21 days and they had bars on the windows so you couldn't escape.

After that I came straight to Toronto to see my uncle who had brought me over and paid my $500 head tax. He had a laundry on King St. E. near Parliament St.

I went to school once a week on Sunday. We had math, English and bible studies. I eventually went back to China and got married. I worked in a restaurant and then finally I had my own restaurant, a coffee shop in Crystal Beach near Fort Erie.

Because of the exclusion law I couldn't bring my wife to Canada since 1951. In 1923 they had stopped all the Chinese from coming to Canada, so life was very hard for the men already living here.

I don't bear any ill will toward the government. Canada has been very good for me and my family. We were really lucky to be able to come to this country.

I don't mind at all if the government refunds the $500 head-tax. I wouldn't take the money myself, I don't need it. I would donate it to charity, probably the Mon Sheong Home for the aged, where it can do some good.

Ken Mark, 72: We were one of the pioneer families in Toronto. Dad came to Toronto sometime before 1910. Mom came over in 1911.

I was born in the 1920s at home in Toronto. Back then there were maybe 1,500 Chinese here. When I first went to public school in kindergarten, I didn't know a word of English because we all spoke Chinese at home.

There was some discrimination when I was growing up.

Sometimes you got the snub or the cold shoulder. Other times, like at the movies, they'd tell you where to sit. For Chinese people it was usually right beside the projector. Some places like the dance halls they would flat right out tell you that no Chinese were permitted.

In the late 1940s we sent an application to join the Lakeview Golf Club in Mississauga. Mark is an anglophile name, so they sent us our membership cards, not knowing we were Chinese. When we got there they took one look at us and said: "We'll let you play for today, but we'll refund your membership money now." We didn't feel like playing after that.

Now of course, the younger guys have a lot of opportunity. It's not a rarity to see someone high up in management. When you think of it, we've done pretty well. In just about two generations the Chinese had made it from scratch, that's not bad at all, although we sure worked for it."

Daniel Mah, 71: I was born in a Chinese church. My father was the first Chinese Presbyterian minister. So we lived on the second floor of the church at Dundas and University Ave.

Chinatown on Dundas St. in the 1930's was basically just a street with a few restaurants and some grocery stores.

We knew most of the families because my dad was a minister.

When I was about 14 or 15 I worked for $3 on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. We sold fruit and vegetables, it was always busy on weekends.

Life was much slower then. We went to shows, sometimes we'd sneak in at a side door. They didn't have too many women at the time, and they also didn't have too many Chinese women who wanted to become actresses.

They ended up having to use men in the Chinese operas they used to have at the Roxy theatre that was located on the south side of Queen St.

'Head-tax' certificate from 1913 recording the $500 payment

Figure 1: "My Wife died in China....I hardly got to see her" Toronto Star, October 15, 1992

ifying their legitimate claim as real and full members of Canadian society. A society that sees their yellow faces and screams peril.

Between 2015 and 2019, Toronto's Chinatown West has seen significant development pressures and the beginnings of a seismic neighbourhood and demographic change. Despite the rhetoric that the ongoing and contemporary developments in Chinatown are new and groundbreaking, when we examine the history of Chinatown West from the 1970s onwards, we uncover waves of ethnic succession and gentrification that makes this space what it is today. To put simply, Chinatown West is not, and never was, a stagnant place and exists in multiple scales and functions on multiple time dimensions, which we will explore throughout this Major Paper. How then does the increasing student population living within Chinatown's boundaries, or the *studentification* of Chinatown, play into the continued history and living heritage of this place?

The core of this Major Paper argues that the present studentification of Chinatown West is another epoch in the continued transformation and evolution of Spadina Avenue as an

immigrant reception centre. An epoch of gradual change or an extinction? Recent neighbourhood change is defined by international students attending the HEIs in downtown Toronto, specifically Chinese international students. However, despite the name 'Chinatown,' the broader of implication becomes, what happens when urban spaces are earmarked by ethnic diasporic communities and actively kept 'ethnic'? Can this, and should this, identity harmonize with students? Moreover, the question of 'who' lives in Chinatown has become a contentious subject. Although the Chinatown neighbourhoods have a significant student population who reside in legal and illegal subdivided houses, whether or not students qualify as legitimate inhabitants and valuable members of the community is a continued discussion between grassroots organizations and long-term residents.

The head tax stories and community stories of Chinatown also contribute to a collective identity that the Friends of Chinatown (FOCT), a local Chinatown-advocacy and grassroots organization, utilizes to draw a distinction between Chinese-Canadians and Chinese international students, and the othering of students are members of the community. A Friends of Chinatown (FOCT) activist and artist commented,

> "But do [the international students] have any understanding of this Chinatown [and the history of Chinatowns]? Because this Chinatown was very like. You know, this is the only place where Chinese people can exist, on a legislative policy level, like Chinese people weren't allowed to go to [certain] public spaces or vote, but Chinese international students coming over, it's like, well, everyone's Chinese from where they come from" (Friends of Chinatown Toronto [FOCT] Chinese-Canadian activist, interview, March 16, 2021).

The tension between existing stakeholders, activists, and new and existing community members lies in the disagreement in what is an '*authentic* Chinatown.' Community members claim that Chinatown is an inclusive space but the emerging divisions indicate that inclusivity is conditional, and most importantly to the international Chinese students, just because you are Chinese does not mean you are owed a piece of Chinatown.

This Major Paper explores these larger challenges through the research questions:

1. In a growing city with transnational and global aspirations, how is a centrally located Chinatown changing?
2. What is the value of Toronto's Chinatown to the Chinese diaspora and beyond?
3. How are communities reacting to the neighbourhood change?
4. Do we need to protect and preserve Chinatown? Is Chinatown in need of protection and preservation? And,
5. What is the role of students and young people in Chinatown's future?

Aspects of Chinatowns and Chinatown West's history will be explored in detail in later chapters. The narrative is structured thusly, first we begin with a literature review of the key themes in this Major Paper, followed by a review of provincial and municipal land-use policies. A discussion evaluating the gentrification in Chinatown will follow, and shortly a chapter on the history of Chinatown West through archival newspapers. Finally, we will walk through the findings as derived from interview and spatial data, exploring vertical studentification, commercial gentrification, and perspectives of an authentic Chinatown. A short considerations and recommendations section followed by a conclusion and poem.

2. Methods

This Major Paper utilizes a mixed-method approach to triangulate neighbourhood change in Toronto, Ontario and took place between 2020 and 2021. The research mobilizes grey literature in the form of archival newspaper articles from the Toronto Star (formerly Toronto Daily Star) and the Globe and Mail between 1890 to 1990; City of Toronto planning documents; academic literature on the Canadian student housing market and internationally; Toronto Employment Survey data obtained from the City of Toronto, City Planning division, details employment and residential changes between 2009 and 2019; primarily research of archival Google Street View virtual reality photographs (2009-2019) to conduct spatial analysis; and in-depth interviews with community members, students, student housing experts, and City of Toronto staff. The separation of “students” from “community members” does not denote that students are not community members, but rather asking a different set of questions to highlight each respective experience. For students, the focus is to understand their student-related experiences relative to housing and the communities they live in, whereas for community members, the questions target specifically to neighbourhood change.

From 2020 to 2021, we analyzed Google Street View virtual reality photographs of the study area. We documented the names of the storefronts and conducted a Google search of the business to determine its operations, and categorized the businesses into descriptive categories, such as “wholesaler” or “cafe.” Sourcing data from this third-party software was crucial in documenting neighbourhood change as there is no central record of the types of businesses that existed within the study boundary. The City of Toronto planning documents relating to the updated University of Toronto St. George Campus Secondary Plan were obtained from the City of Toronto Application Information Centre (AIC). The City of Toronto, Toronto Employment Survey (TES) data set was obtained for the study area from the City Planning division.

For the purposes of this study, we opted to use descriptive language unless otherwise

indicated. ‘Chinatown West’ will be referred to as ‘Chinatown,’ although we acknowledge there are multiple Chinatowns in Toronto. ‘International Chinese chain’ will be inclusive of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan (Republic of China). Chinese international students will refer to students from the PRC unless otherwise indicated.

In the Spring of 2021, twenty-four 1-hour stakeholder interviews were conducted. The stakeholders were selected based on their relationship to Chinatown. The stakeholders are categorized into “community members,” representing long-time residents, Grange Residents’ Association, employees of Cecil Community Centre, artists, etc; “students” sourced from a University of Toronto off-campus Facebook housing group and chosen based on their housing history, experience living in West Chinatown, and experience living in student-focused housing; “City of Toronto staff” included the planners and urban designers whose boundaries included Chinatown in addition to the City Councilor Mike Layton; and “student housing experts” included developers of student housing and private-practice architects and planners who worked on projects around the University of Toronto. Students and community members were offered a $50 honourarium for their time.

Finally, our review of archival newspapers took place in 2021. Searches were conducted on the key words “Chinatown,” “University of Toronto,” “St. George Campus,” “Student Housing” in ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Toronto Star and ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Globe and Mail.

3. Literature Review

Chinatowns in Canada and the United States historically emerged as spaces unplanned by municipal planning authorities. Historically, Chinatowns in North America were regarded as “a town within a town” of ethnic Chinese surrounded by a White majority population (Lai, 1988). In an early study of the growth of a city, Burgess identifies that slums in the ‘zones of transition’ are inhabited by immigrants, including Chinese, and combines “old world heritages and American adaptiveness” (Burgess, 1925, 56). Nearly all of the Chinatowns in the Western world can be found in ‘zones of transition,’ a location geographically close to the Central Business District, and where warehouses were dominant (Luk and Phan, 2005; Phan and Luk, 2008). The evolution of Chinatown West will be explored further in a later section, below is an overview of the literature discussing each of the key themes of the paper, grouped into two sections: Chinatowns and gentrification. The Chinatown related themes begin with the broader historical context of the Chinese in Canada, followed by an analysis of self-orientalizing strategies, and a section on the lived realities of early Chinatowns. The gentrification related themes commence with a short discussion on the theoretical pinnings of gentrification, followed by condofication and financialization, and finally studentification as a form of gentrification. All of the themes coexist in the same geographic space, and as such, collapses time, geography, and space, into a complex landscape of social relations.

Chinatowns and the Railway

The creation and legacies of Chinatowns in North America are linked to discriminatory state policies targeting Chinese economic migrants. In 1871, British Columbia joined the confederation on the promise of a railway that connected Eastern Canada to the new western province to be built within 10 years (CPR). Andrew Onderdonk, an American contractor hired by the Canadian government to oversee the building of the railway, estimated that a workforce of 10,000 labourers would be needed (Chan, 2013). Onderdonk recommended the importation of Chinese labourers to fulfill the shortfall of local labourers;

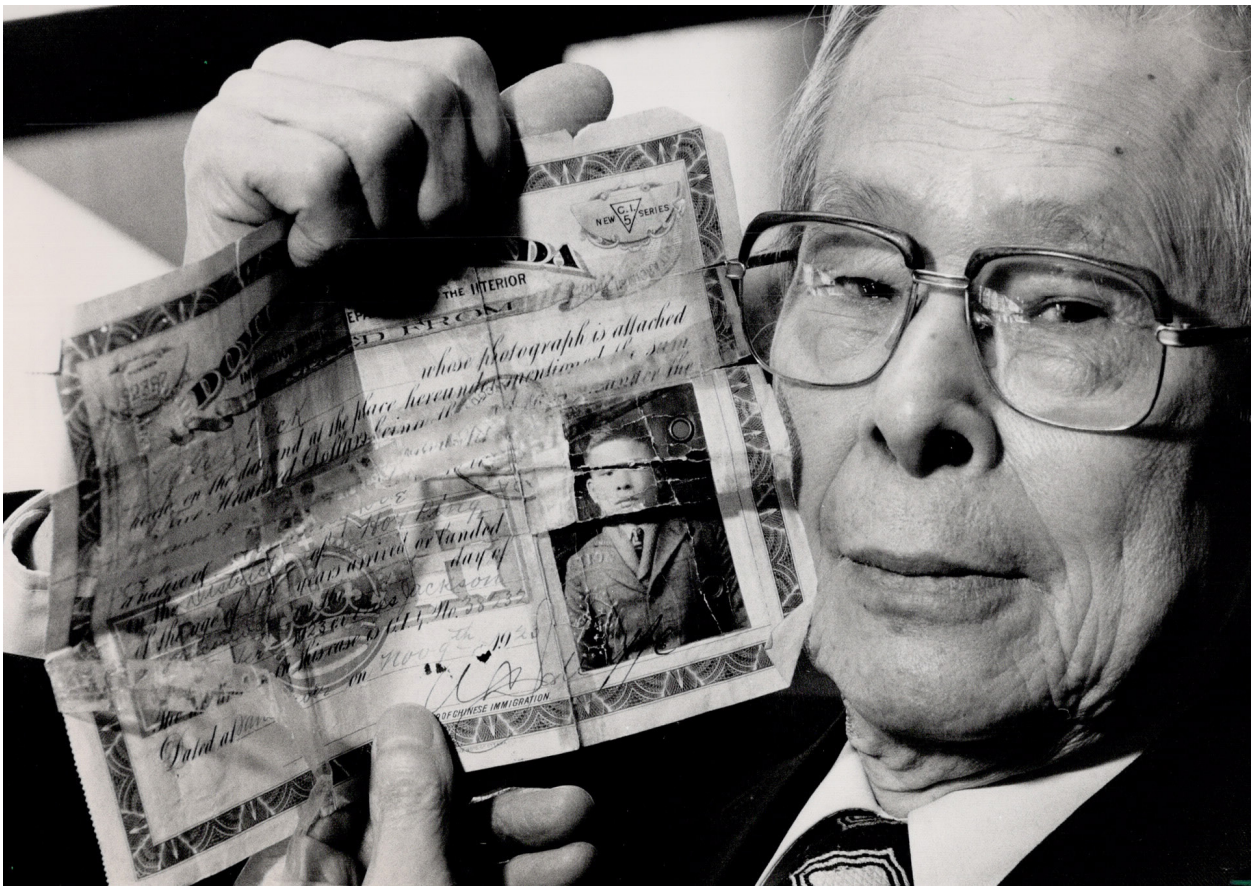


Figure 2: Bitter Memories: Cecil Ing shows the $500 certificate he bought to enter Canada. About 81,000 Chinese immigrants paid $23 million in head taxes between 1885 and 1923. (Toronto Star Archives, 1988)

only 400 local labourers were available (Chan, 2013). The decision was controversial and Prime Minister John A MacDonald defended the decision, stating “either you must have this labour or you cannot have the railway”(Lee, 1972, 62). Seventeen thousand Chinese labourers were hired mostly from rural villages in Guangdong who sold their possessions to pay for the ship fare; recruits composed of boys as young as twelve to forty-year-old men (Chan, 2013). The Chinese who survived the crossing were paid a dollar a day, half of the amount paid to white workers, and were assigned to the most dangerous tasks of tunnelling through the mountainous terrain of British Columbia. While official death estimates that at least 600 died in construction, it is believed that roughly one Chinese died for every mile of track laid (Chan, 2013).

Chinese lives and labour built the infrastructure that facilitated the confederation of the Canadian state. At the same time, the Chinese were the only population group singled out

on the basis of race through immigration policies beginning with the Chinese Immigration Act (1885) that levied a head tax of $50 and increased to $500 in 1903 (two years' worth of labour) and the Chinese Exclusion Act (1923-1947) which banned Chinese immigration to Canada for 24 years (Chan, 2017). From 1923 to 1947, the Canadian state collected $23 million in head tax, nearly the amount necessary to pay for the western portion of the CPR; in essence, the Chinese built and then reimbursed the Canadian state for the CPR (Road to Justice).

As a result, of the discrimination and exclusion, the Chinese formed settlements along the railway and in rural communities. In the late 1800s, ghettos began forming in major Canadian cities, which later were referred to as Chinatowns. Marcuse defined ghettos as "a spatially concentrated area used to separate and to limit a particular involuntarily defined population group (usually by race) held to be, and treated as, inferior by the dominant society" which was directly linked to discriminatory state policies (Marcuse, 1997, 231). It wasn't until post-WWII did Chinatown move from a ghetto to an enclave, the differentiation lies in the gradual roll-back of discriminatory state policies that limited economic and social mobility. For Marcuse, enclaves are "a spatially concentrated area in which members of a particular population group, self-defined by ethnicity or religion or otherwise, congregate as a means of enhancing their economic, social, political and/or cultural development" (Marcuse, 1997, 242). The shift from 'ghetto' to 'enclave' includes another dimension of community agency, and concerted efforts from within the community to capitalize on the enclave economy.

Chinatowns and Self-orientalization

Edward W Said articulated in 1978 that the Western construction of "The Orient" and "Orientalism" is an "integral aspect of European material civilization and culture" (Said, 1978, 10). Orientalism can be understood as the process of Western and Imperial redefinition and restructuring over the narrative discourse of the Orient to have authority over it. Said observed that Orientalism positions the Westerner in a series of perspectives in relation to the Orient, but never losing the upper hand in their positionality; such as a

scientist, a soldier, or a tourist. For many in the Chinese community, self-orientalization became a strategic tool of survival that spoke to the duality of Chinatowns as both a Chinese and Western creation. The duality which is embodied in the name Chinatown or Tangrenjie (street of people from Tang [Dynasty]), and a certain double consciousness of being for early Chinese-Canadians and Chinese-Americans as “always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” (Dubois, W. E. B, 1903). Laguerre documented how Chinatowns were often labelled as Chinatowns by outsiders instead of Chinese migrants themselves (Laguerre, 2000).

From the late 19th and 20th centuries, non-Chinese populations viewed Chinatowns as a spectacle and spaces of vice, filled with opium dens, gambling halls, and prostitution (Light, 1974) whereby the ethnic Chinese view the same space as home, spaces of comfort, a livelihood, and personal safety (Lai, 1988; Zhou, 2010; Acolin and Vitiello, 2018). While Chinatowns were, indeed, originally formed as a result of exclusion and discrimination (Marcuse, 1997), the development trajectory and preservation of Chinatowns speak to the continued efforts by leaders of the community to commodify a curated selection of oriental aesthetics in part to aid in an economic strategy that harnesses “authenticity,” “uniqueness,” and creates an illusion of multicultural diversity and urban cosmopolitan living (Lin 1998, 2010; Rath 2007) while actual ethnic spaces were quietly revitalized and disappearing (Knapp and Vojnovic, 2013; Stein, 2016). The specific community leaders can be seen as part of the ‘growth coalition’ which, in the case of Chinatown, can be tied to land-based interests and the business community broadly, as defined by Molotch (1976). The municipality can be seen as part of the greater Toronto growth coalition, which we will explore in the policy review chapter. The aesthetics of Chinatown is a self-inflicted brand of exclusion that utilizes convenient oriental symbols and plays into the conception of the exotic, marking the oriental island as distinct from the European sea that surrounds itself (Anderson, 1991; Umbach and Wishnoff, 2008).

Chinatowns however did not produce and maintain the oriental aesthetic and milieu purely as a mode of survival, but rather, the Chinese American and Chinese Canadian community is an active participant in the construction and redefinition of the orient through a

Figure 3: Trade Mark Building in San Francisco, built in 1910 following the Great Earthquake of 1906 (Photo by Madeleine Maguire, 2020 for UnSplash)

process of “self-orientalization” (Umbach and Wishnoff, 2008; Li, 2015; Liu, 2017). Kay Anderson detailed how the Chinese commercial elite in Vancouver collaborated with city officials to create a vision of Chinatown that is consistent with the exotic (Anderson, 1991). Umbach and Wishnoff documented the number of failed self-orientalizing plans, reliant on the connection between tourism and exaggerated Chinese architecture, initiated by the commercial leaders in New York’s Chinatown in pursuit of financial and political gains (Umbach and Wishnoff, 2008). Pyratt (1999) reported on the confluence of ethnic identity and commercialism in D.C’s Chinatown. In many North American cities, the ‘Chinese’ aesthetic originated from a singular model of self-orientalization pioneered in the United States.

Many early Chinatowns were identified by their majority Chinese population, but the distinct ‘Orientalist’ aesthetic of Chinatowns originated from San Francisco. The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 razed most of Old Chinatown and provided a unique opportunity to reimagine and rebuild Chinatown from a collection of western buildings into a curated selection of exoticism and oriental architecture that would “attract tourists” and

"boost business" (Rast, 2007, 53). The City of San Francisco realized that not rebuilding Chinatown would miss out on tax revenue paid by the Chinese (Ngai, 2006). Look Tin Eli, a wealthy Chinese born in Northern California and founder of the Bank of Canton, advanced a vision of Chinatown as a city of "veritable fairy palaces" which was adopted by the Chinese merchants and White property owners of San Francisco (Ngai, 2006). White architects were hired and the pagoda-inspired rooflines on the facades of Western buildings were constructed, an aesthetic that came from the "Chinese Village" at the 1893 Chicago World Fair, and became the model reproduced in Los Angeles and elsewhere across North America. By 1915, the dominant narrative of 'authentic Chinatown' moved on from depravity, crime, and danger, to "exotic architecture, performances, curios, and cuisine" (Rast, 2007, 57). Previous notions of crime had also been commodified as San Francisco's Asian merchants went as far as to hire "jobless Chinese to run through Chinatown with ketchup-smeared rubber daggers to evoke the 'Tong Wars' that many sightseers associated with the quarter" (Umbach and Wishnoff, 2008, 215). The Chinese merchants promoted this new version of 'authentic Chinatown' over narratives of crime and danger, as evidence of Chinese American respectability and culture (Rast, 2007).

Lived reality of Chinatowns: Class, Aesthetics, and Transnational Capital

As far back as the turn of the century, Chinatowns have been marked by gross coethnic class divisions and the exploitation of Chinese labour. Coethnic exploitation was apparent and documented in Vancouver's Chinatown; the class distinctions within the Chinese community in Vancouver were more distinct than European communities with the wealthiest four Chinese men (Sam Kee, Gim Lee Yuen, Lee Yuen, and Hip Tuck Luck) earning between "$150,000 to $180,000" annually in 1907 (Anderson, 1991, 75). Chinese bosses depended on the labour of their countrymen for the operation of their firms (Anderson, 1991, 75). While Chinatown was 'self-sufficient' in its provision of services, it still relied largely on the incoming capital of Chinese working outside of Chinatown as domestic workers in White neighbourhoods. From the 1880s to 1900s, most of the Chinese wage labourers relied on "labour contractors" to overcome the language barriers and

seek employment from White employers; the middlemen, a majority were Chinese firms, organized the labour supply and received a commission from their wages (Yee, 1983). Real estate was another key source of revenue for major Chinese firms, Wing Sang, who owned 16 lots, had a portfolio valued at $200,000 in 1908. An estimate of landholdings by the Chinese was valued at $2 million in Chinatown, and $1 million in Vancouver in 1908 (Yee, 1983). The narratives of Chinatowns as a microcosm of class disparities and polarization are delineated in Chapter 6 of this Major Paper.

The aesthetics of perceived authenticity and distinct identity is in contrast to the lived reality of many Chinatowns in North America. Demographic and preference changes in the 1970s resulted in an exodus of Chinese residents from the historic Chinatowns in major North American cities. In addition, new waves of Chinese migration created emerging ethnoburbs in the suburbs of major cities that function as 'satellite Chinatowns', but are not characterized as 'suburban Chinatowns' (Wei Li, 1998a, 1998b; Singer, 2009; Acolin and Vitiello, 2018). The suburbanization of Chinese communities mirrors the suburbanization of labour in North America, and the increasing number of immigrant-owned businesses operating out of suburban areas of major metropolitan cities (Li, 1998, Zhou, 1998a, b; Fong et al, 2005; Keil and Addie, 2016). From this perspective, the loci of need[1] moves out of the traditional downtown Chinatowns and into suburban municipalities and within the immediate radius of their customer base. The question remains then, what happens to a locality forced, through policies and historical linkages, to serve a population that is no longer there?

In some incidents, neighbourhoods are "ethnically packaged" as a means to attract capital and community development (Zukin, 1995; Hackworth and Rekers, 2005; Rath et al, 2017). The commodification of aspects of Asian or "Chinese" identities into consumable artifacts informs a new iteration of the "Chinatown" identity, marked predominantly by its economic use and benefits to the municipality (Li, 2015; Rath et al, 2017). In D.C's Chinatown, the Chinatown Steering Committee devised a plan to preserve the neighbourhood's character by insisting that new businesses use Chinese characters and dec-

1. Where the customers are

oration irrespective of their commercial use while more and more Chinese businesses cannot afford to stay (Pyratt, 1999; Lou, 2007). Chinese language signs by non-Chinese businesses include CVS, Starbucks, and Urban Outfitters (Lou, 2007). Further readings on the semiotic landscape and commodification of signage are documented by Leeman and Modan (2009) and Lou (2007).

The commodification of D.C's Chinatown as an aesthetic (through its largely decorative signage) brings about the new iteration of historic Chinatowns as a symbolic enclave (Pang and Rath, 2007). Most of the D.C Chinatown's approximate 500 residents live in the Wah Luck House, a low-income housing project built in 1982 to accommodate the residents who were displaced by the development of the MCI Centre, whom are now isolated in the Disneyfied Chinatown with few social resources to support the predominantly senior population; the same population is unable to afford anywhere else outside of this subsidized building (Nakamura, 2011; Choi, 2018). Jing Chun Li, 83, who immigrated in 1997 commented,

> "When I first came here, there were 10 Chinese restaurants and two grocery stores, and they carried many things. Now there's none. Chinatown has only the name. The reality is not there anymore: just the art and the [Chinese] symbols on the buildings" (Nakamura, 2011).

Similarly, Acolin and Vitiello noted that the remaining Chinese residents of Boston's Chinatown are lower-income and are at risk of displacement. The neighbourhood, meanwhile, is trending predominantly to higher-income households that are ethnically diverse (Acolin and Vitiello, 2018).

At the same time, Chinatown can also be characterized as transnational spaces of flow as defined by Castells (1996) and Glick-Schiller et al., (1992), in which global relations, social, familial, organizational, economic and so on, ground themselves into the physical space. The transnational qualities of Chinatown make space a highly desirable location for a transnational class of migrants, restructuring urban space through a new class of Chinatown residents (Wong, 2017; Wong and Ang, 2017; Li, 2015). Today, Chinatowns

are no longer enclaves hosting predominant Chinese or Asian immigrants (as is the case with Chinatown West further on in the paper), but sites for the localization of transnational capital (Ley, 2010). Many contemporary Chinese immigrants are “transmigrants” (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 1995; Basch et al., 1994) whose identity spans multiple localities and “parachute kids” who go to school in a foreign country while their parents reside in Asia (Li, 2005). The new transnational migrant renews the conversation on Chinatowns and gentrification; just because you are Chinese, are you owed a piece of Chinatown? In many ways, gentrification is embedded into the future of Chinatown by proxy of its desirable location, and the return of capital into the city.

