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The Chinatown Gold Line transit station was completed in 2003.

Photograph by Jan Lin

## Los Angeles Chinatown: Tourism, Gentrification, and the Rise of an Ethnic Growth Machine

Jan Lin

### Early Chinatown: A Conspiracy of Interests

"Forget it Jake. It's Chinatown."

An associate chides detective Jake Gittes, at end of the 1974 film *Chinatown*, urging him to drop the case and let the Chinese take care of business themselves. Chinatown is the scene of the movie's last crime, and a metaphor for the sin and corruption at the heart of the metropolis. The incestuous power broker, Noah Cross, eludes apprehension with his daughter / granddaughter in his clutches, and slips into the night. In Robert Towne's screenplay, Cross represents William Mulholland, the founder of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP). There was a conspiracy of interests in early twentieth-century Los Angeles that could be described as an urban "growth machine" which included the DWP, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.<sup>1</sup> As the film depicts, the power brokers misled the public into believing there was a water shortage to gain public support for a bond issue to build an aqueduct from the Owens River valley to Los Angeles, generating windfall profits especially for land speculators with holdings in the San Fernando Valley where the aqueduct entered Los Angeles.<sup>2</sup>

Films such as Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* contribute to the popular perception of Chinatown as a deviant and disordered urban place. During the early twentieth century, Los Angeles Chinatown was in fact publicly viewed as a "slum" plagued by vice, moral decay, and poor sanitation. It was slated in 1931 for con-

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demnation and removal to make way for the construction of the city's new railway terminus, Union Station, which was completed in 1939. In 1938, two construction projects rebuilt Chinatown north of the original site as tourist enclaves, China City and the New Chinatown. Heritage tourism was already becoming established downtown at the old city plaza, where Christine Sterling led the preservation of the Spanish-Mexican past with a picturesque marketplace at Olvera Street and associated sites from early Los Angeles in the days of "El Pueblo." The 1930s and 1940s were a period of political rapprochement between China and the U.S., which became diplomatic allies against the growing Japanese military threat in East Asia. In the 1940s, the New Chinatown grew prosperous by catering to the American public's interest in Chinese food, curios, and culture. By the 1950s, however, this interest started to decline with the onset of the "red scare" and the social conformism of the McCarthy period, as well as the movement of people out of downtown Los Angeles to the suburbs. The construction of the freeway system that enabled the suburbs in the 1940s and 1950s also involved the destruction of many central-city neighborhoods. The Hollywood Freeway (I-101), for example, which runs right through downtown Los Angeles, became a concrete barrier contributing to the isolation of Chinatown from the rest of downtown Los Angeles. Chinatown went through a period of decline.

### Labor and Capital Globalizes Chinatown

Since the 1960s, a revival was underway in Los Angeles Chinatown, with new flows of immigrant labor and capital into the region. This globalization process is the outcome of liberalizing of U.S. immigration and investment controls and growing commodity trade with other world regions. Los Angeles Chinatown has expanded both demographically and economically in the global era, with the original Cantonese colony now augmented by immigrants from other provinces of southern China as well as ethnic Chinese from Vietnam and other areas of Southeast Asia. Several new local Chinese and overseas Chinese banks have established branch offices in the 1960s. These banks were closely involved with the development of several new shopping plazas in the 1970s. The original Central Plaza of the Los Angeles Chinatown, which dates back to the New Chinatown of 1938, began a decline in the 1970s because of competition from the new shopping plazas, as well as with steady growth of the new "suburban Chinatown" in Monterey Park.

## 1990s: Emergence of Gentrification

Since the 1990s, however, a new bohemian arts and entertainment scene began to emerge along the Chung King Road and the old Central Plaza, with the traditional mom-and-pop Chinese American curio shops and restaurants being displaced and making way for art galleries, bars and nightclubs, and upscale gift shops. Chinatown is undergoing gentrification and redevelopment.