Gentrification

The process of gentrification can be understood as the displacement of lower-income households (Glass, 1964); accompanied by a simultaneous urban restructuring of urban spaces which impedes the “ability of low-income residents to move into neighbourhoods that once provided ample supplies of affordable living arrangements” (Newman and Wyly, 2006, 26). Gentrification is increasingly fueled by the embeddedness of cities in the global economy and operates on multiple scales. There are two facets of gentrification at play in Chinatown West, firstly the theory of the “rent gap,” followed by urban amenities, and finally, the demographic factors of reinvestment. Smith (1979) introduced gentrification as a function of the “rent gap” between potential and actual ground level rent embodied in existing land use, and the rent gap is created through capital depreciation and urban development and expansion. On a high level, Smith notes that gentrification is a back to the city movement “but of capital, not people” (Smith, 1979, 547). Important to the return of capital is the role of policymakers and their influence on the urban landscape. The neoliberal “roll back” of public investment and simultaneous “roll-out” of revitalization efforts and increasing urban entrepreneurial efforts aided in the distinctive making and remaking of urban spaces (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Harvey, 1989). Tonny Louie, the Chair of the Chinatown BIA, was an appellant in an Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) case to approve a zoning bylaw amendment that would increase density on Spadina Ave, Between College and Dundas Street, from 2.5 times maximum coverage to 3.5 times (Chan, 2001).

The second component is the idea of the urban ‘amenities’ as an impetus for consumption and attracting high-skilled professionals, a phenomenon exemplified by Florida (2002)’s creative class. Florida discusses the rise of the creative economy and the shifting meaning of work in the new knowledge economy (Florida, 2002). Important to our discussion, “the Creative Class is strongly oriented to large cities and regions that offer a variety of economic opportunities, a stimulating environment and amenities for every possible life” (Florida, 2002, 11). The creative class prefers a place with a “distinctive character” which describes the aesthetic ‘distinctiveness’ of Chinatowns (Florida, 2002, 15). The same process can also be described as the “youthification” (Moos, 2014; Moos, 2016; Moos et al, 2019) which “occurs as young adults increase in the share of the total population in specific neighbourhoods” and denotes generational segregation of uses (Moos, 2016, 2904). Youthification and gentrification are not mutually exclusive, youthification does not necessarily denote a class-based displacement, but a general orientation towards “contemporary lifestyle, demography and socio-economic condition of the young ‘playing out in the landscape’” (Moos, 2016, 2904).

Florida’s note on the distinctiveness of character is mirrored by Levy (1986) in their studies of the alternative approaches to gentrification, one of the pillars is the attractive urban amenity and “character neighbourhoods” (Levy, 1986). While it’s true that Chinatown West has a distinctive character, arguably, the neighbourhood is less connected to the direct investment of the creative class than influenced by the developments elsewhere in the city targeting the creative class, that is, the “condofication” of Toronto (Lehrer and Wiedtz, 2009; Walks, 2014). Such areas of interest include the College St and Bay St intersection, developments around Spadina Ave and King St, and the Alexandra Park revitalization. As such, the interconnectedness of Toronto’s urban development regime is exemplified in Chinatown West and the condo boom.

The combination of the structural policy change and the packaging of cities as amenity spaces speaks to the core of gentrification as a process of displacement. The displacement can be characterized as people or uses, from the spaces. In Chapter 5, we will build upon the theoretical framework of gentrification in this section, and apply it to the process-

es happening in Chinatown.

Condofication and the financialization of housing

The studentification of Chinatown is preceded by the condo boom of the late 1990s, and the reurbanization of the central city (Lehrer and Wieditz, 2009). The condofication of Downtown Toronto was enabled by specific municipal and provincial policies that directed intensification to Urban Growth Centres and former industrial areas, such as King St and Spadina Ave, and the amendment to zoning by-laws that permitted mixed-use developments (Lehrer and Wieditz, 2009). The deregulation of zoning by-laws and weakening of rent control spurred loft conversions and residential condo developments which accelerated beginning in 2001, and a simultaneous trend of large buildings exceeding 350 units and diminishing unit sizes; from 2001 onwards, condo developments begin marketing themselves as offering a new form of privatized urban living that functions both as the impetus of urban development as well as addressing the growing number of young professionals in the FIRE sector (finance, insurance, real estate) (Rosen and Walks, 2014; Lehrer and Wieditz, 2009). Although a proportion of the newly constructed condos were owner-occupied, many became substitutes for rental units, the construction of which has decreased since the 1990s parallel to a rise in condominium developments (Rosen and Walks, 2014). The condo boom predates the present studentification, however, it is important to note the contributions of the condo boom to vertical studentification.

Studentification

Smith (2005) defined studentification as an “influx of students within privately-rented accommodation in particular neighbourhoods” (Smith, 2005, 73). While students are characterized as marginal gentrifiers (Hubbard, 2009; Rose, 2004), the creation of a new class of purpose-built student accommodations (PBSA) targeting students raises important questions about the evolving role of students, and even distinctions between students within the student body (Chatterton, 1999; Smith and Holt, 2007). PBSAs builds upon the financialization of housing that began with single-family residential properties and accel-

erated with multi-family residential properties (August and Walks, 2017; Walks, 2014). PBSAs typically locate near post-secondary institutions or build near an amenity-rich area desirable to students (Chatterton, 1999; Revington and August, 2020, 865; Hubbard, 2009). The process of studentification is amplified by the internationalization of the HEI sector in which HEIs functions as a form of place-bound institutional actor that facilitates and enables the acceleration of the knowledge economy in a process that exceeds its territorial boundaries (Huggins et al., 2008; Deiaco et al., 2012; (Robertson et al, 2016)). The connection between the transnational HEI and the hyper-local neighbourhoods may be an advantageous relationship at first, but what happens to these neighbourhoods when the global supply chain of students is disrupted? Who will live in the gated student communities?

The market for PBSAs has recently been recognized by investors as an untapped and lucrative market (Revington and August, 2019). In Canada, there are 1.3 million university students (2017), half living with family, 16% live in campus residence, 33% live in off-campus rental housing, and only 3% of students live in PBSAs (CHC, 2015a; CUSC, 2011). The 33% living-off campus is a prime opportunity for investors to capitalize and shift to PBSAs. The by-the-bed leasing model generates “higher returns than conventional rental housing” (Smith, 2005; Smith and Hubbard, 2014) and parental guarantors guarantee payment (CHC, 2015a). The newest wave of student housing extends beyond the horizontal spread of studentification as documented by Smith (2005) to vertical studentification. The ‘vertical’ studentified community manifests in a high density or tower typology and is linked to the formation of the neoliberal knowledge economy and the condo-ism (Holton and Mouat, 2020; Rosen and Walks, 2013). Vertical studentification provides a form of packaged lifestyle that mimics condo living. At CampusOne, a high-rise PBSA, students pay $1,700 USD (in 2017) per room and before a meal plan for “condominium-quality units, high-speed WiFi, fitness and games rooms and a host of programming from yoga classes to animal-petting events” (McFarland, 2018).

In Short

Chinatown West embodies and grounds contemporary debates and findings into the hyper-local. The confluence of each key theme arises from the highly political nature of Chinatown, and the transnational dimensions of a very old space, an unassuming relic of the 19th and 20th centuries. Students are a new actor, but their impact on neighbourhoods falls within the already established processes of globalization. As such, students are the visible component of a long factory process that begins with government deregulation of land-use, funnels through the entrepeneurial and transnational HEIs, and ends with a student looking for housing. Why is there shortgage of student housing? Why is Chinatown being gentrified? These questions have long answers that touch each corner of the globe. In the next section, we will provide a review of key policies which impact Chinatown West. In particular, we will analyze how municipal policies are functioning in tangent and in reaction to the key themes outlined in this literature review.

4. Policy Review

The City of Toronto is one of the fastest-growing cities by population in North America (Clayton et al, 2021) and in the first quarter of 2021, Toronto accounted for the majority of total cranes (43%) amongst the 1 largest North American cities (Sewell, 2021). The growth is not random, but an intentional strategy from the provincial government of Ontario and the City of Toronto, to direct growth into the downtown core and other strategic nodes within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Molotch (1976) defined localities as enablers of growth, and "attempt to maintain the kind of 'business climate' that attracts industry" (Molotch, 1976). The fortunes of many, to grow or not to grow, hinges on the land-use decisions of municipalities. As noted in the literature review, the condo boom of the 90s and 2000s is a byproduct of municipal and provincial policies that saw the redesignation of former industrial districts into mixed-use, and the deregulation of zoning by-laws. In this section, we examine how the growth pressure experienced by Chinatown West is intentional and by design through a review of provincial and municipal land-use policies. We will also examine heritage policies as growth tensions in Chinatown incorporate elements of heritage preservation, and is an emerging challenge in contemporary discourse.

For this policy review, the following documents have been consulted in detail, but this is not an exhaustive scan of policies specific to the themes outlined in the literature review. The following policies will be discussed in detail:

- A Place to Grow (2020)
- Ontario Heritage Act (1990)
- City of Toronto Official Plan
    - Relevant Secondary Plans and Site and Area Specific Policies (SASP).

A Place to Grow (2020) and Planned Growth

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) or the Growth Plan is provincial legislation that manages growth and development in a way that "supports economic prosperity, protects the environment, and helps communities achieve a high quality of life" (Ontario, 3). The Growth Plan governs the "Greater Golden Horseshoe," a swath of land bounded by Lake Ontario to the south, followed by the Greenbelt Area, and other municipalities north of the Greenbelt. The Growth Plan literally dictate and guide growth through the setting growth targets, whereby growth is linked to intensification.

Under the Growth Plan, municipalities are required to develop a strategy of achieving minimum intensification targets in built-up areas to promote strategic growth and development. The Growth Plan sets up urban growth centres as focal points of investments and regional service facilities, transit, and employment centres, and urban growth centres in the City of Toronto will achieve a minimum target density of 400 residents and jobs per hectare (Section 2.2.3 Policy 2(a)). In addition, major transit station areas and priority transit corridors will have a minimum density target of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare for those that are serviced by subways, and 160 residents and jobs for those that are serviced by light rail transit (such as streetcars) (Section 2.2.4 Policy 3 (a) and (b)). Municipalities are encouraged to go beyond the minimum targets where appropriate (Section 5.2.5, Policy 1). Downtown Toronto is an urban growth centre and surrounded by existing higher-order transit, and Chinatown is located within the urban growth centre boundaries. This policy makes apparent that the growth pressure experienced in Downtown Toronto is not random, but actively planned and measured.

While housing is addressed in the Growth Plan (Section 2.2.6) there is no clear mention of specific housing or affordable housing targets in strategic growth areas. Discussions of complete communities touch on the importance of a range and mix of housing types, households, and incomes, but no concrete targets. Affordable housing is defined whereby the purchase price results in accommodation costs not exceeding 30% of gross annual household income, and when the purchase price is at least 10% below the average pur-

chase price of a resale unit in the regional market area, thus addressing new construction (Growth Plan, 65). Affordable rental is defined as rent not exceeding 30% of gross annual household income for low and moderate-income households, or a “unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area” (Growth Plan, 65). Many had critiqued the definition of affordability relative to annual household income, especially in relation to an area of high growth and intensification, is insufficient.

Under “Protecting what is valuable” (Section 4), the Growth Plan outlines under section 4.2.7 that policies pertaining to cultural heritage resources, whereby cultural heritage value or interest is determined by the “important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people.” Cultural heritage landscape refers to the Ontario Heritage Act (1990) for an assessment of value, or as identified by other levels of government. Policy 1 states that “cultural heritage resources will be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas” (Section 4.2.7 Policy 1) but no nuance on what is a sense of place, and how can conservation benefit communities.

The Ontario Heritage Act (1990)

The Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) sets out priorities and programs for the conservation, protection, and reservation of the heritage of Ontario. The OHA speaks specifically to “property” related to “real property and all buildings and structures thereon” as well as “personal property” pertaining to the Ontario Heritage Trust, and an expanded understanding of “property” to include ruins, burial mounds, petroglyphs, and earthworks under archaeological value. The OHA is under appeal with components of the Act effective July 1st, however, for the purposes of this paper, the focus is on the 9/06 evaluation that suffices Section 29 of the OHA on whether a property has cultural heritage value or interests. 9/06 evaluation is detailed in the table on the next page. The intersection of planned growth and heritage conservation is an interesting discussion, especially as we move to question what *exactly* is heritage, and whether heritage too, is a tool of growth.

A property can be designated under Section 29 of the OHA if one or more of the above cri-

teria is met. Properties that qualify through 9/06 are mapped out in Table 1. After a property is designated under Section 29, a by-law designating the property will be passed and registered on title; the by-law includes a description of the property, reasons for designation, and may include a list of heritage attributes (City of Toronto). Designating a property under Section 29 only preserves elements of interest (as noted in the Heritage Easement Agreement and the by-law) and not the use. Additional conservation considerations, such as the integrity of the heritage building, impacts the preservation of the structure although there is no way to entrench that the building must be conserved for a specific use. The 9/06 evaluation is contentious as tests such as 'contextual value' are highly dependent on the entity or heritage consultant conducting the 9/06 evaluation, bringing up questions of, well, what is contextual value? Who defines contextual value? What if histories are not recorded or acknowledged?

In addition, the heritage protection afforded to buildings makes them potentially more difficult and costly to redevelop over empty lots and brownfield sites. It is questionable whether heritage protection, especially heritage protection on properties fronting onto a major commercial street zoned mixed-use and adjacent to future major infrastructure projects, benefits the communities they serve. As mixed-use areas are the largest receptors of growth in Toronto as well as new development, and the city is bounded by low-rise residential neighbourhoods, limiting development potential along these spaces does not equate to less high-rise developments and complete communities, but more costly developments to accommodate the retention or rehabilitation of heritage properties or a NIMBY effort mobilizing behind the value of cultural heritage landscapes (Micallef, 2021; Micallef, 2018). Mixed-use neighbourhoods will be discussed in the next section. In a sense, heritage properties do not actually limit growth, but rather contributes to the facade of authenticity; an empty gesture towards the community without actual tools of preserving the use of the space.

As Figure 6 illustrates, very few properties in the commercial study area are listed in the City of Toronto heritage register, whereas the properties in the adjacent Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District (HCD) study is where the heritage properties are

Criteria	Y/N	Reasoning
1. The property has design value or physical value because it,		
i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,		
ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or		
iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.		
2. The property has historical value or associative value because it,		
i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,		
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or		
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.		
3. The property has contextual value because it,		
i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,		
ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or		
iii. is a landmark. O. Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2).		

Table 1: 9/06 Evaluation as part of Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

located. Heritage designation has previously privileged wealthy neighbourhoods; the recent discussions on Little Jamaica renewed the spotlight on heritage protection as a tool of wealthy and resource abundant neighbourhoods (such as Leaside, Leslieville, and Cabbagetown), over other spaces occupied by people of colour (Bozikovic, 2021). In the Dragon Centre Stories, a community heritage and storytelling project, the instigator, Howard Tam, noted that the cultural value of Dragon Centre as North America's first indoor Chinese-focused shopping centre (built 1984) was completely overlooked in the redevelopment process and only later recognized by way of a plaque (Lee-Shanok, 2019). The Centre is one of many spaces of heritage not linked to the built form, but how space is used and the value of these landscapes to the community (Tam, in interview Law, 2019). In a panel hosted by Myseum in 2021, Tam notes the intangible heritage value of strip malls in suburban communities, and how these mixed-use spaces are the sites of living heritage over the brownstones in Cabbagetown. These emerging challenges specific to heritage and its present inseparability from the built form, alludes to a shift in how planning ought to approach heritage. The conclusion, inevitably, moves beyond the built form and reasserts that the most vibrant spaces are where the people are, and the people are in places they can afford.

As such, can heritage through the OHA be a viable tool regardless, for Chinatown? A 9/06 assessment provides inconsistent assessment over the streetscape of Chinatown; the eclectic mix of properties along the main roads do not individually fit within the criteria of the assessment, and the assessment of 9/06 over the streetscape is spotty. What is the feel of Chinatown and how much does the built form actually contribute to the pedestrian experience? Similarly as noted above, for whom and by who defines contextual value?

However, in terms of neighbourhood development and preservation, it seems that heritage is one of the many tools Chinatown must utilize regardless of potential adverse impacts if Chinatown wishes to remain in its current form. In mapping out the relevant municipal policies that pertain to downtown Toronto, it is quickly apparent that the study area lacks both site-specific protection, such as a secondary plan, and heritage recognition (see Figure 6). The area outlined in orange is the broader residential study boundary and

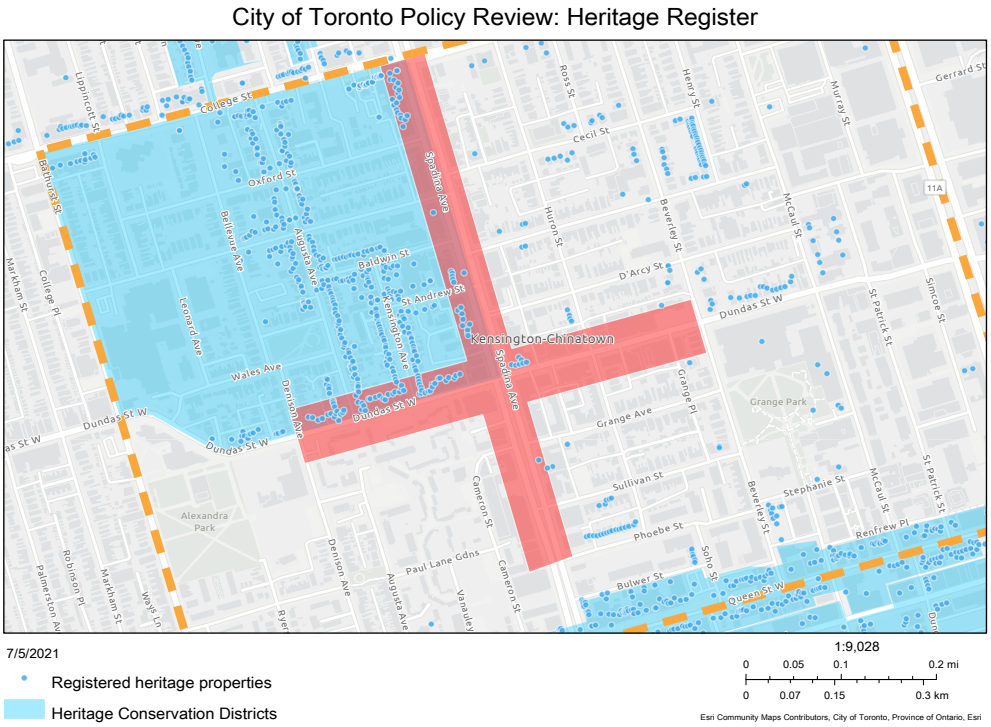


Figure 4: Map depicting heritage properties, heritage conservation districts, and the study area.

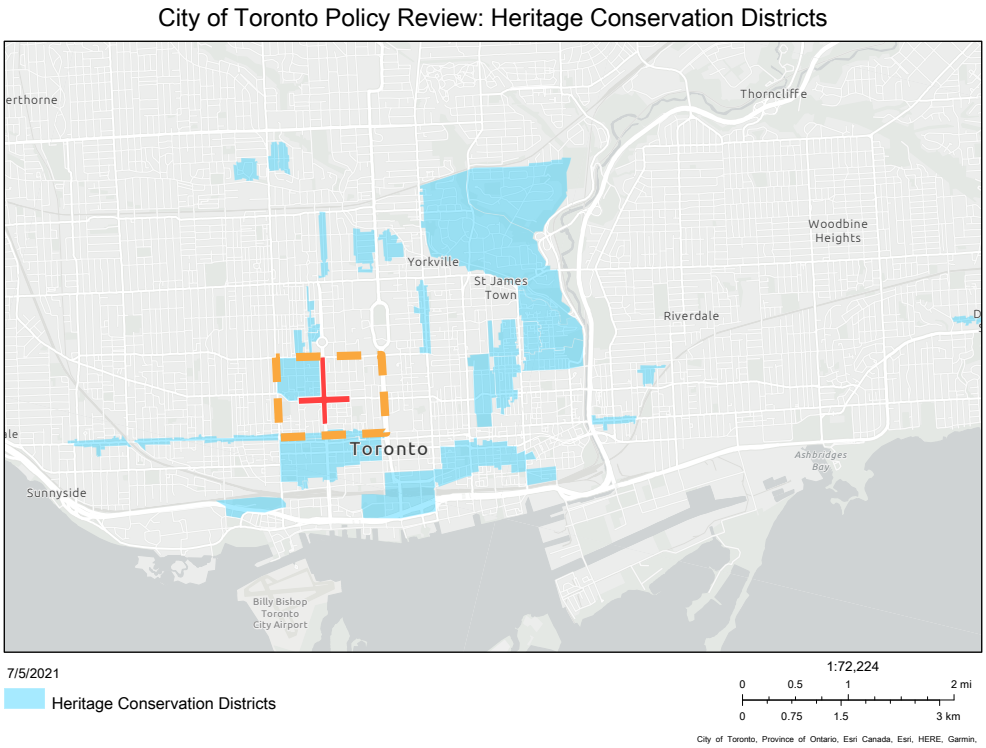


Figure 5: Map depicting heritage conservation districts and Downtown Toronto (both approved HCDs and under appeal)

the area shaded red is the Chinatown commercial boundary. The Chinatown commercial boundary is an expanded version of the Chinatown BIA boundary, which is the common shorthand for Chinatown. Chinatown is located adjacent to a number of ongoing heritage conservation district studies, as well as secondary plans. The area lacks policy direction to mitigate growth pressures and ways to manage and maintain the cultural heritage of the space. More on the policy gap will be addressed in the Official Plan, Chapter 6.

On June 8, 2021, Council request the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to identify policy and program options to protect Chinatown's cultural identity, affordable cultural spaces and local retail through a Cultural District Plan or other mechanisms, and to report back on the initial findings to the Economic and Community Development Committee by the end of 2021 (MM34.22). At this current point in time (July 2021), Chinatown and the heritage sector continue to be in flux. Longitudinal studies on cultural districts in Toronto are needed to evaluate the long-term policy outcomes.

The Official Plan

The City of Toronto's Official Plan is "intended to ensure that the City of Toronto evolves, improves and realizes its full potential in areas such as transit, land use development, and the environment" (City of Toronto, 2019b). For the purposes of this paper, we will examine Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4, Chapter 6, and Chapter 7.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 of the Official Plan delineates a growth management strategy that is tied to Toronto as a competitive location and a node in the regional economy. Policies under Chapter 2 specifically promote density and compact centres as supported by transit; the integration of land-use and transportation is a major theme. Chapter 2 defines the Downtown Toronto Urban Growth Centre as a major economic driver, and Section 2.2.1, Policy 7 specifically outlines development that complements the goals of the growth centre as set out in the Growth Plan. Section 2.2.1 Policy 10 and 11 outlines the preservation of the cultural heritage of Downtown, and stipulates the need for guidelines as to shape new development to the "historic or distinct" character of the neighbourhood (Section 2.2.1,

Policy 11). Chapter 2 of the Official Plan reinforces the growth targets of the Growth Plan, and further illuminates that growth is planned, designed, and not spontaneous.

Chapter 2 also defined “healthy neighbourhoods” and made it apparent that “by focusing most new residential development in the Downtown, the Centres, along Avenues, and in other strategic locations, we can preserve the shape and feel of our neighbourhoods” (Section 2.3.1). Section 2.3.1 Policy 1 acknowledges that neighbourhoods are “low rise and low-density residential areas that are considered to be physically stable,” a characterization often mobilized by community members against new development adjacent to “neighbourhoods.” Development close to neighbourhoods must be compatible with the neighbourhood and not infringe on the enjoyment of these stable communities. The challenge with focusing development along strategic centres and maintaining neighbourhoods as stable communities, creates an imbalance of where growth is directed, and the best use of land, especially considering the pattern of land-use within the City of Toronto. More on the allocation of land in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 of the Official Plan “[brings] to life our vision of a successful city by focusing on the built environment, the human environment, the natural environment, economic health and new neighbourhoods. All applications for development will be evaluated against the policies and criteria in this Chapter to ensure that we make the best possible development choices” (Chapter 3, preamble). Section 3.1.5 addresses heritage conservation, the details of heritage conservation analysis is detailed in the Ontario Heritage Act section of this policy review.

Chapter 3 also details the plans for a strong and diverse civic economy which reinforces Richard Florida’s notion of the creative class (see literature review). Section 3.5.2 “Creating a Cultural Capital” draws a connection between elements of the creative economy, the Official Plan contains policies that support the city’s Cultural Plan which will “position Toronto as a ‘Creative City,’ a leading international culture capital” (Section 3.5.2). The influence of ‘youthification’ is apparent in this section. Cultural industries are defined as

“[originating] in individual creativity, skill and talent and have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and advancement of intellectual property, including design, broadcasting, film video and photography, music and the visual and performing arts, publishing, software, computer games and electronic publishing” (Section 3.5.2). The multiple uses of ‘cultural’ to denote an industry, in comparison to the way ‘cultural heritage’ and ‘cultural heritage landscapes’ is used in the OHA, draws a distinction between commodifiable culture and culture as histories and places. The incongruity of the ‘cultural industry’ and ‘cultural heritage’ inadvertently pits together a growing industry and places with cultural capital (such as immigrant communities, former immigrant communities, and so on), as seen in gentrification discussions on Geary Avenue (Mok, 2018). Cultural industries and cultural heritage, can, in essence, be the same thing, but the challenge is the city’s own plans to project cultural industries as ‘outward facing’ instead of ties to a specific community or heritage.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of the Official Plan “contains the land use designations which apply across the City, which together with the land use maps implement the strategy for managing change set out in Chapters 2 and 3” (Chapter 4, preamble). Chapter 4 expands upon the conflict noted in the Chapter 2 policy review regarding stable neighbourhoods. Development in established neighbourhoods, as noted in Section 4.1 Policy 5, needs to “reinforce the existing physical character of each geographic neighborhoods” (Section 4.1 Policy 5). Intensification of land on major streets in neighbourhoods are not encouraged under the Plan, and any potential use that exceeds the as-of-right zoning, must be reviewed relative to the criteria set out in Policy 5 (Section 4.1, Policy 7). Policies limiting intensification in neighbourhoods, such as the policies noted above, funnel growth into the 5.2% of total City of Toronto land (634.04 km2) zoned mixed-use areas (Dixon, 2020). The “Yellow Belt” or land recognized as stable neighbourhoods and zoned for low-rise residential properties, comprises of 35.4% of the total City of Toronto land (Dixon, 2020). All other viable land to accommodate the increase in growth, densification, and intensification as prescribed in the Growth Plan, has little place to go other than the 5.2% of mixed-use areas, employment areas (12.9%), institutional areas (1%), and regeneration areas (0.7%).

The collective percentage of land in which growth can occur is 19.8% of total developable land, which is minimal in comparison to the 60.6% of land in which the Official Plan actively protects and reinforces the existing physical character.

For Chinatown, which is located in a mixed-use area, the intensification is inevitable and a byproduct of a system of land-use that simultaneously discourages intensification while actively planning for growth. It is a disadvantageous outcome of an advantageous but unplanned location.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 contains “the Secondary Plans, which are more detailed local development policies to guide growth and change in a defined area of the City” (Chapter 6 preamble). Figure 7 details the secondary plans adjacent to Chinatowns. As noted in the previous policy sections, Downtown Toronto has specific density targets as per the Growth Plan, and additional policies that support density and compactness along transit lines. In addition to the challenges associated with the mixed-use designation along Spadina Ave and Dundas Street and growth (as discussed in the Chapter 4 section), the Chinatown neighbourhood lacks any specific secondary plan to guide development in the area as to mitigate the growth pressures in the space. This paper identifies the policy gap in the lack of neighbourhood specific protection, however, more analysis is needed on the surrounding secondary plans to determine the impact of secondary plans on neighbourhood development.

The University of Toronto Secondary Plan will not be discussed in detail as it is undergoing revisions. The secondary plan will be discussed in later sections through an interview with the planner updating the secondary plan.

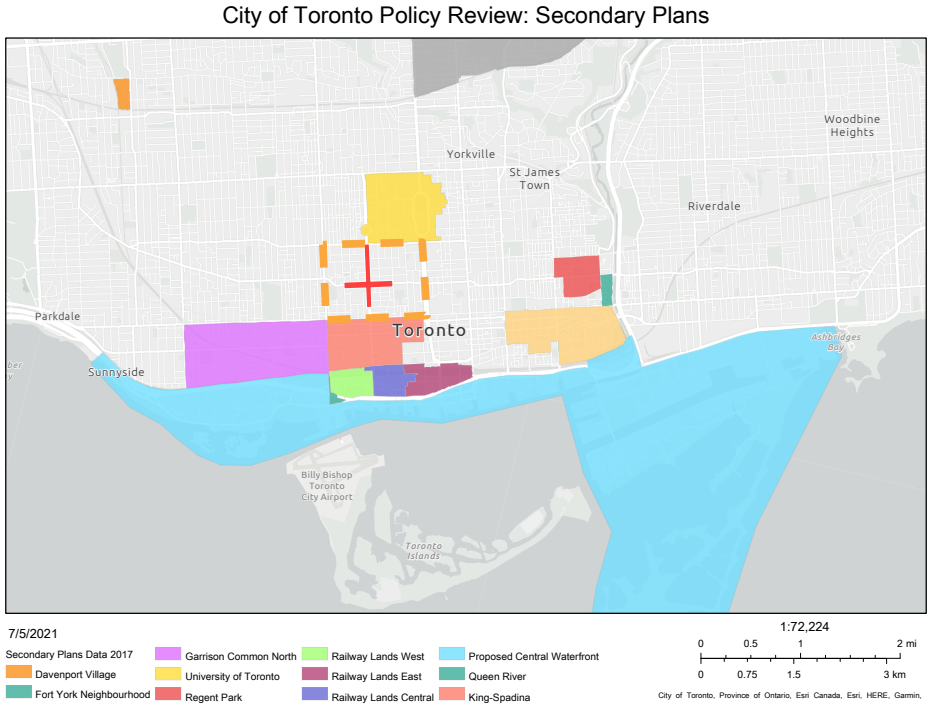
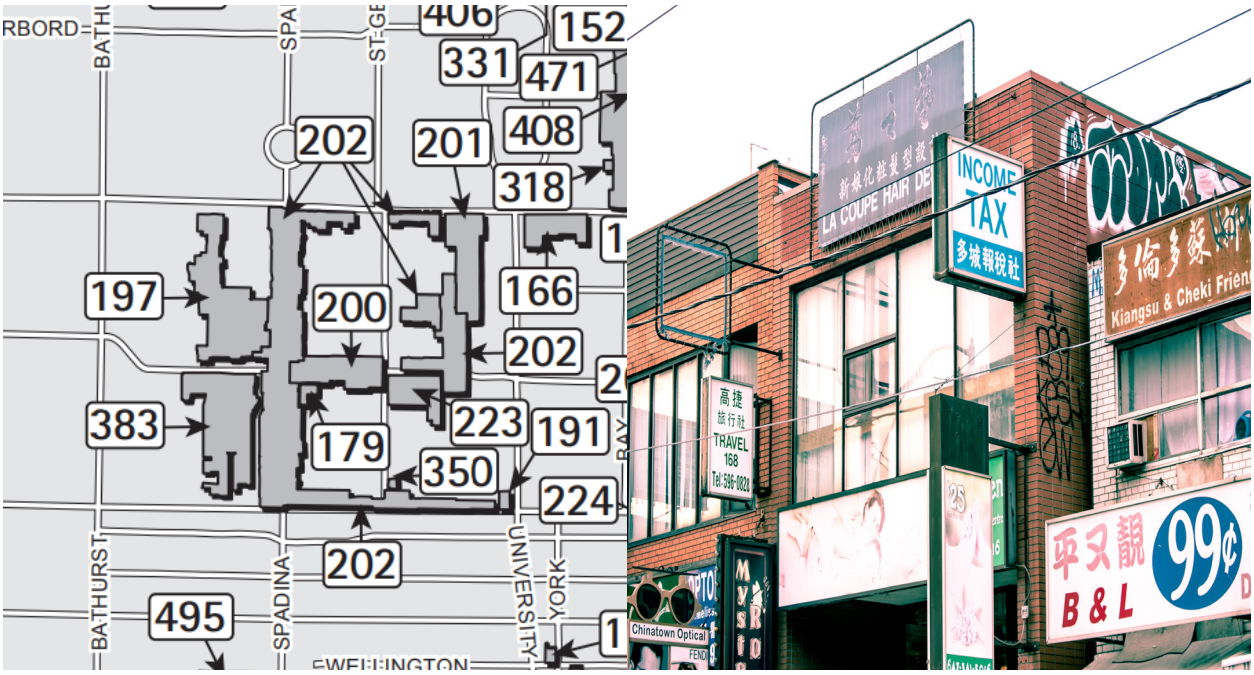


Figure 6: Map depicting the study area and surrounding secondary plans.

Chapter 7

There are three SASP that pertains to Chinatown, but SASP 200 is the most relevant to Chinatown's future development. SASP 200 states:

The presence of SASP 200 brings into question how much of the 'character' of Chinatown is a planned aesthetic enforced onto the community, or a genuine neighbourhood characteristic. The 'decorative elements' which often denotes the Chinese language signage circles back to D.C's Chinatown and the signage that reinforces a sense of diversity. It is unclear how can SASPs support the unique mixed-use of Chinatown without turning these qualities into a burden upon the community.



200. 283 and 285 Spadina Avenue, and 393-479, and 396-484 Dundas Street West

Development will be compatible in form and character including decorative elements, with the three and four-storey buildings generally built to the street line often with closely spaced split level entrances to the sidewalk.

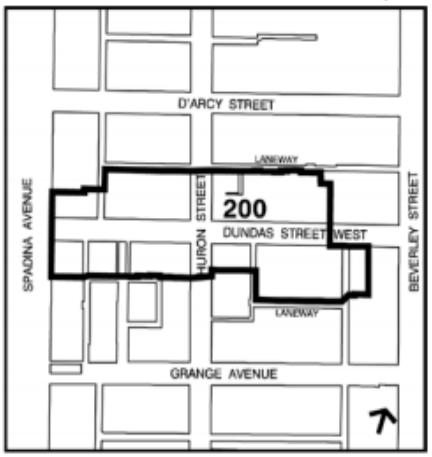


Figure 7: Left - The SASP map from the City of Toronto Official Plan; Right - vertical signs on Dundas Street, within SASP 200.

In Short

This chapter illustrates that the growth pressure experienced by Chinatown is actively planned through provincial and municipal policies. The policy review illuminates the disconnect between planning for stable neighbourhoods and planning for intensification. Finally, the policy review identifies the policy gap in Chinatown, while at the same time, the policy that may have shaped the aesthetic of the neighbourhood, bringing into question if the authentic elements of Chinatown, may in fact be another municipally planned illusion.

5. Real v. Perceived Gentrification

In the literature review, we established that the core of gentrification is defined as displacement, which can materialize in the displacement of people and or uses. One of the key tensions in the Chinatown conversations is understanding what is gentrification and what are the indicators of gentrification. This chapter provides an overview of the demographics of Chinatown, followed by a discussion on the gentrification indicators collected from interview data. The neighbourhood profile is a summary of the data from the City of Toronto and drawn from Census data, which may not be fully representative of the real neighbourhood demographics. The interview data is a collection of responses when asked “what does gentrification look like to you” and posed to community members, city staff, and the local councillor, in order to bridge the gap in the varying and often conflicting understanding of gentrification.

The Demographics of Chinatown in 2016

The Kensington-Chinatown (KC) neighbourhood is an area bounded by College Street to the north, Bathurst Street to the west, Queen Street West to the south, and University Avenue to the east. The neighbourhood is often characterized as an immigrant neighbourhood, however, the demographics indicate that 43.6% of the neighbourhood is immigrants and only 4.8% are recent immigrants, compared to 51.2% and 7% respectively at the city level. The majority of the residents of KC were born in Canada (49%) and of those who immigrated, 43% of the residents arrived between 1981 - 2010 with a majority immigrated before 2000. Only 5% of the population immigrated post-2011. This shows that the immigrants living in KC have been in Canada for some period of time, and it is not a neighbourhood of predominantly new immigrants. The top place of birth of all immigrants is China, and consistent with the City of Toronto.

KC is a younger neighbourhood, whereby 49% of the population is working age (25-54), and 75% of the population is under 54; 25% of the population is 55 and older. In compar-

ison to the City of Toronto where 72% of the demographic is under 54 years old. While KC is a younger neighbourhood, it is a shrinking neighbourhood and the population has decreased by 3% since 2011. Much like the City of Toronto, the average household size has been shrinking in the last decade. Of all the households in KC, 71% of households are renters, which is high compared to the city average of 47.2%. The KC neighbourhood also shows a higher percentage of one-person households (47%) and never married (52%) compared to the City average (32% and 35% respectively), and lower than the city average (43%) of married people in KC (25%).

The income profile of the neighbourhood skews on the lower end compared to the City of Toronto average. Figure 10 shows that the neighbourhood is a low-income neighbourhood, with a higher than city average number of residents receiving income from government transfers and living in poverty. The median shelter costs for renter and owner households are lower than the city average, however 51.1% of the renter households respondents indicated that they live in unaffordable housing (compared to 46.8% at the city level); 41% of owner households noted that housing is unaffordable, compared to 27.4% at the city level. 48% of households in KC spend more than 30% of their income on shelter costs, which is higher than the city's rate at 37%. In KC, 30.1% of respondents live in subsidized housing.

The demographic data shows that KC is a neighbourhood of younger people, predominantly tenant households, and an unaffordable neighbourhood for tenants and homeowners alike. The neighbourhood is lower income with a higher percentage of people living in poverty than the city average. The neighbourhood profile indicates that KC is not an immigrant dominant neighbourhood, with a lower than city average percentage of immigrants, and no longer a primary immigrant reception centre as most immigrants living in KC immigrated prior to 2000 and a lower recent immigrant percentage than the city average. In comparison, the neighbourhood of Willowdale East in North York comprises 14.7% of recent immigrants. These statistics on immigration patterns appear to be correlated with existing scholarship on the suburbs as the primary immigrant reception centre in the Greater Toronto Area. The data illuminate that the core needs of KC are housing

Income	Neighbourhood	Toronto
Median household income	$44,216	$65,829
Median family income	$61,593	$82,859
Median FY/FT work income	$49,587	$55,246
Without income	2.6%	4.7%
Income from gov't transfers	11.6%	9.3%
Poverty (MBM)	40.3%	21.9%
Low income (LIM-AT)	33.2%	20.2%
Low income (LICO-AT)	34.7%	17.4%

Figure 8: Income in Kensington-Chinatown (Source: City of Toronto, 2016a)

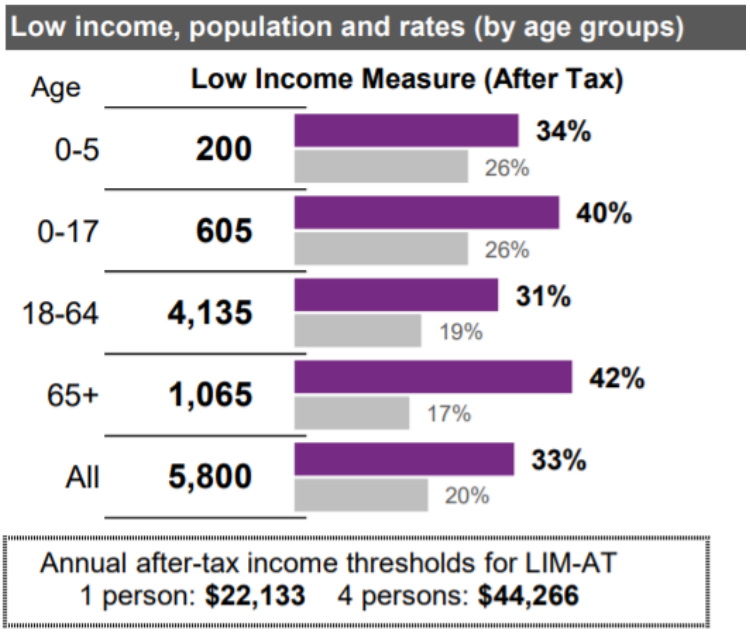


Figure 9: Income in Kensington-Chinatown by age (Source: City of Toronto, 2016a)

and specifically rental housing.

The limitations of the census data are that it does not account for those who use the space, and undocumented residents and workers in KC. More research is needed to understand the demographics of KC users, in addition to residents.

What does gentrification look like?

A key challenge that emerged from the interview data is the multiple understanding of gentrification and gentrification indicators. Building on the demographic profile of KC, this section seeks to provide an overview of how each actor identifies gentrification indicators. The focus on gentrification indicators, such as loss of small retail space or homogeneity of the streetscape, spur more productive policy interventions, and aid in bridging the gap between city staff and community members. By positioning the gentrification trends and indicators alongside demographic data, we can see whether or not there is alignment between perceived gentrification and actual community needs.

The interview question, “what does gentrification looks like to you” was posed to city staff and community members only.

Small retail space

A number of respondents noted that a major indicator of imminent gentrification is the loss of small retail spaces or large retail spaces in new developments. A community member and urban planner commented that the only specific types of tenants can afford a retail unit with large square footage.

> “From a technical perspective, I definitely refer to like the unit size of commercial businesses, recognizing that like the, only big franchises can really afford a unit that has like tons of square feet. It’s like a strategic move for a developer to purposefully create smaller commercial units to attract entrepreneurs and people, kind of just like starting up their business.” (community member interview, March 16, 2021)

A staff member at the City of Toronto reiterate that the loss of small retail spaces is an

Figure 10: The Hsing Kuang Centre, or commonly known as the Bright Pearl in 2015 (left) and 2019 (right) (Google Streetview 2021).

indicator of gentrification:

> "For me, it is more the loss of small retail units. That's what I feel. Once you see those bigger units, bigger franchises or even it doesn't even have to be a franchise, but, you know, a much more upscale, bigger restaurant, that, that for me. So, it's the sign of gentrification because I don't know what happens on the upper floors, and I don't know the nature of the residential units at all, but on the streets when I'm walking there, the retail units are the most obvious. It's very different when you have this environment of smaller storefronts with mom-and-pop businesses or with store names that you have never heard of. It's it's. When that's lost. I think that's the first sign of gentrification." (city staff interview, March 8, 2021)

And reiterating that for the pedestrian, often the loss of small retail space changes the streetscape and can be sensed more readily than the residential or commercial units above if any. Small retail spaces are also connected with affordability as some businesses cannot afford the rent of a large retail unit, nor the outfitting costs.

Changing neighbourhood aesthetic

The change in neighbourhood character and aesthetic is a recurring theme in the gentrification discussion. Specific to Chinatown, the redevelopment of the former Bright Pearl restaurant was seen as a major indicator of gentrification. The Bright Pearl discussion is also linked to the loss of small retail spaces as within the former complex contained a number of apparel companies.

> “One of the key, like tangible developments that we could point to is the Bright Pearl building on the west side of Spadina. [...] And I think what many folks had felt like, that Bright Pearl building had hosted a number of important organizations, landmarks, also, like what it was replaced with has been this like black and gray building that has been empty for a number of years. And so, I think with that, there was a bit of a kind of precedent to feel like what else is at risk?” (Community member interview, March 18, 2021).

It is unknown what was the rent costs of retail space in the Bright Pearl, but the community member noted that the changing aesthetic of the former Bright Pearl signalled in a very visible way that gentrification is beginning or ongoing. The Bright Pearl redevelopment is the tip of the iceberg and embodies underlying processes that may have been simmering for years. Other developments in the neighbourhood are also indicators, such as 315-325 Spadina Ave[1], with motions a changing streetscape from predominantly low-rise and ‘main street’ qualities to more mid and high-rise developments.

> “The [expletive] developments, obviously, like Bright Pearl is now a dead space for over two years.[...]The new high rise beside Dragon City. And then obviously 315 and 325 Spadina is a huge, huge indicator like a 13 story building is going to come right smack dab of Chinatown. And it’s so ugly and it’s so tall. Do you know what I mean? Look, it’s just all the developments trying to come in, really, that’s what it is.” (community member interview, March 16, 2021).

The large developments signal, similar to the redevelopment of the former Bright Pearl, the potential of a new group and class of people coming into the neighbourhood that threatens to displace existing residents and users. A city staff agrees, commenting

> “Another one is obviously just like larger residential proposals coming in. I mean, when a big residential building comes in. Obviously, it’s changing the demographics of the area. You get new people moving in that are going to be in new buildings are obviously paying more rent and also changes maybe the dynamic of the businesses in the area as well or as the potential to overtime. So that’s another indicator.” (city staff interview, March 4, 2021)

And noting that prior to 315-325 Spadina Ave, there were minimal developments in Chinatown, with the exception of Dragon Condos which did not result in community push-back as the site did not require rezoning and was originally part of the Dragon City Mall

1. A new apartment development in Chinatown

complex. The same city staff noted that in addition to new developments changing the community character, is the changes in uses such as bars and restaurants,

> "I would agree with [specific amenities or retail types as indicators], but when we're like civilly speaking about bars and restaurants, we did the study. We did conclude that there was a proliferation, a rise in the number of bars and restaurants in Kensington Market. But also we saw that was sort of a trend like citywide, like more restaurants and bars popping up like major streets along with the city in general. So, and less like grocery stores, that sort of stuff. Normal mom and pop shops." (city staff interview, March 4, 2021).

Another city staff agrees, commenting

> "It can also obviously happen when you have relatively affordable commercial space, and important kinds of anchors in communities that could be lost if a proposal moves forward. So, things like bookstores and important restaurants and cafes and all of these things that might serve, though their private spaces, they might serve as a community gathering space or a hub of sorts." (city staff interview, March 4, 2021).

In responding to the murals and pseudo-Chinese aesthetic of Chinatown, a community member responded,

> "Well, I think [Chinatown] always had to self-orientalize, but before, like back in the day, it was a facade, you know what I mean? It was like, OK, we want you to just think it's a tourist and the pagodas so that we can just live our [expletive] lives. Yeah. And now it's kind of just like. I guess it's amplified because it's like it's not a facade anymore, it's just kind of like it's become like this self-fulfilling prophecy." (community member interview, March 16, 2021).

The aesthetic shift in Chinatown is a major and very visual indicator that can also be the rallying force behind community activism, as Friends of Chinatown Toronto formed after the Bright Pearl redevelopment. The "self-fulfilling prophecy" circles back to the discussion on cultural capital, the packaging of ethnic spaces, and the perception of authenticity, as a tool to attract capital and reinvestment.

Loss of greengrocers

Specific to Chinatown and Kensington Market is the loss of greengrocers, which was a recurring theme in community members' memories of Chinatown, and contributed to the

lively streetscape of the neighbourhood. Greengrocers and their affordable prices were hedges against poverty by providing affordable and culturally appropriate foods.

One community member recalled their trips to Chinatown with their *ama*,

> "You know, the assumption that the Chinese markets and Spadina Chinatown are more expensive [than other Chinese supermarkets]. There's [now] less selection. Like I remember there used being like multiple different vegetable and fruit vendors in Spadina Chinatown growing up as a kid. And like it was like, again, as a ritualistic practice of like going to like one business. And my ama saying, OK, let's just like that's how much that one is. Let's go to the other one, then we can come back. That's cheaper and like comparing costs that way again, like it's like a practice of mine growing up and we're just like limited in that selection, I would say. That, I would also say like the notion that, like my memories of Chinatown being like a really, like vibrantly, vibrant business center. And what I mean by that is like the sounds and visuals of like business, people working in businesses in Chinatown, whether that be the restaurants, the dim sum places, the vegetable and fruit vendors being very loud and outspoken." (community member interview, March 16, 2021)

Another community member commented,

> "When I first moved here, there were much more, much more mom and pop businesses. There are more greengrocers. And now, you know, now what I'm seeing more and more of, there's still the greengrocers and still mom and pop-y. But these are rich moms and pops. You know, they weren't like, they weren't like the nice Portuguese lady who sold eggs or, you know, [unclear name], you know, Vietnamese family that had just these amazing, like, you know, berries and stuff and that really like, you know, reasonable prices." (Community member interview, March 11, 2021)

And the displacement of greengrocers by other uses, or just fewer greengrocers and grocery stores in general,

> "There's the place where Nomad used to be a grocery store. The black building right beside King's Noodle, also used to be a grocery store, burned down." (community member interview, March 16, 2021). This interviewee noted several other retail spaces that used to be grocery stores.

The loss of greengrocers and grocery stores appears to be a grievance to certain mem-

bers of the community, as they recall the liveliness these spaces contributed, but also the role these spaces play in their day-to-day routine. A city staff of Chinese descent commented,

> "I wonder if it is because Chinatown has never been seen as, at least by the own Chinese people as. It's more of a utilitarian space as opposed to a place that they enjoy, so they walk or get away. You know what I mean? Yeah, it's very purely utilitarian. That's where we get our food. Because I feel that Chinese culture, and I'm a Chinese person, we're more practical. That's like, you know, we go there, that we get a lot of that done, but we never really put [importance on Chinatown in] our minds until one time, until suddenly we feel that we might be losing [the space]. And then suddenly and all these memories start to come back [and we realize] that this is really our cultural gem or our cultural living room. And probably we normally always just complain about it, that it's dirty, it's not as pretty as other places, but, we get a lot done [in this space] and we cannot live without it. So, and I don't know, maybe that's a little bit of the cultural background and how other people view this might be representative of how we treat our space, our own space." (city staff interview, March 8, 2021)

The staff member expressed that from their personal perspective, it is the utility of the space, and not the aesthetics, that makes Chinatown and the subsequent greengrocers and grocery stores so valuable to the Chinese community. The same staff member commented that the loss of these grocery stores may be a value shift between different generations of immigrants,

> "But it's probably because the first generation, still value a lot of what exists there and they don't really want to do more. But the second and third generation are seeing the opportunities and the. Obviously, because of the evolution of land values also has evolved." (city staff interview, March 8, 2021)

It is unclear whether the loss of greengrocers is an indicator of gentrification local to Chinatown and Kensington Market or a larger trend of urban change that requires further study.

Loss of rooming houses

The final indicator of gentrification is the loss of rooming houses, and the conversion of former rooming houses into single-family residential or remain a multi-residential units

with apartment-style spaces. A city staff member indicated that the loss of rooming houses is a major indicator of gentrification and another city member agrees, commenting

> "I think the big one and the most obvious one is there for like city planning indicators is rooming houses. I know they're legal in this part of the city. And like a big indicator is that when the rooming house is being converted into residential units. Up until this year, I think, I think you were allowed to do that like as a rate. You didn't need an additional policy that would preclude you from doing that. And we're trying to change that this year. So, there's like the legal rooming houses which are being converted. We might have some stats to sort of show to what extent that's happening. [...] but I know anecdotally, I know that that's happening. In the councillor's office, I've been hearing it. So that's another indicator from our end and then, yeah, I mentioned, yeah, minor variance applications, that's a good sign." (city staff interview, March 4, 2021).

Councillor Layton agrees, commenting,

> "Seeing the loss of rooming houses like these are people that, generally speaking, don't have a choice [to live elsewhere]. Not the rooming house owners, but the rooming house residents. Some owners may [want to sell], but it's doubtful because they're probably making some money off that rooming house. (Councillor Layton, interview, March 11, 2021).

The Councillor draws a connection between rooming and subdivided houses and the crucial role it plays in housing affordability. Rooming houses and other housing was important for immigrant communities, and the history of the migration can sometimes be seen in the house itself as Councillor Layton recalls,

> "The basement was all the young Italian men that were all sending, they were in construction, mainly all sending money home or saving money to bring their families here. I think the story goes, the second, the main floor was the men who had brought their families over, who were living two-three families, to a household. And then the second floor was the earliest person to come. And they were the ones that own the house. And everyone else was paying their mortgage. In all likelihood. But they all came from the same village. They all came from the same town. And that was the model. And when you go into houses, you can see it like you can see the second-floor kitchen connections, you can see the basement" (Councillor Layton, interview, March 11, 2021).

These rooming and subdivided houses are a crucial component in the history and part of the heritage of a diaspora, and a historical source of housing for a wide demographic of people.

Demographics and Gentrification Indicators

Through an exploration of the demographics of Kensington-Chinatown and the gentrification indicators compiled from interview data, we can see a somewhat alignment of focus between real need and perceived displacement. To circle back to the research questions, the loss of rooming houses and greengrocers has a direct impact on the already unaffordable housing conditions of KC, and would disproportionately impact the lower-income tenant population. Affordability both in housing and food security is in dire need of protection and preservation. It is unknown whether the increases in housing supply through mid and high-rise developments can provide more housing options to the large tenant population living in KC or contribute to their displacement. If mid and high-rise residential can service the large tenant population, it would drastically change the aesthetics of the neighbourhood, and potentially contribute to the loss of small retail space. Even when offered the option to return, for the many older business owners, especially immigrant business owners, would there be a second generation to take over the business? Would the land assembly be the penultimate reason to finally retire?

By parsing out the gentrification indicators, we can see some alignment between community and city staff perception, and other indicators may serve as a bridge to understanding the needs of the community and focus targeted policy interventions.

Figure 11: Image of a rental ad outside of a probable rooming house in the Chinatown residential study area. The sign is advertising a single occupancy room for rent. Personal information and address redacted (photo provided by the author, 2021)

6. History of Chinatown West

The Chinatown West neighbourhood is characterized by a mix of building typologies on small building parcels with fragmented ownership structures along the commercial corridor. The visual aesthetic of Chinatown is defined by its Mainstreet character, from house-form commercial buildings with small store frontages to brick box warehouses. There are elements of orientalist decor, such as the Dragon Gate at the Spadina Ave and Dundas Street streetcar stop, but the Chinatown aesthetic is characterized by commercial features over architectural ones, that is, Chinese and English commercial signage, perpendicular signage, and street vending. The layperson experience of Chinatown may not be able to accurately estimate the age of Chinatown West from the built form alone. But beyond the built form, the contemporary Chinatown is not directly connected to the railway or the gold rush, but a different history of urban renewal policies and the expropriation of an older Chinatown by the City of Toronto. The loss of the First Chinatown is a crucial narrative mobilized by contemporary civil society actors, community stakeholders, and local activists that informs the desire for community preservation against the development and growth pressures of contemporary Chinatown West. In addition, by analyzing the history of Chinatown West, we see that in each period of its history, there were gatekeepers from within the Chinese community that attempted to qualify and evaluate if you were the right kind of Chinese; if you had full rights to claim ownership over Chinatown. This chapter builds the historical background that links to the final findings chapter of the thesis on who are the legitimate residents of Chinatown, who has the legitimate claim and rights to Chinatown, and who are excluded in the process.

As noted in the literature review, Chinatown is a co-created space, both by the “Western” gaze through state policies and exoticism, and within the Chinese community. Diving deeper, within the Chinese community itself are fractured approaches to Chinatowns, from seeing it as a safe space to coethnic exploitation. The following is an account of the brief history of Chinatown West as told by newspapers and academics, as well as the per-

sons interviewed. The tensions detailed counter the claim made by Friends of Chinatown that “Chinatown was built by and for working-class immigrants” (FOCT, 2021). Rather, the narrative illustrates that Chinatown was built by working-class immigrants, and built for the growth coalition of the business owners, and the needs of capital. In sum, Chinatown was a community divided by class and defined by often conflicting interests and claims over the space. Understanding this documented history of the growth of Chinatown West illuminates that the present debate over the future of Chinatown, is in fact, quite old, and a continued and ongoing conversation that stems from its very inception.

Chinatowns in Toronto: The Ward

Toronto had, and continues to have many Chinatowns. The following overview of historical events is crucial for the reader to understand the legacy of Chinatown and a high-level summary of the land-use approach to inner city blight and urban renewal.

At the turn of the century, the Chinese in Toronto settled at York Street between King and Queen Street, but the first established Chinatown in Toronto was located at Elizabeth and Dundas St, within the “St. John’s Ward” (1845-) or The Ward, which was a working-class enclave that was first home to a thriving African-Canadian community, and followed by immigrants from Italy, Eastern Europe, Finland, Macedonia, and China (Lorinc, 2015). In the early 20th Century, The Ward’s residents were primarily Jewish and Italian, but after the First World War and the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1923), The Ward became populated by Chinese bachelors who worked in laundries or cafes. By 1911, the City of Toronto had 301 Chinese laundries and 19 Chinese restaurants, 20 and 10 in The Ward respectively (Chan, 2015), forming an enclave economy (Wilson and Portes, 1980).

Living conditions in The Ward were slum-like, the 1911 “Report of the Medical Health Officer” by Dr. Charles Hastings noted that only 160 of the 1,653 inspected Ward homes had indoor plumbing (Hastings, 1911). For underemployed and or unemployed women engaged in sex work, The Ward became a place of business as many hotels rented rooms by the hour, and much of the trade was facilitated through restaurants and other estab-

lishments (Lorinc, 2015). The Chinese bachelors fueled the expansion of The Ward's sexual economy as a direct result of the Exclusion Act. For many migrants, the first World War, followed by the Japanese occupation of China and the Chinese Civil War, disrupted plans of return. The Exclusion Act further barred migrants from travel and sponsoring their spouses until 1946. In 1931, there were twelve Chinese men to one Chinese woman and only thirteen men had families in Toronto (Chan, 2013). This created a society of predominantly "bachelor" men.

Facing discrimination and alienation from the White Canadian residents and the media [3], the Chinese within The Ward established family associations [4] and mutual benefit societies [5]. Family Associations or tongs are an association of people with the same last name, while not always blood relatives, but likely shared a distant ancestor (Chan, 2013). Other associations, such as political and Chinese regional associations, which can emerge from family associations, also became the center of social life as well as mutual aid. These organizations provided help for immigration, interpretation, housing, letter-writing, employment, money-remittances, an informal banking system [6], and looking after the burial and repatriation of the bodies of deceased members, amongst other services that were essential to the "Lo Wah Kiu," the old-timers who immigrated before the 1970s (Micallef, 2014). E.C Mark of Shing Wah Daily News and President of the Chinese Community Centre commented that the tongs are a brotherhood that keeps peace within the community, and in 1959, 100 elderly Chinese received aid from the tongs (Godfrey, 1959). The mutual-aid societies were profiled in a 1962 MacLean article as agents of Triads, propagandists, smugglers of illegal Chinese, and at best, "give handouts to the destitute" (Phillips, 1962). Ping Mark, a Lo Wah Kiu who arrived from Canton in 1919 recalled his story

> "I worked very hard. Sixteen hours a day for hardly anything – four dollars a week. There were about 2,000 of us then, and it was hard going. There was discrimination, and they'd call you names, and everything, and it went on a long, long time. But what could I do? I just had to walk away? Fun? No fun, nothing at all. Sleep, work, sleep...the young Chinese [of 1978] really have it better now. They're better educated. It used to be we couldn't walk with white people, and at one point I couldn't get a job because I was Chinese. It was impossible" (Blackadar, 1978).

During the 1950s, The Ward constituted the City of Toronto's designated urban renewal study area following fears of inner-city blight due to the suburbanization of Toronto. In 1947, Toronto electors eligible to vote on money bylaws approved the plans for a civic square, Bylaw 16834 was passed unanimously that allowed for the establishment of a civic square bounded by "Bay Street, Queen Street, Chestnut Street, and a line approximately 460 feet north of Albert Street" and bylaw 16835 permitted the city to expropriate 'certain lands' within the boundaries, with bonds issued to finance the property acquisitions. Nathan Phillips Square, the imagined 'civic square' advanced in 1943 and completed in 1962. At the same time, Kensington Market was also the subject of an urban renewal plan that would see less than 25% of the homes demolished and replaced with a pedestrian mall; the plan was met with opposition from residents regarding the proposed expropriation (Globe and Mail, 1967).

Expropriation began in 1948 with the acquisition of 19 and 19 ½ Elizabeth Street, which housed a grocery store owned by Mr. Lee Sam and Mr. Yung Ing Lee who sold the properties for $13,500. In 1955, residents of Chinatown complained that the City was not paying market value for the properties, one man declared that his property cost his father $25,000 and the city wishes to expropriate at $16,500 (Honderich, 1955). Following the initial expropriation and the completed Nathan Philips Square, there were additional plans for the city to expropriate what remained of Chinatown. Alderman George Ben noted that Chinatown is "an eyesore" and should move 6 blocks away from its current location adjacent to the new Nathan Phillips Square which cost $30 million (Barker, 1964). Commissioner Manthorpe stated, "it is completely unrealistic to think that Chinatown can remain where it is and as it is. A new showplace Chinatown ought to be created on less expensive land, possibly north of where it is now" (Kerr, 1967).

The Toronto Daily Star article profiled the diverse responses to the first expropriation, of which Lim Chow, a Chinese who came to build the railway, commented "Chinatown is a good place, why can't it stay? I don't understand" (Kerr, 1967). The article documented that following the initial expropriation, most of the Chinese relocated their businesses

and or residences to the suburbs; very few of the 9,000 Chinese in Metro Toronto live in Chinatown (Kerr, 1967). In 1969, Alderman Horace Brown commented that he opposed designating any area as a 'Chinatown' as "you have an attitude of segregation" (Globe and Mail, 1969). Alderman Bruce and Alderman Rotenberg were ambiguous about the future of Chinatown, forwarding ideas of relocation rather than preservation. The media narratives indicate that Chinese residents were already accepting of the planned civic square and new surrounding institutional uses. In that same year, the north section of The Ward became a 'housing improvement area' and in 1969 the Official Plan designated parts of The Ward as 'designated improvement study area.' However by 1974 the area was no longer residential and converted to the new City Hall, office buildings, and the now hospital district (Hulchanski, 2015).

In addition to the City Hall the expropriation plans, other plans threatened Chinatown including the 1970 plan for the construction of a 120-foot concrete station at Beverley, Cecil, Henry and Baldwin Street by Ontario Hydro, this plan was withdrawn in 1971 (Toronto Daily Star, 1971). The Dundas Street widening also caused uproar over displacement.

Diverse Opinions

While characterized as a "tight knit" community, the First Chinatown already embodies the paradox of Chinatown now. Maxine Ma wrote in 1964, "[Chinatown] still provides Toronto and its tourists with tradition, Oriental mysteries, Chinese food and a look at a smattering of native Chinese" (Ma, 1964). Ma continues, positioning her upbringing parallel to a middle-class Canadian family, "as education an economic status improved, many of the Chinese uprooted themselves from Chinatown. Their Chinese associations became fewer... The trend seems unlikely to continue, however, Chinatown's location has been traditional. Chinatown wants to stay" (Ma, 1964). However, while only 1,500 of the 9,000 Chinese in Metro Toronto lived in Chinatown in the 1960s, it was the communal focal point of the Chinese population (Barker, 1964). According to the Toronto Daily Star, fifteen Chinese property owners under the leadership of Harry Lem, a partner at Lichee Gardens restaurant, formed the Chinatown Redevelopment Committee, later rebranded as the Save Chi-

natown Committee, a collective that owns 60 percent of all properties in Chinatown. The committee wished to submit a proposal for the redevelopment of Chinatown privately as opposed to the expropriation plan. Jean Lumb of the redevelopment committee said “Chinatown’s ugliness is due to the uncertainty of what’s going to happen. Merchants don’t want to invest in refurbishing businesses if they are going to be torn down. Remember 75 percent of Chinatown was expropriated over a 10-year period to make way for City Hall; this made businesses wary” (Barker, 1964). The cohort of landowners directly speak to the role of the growth coalition in protecting their land-based interests. By 1969, the committee was successful in saving the First Chinatown, however, by this point in time, Chinatown had already began to move west onto Spadina Ave.

In March 1977, an article in the Toronto Daily Star critiqued the Metro Toronto planners for ignoring the needs of Chinatown through the proposed zoning laws that restrict residential growth on Spadina Ave in favour of industrial and commercial growth in the garment district (Letters to the Editor, 1977b). Representatives from the Toronto Chinese Businessmen’s Association commented that zoning changes will make the area less attractive to investment, and limit the future growth of Chinatown (Letters to the Editor, 1977b). Doug Hum, a resident and activist, wrote to Letters to the Editors in the following week, stating that the residents, not business communities are supportive of the city’s rezoning efforts as it limits the encroachment of business interests on the residential neighbourhoods; Hum critiqued that the complaints of community engagement came from Chinese businessmen who do not live in Chinatown (Hum in Letters to the Editor, 1977a). “The fear among the residents,” writes Doug Hum, “is that if the industries are not protected, the garment factories will close with the resultant loss of many jobs and the fear that with further redevelopment on Spadina Ave, the traffic volumes already intolerable will become impossible to deal with” (Hum in Letters to the Editor, 1977a). Two people in wrote in Letters to the Editor later in April of 1977 critiquing the aforementioned “save the Chinatown” campaign, and reinforcing Doug Hum’s comments arguing that the Chinese who were angry they were left out of the planning process represented only the “businessmen” and not residents, workers, and employees (Letters to the Editor, 1977b). Fred Li, one citizen in the column wrote, “the Chinatown development speculators are shaping

up their onslaught as an ethnic 'Chinese against City Hall' campaign. They are also trying to look like the spokesmen for the whole Chinese community. Nothing can be farther from the truth. They represent nothing but their vested interests" (Letters to the Editor, 1977b).

Self-Orientalization as Preservation

The self-orientalization of Chinatowns, as we developed in the literature review, also took place in Toronto's Chinatown. The Chinatown Redevelopment Committee consulted with the city to redevelop Chinatown as "a little Hong Kong here in Toronto" with a mall of oriental shops, a tourist attraction with good food and an asset to the city itself (Daly, 1969). Businessman Harry Lem, President of the Chinatown Redevelopment Committee stated "A Chinatown shouldn't be a place for people to live. You should think of it as a modern shopping centre – you know, being able to get everything at one stop. In Chinatown, you can get a meal, buy Chinese curios and clothing, buy groceries for Chinese cooking" (Daly, 1969). Lem attributes the run-down nature of the First Chinatown to the decades-long expropriation plans that hinder community development plans, "but if we had assurances that the area would stay Chinatown, I know the occupants would improve their property on their own. And they could keep the oriental style, and colours" (Daly, 1969). Alderman Brown disagrees with an official Chinatown, stating "I don't think the area should be officially labelled Chinatown; this is silly. We don't have an official Yorkville or an official Kensington Market – these are just names people give to a general area. In fact, there isn't any Chinatown to speak of left now, not compared with what I remember when I was a boy. To me a Chinatown is an area where Chinese people centre and live; Elizabeth St hasn't been that for years. Sure, these businessmen are going to hate relocating, but I don't see how they'll be able to help it. Land prices will make it impossible for them not to. Land assemblers are busy up in that area already" (Daly, 1969).

Jean Lumb commented, "one reason why we [12,000-14,000 Chinese] feel there should always be a Chinatown in a city the size of Toronto is simply that there has been one, and to have it lost would be strongly felt. Its existence has its effects on people, especially as long as there are new Chinese immigrants coming in from China every year – we should

have a spot for them to start from you know? A place where they can be among their own people, hear their own language spoken. The Chinese people are quiet and reserved; it takes them longer than many other immigrants to make friends, to get used to new ways. Some people say a Chinatown encourages ghettos and this is a reason why it shouldn't be, but that's not so. It just gives the people a sense of belonging. It's a nice environment for them until they're ready to go on their way more and fit into the Canadian community" (Daly, 1969). The narrative of Chinatown as a step before assimilation while simultaneously a place of exoticism, is a repeated theme that characterizes the self-orientalization of Chinatown.

In 1969, more than 350 Chinese-Canadians packed the City Council chamber to garner political backing to save Chinatown from developers. A group of Chinese-Canadians met with Robert Andras, the federal minister responsible for housing, to as for financial aid in the preservation of their communities on the grounds of that Toronto is "at least 10-years behind" in developing plans in comparison to other Chinatowns in North America (Toronto Daily Star, 1969). By the 1980s, Chinatown West became an officially designated tourist area, which allowed businesses to open on Sundays. $12,000 was spent on bilingual street signs, a project initiated by Ald. Anne Johnson, inspired by similar signs in New York's Chinatown; the same scheme was brought to the Danforth with Greek and English signs (Stoffman, 1982). The issue on signage is discussed in the literature review, however, it is apparent that the markers of what we understood as Chinatown now, stems not from the community itself but in many ways imposed upon it and received community buy-in after the fact.

Figure 12: Above - a newspaper clipping advertising China Court, an outdoor shopping mall with a distinctive Oriental aesthetic. (Toronto Star Archives, 1976)

Major Divides: Class, Demographic, Geographic, and Gendered

There were always class and gendered divisions in the Chinatown community, however beginning in the 1970s, the existing fractures widened with the influx of new immigrants from Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as the suburbanization of Toronto's Chinese population. Arlene Chan stated, "especially in the eighties and nineties, if you were living in Chinatown and then you moved out to the suburbs and that would be including Scarborough and North York or even farther out to Markham and Richmond Hill, it was a sign that you've made it. You've made enough money, you are now successful, and now you can move away from Chinatown. So, it was a sign of success and people would boast about it. I now have a big house and whatever. So that meant that the demographic of Chinatown, the kind of people who were living in Chinatown, again, it's really focusing on a lot of working-class people [still] living in Chinatown" (Chan, interview, 2021). An article in the Toronto Daily Star published in 1970 exemplified the coethnic fears and the split between established Chinese communities and the immigrants arriving after 1967. Louis Tchang, a Chinese-born Roman Catholic priest from Shanghai alleged that jade was smuggled into Canada by Maoist agents, to finance and build an arsenal of arms and ammunition. Tchang also called upon the Canadian authorities to "help Chinese immigrants get out of Chinatown ghettos" (Toronto Daily Star, 1970). Tchang further elaborates that the Chinese community is becoming increasingly concerned about Maoist agents in Metro.

While it is unknown how many Chinese in Toronto were concerned about Maoist agents in 1970, the 1970s marked a new decade in the history of Toronto's Chinatowns. The establishment of the new Chinatown West at Spadina Ave and Dundas Street was documented in 1976 through the increasing number of Chinese restaurants. Prior to the 1950s, the area along Spadina Ave from College Street to Adelaide Street were a "mixture of residential housing, garment manufacturing and retailing with east European Jews as the largest ethnic group in the area" (Phan and Luk, 2008). The Toronto Daily Star observed that the growing number of Hong-Kong backed Chinese restaurants at Spadina Ave and Dundas Street divided the Chinese community.

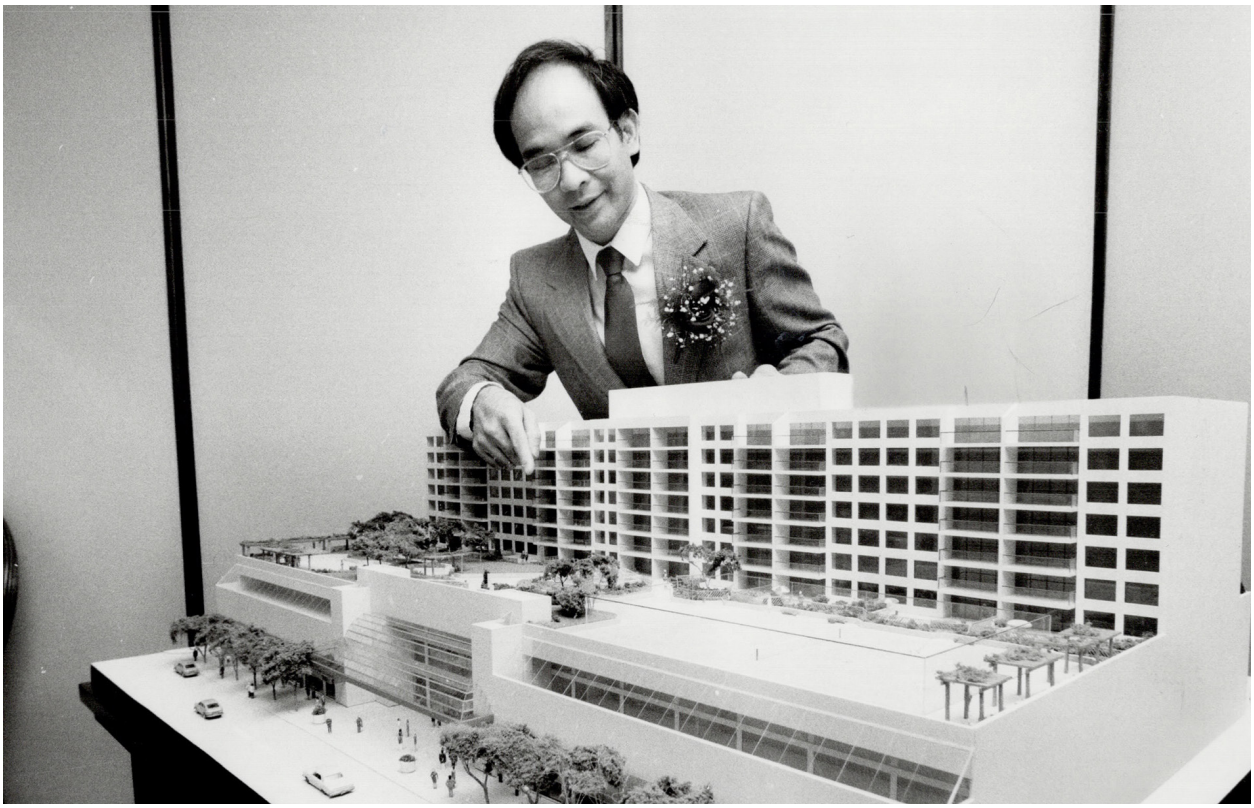


Figure 13: Booming Chinatown: Developer Tim Man (above) points to a model of Chinatown Centre, to be built by 1987. (Toronto Star Archives, 1986).

In 1967 the existing immigration policy was replaced with a point system that rewards immigrants with education, language skills, and so on, opening Toronto to a new class of highly educated and high-skilled Chinese immigrants. The new immigration system paired with the social and economic turmoil in Hong Kong during the 1960s saw an exodus of Hong Kong capital and residents, some of which are being invested in Downtown Chinatown along with the increase in immigration. By the 1980s, Spadina and Dundas St became the new Chinatown. As Hong Kong closes to 1997, the end of Britain's 99-year lease, wealthy Hong Kongers are immigrating to Canada to escape the colony's uncertain future. Dr. Joseph Wong, Toronto family physician and founding president of the Chinese Canadian National Council, commented that most of the immigrants from Hong Kong are middle- and working-class people, and come to Canada under the family reunion program, and not through immigrant investor program introduced by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in 1986 (Wong, 1992). Only 5% of the immigrants to Canada from Hong Kong and Taiwan immigrate through the immigrant investor program. However, despite Wong's attempt to counter the narrative that wealthy Hong Kong immigrants are driving up hous-

ing costs, newspapers of the period reported on middle-class and wealthy Hong Kong immigrants buying up multiple properties for investment and their family members.

The Toronto Daily Star documented that during this period, as new Chinese immigrants flowed into Canada for the first time, the existing Chinese community received them partly with hostility. One Chinese man remarked with regards to a Hong Kong student studying the Chinese-Canadian community, “you can’t possibly understand the Chinese, so there’s no use in trying” (Collins, 1967). These moments of division further highlight the diversity of the Chinese in Toronto, and how narratives of a homogeneous community with shared values, can in fact, be another self-orientalizing strategy. Within the new Chinatown, divisions along class lines within the Chinese community are increasingly apparent especially with the locality becoming the locust of international investment and the movement of global capital. Major international banks opened branches in Chinatown West. In 1983, the Hong Kong Bank of Canada (now HSBC) opened its second location on Dundas Street; the bank will offer services in Cantonese, Mandarin, Toishanese, and English (Toullin, 1983). Eugene Nesmith, the bank’s president and CEO commented “it’s a well-defined market...we know there are 130,000 to 150,000 people [in Metro Toronto] and there’s a large student population” (Toullin, 1983). Nesmith believes that Chinese-Canadians and new immigrants will do business with the bank, particularly due to its strong linkages to the People’s Republic of China (Toullin, 1983).

Following the arrival of HSBC, Merrill Lynch opened an office in Chinatown in 1984 to capitalize on the exodus and the new Chinatown-Hong Kong connection, with Gordon Jones, chairman of Merrill Lynch Canada commenting “we really sense a market here and we feel we can bring in some investment services here better than we can from Bay Street” (McBride, 1984). An article from 1985 detailed 4 major developments in Chinatown West with connection to Hong Kong investment (Holden, 1985).

- $10 million mixed-use commercial and residential development planned by developer Hing-Lung Corp
- A large, mixed-use building to replace China Court, and a boutique mall on Spadina; “City Planners say it will be among the most ambitious projects built on Spadi-

na since Casa Loma" which became Chinatown Centre,

- Kingscourt, a mixed-use condominium-commercial complex on the West side of Spadina,
- 360-car parking garage with an apartment building above it

Chinatown Centre, a product of nearly $100-million in investments along Spadina Avenue, is 50 percent financed by Tim Man of Manbro Land Holdings and costs $50 million dollars. Prior to the development of Chinatown Centre was 'China Court' (1976-1986) "an authentic Chinese shopping facility where you'll find everything from fashions to delicately carved marble ornaments. Watch as experienced chefs prepare exotic delicacies in the Chinese Food Boutique. Or just enjoy a stroll in the Oriental garden" (ad in Toronto Daily Star, 1976). Prior to China Court was a service centre for General Motors trucks and coaches. Another development, Dragon City Mall (1987 - onwards), formerly a church owned by the Archdiocese of Toronto, was financed by Daniel and Henry Hung of Hung Lung Corp for $18 million dollars. The Hung brothers were the developers behind Dragon Centre in Scarborough and the Hsin Kuang restaurant, or also known as the Bright Pearl, on Spadina Avenue and St. Andrews Street.

The developments faced pushback from residents of the Grange, 40 percent of which are Chinese, who protested the changing neighbourhood character. Concerns raised by residents include fears of allowing commercial uses into the residential neighbourhoods and the residential and commercial displacement caused by increasing land values, especially jeopardizing the fragile garment district along Spadina between Queen St and King St that employs blue-collar workers (Holden, 1985). Shirley Beaty, a resident of 4.5 years commented that "already high land values are forcing many lower-income people out, and in the long run, it would hurt Chinatown itself" (Holden, 1985). The interests of the business class highlight the tension between commercial Chinatown and residential Chinatown, and of the interests of one to cannibalize the other. Contrary to the narrative that Chinatowns were a source of affordable commercial rents, Wah Yue who owned a Chinese records shop pays higher rents than tenants in the Eaton Centre to occupy a 6-meter storefront (Holden, 1985).

An article in 1986 detailed the emerging class divisions in the Chinese community relative to their geographical location across Metro Toronto, and the developments along Chinatown would only exacerbate the growing class divides:

- The young professional Chinese community has settled in the suburban municipalities that have access to restaurants, shops, language schools, and grocery stores in their immediate neighbourhood. Many professional Chinese feel there is subtle discrimination that inhibits career advancement; while some feel it is changing, others have chosen to service the Chinese community instead,
- Second-generation Chinese are more integrated into their communities, but work pressures have altered the traditional Chinese family structure; “divorce rates among Chinese in Scarborough have increased 1,000 percent in 10 years and the third-generation children now prefer Big Macs to dim sum” (Miller, 1986)
- The first-generation professionals, once established in their careers and housing, bring over their parents from Hong Kong or mainland China, and this senior population feels “culture shock, immobility, the sudden need to rely on their children. Many are homebound and frustrated” (Cindy Yee, Association of Chinese Community Service Workers, in Miller, 1986)
- Growing refugee population of 30,000 in 1986 of ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, who have settled west of Spadina Ave in Parkdale and Broadview Ave and Gerrard Street. 70 percent of the refugee population lack proficiency in English and language skills determine access to labour opportunities,
- Most of the refugee population is struggling; women work in the Spadina garment trade, and men find work “anywhere they can” (Miller, 1986)
- The Chinese community is polarized by income, with the minimum wage workers hampered by language and culture shock.
- Low-income Chinese “feel they are denied access to community legal services under the Ontario Legal Aid Plan. Repeated requests for services in their native tongues have been denied”
- The Chinese who immigrated pre-1940s are not assimilated into Canadian society. This population is settled around Chinatown West and does not have family to care for them. This population is most at risk of displacement from development along

Spadina Ave.

- The Mon Sheong Home for the Aged opened on D'Arcy Street in 1975 to serve 65 elderly people in a completely Chinese environment and cost $1.4 million (Pennington, 1976).

By the late 1980s, class divisions had entrenched themselves into the physical fabric of Chinatown West in the new condominium malls. In 1988, the Mandarin Club opened on the top floor of Dragon City Mall (1987 - present). The Mandarin Club was an exclusive club with individual initiation fees of $1,500 and $600 annually, or for corporations of $3,500 and $900 per year (Adolph, 1988). 60% of the Mandarin's 500 members emigrated from Hong Kong within the last five years, along with long-established Chinese Canadians, and members of major Canadian banks (Adolph, 1988). A member of the Royal Bank commented, "the Mandarin Club provides a lot of opportunities for networking, meeting professionals and businesspeople, and it's a good place to entertain" (Adolph, 1988). The club was described as a place that connected members of the Canadian business class with recent immigrants with contacts in China and Hong Kong.

In the same year, a survey of 100 Chinese-speaking restaurant workers conducted by a Chinese community group reveals that working conditions are "intolerable" (Bilodeau, 1988). The survey indicates that:

- 56% work more than 50 hours a week, with an average of 54 hours and a range from 30 to 72 hours. None of the employees were paid overtime if they worked more than 44 hours a week.
- Wages ranged from $2.50 to $4.50 an hour for waiters, to $8.20 for chefs. The Ontario minimum wage is $4.55 for general workers and $3.70 for students under 18.
- 54% of Chinatown workers speak little or no English with only 14% are fluent. More than half had attended English classes but were forced to drop out.
- 55% reported that they were injured at work, many seriously enough to miss work, but 66% were unaware of Workers' Compensation Board benefits.

The leaders of the 586-member Chinese Restaurant Owners Association of Ontario de-

nied that workers are being exploited. The Association president, Harold Quon commented that Chinese immigrants see Chinese restaurants “as a way to move into the future... they work one or two months and they are gone” (Bilodeau, 1988).

Suburban Chinatowns: Ethnic Succession

The first Chinese restaurant and grocery opened in Scarborough in 1979, and by the mid-1980s, Norman Ho, president of the Scarborough-North York Chinese Business Association says there are 45,000 Chinese living in Scarborough and Markham who do their shopping primarily at the Agincourt Chinatown (Stewart, 1984). From 1981 to 1986, the Chinese population in suburban municipalities increased by 236 percent (Miller, 1986). The suburban Chinese are a generation of young, educated professionals Chinese-Canadians and recent immigrants from Hong Kong or Taiwan. Ho noted that the new Chinese in Toronto are those who “can afford a $150,000 home. Many of the people in the old Chinatown couldn’t drive or speak English when they arrived. In Agincourt almost everyone drives and speaks English” half of Agincourt’s residents have roots in the old Chinatown the other half are new immigrants (Stewart, 1984). The new face of Chinese immigration included wealthy families from Hong Kong, Africa, South America, the Caribbean or “other politically unstable areas” of the Chinese diaspora (Goldstein, 1980). The wealthy do not settle in Chinatown but settle in Willowdale, Don Mills, and Scarborough, accounting for 30 percent of sales of new subdivisions (Goldstein, 1980).

The shift to Agincourt created suburban ethnic enclaves, notably the construction of Dragon Centre, North America’s first indoor Chinese-focused shopping center, built in 1984 over a roller-skating rink for $800,000. The developers Daniel and Henry Hung of Shiu Pong developments opened Dragon Centre first and imported the model of the Chinese-themed shopping mall and residential development to Dragon City in Chinatown. The local alderman of Scarborough, Bob Aaroe, remarked that “I am excited about the money [new immigrants] are bringing into Scarborough. The Chinese development has the potential to serve as an urban renewal project for that area. The potential money is there and the desire is there” (Stewart, 1984). The area was characterized as underde-

veloped with crumbling street plazas built in the 1960s. Unlike the First Chinatown, the developments in the former suburban municipalities preceded demands of an ethnic population and were constructed as a means of attracting recent Chinese immigrants (Phan and Luk, 2008).

Mississauga gained its own official Chinatown in 1988 through the construction of the "Mississauga Chinese Centre" at a cost of $20 million on a 3.7-hectare site. The Mississauga Chinese Centre is positioned as a tourist attraction that will also serve the 75,000 Chinese in Mississauga, Oakville, Hamilton, and Burlington (Wong, 1988). The centre was financed by Cheong Lee, the principal partner of six Hong Kong investors; Lee also was the partner in the Hsin Kuang chain of restaurants.

Between 1991 and 1996, suburban municipalities superseded Chinatown West as the immigrant reception corridor, with the Chinese population increasing by 20 percent, compared to Scarborough (47 percent), Markham (109 percent), Richmond Hill (165 percent), and Mississauga (86 percent) (Keung, 2000). By 1999, there were 5 recorded Chinatowns in Toronto (Infantry, 1999).

Vietnamization of Chinatown West

The exodus of Chinese from Chinatown West initiated the beginnings of ethnic succession in the "Vietnamization" of Spadina Ave and Dundas Street (Luk and Phan, 2005; McAndrew, 1987). Vietnamese restaurants, grocers, jewelry stores, and other service-oriented shops take shape in Chinatown West. Pho Hung, opened initially in a former butcher shop, was established in 1986 after the owners arrived in 1981 and worked minimum-wage factory jobs and harvesting crops (McAndrew, 1987). The present landscape of Chinatown West is reflective of both the contributions of long-time Hong Kong and Guangdong Chinese and the impact of Sino-Vietnamese refugees in the late 1970s (Luk and Phan, 2005). The Vietnamization of Chinatown West accelerated from 1998 to 2003 indicates a reconfiguration from a truly ethnic Chinese place to a pan-Asian identity (Luk and Phan, 2005).

From 1978 to 1982, Canada received the first wave of Indo-Chinese refugees fleeing from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. In 1991, Sino-Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese people of Vietnamese nationality from urban centres in North and South Vietnam, established businesses in Chinatown, aided by their "Cantonese language skills, shared cultural values, and ancestral Chinese background to access jobs, services, and housing from the local Chinese" (Luk and Phan, 2005, 20). Vietnamese businesses settled in and around Toronto's downtown Chinatowns for their "cheap rents, central location, and availability of Asian goods," which gradually replaced the departing Hong Kong Chinese businesses that either aged out or migrated to the suburbs (ibid, 20). Between 1983 and 2003, the proportion of Vietnamese businesses in Chinatown increased from 6% to 24% with a majority concentrating in Chinatown Centre, benefiting from the condominium commercial spaces (Luk and Phan, 2005).

Crime in the 1990s

By the 1990s, the narratives around Chinatown West have shifted from excitement over transnational capital to organized crime, centred around Vietnamese gangs. The following shows the buy-in from community members to police itself and other members of the community. From December 4th, 1990 to August 16, 1991, 9 people were murdered in the Chinatown West boundaries. While gang violence was documented as early as the 1970s related to prostitution, gambling houses, and extortion, the murder of Asau Tran, a Vietnamese gang boss, renewed the narrative of Chinatowns as a place of crime. Media narratives of gang violence are linked to the criminals who abuse Canada's refugee system or illegal immigration, while others attribute the criminal involvement to limited employment opportunities for young people (Wong, 1991; Bronskill, 1999). Members of the Vietnamese community have requested Vietnamese businesses to cooperate with the police, Hoanh Khoi Ngyuen, president of the Vietnamese Association in Toronto stated, "just a few people can taint the whole community." Other members of the community voiced their opposition to policing, but foot patrols with the addition of four Chinese-speaking police officers increased (Wilkes, 1991). Alexis Yam, president of the 1,200-member Toronto

Chinese Business Association stated, “it’s a true indication of the cooperation between police and our community...this step is only the beginning and is part of an overall program of community-based policing” (Wilkes, 1991).

Illegal immigration, particularly the smuggling of Fujianese people from Fujian, China, became an issue of concern for the Toronto police in the late 1990s. Det. Peter Yuen estimates between 500 and 1,000 undocumented Fujianese arrive in Toronto each year, drawn by Canada’s social-support system and employment opportunities (Bronskill, 1999). Members of the established Fujianese community caution the arrival, commenting that while most are hardworking people, illegal immigration should not be condoned. “If you go through the proper channels, your background will be checked,” said Det.-Const. Raymond Miu of Toronto’s Combined Forces Asian Investigative Unit, “but these people, who’ve never been checked, you will never know who they are.” Smuggler groups are charging interest rates of up to 900 percent on smuggling fees, and the pressure to pay off the fees spawn criminal activities such as prostitution in massage parlours (Bronskill, 1999). The Chinese and Chinese-Canadian communities are anxious with the new wave of migrants, Joe Tseng, a resident of Scarborough and Chairman of the police liaison committee stated, “The influx is having a definite impact on Toronto. There will be a lot more Fukinese showing up ... but whether they are legal or not, I don’t know,” said Mr. Tseng, “They will never advertise that they are illegals.” (Tseng, in Bronskill, 1999).

While there were advocacy groups protecting the rights of undocumented immigrants, such as the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, we can see that members of the existing Chinese community are willing to Other perceived ‘outgroup’ Chinese. The othering reinforces and surfaces the challenging and controversial conversations around group identities; what is a legitimate and authentic Chinese person. Do undocumented Fujianese people have the right to claim a piece of Chinatown?

In Short

Understanding the history of development in Chinatown West, along with the development of the Chinese community in Toronto, is crucial to frame the present narrative of gentrification and displacement. The history of Chinatown West counters many romanticized ideas of Chinatowns as built by and maintained by the descendants of railway workers, but rather spurred and propelled by the interests of a select segment of the Chinese community. Chinatown West has always been contested space, and to a certain degree, built by Chinese people on the exploitation of lower-class Chinese communities. Chinatown West also experienced many waves of ethnic succession and gentrification, from the European Jews to Chinese to Vietnamese, and the displacement of the garment district and manufacturing into the present commercial and residential uses we see today. The snapshots show that the community has always been divided, and there are, and always will be, coethnic gatekeepers inplace. The job of the gatekeepers, whether they be the growth coalition, members of the church, the existing Chinese community, is to simultaneously evaluate if the newcomer has a legitimate claim over public space and the group identity, and qualify one's identity based on how one reflects and represents the Chinese diaspora as a whole. The story of this group dynamic, as shown in this chapter, is very old, but the cycles and pundits are so familiar as we approach the new class of Chinese immigrants, the Chinese international student.

7. Vertical studentification: The expansion of off-campus housing

> "The notion of the commuter school in Toronto is changing. And part of that is just like an explosion in the number of students [living] in Toronto" (Councillor Layton, interview, March 11, 2021).

HEI are placebound institutional actors that cannot be separated from the mechanisms of urban production. Specifically for urban HEIs, their role in the space is to facilitate and enable the acceleration of the knowledge economy in a process that exceeds its territorial boundaries (Huggins et al., 2008; Deiaco et al., 2012). "Contemporary universities are now reacting to, and actively generating, new post-metropolitan urban forms, modes of urbanism, and centralities beyond the traditional campus and the urban core (Addie et al., 2015)" (in Addie, 2016). Robertson et al question the inevitable governance challenge, asking what are "the implications for (sub)national governments when their higher education institutions and efforts are being governed at a supra-national scale?" (Robertson et al, 2016, 3). As HEIs are located in a specific place and with connections to the wider region, it's important to understand the meaning of regionalism as an evolving process consisting of a number of factors. Breslin and Higgott (2000) stated that regionalism comprises economic integration (global and regional) and regional institutionalized governance, emerging vertical levels of authority between the state and the global order as well as the state and the local level, and emerging (horizontal) authority across territorial jurisdictions. From this perspective, the symbiotic connection between UofT and the City of Toronto's Downtown Growth Centre as a form of regionalism is apparent.

The impact of the UofT-CofT (City of Toronto) region left distinctive marks on the university's surrounding neighbourhoods. HEIs has played a major role in urban and regional development and recently a new form of urban development with the emergence of university-centric innovation districts, such as the pipeline between Silicon Valley and Stan-

ford University or the Waterloo-Toronto corridor (Gillmor, 2012). These partnerships hint at the increasing amalgamation of municipality and university in the creation of the new economic structures under the globalized economy (Addie et al, 2014). The codependent relationship between cities and HEIs can also be examined at a microscale, through the rebranding of former commuter schools, such as UofT.

The ‘return to the city’ movement for students reflects the changing nature of HEIs, as Councillor Mike Layton observed (interview, March 11, 2021). Interviews with city staff also indicated a trend of development in which condominiums close to the UofT were seen as “secure investment” that appeals to a wide range of renters, but ultimately, “students will rent it anyway” (City staff interview, March 8, 2021). Vertical studentification (Garmendia, 2012) has historically coexisted with the low-rise residential neighbourhoods in Chinatown, with each neighbourhood offering spaces at different price points and within their respective municipal boundaries. In the last 5 years, the boundaries began mixing with increased development along commercial Chinatown and threatening the low-rise neighbourhoods between major right of ways. The low-rise neighbourhoods are speculated to have the highest number of rooming houses in Toronto. At the same time, the low-rise areas are most diverse in terms of demographics, according to interviewees. However, with the increasing UofT student population from 2007 onwards, the shortage of on-campus housing, the changing nature of campuses, and the desire for students to live near their studies, in part spurred an intensified demand for student or student-focused housing.

The student housing question hasn’t always been contested. In the 1960s, the federal government made extensive investments in student housing through low-interest loans to HEIs, however, the impetus to build has slowed down since (Allard and Sim, 2012). Neoliberal policies and the rollback of public investments on HEIs created a shortfall of funding, increasingly filled through private sources and delegated student housing to the private sector (Evans and Sotomayor, forthcoming). At the same time, HEIs are increasingly becoming agents of the “roll with it” neoliberalization process (Keil, 2009), and a trajectory shift into more entrepreneurial means of attracting funding (Pillai. et al, 2021). In 1992, Ontario universities received 83% of their funding from the government, in 2013, this per-

centage has shrunk to less than 50% (CFS-O, 2015). The decline of public investment has Ontario universities shifting to private sources, such as tuition fees and public-private partnerships (P3s). More specifically, a dependence on international students as an income source. From 2009 to 2017, international students in Canada have nearly doubled; 13 % of university students are international (Usher, 2018). Tuition fees for international students have risen twice the rate of domestic students, which translated from 1.25 billion in 2009 to 2.75 billion in 2016, and the "1.5 billion increase almost exactly offset the 1.7 billion fall in government funding over the same period" (Usher, 2018).

The expansion of UofT's student populations has resulted in an acceleration in the studentification of communities near campus. The rise of PBSAs are directly correlated to the expansion of the UofT ST. George's (UTSG) student population, as well as the stagnant increases in on-campus student housing. UTSG can accommodate 6,502 students in its 11 residences in 2019-20, however, 4,017 of the total available beds are occupied by first-year students (UofT Quick Facts). There are a total of 62,864 students enrolled in the St. George campus, of which 23,019 people are international students (UofT Quick Facts). Assuming that international students do not have a family member or relative to stay within Toronto and all 4,017 first-year students are international students, this leaves 19,002 students to find housing in the private sector. The insufficiency of on-campus housing is indicative, and, much like many United Kingdom university towns and cities, the liabilities of housing these students are transferred to the private sector (Hubbard, 2009).

Conveniently at the same time, Toronto experiences a condo boom. For the urban universities, private condominiums became the informal and unspoken third student housing option. Since the early 2000s, the condo and high-rise rental communities predominantly along major arterial roads such as Bay Street and University Avenue and a 15-20 minute walk from the UofT, Ryerson and OCAD have seen vertical studentification. High-rise rentals and private condo units offer the urban lifestyle qualities that students are increasingly attracted to. The students interviewed reinforces this idea of a condo-lite student lifestyle

Of the students interviewed, those who sought out high-rise residential accommodations stated that they were willing to pay more for personal autonomy, security, specific amenities, and desire to have fewer roommates and more private space. Four students actively sought out condos and apartments as they are “appropriate” to their housing needs, with one student commenting on wanting that condo lifestyle after the types of housing they lived in previously. The high-rise residential spaces however were more expensive than low-rise residential but more affordable than on-campus housing and PBSAs. All of the students who lived in high-rise residential units commented that it was more affordable than on-campus housing and PBSAs despite less student-specific amenities, although the savings from rent allowed students to have more autonomy over other components of their budget, such as food and the ability to cook. Nearly all of the students considered PBSAs as off-campus housing but bypassed the option as it was more expensive than other private-sector options.

Dr. Erica Allen-Kim[1] (interview, April 27, 2021) describes how these early condo developments were residential towers that were not pedestrian-friendly and did not have the social business infrastructure in the immediate neighbourhood, such as grocery stores or gathering spaces. The immediate neighbourhood of the College Street and Bay Street intersection, where most of the condominium developments were located, is predominantly institutional uses and government offices, with limited retail space on the street-level and mixed-use opportunities. The largest demographic group in the Bay Street neighbourhood are people between 20-24, and 84% of its population is under 54 (City of Toronto, neighbourhood profile). As such, Chinatown and Kensington Market became part of the social infrastructure of high-rise residential towers, especially in the ability to purchase affordable groceries in Chinatown’s many greengrocers or Kensington Market’s cafes and public spaces, forming an existing symbiotic relationship between the high-rise communities and Chinatown. All of the students interviewed noted going to Chinatown for affordable groceries.

To further complicate the landscape of students, undergraduate students from “Asia and

1. An architectural historian interested in Chinatowns; at the Daniels Faculty of Architecture at UofT.

Pacific" have increased by by over 300% since 2007 (2007-2019). The growth in "Asia & Pacific" is driven primarily by students from the People's Republic of China (PRC), which increased by 600% from 1,736 in 2007 to 12,279 in 2019 (UofT Quick Facts). Figure 14 illustrates international student growth from 2007 to 2019, and it is evident that students from "Asia & Pacific" drove nearly all of the increases. When we look at the top 15 countries and isolate the growth by countries in "Asia & Pacific" we can see that the growth is driven primarily by students from the People's Republic of China (PRC), see Figure 15. Considering that growth for most other students increases incrementally, the exponential increase of students from the PRC is notable for a period of just over a decade. As UofT does not provide publicly accessible data on international students by campus, the notable increase of students from the PRC would be significant on a campus of 14,000 students or 60,000 (UofT Quick Facts).

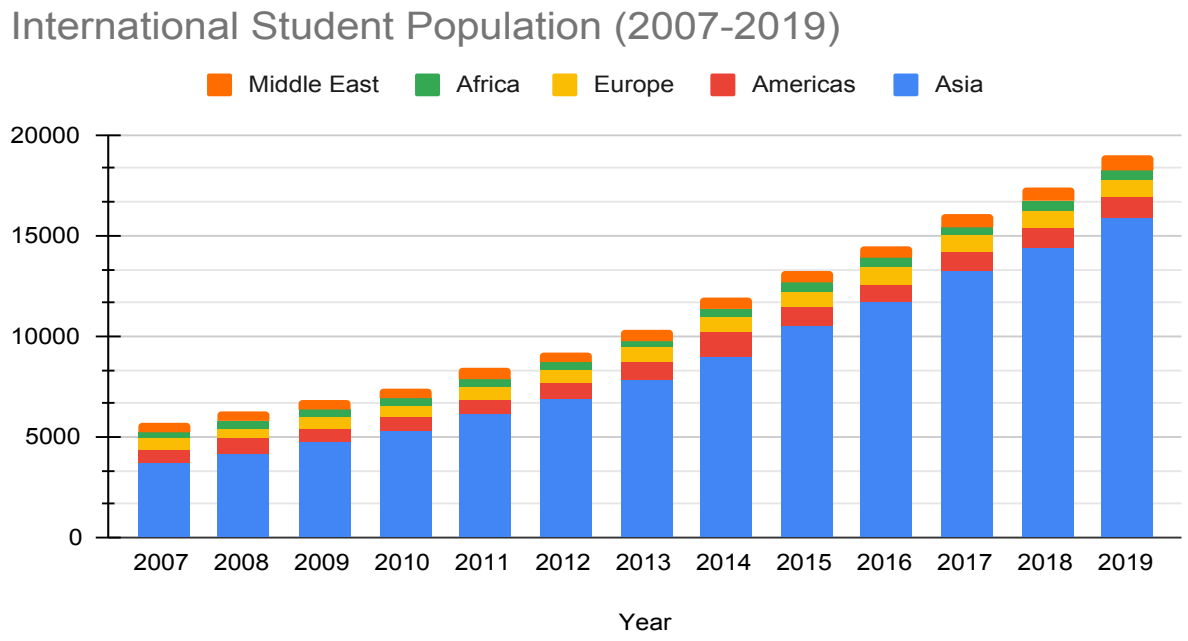


Figure 14: International undergraduate students by region from 2007-2019. From 2011 onwards, "Asia" included the Pacific, and "Americas" was broken into North and South America.

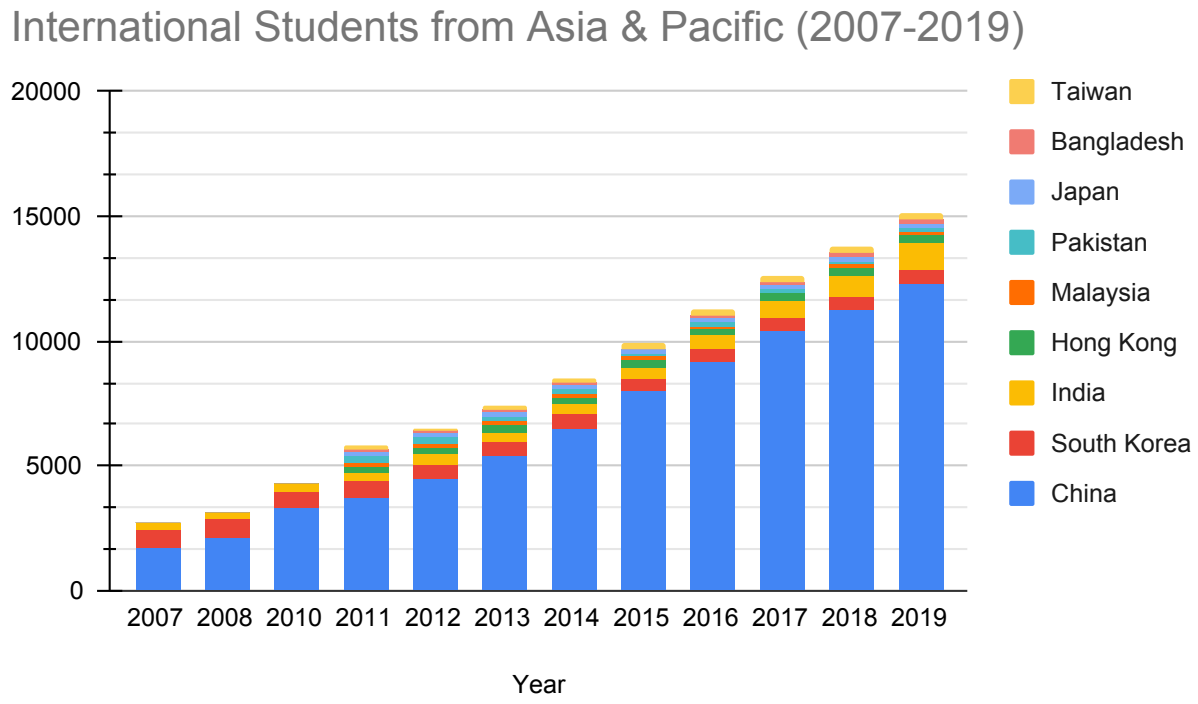


Figure 15: International undergraduate students from Asia & Pacific by top 9 countries. Before 2011, the "China" included the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Hong Kong. Hong Kong became its own category following 2011.

Student Responses to Vertical Studentification

For most of the students interviewed, going to university is their first time living independently and interacting with housing systems. All of the students attempted to secure on-campus housing for their first year at UofT, and students who did not live on-campus were only forced into the private housing market due to late offer acceptances or technicalities as a transfer student. All of the students drew a comparison between the predictability of the on-campus housing experience to the unpredictability of the off-campus private housing market, however, ultimately choosing to move out of on-campus housing in search of greater personal autonomy. Most of the students participating in the study lived in on-campus housing for at least a school year. The students who lived in on-campus housing described how the meal plan, management, proximity to campus, feeling of security, and a readymade student community aided in their transition to post-secondary careers. Most of the students described how living on residence allowed them to make friends with floormates through socials and foster a sense of community, which was espe-

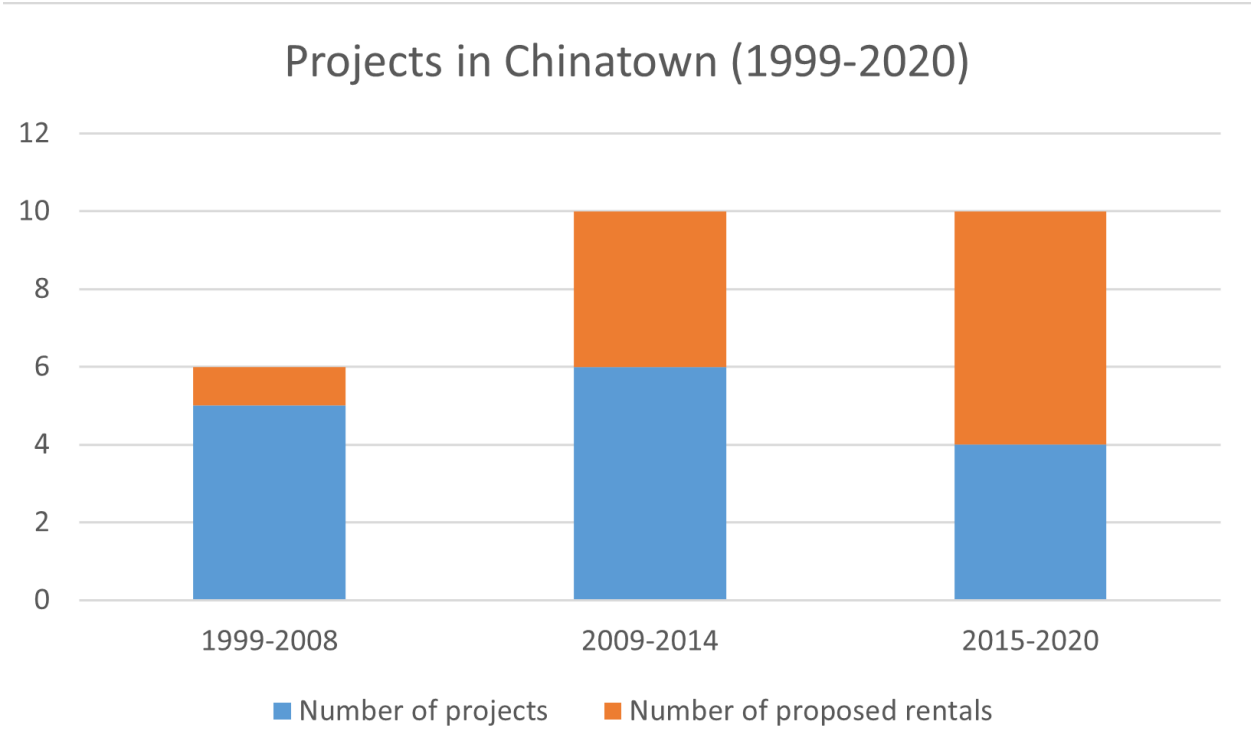


Figure 16: New residential developments in residential study boundaries that are over 20 units. 1999-2020.

cially important for international and out-of-province students. The students who did not live on campus noted the loneliness in their first semesters at UofT. All of the students' descriptions of on-campus housing were consistent with other responses, despite the students residing at very different residences.

Despite the more predictable and supportive on-campus housing experience, all of the on-campus students chose to move out for four common factors: greater control over personal finance, how shared spaces are used, control over meals, and the generation gap between first-year students and second or third-year students. One student commented,

> "I didn't really consider [returning to campus housing] because at the end of day I knew that I could find a similar situation outside of campus and I'd have a little more freedom" (student interview, March 17, 2021).

One international student stated,

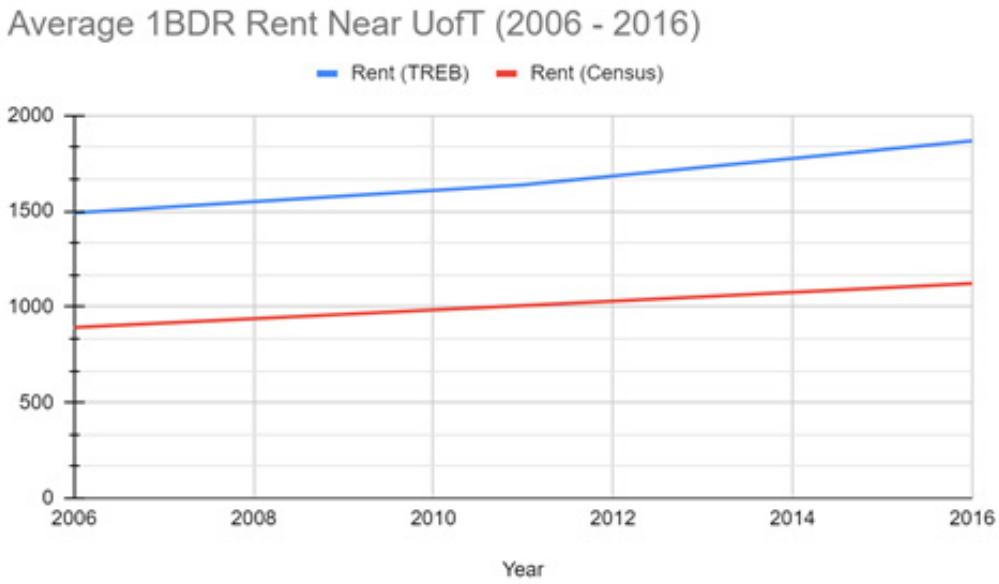


Figure 17: Average rent near UofT for a one-bedroom apartment. Source: Toronto Real Estate Board and CMHC Census data.

> "In retrospect, I think I made the right choice to move off campus because I have more freedom.[…] I could cook whenever I want to, I just feel comfortable because I don't know if you've been to [communal kitchen and lounge at a UofT residence], but cooking there was just weird, especially if you if you're trying to cook there on your own and then all of a sudden a group of people come in, they just started, start to like hang out and stuff it. It's just, you know, I sometimes I like a little, a little privacy" (student interview, March 9, 2021).

The housing types the students chose ranged from illegal rooming houses to high-rise condominiums. The students who chose rooming houses and subdivided units in houses stated that they chose these housing types for the relatively affordable rent and the proximity to campus. Students who opted for high-rise rentals and private condo units stated that they were willing to pay more for security, specific amenities, and desire to have fewer roommates and more private space. Four students actively sought out condos and apartments as they are "appropriate", with one student commenting on wanting that condo lifestyle after the types of housing they lived in previously.

For the students, the desire and need to seek off-campus housing is embedded into the student experience, and many could not imagine their ideal 'appropriate' housing situation provided by UofT. Many students approach UofT housing and support with cynicism, one student commented,

> “And if there were an option where it’s better housing, it’s, it’s apartment-style or whatever, I would probably consider it. But then, first of all, I don’t think it’s going to happen any time soon, realistically, because it’s UofT, there’s not that much land to build new things and it’s going to be very costly to upgrade things.” (student interview)

One student articulated that because of the housing demand, there has to be a level of exploitation that has to be tolerated by the tenant in order to secure “appropriate” housing and calling the process “trial by fire.” The same student felt like due to the high demand for student housing around UofT, they cannot stand up to their landlord for abuses because there would be a tenant to replace them and no onus to do better. There is an overarching theme of reluctant acceptance of the market as it exists now, and skepticism on options available to students. However, from student responses, it seems that the characteristics of housing they’re looking for does not always align with the PBSA offerings. One student commented,

> “I found that those additional supports were very valuable at [in my first year]. And at that time, I really would not have wanted to be living on my own in an apartment. But after that year, I think I’d kind of, I’d gotten the hang of things enough that I was comfortable switching out of that situation, and going to a more independent one.” (student interview, 2021).

Highlighting that for some students, the programmatic lifestyle offered by PBSAs are grouped in the same category of on-campus housing, and the challenge circles back to whether or not the space guarantees a level of personal autonomy. From this finding, we can see that students don’t necessarily benefit from studentification if the market responses duplicate a form of housing that is inconsistent with evolving student lifestyles and tastes.

Market responses to student housing demand: Purpose-built rentals and PBSAs

In response to the shortage of on-campus housing for first-year students, within the last ten years there was a significant private sector response through new purpose-built rentals in the residential study boundary (see Figure 16). Findings from the City of Toronto data indicate while the number of developments is consistent between 2009-2014 and 2015-2020, the proportion of proposed purpose-built rental buildings has increased. Interviews with student housing developers indicate that Chinatown is within an ideal geography for student housing developments. For a project to be viable, the developers indicated five factors, which are illustrated in Table 2 against Chinatown.

One industry professional[2] observed that there is not a lot of student housing near UofT to adequately meet demand, and the area can accommodate significantly more buildings, commenting several thousand new beds would only make a minimal impact on demand. A community member[3] with a property that's been in their family for decades, identified the shortage of student housing at UofT to be the primary reason for developing their property (community member, interview, March 2, 2021). Another developer[4] stated, "in all of our projects we've been doing, we're counting on somewhere between 40 and 50 percent of our residents are internationals right now...China was clearly number one give or take double India" (industry professional interview, March 9, 2021). It is clear that the push towards HEI internationalization has spurred the growth of the PBSA industry, as international students are a guaranteed target market for student housing.

Paul Johnson, a City of Toronto planner updating the University of Toronto St. George Campus Secondary Plan described UofT's student housing shortage as,

> "A crisis in not only housing affordability,[...], but also in particular, in student housing and affordable student housing […] And I think the fact that there really hasn't been student housing that's been owned and operated by the university in quite a

2. 12 years of experience in the development industry and 8 student housing projects completed or ongoing as of 2021
3. 18 units as of 2021
4. 18 years in the development industry and exceeding 20 PBSAs across North America as of 2021

Criteria	Chinatown
Proximity to campus	Using 27 King's College Circle as UTSG, 51 McCaul as OCAD, 350 Victoria St as Ryerson, and 160 Kendal Ave as George Brown Casa Loma Campus. Using Spadina Ave and Dundas St as the center of Chinatown. • UTSG: 15 min walk; 13 min transit • OCAD: 11 min walk; 7 min transit • Ryerson: 22 min walk; 14 min transit • George Brown: 40 min walk; 20 min transit
Area with large existing student population	• UTSG student population is 62,864 (graduate and undergraduate) (UofT quick facts) • OCAD student population is 4,742 (graduate and undergraduate) (OCAD facts and figures) • Ryerson student population is 36,112 (graduate and undergraduate, excluding continuing education courses) (Ryerson University) • George Brown College student population across its 5 campuses is 34,341 (full-time students and part-time, excluding continuing education registrations) (George Brown College, 2020). Unknown student population at the Casa Loma Campus. • Total: 103,718 students per year (excluding George Brown College)
A campus or university environment	UTSG has an institutional boundary with several residences outside of the traditional university boundary. There are fraternity and sorority houses along Beverley St.
Baseline rents are decent	See figure 5 for average rent near UofT
A low supply and high demand	• UTSG can commodate 6,502 students in its residences (UofT quick facts) • OCAD does not have listed homes or housing options • Ryerson has 1,144 beds (Ryerson University b) • George Brown College resdence is located by its Waterfront Campus.

Table 2: evaluating Chinatown against the student housing criteria

> long time, even though the student population has been growing, I think it's kind of, it's just logical that there would be this issue" with the private sector capitalizing on the crisis "we're also seeing a lot of [...] private apartments and rooming houses and things that are targeting students" (Johnson, interview, March 4, 2021).

All of the city staff interviewed acknowledges that the demand for student housing has translated into large developments that specifically target students. Outside of overt marketing materials that describe the development as "student-focused," "purpose-built student residence," the interviewees observed new multifamily residential buildings with specific coded amenities or features that allude to its target demographic, such as study rooms or through the unit sizes and unit mixes. The rents in these new multifamily buildings are at a premium and capitalize on its proximity to campuses and amenities, however, in comparison the rents would be more affordable than PBSAs.

As one PBSA developer explained,

> "Another version of student purpose-built student housing, is [...] it looks more like a multi-family apartment building, but you try to have more studios than what you typically have in a regular building" further elaborating "students primarily like studios for the privacy and they understand that a little less space, less spacious overall, but they like the privacy" (industry professional interview, March 2, 2021).

In response to lower occupancies during COVID-19 and other student supply disruptions, the developers interviewed indicated a need to transition away from the dormitory PBSA model to multifamily rental buildings. These new multi-family residential buildings will contain more studio-type layouts per building to expand the possible tenant pool to include young professionals, families, and seniors.

The developer continues noting that the industry could yet be going in a hybrid direction:

> "(I'm) maybe leaning more towards like the studio model of catering to students as opposed to the four-bedroom versions because, like I said, although it's ideal for students and that's what we're trying to target, if COVID is here and I have a building with a bunch of studios, I'll be able to find people that are willing to take those spaces, maybe not the same rents that a student would be pay. Right. But there is still [...] a bigger market than just students. ...I would say the solution or the consideration is to reduce the number of units that only can be used for students [such as four bedrooms] and try to go more towards a hybrid where they're catered

> to students, but they still have, you know, value to other people." (industry professional interview, March 2, 2021)

Another developer commented,

> "Informally [in terms of contingency plan], you know, we're trying to think off-campus, for example, of who else is our target audience, and that's why we're also melding co-living in with our students. So, we do have secondary sources of tenants." (industry professional interview, March 9, 2021).

And further elaborating that for the built developments that are designed to mimic a dormitory-style living, the spaces would be open to other young professionals with a similar desire for a programmatic lifestyle.

Findings from interviews with developers indicate that the main gentrifying force is the number of students attending the downtown universities. Moreover, the growing number of purpose-built rentals was seen by developers as offering a form of neighbourhood succession, the same developer commented,

> "In theory, [if] we were able to get students out of the houses and into the [rental] building. [...] You know, there's you know, you may be taking some people out of houses, but what it might do, it might bring other people, other students who weren't in those houses. Maybe the rent goes down in the houses. Now they can afford to move into a house where they weren't in the neighbourhood at all" (industry professional interview, March 2, 2021).

In sum, the location of Chinatown makes it an ideal location for investment and redevelopment. Interviews with industry professionals indicate an awareness of the student housing crisis, in addition to actively responding to changing consumer demands. New housing near UofT is appealing not only to students, but also young urban professionals, which accelerates the youthification of the neighborhood. As the next section explains, similar findings are observed on the commercial spaces in Chinatown.

Community perspectives to expanding student populations and housing

Community members were largely critical of the expansion of UTSG and the student pop-

ulation in residential areas, citing concerns over the lack of regulation of informal rooming housing, the rapid pace of university expansion, student transience, and residential displacement by 'transient' students. With regards to the proliferation of unlicensed rooming houses, a community member who conducted a neighbourhood survey in 2009 told us:

> "We have a half dozen legal rooming houses, they're perfectly fine and we have over 300 illegal rooming houses. So, this is 12 to 20 students per house" and "many people have done over the years and carved them up into rooms and stuffed them full of students, there's not much stopping you." (community member interview, March 12, 2021)

Similarly, community members complained about the market removal of viable spaces for potential long-term residents and the rapid expansion of UofT: "I don't understand the point. Is it a school? Or, is it some kind of multinational, aggressive business?" (community member interview, March 12, 2021). Another community member remarked,

> "I do definitely think that [UofT's] whole drive towards international recognition has widened the cleavage [between UofT and the community] from being a cleavage to literally being a giant abyss" (community member interview, March 11, 2021).

Johnson reiterates this concern, observing consistent resident resistance to UofT expanding outside its traditional boundaries (Johnson, interview, March 4, 2021). Arlene Chan, a Chinatown historian, reflected,

> "The bottom line is this is how [the landlords] make their money, because they know they can rent. They know they can divide up their rooms. They know, like Chinatowns got one of the highest rates of rooming houses because who knows what? You'll see this beautiful, detached home. But who knows how many people are living in there?" (Chan, interview, March 11, 2021).

Friends of Chinatown Toronto, an activist group, view the students as a gentrifying force that is contributing to the displacement of long-term residents. One FOCT activist reiterated on the transient nature of students,

> " I guess I wish they just cared a little bit more. They're valuable, like they're clearly in the community. They are community members, but it's so insular, you know" (community member interview, March 16, 2021).

Another FOCT member commented that the change is not necessarily the fault of students, but students are a visible commodity capitalized by external stakeholders, which erases other members of the community, such as seniors. Other community members acknowledge that students can be valuable to the community, however, there is still a disconnect as Chinatown is for working class and low-income residents. A community member reflected on FOCT's activism,

> "I think that for [FOCT], you know, they [were students or artists who came to Chinatown] sort of came here thinking, you know, this is going to be the last place they'd be displaced from, only to find themselves being displaced by other Chinese people" (Community member interview, March 11, 2021).

Implications of studentification

In sum, the location of Chinatown makes it an ideal location for investment and redevelopment. Interviews with industry professionals indicate an awareness of the student housing crisis, in addition to actively responding to changing consumer demands. New housing near UofT is appealing not only to students, but also young urban professionals, which accelerates the youthification of the neighborhood. But what happens to neighbourhoods, institutions, buildings, municipalities, and countries built on the assumption of a continual and never-ending supply of international students? A recent study indicates that only 38% of international students to Canada (between 1980 to 2015) obtained permanent residentship, so what happens to businesses that specifically cater to them (Preston and Akbar, 2020). What happens when that "supply chain" is disrupted?

One of the most apparent implications is the dangerous connection between neighbourhoods and global international politics. In December of 2018, Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou was arrested at Vancouver International Airport on a "provisional arrest warrant, under the terms of an extradition treaty between Canada and the United States" (Proctor, 2018). Following Meng's arrest, the Vice-Provost International of the University of British Columbia requested a meeting with colleagues to discuss the situation "given our signifi-

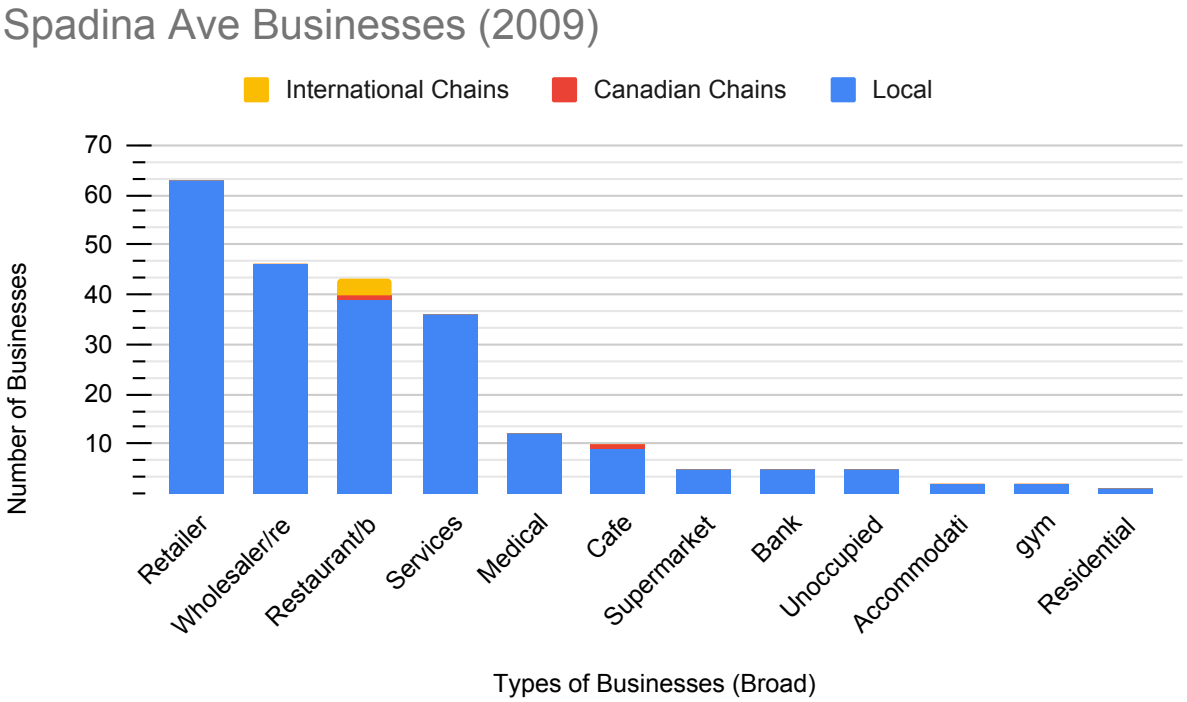
cant reliance on China for students/$" (Quan, 2019). At the same time, a delegation from the Chinese Academy of Sciences cancelled a visit to UBC "due to the recent incident related to the arrest of Huawei CFO" (Quan, 2019). In addition, Huawei sponsors $9.5 million in research agreements with UBC, which was now up-in-the-air (Quan, 2019). In addition to the safety of Canadian students in China, the question of whether or not China will stop sending students to Canadian institutions is a large and looming reality. The Meng Wanzhou incident shortly follows the 2018 Canada-Saudi Arabia disputes which saw the withdrawal of Saudi-funded scholarships from Canadian schools, impacting over 8,000 students (Knope, 2018). What would happen to neighbourhoods, institutions, buildings, municipalities, and countries when students leave? As the next section explains, similar findings are observed on the commercial spaces in Chinatown.

8. Commercial Gentrification: An Outcome of Studentification

The expanding student population has real effects on the commercial landscape of Chinatown. The community members interviewed for this study observed a growing number of international chains and franchises, and the loss of long-time community assets, such as greengrocers, bakeries, and restaurants. In 2009, there were a total of 4 international and 5 Canadian chains and franchises in Chinatown. There were no international Chinese chains[1]. However, in 2019, there are 15 Canadian chains, 7 international chains, and 23 international Chinese chains in Chinatown (see Figure 18 and 19). Most of the international Chinese chains came to Chinatown within the last five years (2015 – 2019) and the most prominent changes are along Spadina Ave. In 2009, the dominant commercial use in Chinatown were "retailer" of apparel and "wholesalers" that sold imported goods which accounted for 40% of commercial activity in Chinatown. By 2019, the proportion of retailers and wholesalers were 29%. At the same time, restaurants and bars, cafes, and services catering to youth have increased. The findings indicate that youthification and studentification is well underway in Chinatown, and is marked by several businesses as key identifiers: international bubble tea chains (represented as "cafes") and restaurants offering regional Chinese cuisine.

In addition to the changing commercial landscape of Chinatown, the shift from wholesale and retail to primarily eating establishments also impacted the nature of work in Chinatown. Figure 6 indicates the changes in establishment types in Chinatown, with a decrease in retail and office establishments and a rise in services. The TES data indicates that there is a decrease in full-time work by sector, with exception of office work, and a corresponding increase in part-time labour (see Figures 20 and 21). The data reinforces

1. 'International Chinese chain' will be inclusive of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan (Republic of China). Chinese international students will refer to students from the PRC unless otherwise indicated.



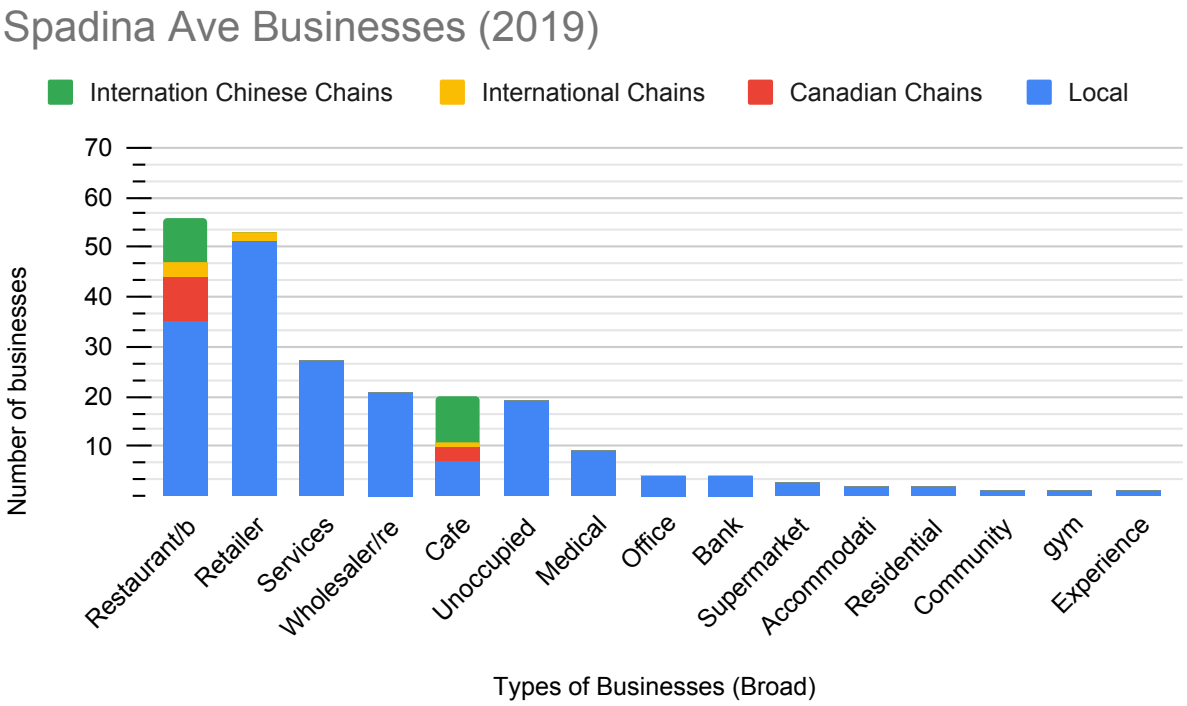
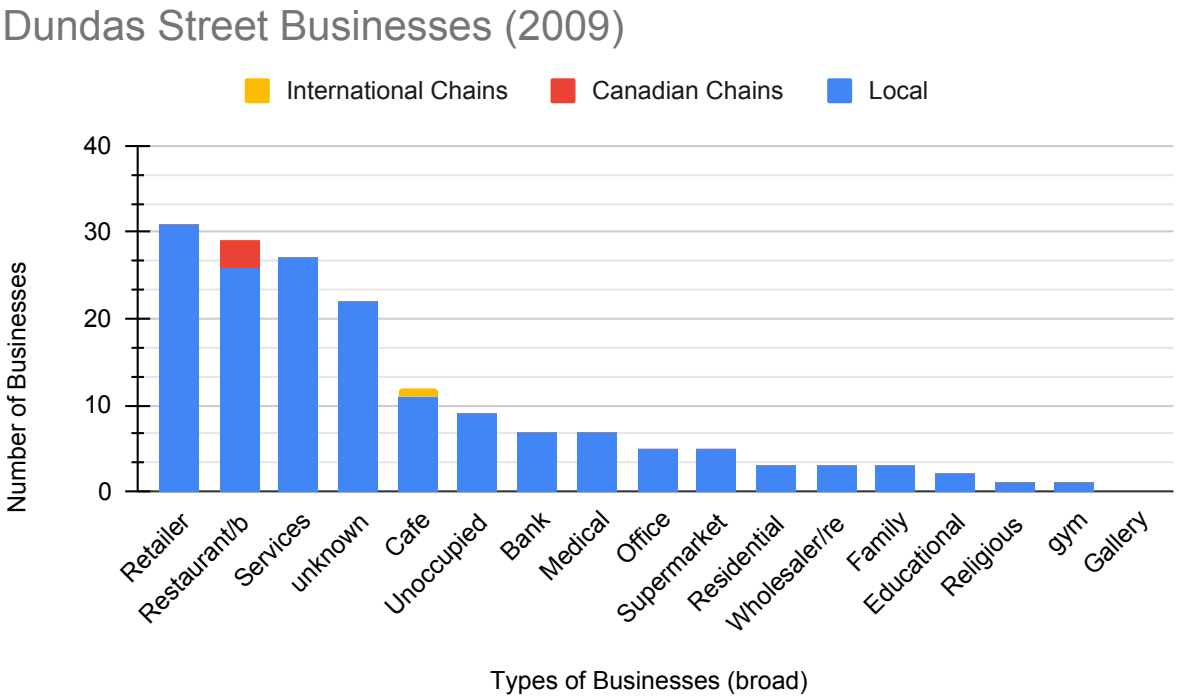


Figure 18: Commercial change along Spadina Ave, comparing 2009 and 2019; the categories of uses are descriptive.



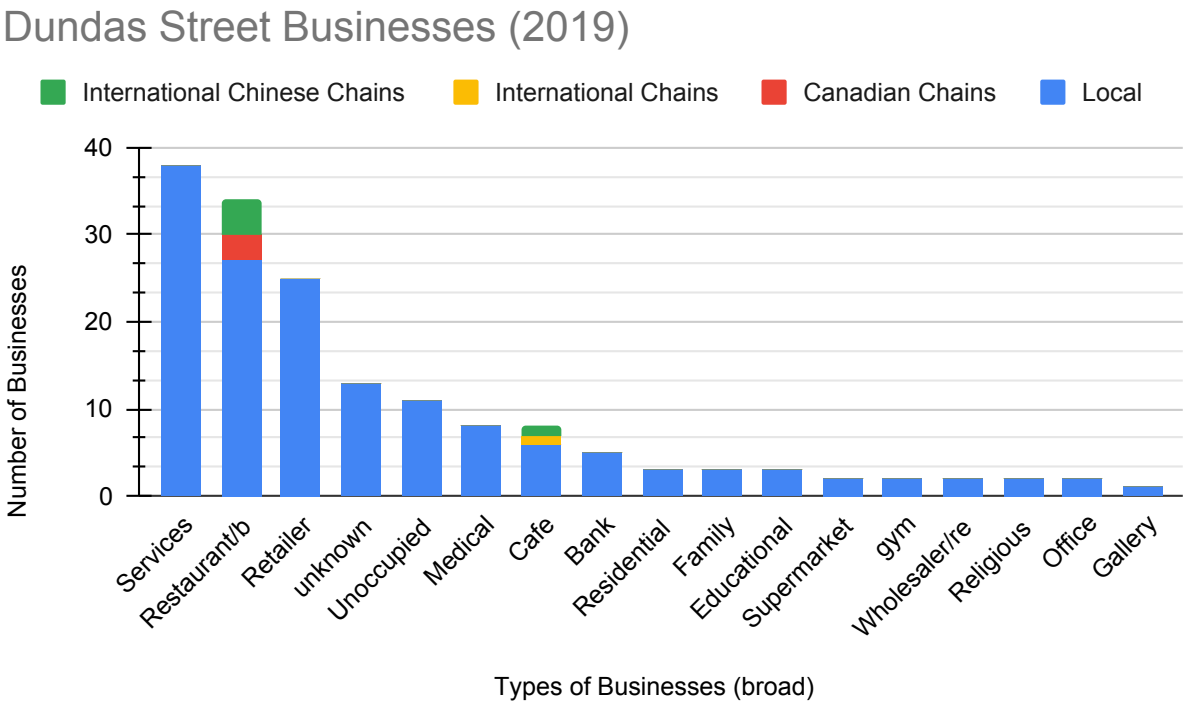


Figure 19: Commercial change along Dundas Street, comparing 2009 and 2019; the categories of uses are descriptive.

that with the rise of restaurants, cafes, and services, the types of work offered are found increasingly in those new establishments, and more likely to be part-time. Casual employment and precarious employment had always been an issue in Chinatown, however, with the changing landscape of labour, it is unlikely that an employee can sustain a livelihood with the types of part-time jobs offered, thus jeopardizing the history of Chinatown as an employment hub for new immigrants.

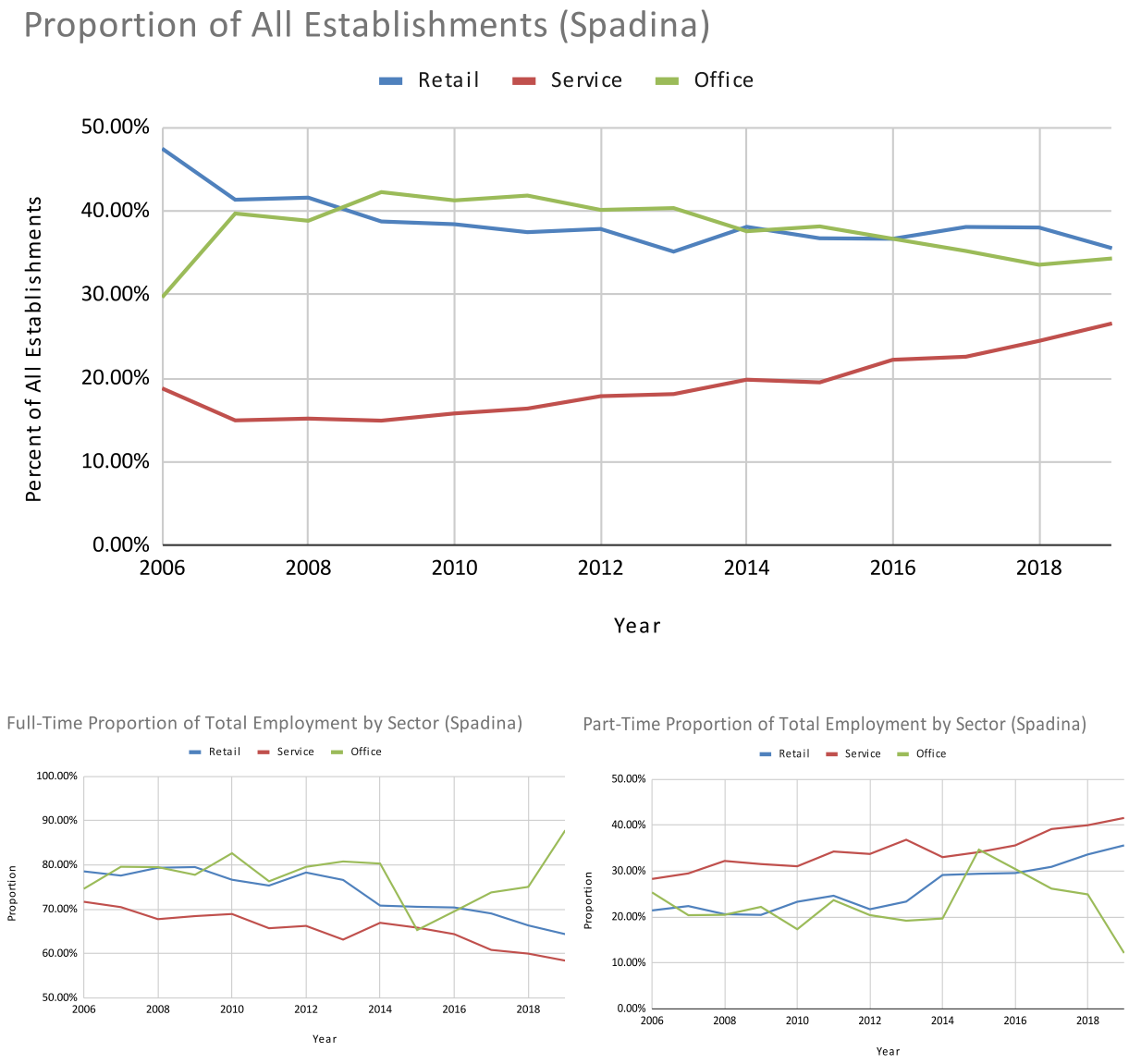


Figure 20: Business establishments from the Toronto Employment Survey (Spadina Ave only) from 2006-2019

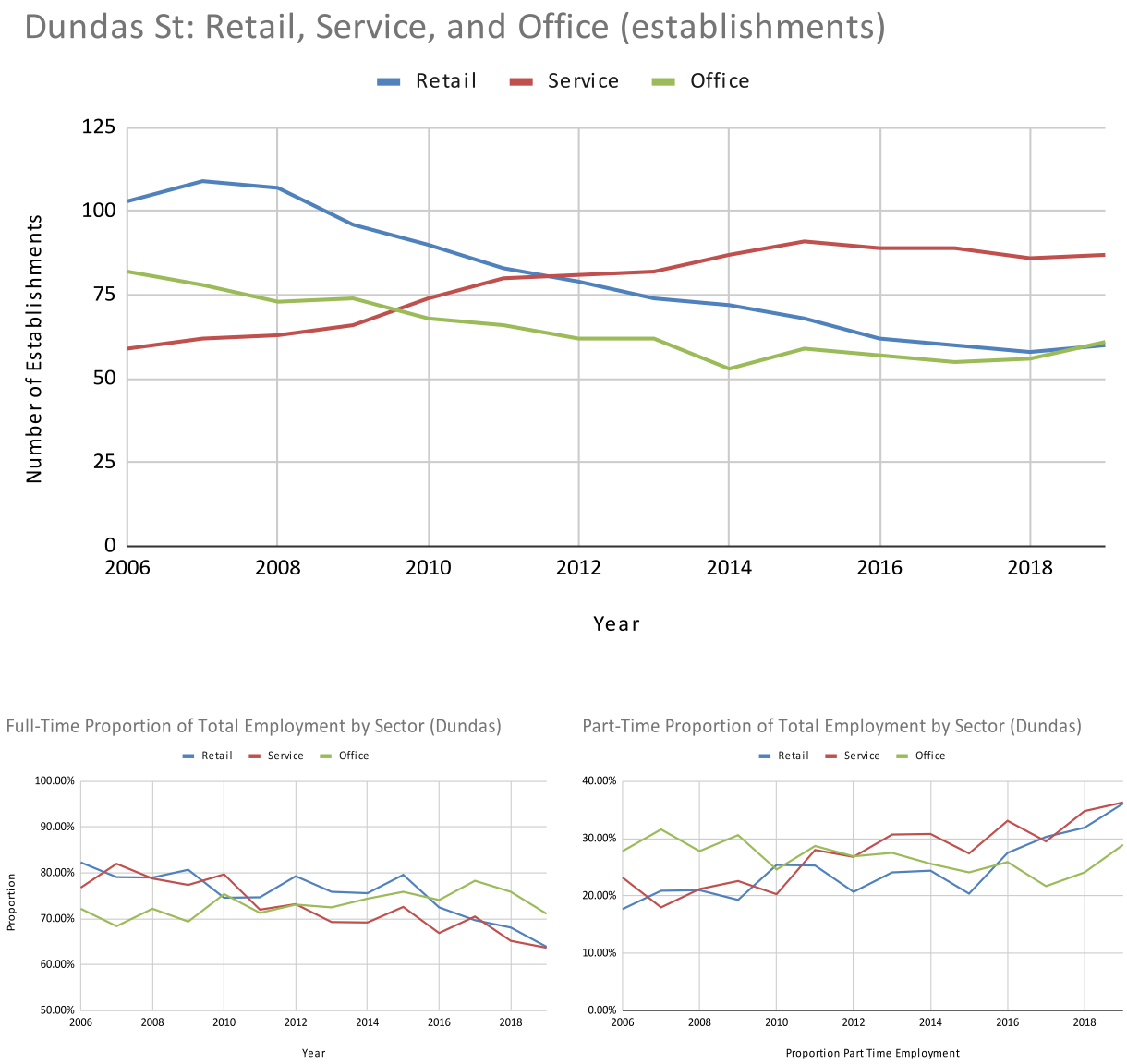


Figure 21: Business establishments from the Toronto Employment Survey (Dundas St only) from 2006-2019

It is not a coincidence that with a near tripling of international students from the PRC, and an increasing number of students from Taiwan and Hong Kong, that Chinatown is seeing a shift towards the taste preferences of these new students. In 2009, along Spadina Ave, there was one bubble tea specific shop. In 2019, there are 20 “cafe” shops, 9 of which are international Chinese chains, and nearly all of the 9 opened between 2016 and 2019. Arguably the trend indicates that businesses within West Chinatown are getting more Chinese, but it is the wrong type of Chinese to many; a type of new Chinese diaspora

that is divorced from the Chinese that originally inhabited and shaped many Chinatowns throughout North America. But is the inclusion of international Chinese chains a marker of authenticity or, by proxity of it being in Chinatown, contributing to a false sense of idenity?

What is boba liberalism?

Bubble tea, or boba, refers to the drink *zhenzhu naicha* (pearl milk tea) which originated in Taiwan in the late 1980s. The classic form of the beverage consists of black tea with milk, crushed ice, and small tapioca bubbles, derived from cassava, caramelized in brown sugar (Nguyen-Okwu, 2019). The 'bubbles' refer to the chewy tapioca pearls which adds an additional texture of chewiness to the cold tea beverage. While bubble tea is a menu staple in many Taiwanese and Chinese restaurants and bakeries, historically it was not a central offering. The present wave of bubble tea culture is driven by franchises like CoCo Fresh Tea and Chatime that specialize in bubble tea; the new bubble tea movement is equivalent to the "third-wave" coffee movement (Zhang, 2019). Bubble tea offerings have moved past the classic milk tea to include fruit teas, and a range of toppings to add texture and flavours to the tea, such as cheese foam, a variety of jellies, and so on. The beverage can be endlessly customizable in its sugar content, ice levels, and come as both a hot or cold beverage. In this section, bubble tea and boba will be used interchangeably.

CoCo Fresh Tea is an example of one such chain which was founded in Taipei in 1997 and opened its first Toronto store in 2014 (CoCo). With 40 locations in Ontario and 4,000 stores worldwide (CoCo), CoCo is one of the world's largest bubble tea chains (BlogTO). In an article by the People's Daily statistics collected by the PRC government indicate that the "younger Chinese population are the primary consumers of milk tea, with statistics indicating the people between the ages of 16 and 35 account for over 90 percent of new-style tea consumers in China" (People's Daily Online). According to a 2020 New-Style Tea Drink report using CBNData[1], "the Chinese bubble tea market grew from 44 billion yuan ($8.5 billion CAD) in 2017 to 102 billion yuan ($19.8 billion CAD) last year. Most of these sales are to young consumers: Chinese born in the 1990s and 2000s account for almost

1. A subsidiary of Shanghai Culture, Radio, Film and Television Group (smg) and co-created by Alibaba, is a big data service provider, offering data for market analytics.

70% of new-style tea sales, and 27% of them reported spending more than 400 yuan (more than $77 CAD) a month on new-style teas" (People's Daily Online). The connection between bubble tea and youth culture is undeniable and bubble tea is not an isolated aspect of student culture, the global bubble tea market is valued at $1.9 billion USD (2016) and is projected to reach $3.2 billion by 2023 (Allied Market Research). Bubble tea's connection to the rise of China's middle class and soft power is not well documented in academic scholarship, however, Krishnendu Ray, associate professor of food studies at New York University and the author of the book The Ethnic Restaurateur observed that "to me, bubble tea is linked to the economic and cultural power of East Asia, and Taiwan [as the origin of many trendy variations on bubble tea] is a perfect locus of that," Ray continues, "It's symptomatic of East Asia's location — of East Asian urban culture — in the global circulation of taste" (Zhang, 2019). It is safe to assume that there is a correlation with UofT's large and growing international Chinese student population and proliferation of bubble tea chains, if younger Chinese are the predominant and frequent consumers of the beverage.

In North America, bubble tea culture is linked to the coming of age narrative of second-generation Chinese-Americans and Chinese-Canadians, and rooted in nostalgia. The feeling of out-of-placeness of Chinese and other Asian youth in White culture, means that bubble tea shops or getting bubble tea, forms the "third place" in search of community and belonging (Zhang, 2019). Contrary to the Taiwanese boba movement, U.S boba culture caters to a pan-Asian community (Trazo, 2020). The discourse on bubble tea and the East Asian diasporic experience is recent and while the bubble tea experience goes back to the 90s, the Facebook group "Subtle Asian Traits," started by a group of Asian Australian students to share memes and jokes about the Asian Australian experience and later became a global phenomenon, accelerated the mainstreaming of bubble tea. Through this global community, bubble tea experiences became universalized and embedded into a larger conversation on what it means to be part of a diaspora. An example of a meme is seen on page 98. The connection between bubble tea consumption and youth culture is apparent.

In reaction to the conflation of bubble tea with a generalized Asian experience, Twitter user @diaspora_is_red coined the term “boba liberalism” to describe what bubble tea has become in discourse. @Diapora_is_red, identified as Redmond, says “it’s a sweet popular thing. It’s not very offensive, but it’s also not that good for you from a health point of view. It’s just empty calories” and elaborating,

> “Thinking t-shirts, products, and merchandise are the main way of affirming one’s racial identity. It’s capitalist consumption presented as ‘API-ness.’ Buy more crazy rich asians tickets, sell more boba, go to raves, wear this brand. It’s reliant on capitalism.” Redmond attributes the strawman of commodified boba, “wanting to reconnect with your roots by [...] drinking bubble tea, getting added to subtle asian traits, and organizing fundraisers for your asian student association, but never studying your history and feeling solidarity with your homeland against imperialism” (Redmond, as quoted in Zhang).

In essence, boba as a form of identity and even third place, “is all sugar, no substance” (Redmond, as quoted in Zhang). From this perspective, the perspectives of the growth coalition is consistent with the values of boba liberalism. More on the growth coalition will be discussed in the next chapter.

Filmmaker Bing Liu commented on this apparent contradiction, “Coming out to the West Coast for the first time in my late teens and early 20s, seeing massive amounts of Asian-American communities, I [felt] like, wow, this is weird, I wish I grew up here, I would feel a stronger sense of confidence in who I was. And then getting beyond the weirdness and realizing — oh no, there’s a sort of boba tea culture where it’s surface-level identification. There’s something even within the community that needs to be explored.” (Liu, in Yu, 2021). The surface level appreciation and conflation of boba with the Asian-American experience reshapes the narrative of a whole community into a youth-oriented discussion, and one that erases the stories of Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community that does not fit within the boba narrative. If both a South Asians and East Asians like bubble tea, the perception of a common attribute overshadows any recognition of the vast disparities between South Asian and East Asian communities, such as the education attainment disparity between Taiwanese (74%) and Hmong (13%) (Nguyen, 2020).

Figure 22: Example of a Subtle Asian Traits bubble tea meme (Subtle Asian Traits)

While the present commodification of boba can be problematic, it is hard not to regard the drink with elements of nostalgia. Trazo (2020) nuances Redmond’s claims that the performance of boba is the commodification and dilution of difference, but adds that the history and legacy of boba demonstrate complex webs of how Asian Americans, at least in San Jose, understands “race, identity, social circles, and geographic space” (Trazo, 2020, 77). But how does bubble tea form into the identity of Chinese nationals from China, who are increasingly part of this existing Chinese diaspora? Is the differentiation of ‘from China’ and ‘from North America,’ important in how oneself is, or isn’t performing boba liberalism? Is boba as a symbol inherently negative? Rather, it appears that boba takes on new meaning in the context of the conversation both locally and globally.

As important, or unimportant, bubble tea is to the Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-American identity, in Toronto's Chinatown, the main identifier of international Chinese student-led studentification is the proliferation of international bubble tea chains and franchises. Most of the chains arrived between 2015-2019, and while documented on the news media, the additional gentrification and class dimension has not been critically interrogated. Although the trend towards bars and restaurants is an emerging shift city wide, and while other interviewees observed an increase in Chinese international chains beyond Chinatown, there is an additional class implication associated with bubble tea (City staff interview, 2021). A regular pearl milk tea from CoCo is $4.70 and the price increases with additional customization and topping choices. In comparison, a local Chinese bakery offers 3 pork buns for $2.50 and a Vietnamese deli offers a banh mi for $3. For many, the regular consumption of bubble tea is not financially feasible, in addition to the drink as completely outside of their diet. In a conversation with elderly resident, the resident disparaged that she lives alone and cannot drink a whole bubble tea to herself, and that for the price of one bubble tea, she can purchase her dinner at a Chinese bakery.

The price discrepancy and the growing number of franchises within Chinatown causes community members and activists to push back, reiterating that while the establishments are popular amongst young people, they are not affordable for all residents in the area and thus accelerates gentrification. One FOCT member commented,

> "Is [the]it like food [appealing to]that like the, like the seniors or like the low-income folks in the area, like want to eat, can afford to eat or like is that also increasing to like gentrification in general and like are all things like increasing in price?" (Community member interview, March 18, 2021).

The class divide between those who can afford to drink bubble tea and those who can't, reveals the larger questions of who lives in and needs Chinatown. The grocers and bakeries in Chinatown sustains many low-income populations across the city as one community member commented, the prices in Chinatown was the difference between her friend living below the poverty line and her living just above it (Community member interview, March 11, 2021).

To the international students from PRC and Taiwan, bubble tea and bubble tea shops were gathering spaces as a reminder of home. One student stated

> "There's a Kungfu Tea that's also a really nice place to hang out. My third year I was part of a well, I knew a friend who was part of a mentorship program. So, he did all of his weekly chat sessions at that conference. So we just used to go there and I got to talk to first years and answer questions" (student interview, March 31, 2021).

Another student commented that they would hang out with friends in bubble tea stores (Student interview, April 2, 2021). A student from Taiwan remarked that,

> "I've noticed that there are lots of Bubble Tea here and Bubble Tea shop and some of them. [..] I can identify which store is the owner is probably from Taiwan […] Just something that just maybe some keywords or the things that they sell" (student interview, March 9, 2021).

Bubble tea shops are crucial "third places" for international Chinese students, and the beverage itself is a component of the contemporary Chinese tastes and lifestyles.
The class divide between those who can afford to drink bubble tea and those who can't, reveals larger questions of who lives in, needs, and shapes Chinatown. Given their affordable prices, the grocers and bakeries in Chinatown provide food security to many low-income populations across the city who cannot afford prices elsewhere.

In essence, Chinatown is becoming a place for "new Canadians" and "people of Chinese descent" in its shift from predominantly wholesale and retail businesses (that no doubt employed and was owned by Chinese and Vietnamese people) to restaurants and cafes as gathering spaces, and foods that are more authentically Chinese than Chinese-Western fusion food. While civil society backlash has focused on the intrusion of Rexall as a chain store, these subtle international chains are of greater concern to the core fabric of West Chinatown. It is this careful tension that makes the West Chinatown case so paradoxical, and so intriguing.

9. Chinatown and Community Tension: what is an Authentic Chinatown?

In this section, we present the perspectives of stakeholders, such as activists, employees, landlords, residents, and students in relation to current studentification processes, and their vision for the future of Chinatown West. Ideas of preservation and notions of what is the correct or authentic future of Chinatown were discussed, ultimately, revealing competing and contradictory ideas of the futurity of the space, and who it should serve.

First, we have the perspective shared by the Business Improvement Area (BIA) and members of the older generation, whose idea of Chinatown is in relation to authenticity to a curated selection of Orientalist aesthetics, both historic and modern. From interviews, this perspective emerged from seeing the decline of previous Chinatowns and as a reaction to the structural racism experienced by the Chinese in Canada. Chinatown cannot be separated from its role as a tourist destination, and it is perceived to operate as a place of contact between the broader population with the Chinese community; food and culture is seen as a gateway for understanding and reinforcing the respectability of the Chinese community. This perspective commodifies curated elements of Chinese identity and is delineated through language like Chinatown is a place to 'try authentic [name of food item].'

The second perspective sees an authentic Chinatown through its function as a utilitarian space. This is a perspective shared by certain members of the community along with Friends of Chinatown Toronto. The "utility" of the space denotes how space serves communities, especially working-class communities, through the collection of cultural and community assets. Characteristics of the utilitarian view see Chinatown as a place of employment, a supply of affordable housing and commercial space, affordable and culturally appropriate foods, and other significant assets like medical offices offering services in multiple languages. The utilitarian perspective is at odds with the Orientalist and growth-minded perspective as the desire to touristify and commodify Chinatown has the

potential to displace the utilitarian elements of Chinatown.

Finally, there is the perspective of the students who see Chinatown as an extension of their university lifestyle and experience. The student perspective draws on elements of both the growth-minded and the utilitarian faction but is ultimately conflicted over their role and belonging in the space. For students, an authentic Chinatown is one that is utilitarian but also serves their needs. For Chinese students, both domestic and international, Chinatown is less a place of belonging but a space of consumption.

The ambiguity over Chinatown's future in the urban space reinforces the temporality and ambiguity of space and how it's used. As the population of many Chinatowns is decreasing in the United States (Xie and Batunova, 2019), lies the challenge, what is an authentic Chinatown if the people aren't there? Moreover, can Chinatown persist despite a century of major socio-economic changes?

The Growth Coalition

> "I really don't have an issue with if it's a big chain, Chinese bubble tea or tea place or dumpling place for them opening a Chinatown for me. I just see another Chinese business. It caters. It just broadens the range of choices to eat and spend your time in Chinatown." (Chan, interview, March 11, 2021)

The growth coalition of Chinatown is rooted in strategic self-orientalization that reinforces a consumable and commodifiable version of Chinatown to satisfy consumer fantasies (Liu, 2017; Umbach and Wishnoff, 2008; Rast, 2007; Anderson, 1991). At the same time, the pro-growth mentality of the Chinatown BIA is in reaction to the historical perception of Chinatown as a seedy ghetto, and thereby development initiatives should push back against the perceived stigma of Chinatown while simultaneously choosing the palatable components of Chineseness that reinforce the exoticism of the locality. The utility of Chinatowns as a tool to reinforce and legitimize Chinese American and Chinese Canadian culture and identity is repeated in Toronto's Chinatown. Tonny Louie, Chair of the Chinatown BIA, remarked on a Chinese-themed parkette at Huron St and Dundas St,

> “I like it to be a little bit more substantial and [the actualized proposal] is too light. It’s not impressive enough. Not grand” Louie elaborates further “I’m still interested in doing something cultural and historic and bring out the [modern] culture of the Chinese culture to anybody that comes to Chinatown... so that people know what Chinese culture, people are all about. So they wouldn’t have a stereotype because some people blame China for a lot of things” (Louie, Interview, April 2, 2021).

The new iteration of the authentic Chinatown moves beyond an imagined classical Chinese architecture and seeks to relate to modern China. However, the ‘modern’ authentic Chinatown still fits within the categories of Chinatown as tourist and outsider-facing. From this perspective, Chinese International chains have a natural ally in the growth coalition and are consistent with the authentic Chinatown narrative.

For those in the growth coalition or who share components of a similar mindset, students and international chains are a welcomed addition to the neighbourhood. Chan stated “I see any business that opens in Chinatown as a welcome addition” and attributing her perspective as influenced by living through the many iterations of Chinatown throughout the years and seeing the closing of businesses,

> “So I don’t I, I really don’t have an issue with if it’s a big chain, Chinese bubble tea or tea place or dumpling place for them opening a Chinatown for me. I just see another Chinese business. It caters. It just broadens the range of choices to eat and spend your time in Chinatown. So I just see. I don’t see it as a disadvantage. And I know that this concern about the commercialization of Chinatown with either big box stores or chain stores or. But for me. I really welcome Chinese businesses from whatever their background is in opening in Chinatown, because I really see it as. We can’t keep Chinatown with old stores and old rundown. We need to have constant infusion of energy and money and concepts and just to make it vital” (Chan interview, March 11, 2021).

The perspective of keeping Chinatown alive at all cost, traces back to the need for a Chinatown as a place of contact and understanding. The utility of the space, and its relations to Chinese Canadian identity, created a natural alignment between key Chinatown stakeholders and international Chinese chains.

The Bay Street neighbourhood, along with the Kensington-Chinatown neighbourhood has the highest density of Chinese population and speakers in Downtown Toronto (Ahmed et

al, 2021; Social Planning Toronto). While the Chinese population of Chinatown West is decreasing, the Chinese population at the Bay Street corridor is increasing. The Bay Street neighbourhood has nearly double the recent immigrant population of Kensington-Chinatown (8.9% and 4.8% respectively in 2016). The two neighbourhoods are nearly identical in terms of their large tenant population (BS - 67.9% and KC - 71% in 2016) and predominantly low-income households (BS - $48,737 and KC - $44,216 in 2016). In terms of Chinese language speakers, both neighbourhoods have a similar proportion of language speakers, but the dominant language in the Bay Street neighbourhood is Mandarin, over the fairly even split in KC. Chan addresses the change, and reiterates that the growth in Chinese population is amongst young people, “in terms of concentration, which almost equals the concentration of Chinese living in Scarborough, is all along Bay Street. And that’s again, all the condos there, all the students who are living there that go not only to UofT and OCAD, but also Ryerson” (Chan interview, March 11, 2021). The data reflects this, as 20% of the Bay Street neighbourhood population are non-permanent residents, compared to 7% in Kensington-Chinatown.

The strategic self-orientalization creates coethnic class divides between the appropriate users of Chinatown according to the BIA and the growth coalition, which includes students, and all other users of Chinatown. Self-orientalization creates a classist divide and stipulates how certain Chinese bodies are allowed to occupy the space, in so long as they adhere to positive ethnic tropes that reinforces the manufactured exoticism of Chinatown. A staff member at Cecil Community Centre reflected, “one of our board members said, ‘well, you know, if you start, if you start serving homeless people here, the Chinese seniors won’t want to come. Chinese people won’t want to come here. East Asian people won’t want to come here’. And one of our things was sort of like, well, you somehow seem to not understand that we have homeless Asian people” (Community member interview, March 11, 2021).

Recall our early discussion on boba liberalism, in essence, a development trajectory based on growth in perpetuity and tied to a shallow understanding of the Chinese identity, is “all sugar and no substance” (Redmond, as quoted in Zhang).

Friends of Chinatown Toronto

> "Chinatown was built by and for working-class immigrants."
> (FOCT poster, 2021; image by author)

FOCT pushes back against the strategic self-orientalization of Chinatown and through a postering campaign, claiming "Chinatown was built by and for working class immigrants." FOCT arises out of a need for a "genuine community voice to speak on behalf of residents for Chinatown and for workers" which FOCT sees as working-class tenants, residents, and racialized peoples, who weren't being represented in residents' associations and the BIA (Community member interview, March 18, 2021). FOCT describes the high visibility of seniors living in the neighbourhood and the number of Chinese speakers without English capacity working in Chinatown, as an indication of Chinatown's vulnerable residents. FOCT organizers, and other community members, counter the growth-oriented perspective stating that new developments, students, and international chains, contribute to the increasing gentrification of the neighbourhood.

While not opposed to densification and neighbourhood change, FOCT believes that changes need to be rooted in affordability, as well as the preservation of equitable and inclusive elements of Chinatown. As such, new housing and commercial stores that cater to students will displace the existing people FOCT advocates for; students are seen as a higher class of residents that contribute to gentrification and displacement. A FOCT organizer recognizes commercial change as a result of generational change but wants to keep international Chinese chains out regardless (Community member interview, March 18, 2021).

Although acknowledging that the chains can attract new Chinatown patrons by providing truly authentic Chinese food, there is still a classist dimension in the chains and the customers they serve. Despite the fact that Chinese international students are new immigrants and racialized peoples (by definition), the perceived class distinction and cultural gap between them and Chinese-Canadians make Chinese international students a gentrifying force and displacing more vulnerable residents and workers. Another FOCT

Figure 23: FOCT poster (image by author)

member commented, “I do think that there is a big class divide because it’s not cheap to become an international student, you know like I see all these international students like draped in like Gucci. And I’m like, but you don’t care about the Veggie Grannies” (Community member interview, March 16, 2021). The same community member disparaged that the nuance of Chinatowns to Chinese-Canadians is not appreciated by Chinese international students, as “everyone’s Chinese from where they come from” (Community member interview, March 16, 2021). For FOCT, seniors, sex-workers, and new immigrants are the vulnerable residents of Chinatown, and their perceived greater need of the space translates into a more legitimate claim as rightful occupants.

Other community members are more cautious of the international chains, but do not know if the chains have an important function to the Chinese international students. One community member remarked that though they love bubble tea and see bubble tea as a cultural bridge “it’s concerning for sure that, like, a lot of these, like big franchises are now taking over this culturally heritage business like strip that like I don’t know. I don’t know how to feel about it because I definitely, I feel conflicted” (community member interview, March 16, 2021). Two community members are weary of the arrival of the chains, and the fear of their connections to the PRC, or other the amount of Chinese investment capital coming into Canada.

While Chinatown is not directly connected to the construction of the railway and head tax era of Canadian history, nevertheless, the historical context plays into a constructed perception of the rightful Chinatown resident, that is, working class immigrants are the newest iteration of the railway worker. This constructed resident forms a crucial narrative mobilized by contemporary civil society actors, community stakeholders, and local activists, and informs the desire for community preservation against the development and growth pressures of contemporary Chinatown. The history of exclusionary state policies contributes to a collective identity that the Friends of Chinatown Toronto (FOCT) utilizes to draw a distinction between Chinese-Canadians and Chinese international students, and the othering of students as members of the community.

Students

> "When you say, like when a Coco takes down another old business, I think because there are supply and demand here, there are these many international students from China go to UofT for studies. So, yeah, it's like a business opportunity. And I think it's how the things will go. Yeah. Because, um, international students like from China now, they love, uh, chains like Coco better than some old, uh, chains, right? Yeah. So I think it's how the business works" (International Chinese student interview, April 2, 2021)

For students, the core focus is on affordable housing and the need for more support systems in place as they navigate the competitive housing market. All of the students go to Chinatown for groceries and patronize its restaurants, but the feeling of community is acknowledged as being fairly shallow. Students interviewed did not see themselves as a member of the local community, nor know how to tap into the network due to the perception of their transience or their not belonging. The students identify with the university community and don't necessarily feel grounded in their immediate geography unless they have friends who also live in the same area. Despite the feeling of not belonging, nearly all of the students would return to one of the neighbourhoods they previously resided in if given the opportunity as well as appropriate housing. The desire to return emphasizes the opportunities in seeing students as a critical lifeline for shrinking neighbourhoods.

The students participating in the study had varying experiences with their landlords in the private housing market. One student who lives in the Chinatown neighbourhood articulated that because of the housing demand, there has to be a level of exploitation that has to be tolerated by the tenant in order to secure "appropriate" housing and calling the process "trial by fire." The same student felt like due to the high demand for student housing, they cannot stand up to their landlord for abuses because there would be a tenant to replace them and no onus to do better.

All of the students commented on affordability as a factor in choosing housing. The average rent amount the students interviewed were $1,000 CAD. The students felt that paying for housing was not stressful as all the students had parental or financial aid at one

time. The parental support raises a questionable distinction of whether or not students are defined as ‘working-class’ or low-income residents. However, many students related that the rent amount versus value and type of housing was very different. Some indicated a sentiment of ‘you get what you pay for’ while others felt that some private housing operators offered not as much value for higher housing costs. Regardless of the level of affordability, all of the students commented on the lack of support by the university and or local government, and the nuance needed in understanding the student community, one student commented,

> [if homelessness/extreme precarity] is the threshold then like I agree, like [students are] not a critical population. [However] There are some students who have lived in like abusive households and like don’t have income and like want to move out. Or like live really far from home. Like, I know students have to commute like two hours in the morning to get to school. And that’s like it’s awful. And I think the like there definitely needs to be more support for us as well” (student interview, March 18, 2021).

A community member reinforces this perspective,

> “How can you assume that there aren’t vulnerable people at UofT like if you think about how many students are going there on OSAP, when you think about the fact that it’s largest, one of its largest student population are part-time students. [...] You know, they just keep thinking of UofT is this sort of like professional elitist school and it really, really isn’t” (community member interview, March 11, 2021).

As all of the students had interacted with Chinatown in some capacity, their perspective of Chinatowns ranges from neutral interactions with business establishments to feelings of alienation, and not belonging. One international student who desires to remain in Canada postgraduate did not feel connected to Chinatown as it exists now, stating

> “I get that feeling that the culture in Chinatown is like the Chinese culture from like many, many, many years ago when they came here, when they first came here, and it kept maybe the same culture until today” and further elaborating, “I remember seeing one Taiwanese beef noodle store there, but I was like, OK, here’s the Taiwanese stores. And it’s like it’s the same feeling when I see another beef noodle store on Yonge street” (student interview, March 9, 2021).

Showing that for some, despite being ethnically Chinese, Chinatown does not hold a sa-

cred position, nor part of identity formation or community building. Another international student commented,

> "I think is really nice. It also helps educate people on what good Chinese food is, because I feel like there's a lot of stereotypes orange chicken and what not, I think I think it's just it's very good to try to bring the real good stuff in. And then at the same time, all of those or most of those places are chains. So, you do lose some of the sort of the mom-and-pop shops aspect of it a little bit. You see a lot of old school or whatever Canadianized as Americanized Chinese restaurants, struggling and whatnot" (Student interview, March 31, 2021).

The student further elaborated that food in Chinatown West is only 2 years behind emerging food trends in China; this is better than other Chinatowns they visited. For the international students, there is no long-standing rooted connection to Chinatown beyond a transactional one. There is some acknowledgment of the space and its historical use and value, but that experience is not a shared experience in the new Chinese diaspora. Chinatown would have a greater value to them if the commercial businesses catered to their needs, rather than a diaspora that predated them.

The question becomes if Chinese international students are the newest iteration of Chinese economic migrants, do they not have the privilege of shaping Chinatown in their image, or is Chinatown rooted firmly in its 19th and 20th-century history. Another international student reflected,

> "When you say, like when a Coco takes down another old business, I think because there are supply and demand here, there are these many international students from China go to UofT for studies. So, yeah, it's like a business opportunity. And I think it's how the things will go. Yeah. Because, um, international students like from China now, they love, uh, chains like Coco better than some old, uh, chains, right? Yeah. So I think it's how the business works" (student interview, April 2, 2021)

The question of who has the right to inhabit, occupy, and shape Chinatown is the central tension in the studentification narrative and indicates that just because you are Chinese, you are not owed a piece of Chinatown. The exclusionary and qualifiers are needed to determine who are the legitimate occupiers of the space. One Chinese international student reflected on the historic origins of the Chinatowns, commenting that as an international

Chinese student, there should be a responsibility to understand the history and formation of the space, but while also carving spaces for international Chinese students:

> "You got to know what they went through. Then you have a better understanding of what your position is. And then and then what you can do to represent or just what you can do in general…there's also sort of a hierarchy or sort of a superiority complex within the Asian community. There's a lot of hate, which I don't like, but yeah, things like that. It needs to change, but it's kind of going to be tough" (student interview, March 31, 2021).

What now?

The core tension of this paper is the impact of UofT's international students on the neighbourhood, and more specifically, Chinese International students on West Chinatown. And it is the question of succession that challenges the Growth Coalition's push for growth, but it is also the question of succession that challenges FOCT's vision of preservation. Ultimately, who are the end-users of the space? Will these businesses remain when their customers leave. And just as they came in a large and fast wave, so too they will leave; they are not invested in the community any more than Rexall or Starbucks. If they leave, can Chinatown survive? Should it survive? Is Chineseness, now in 2021, ubiquitous enough that we don't need a Chinatown? Is Chinatown now becoming more symbolic? And finally, as the suburban communities become the new immigrant receiption sites, and no longer the central city, can the bonds of history alone sustain Chinatown? Do new immigrants relate to the head tax stories that carved our identities into this unwilling rock.

The global linkages of Chinatown West to the global economy situates this space as simultaneously in the core (by way of HEIs and Toronto's position as Canada's economic driver) and the periphery (dependence on international students, businesses headquartered elsewhere). As we explore this topic further, it becomes clear that this space is located on the periphery, and sadly the command node for this periphery is located elsewhere, not within the community. And that is the ultimate illusion of Chinatown West. What we call Chinatown had succeeded from the Jewish community, to the Cantonese community (Taishan then Hong Kong), and by the early 2000s was dominated by Sino-Vietnam-

ese businesses before the aforementioned recent neighbourhood change erased the Sino-Vietnamese identity under an easy to understand Chinese one (Phan and Luk, 2008).

Furthermore, the connection between the PSBA, universities, Chinatown, and international students is ultimately an exploitative one. Given the significantly higher tuition costs of an international student, the added burden of high residence costs is prohibitive and exploitative. These isolated high-rise enclaves do not encourage nor enable international-domestic student mixing and further the gated experience of international students. In addition to high costs of living and education, the cost of providing familiar foods (new bubble tea stores and region specific Chinese cuisine) provides only an allusion of comfort. New wave Chinese food in Chinatown does not go further than a transactional one. In seeking these comforts, international Chinese students are contributing to the displacement of community assets, thus furthering their alienation in the established community. In turn, the community is unwilling to make conscessions, the municipality is unwilling to make investments in students as full citizens (such as affordable student housing, or as we will discuss shortly, addressing students as drivers of growth and unplanned populations), but all of them are very willing to keep taking students' money.

10. Implications and Recommendations

After a careful analysis of the academic, grey literature, interview, and spatial data, we come to the conclusion that students are the main drivers of gentrification in Chinatown, and the lucrative market is also the source of a new urban residential housing type. The challenge in this section is addressing the implications of the findings, and offer a short list of recommendations for policymakers and community members alike.

Recommendation 1: Student-specific Policies

In the review of land-use policies, we found scarce mentions of students despite how embedded student populations and HEIs are to Toronto's economy. We also found that there were imbalances between the rights of students in student housing, over students in private accommodations. For example, the Residential Tenancies Act does not apply to living accommodations provided by an educational institution to its students or staff. In terms of land-use policies, the Growth Plan does not mention students when planning for regional growth.

While the Official Plan outlines the land-use and principles guiding development in Toronto, the Official Plan acknowledges students as a player in the urban region. Toronto is described to have "concentrations of new immigrants, post-secondary students and seniors, Toronto has a unique social profile within the GTA, in part due to the concentration of rental, particularly subsidized rental apartments and human services" (Section 2.1). Students are also mentioned specifically in the "economic powerhouse" section whereby thousands of students spend time in Downtown Toronto every day (Section 2.2.1). Students are mentioned in the removal or conversion of rental buildings, acknowledging that students might be negatively impacted by the loss of rental units (Section 3.2.1, Policy 6c, III; Section 3.2.1, Policy 8b, III). Finally, students are noted in relation to Institutional Uses in Chapter 4, although no mention of student housing. The omission of students and or planning for a neighbourhood of large student populations, in a city with multiple HEIs is

a significant oversight in the Official Plan, and entrenches the unacknowledgement and thereby erasure of students from the neighbourhoods they live in, further legitimizing the idea that students are transient and othered. When in fact, policies never created supportive and inclusive neighbourhoods with them as a valuable community member in mind.

From interview data, all three city staff noted the challenges with planning for the large student population, and recommended a set of student housing design guidelines to mitigate some of the existing student housing challenges raised in the revised UofT Secondary Plan consultations. A student housing guideline should be studied.

In all instances, students are acknowledged as part of the social mix of Toronto, but very few policies address the experiences of thousands of students moving through the city. There is no policy in the Official Plan that addresses affordability for students specifically, or students as a part of complete and livable communities. Considering the large population of students in the City of Toronto, and the changing notion of what it means to attend a post-secondary institution (see literature review on youthification and studentification), the oversight on the students as major economic drivers in the region, as well as their physical impact on the urban space in driving housing demand, should be addressed in the next Official Plan review. For a city keen on attracting and retaining top talent, greater attention needs to be paid to students and their experiences of the city. Councillor Mike Layton acknowledges the squeeze of students, but commented,

> “I think it may be right that like. Our tools of the city for affordable housing are not geared to students. The one challenge, though, is our waitlist is one hundred thousand. It’s a decade. Right. So. We’re kind of working through that first. I say that, like it’s there. There are people on that list, very deserving people that have been there for eight years, nine years, and then are struggling at the margins. And we’ve got to get, like we need to be working through that list” (Councillor Layton, interview, March 11, 2021).

But rarely is the demand so binary of housing “very deserving people” versus students, as one international student stated simply when reflecting on the tens of thousands they pay per year in tuition,

> "And I think at least that [appropriate] student housing should not be more expensive than renting a condo in downtown Toronto" (student interview, March 31, 2021).

Which is indeed the very least thing policymakers can strive for.

Recommendation 2: Students as community members

Interviews from community members mostly agree, when asked, that students are important to the community, but not necessarily members of the community. There are qualifiers and conditions to their entry into the community, as one community member parsed out,

> "Cities benefit and generally neighbourhoods benefit from schools if a lot of controls are in place to control opportunism, economic opportunism by violating housing rules, but sure, I love to see students around and having that demographic, although any, any, what I call a healthy city, will have a diverse age demographic. Do I think, I don't know. Yeah, I'd love to see lots of younger people around. I think it's a good idea. The fact that their parents drop them off in front of an old house that has twenty rooms in it because they finally found a place for their kid to live. It doesn't you know, it's not necessarily where the kid would have chosen to live. And it's not where the neighborhood prefers that this type of operation exists. So, I have to go back to the beginning of the whole thing and see that, you know, it's pretty qualified," (Community member interview, March, 12, 2021).

The added qualifier, whether it be students are members of the community if they do not contribute to illegal housing operations, or students are members of the community if they do not displace mom-and-pop shops, contribute to the additional alienation of students, as these are not legitimate decisions undertaken by students, but rather happening in the absence of policy and market oversight. One student commented on this paradox, stating,

> "I mean, this is a bit of a circular definition of being a member of a community, but you're a member of a community if the other members of the community think you're a member of the community" (Student interview, March 9, 2021).

So do students ever become full community members? Or are they seen as transient forever? One community member and Cecil Community Centre employee stated,

> “So, from our community centers perspective, we would like to engage more with students, and we’d like students to understand that they can use our programs, they can use our services. We invite them to do that, to have that experience with us. And the thing is, if we could just get students housed in the community. That would be really helpful.” (Community member interview, March 11, 2021)

The circle back to housing, and appropriate student housing defined by students for students, is an important crux in community development. Sean Hertel, a planning professional reiterates the importance of young people in shrinking neighbourhoods,

> “They’re losing population because household sizes. And this is one thing that people don’t talk about. It drives me nuts. Is that. Toronto’s household size is dropping about point, about 10 percent every census. And that adds up, like that means that every census there is literally between two hundred and fifty and three hundred thousand fewer people living in the yellow belt. That, to me, is shocking, because that’s the majority of our landmass, that’s about 60 to 70 percent of our developable land in the city of Toronto. That’s where the majority of our libraries, schools, community centers, parks are. So, if there isn’t the population to support those, if there isn’t the tax base to support those, guess what? Those get shuttered.”

Further stating,

> “I think that students in particular are seen as transient, like they’re seen as people who don’t have a real stake in the neighborhood. They don’t belong, they’re just sort of, you know, temporary and they’re kind of like, oh, well, you know, they’re a bit of a nuisance, but they’ll go away. They’re not the real part of the neighborhood. We get to decide what the real neighborhood is like. And these people tend to detract from what our neighborhood **is**….Imagine we have, a you know, an aging population, right? We have a lot of seniors who want to stay at home. Right. Imagine if students were seen as true assets in their neighborhood, they could actually. If they were seen as part of the community, they could actually be part of the solution. I mean, maybe they can check in on the elderly residents and bring them groceries or get funding from the government to provide some level of personal support services to escort them to the grocery store, get their groceries for them, take them to a doctor’s appointment. Right, like a tremendous asset to build carrying capacity in a community” (Sean Hertel, March 12, 2021).

Students need to be thought of, and treated with the full rights as all other community members. It is increasingly apparent that students are the convenient scapegoat of larger policy failures, such as the lack of investment in student housing, or the growing so-

cio-economic divide in the City of Toronto. As policymakers and community members, it is crucial to critically interrogate the positionality of students as transient or apolitical actors, and see them as they are, people living in a period of their lives.

In reflecting on the exploitation of Chinese migrants for their lives, capital, and labour in the confederation of this country, I wonder if international Chinese students, whether aware of it or not, are the newest iteration of the railway worker. How their lives, capital, and labour are being exploited by HEIs for funding, and the municipality to support the myth of the knowledge economy.

Recommendation 3: A changing Chinatown

The final recommendation is to acknowledge that Chinatown is changing, and will always change. The history chapter outlined the various epochs in the space's history, and linkages to global and political forces that shaped Chinatown into the space it is today. Chinatown's defining quality is its propensity to change and meet the needs of people who inhabit the space, from the Jewish people to the Chinese, the Hong Kong Chinese, and the Sino-Vietnamnese, and function as an immigrant reception space. The locality that Chinatown is currently situated in is undergoing a change to suit the needs of students, specifically international Chinese students, which raises (see Chapter 9) conflicting responses within the existing community. There is a greater need to protect the essence of Chinatown, the affordable goods, services, housing, and so on, rather than entrenching generic elements of a Chinese identity, or the aesthetics of Chineseness, into the landscape. Chinatowns will keep changing, and it is up to the municipality and community to co create an equitable iteration of Chinatown. Even difficult questions like, does Chinatown need to be tied to a specific space, or can Chinatown exist as an idea, a set of principles and values?

Future research and community engagement is needed.

11. Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that the distinctive mechanisms of the current wave of neighborhood change in Chinatown are tied to processes of studentification, where inwardly moving students cause indirect displacement of long-time Chinatown residents and community assets. At a larger scale, such process has been driven by the expansion of urban universities, the growing intake of international students–particularly from Asia, and the recent involvement of private developers and investors in Purpose Built Student Accommodations (PBSAs) (Pillai, Vieta & Sotomayor, 2021). Neighborhood change in Chinatown has been further characterized by the rapid establishment of international Chinese chains and franchises, specifically bubble-tea shops, and the loss of long-time and family-owned businesses with cultural and community significance. The tension between students and community organizers and residents stems back to the question of who has the legitimate claim over Chinatown, what is an authentic Chinatown, and who are rightful residents and users of the space.

From the interviews, three key perspectives emerged: community members with perspectives shared by the business improvement area (BIA) and termed the ‘growth coalition’; members that align with the vision of FOCT; and students. Members of the ‘growth coalition’ adhere to a perspective of Chinatowns rooted in its authenticity to China and its connections to a Chinese identity. This vision is a response to the historic discrimination of Chinese in Canada, and how a self-orientalized Chinatown can act as a space of contact between the wider Canadian population and Chinese-Canadians. The perspective shared by FOCT is in response to the utilitarian role of Chinatowns to immigrants, that is, the provision of housing, employment, fresh food, and a space of community. For FOCT, Chinatowns is a separate entity from the orientalist vision shared by the growth coalition, as the commodification of Chinatowns directly counters the aspects of affordability and sense of community. Finally, the perspective shared by the students reflect elements of the growth coalition and FOCT, but marked by a feeling of uncertainty over their role in

the space.

As Zukin (2009, 543) asserts, “authenticity is most often used as an elitist category of aesthetic judgment.” In response to neighborhood change, the history of Chinatowns has been mobilized as a critical narrative to push back against new developments and argue for preservation. The linkages of Chinatowns to exclusionary state policies, is utilized by community activists to draw a distinction between Chinese-Canadian and international students, specifically Chinese international students. In the present fight against gentrification –whatever that may look like to each of the stakeholders–the legacy of Chinatown and its lineage to discriminatory policies forms a powerful qualifier in narratives to who is the rightful resident of Chinatown, who has the legitimate right to the space or who has the authority to dictate the futurity of Chinatown. Moreover, what is an authentic or even a correct Chinatown; whether students, domestic, international, Chinese, non-Chinese, play into continued community development or contribute to its erasure.

The affect of the space can rarely be captured in a single paper alone. To conclude this Major Paper, I invite readers to close read a poem by He Zhizhang (659-744), a Tang Dynasty poet, while reflecting on the themes in this paper.

Returning Home as an Old Man
He Zhizhang (659-744)

I left home young and returned an old man,
My accent unchanged but my appearance grey.
Unknown to the children I meet,
smiling they ask, “guest, from whence comes thee?”

12. List of Figures

13. Works Cited List

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