Chinatown is entering an era of new possibilities, as ethnic places are increasingly a factor rather than a barrier to urban renewal. In global cities like Los Angeles, ethnic sites are linked to strategies attracting global investment capital and immigrant labor. After years of decline, downtown Los Angeles has been the focus of recurring attempts at renewal by public officials, downtown boosters, and the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). As Mike Davis documented in his article, "Chinatown, Part 2? The 'Internationalization' of Downtown Los Angeles," the CRA is playing the role of the DWP of William Mulholland in the earlier period of the Los Angeles growth machine. In his book, *City of Quartz*, he documents how there was a land rush of investment capital beginning in the 1970s (especially from overseas European, Middle Eastern, and Japanese sources) in the construction of downtown skyscrapers that did much to signify the ascendance of Los Angeles in the global economy. Saskia Sassen<sup>3</sup> describes Los Angeles as a "global city," an advanced financial services and corporate management complex for transnational capitalism. The CRA has been principal overseer to the emergence of an associated elite arts and civic center complex on Bunker Hill, especially along Grand Avenue, which includes the Music Center, California Plaza, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) and the Walt Disney Concert Hall (designed by internationally known architect Frank Gehry) just completed in 2003. Culture is increasingly perceived as a component of production in urban economic development.<sup>4</sup>

## High Culture, Popular Culture, Ethnic Culture?

Tourism, the arts, and cultural affairs are increasing features of the urban economy. Planners and public officials typically focus on high culture through the construction of major hotels and convention centers, symphony halls, theaters, and museums. Popular culture and ethnic culture are also increasingly promoted, with the recognition that hip, bohemian neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves can attract tourists and become focal points for gentrification and urban redevelopment.<sup>5</sup> As discussed by Kyeyoung Park

and Jessica Kim,<sup>6</sup> Los Angeles Koreatown is a district undergoing similar bohemianization and gentrification. Little Tokyo has also acquired an appeal as a hip and bohemian neighborhood. There has been considerable sociological interest for two decades on the ethnic enclave economy as a factor in the incorporation of immigrants into the U.S. society and economy<sup>7</sup> and as a feature of the global economy.<sup>8</sup> There is growing interest in exploring the cultural and touristic dimensions of ethnic enclaves. Russell C. Leong describes these ethnic enclaves, such as Koreatown, Thai Town, and Little Tokyo as “ethnohubs” of commercial as well as cultural activities. Jerome Krase describes the contemporary ethnic enclave of Little Italy as an “ethnic theme park.”<sup>9</sup>

The completion of the Gold Line Metro station in 2003 has spurred tourism and urban redevelopment, bringing tangible benefits to Chinatown in the form of jobs, economic growth, and tax revenues. Economic growth has also caused displacement. Independent small Chinese American businesses and low-income residents are being evicted or displaced by rising commercial and residential property prices and rents. The new bohemian arts scene and the residential gentrification of Chinatown through the construction of mixed-use residential condominium projects is bringing a new population of white middle-to-upper class professionals and artists to compete with the established working- and middle-class Chinese American population. Chinatown is a neighborhood undergoing racial/ethnic and socioeconomic class transition.

### Race, Space, and Power Dynamics

In this paper, I examine how Los Angeles Chinatown is situated within the new economic and social dynamics of race, space, and power in the global city. As a participant observer in Los Angeles Chinatown activities, I have given as well as attended public lectures and through volunteering with the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California and the Chinese American Museum of Los Angeles. Working with the historical museums, I directed students of Occidental College in conducting oral histories of people in Chinatown.<sup>10</sup> I also conducted several interviews with art gallery owners and staff of the cultural preservation and heritage organizations in Los Angeles Chinatown on the new art scene, gentrification, and redevelopment trends in Chinatown.

The Growth Machine and the Redevelopment of Chinatown  
An ethnic growth machine has emerged in Los Angeles China-

town since the 1960s that has brought new investment and redevelopment. A number of new local Chinese American and overseas Chinese banks have established branch offices. The Cathay Bank was established in 1962, the first Chinese American bank in Southern California. The East West Bank, established in 1973, is also Chinese American. There are several overseas Chinese banks operating in Chinatown, including Far East Bank, Bank of Canton of California, Bank of China, Bank of Taiwan, and Chang Hwa Commercial Bank. These banks have been involved in the development of a number of new shopping plazas in Chinatown since the 1970s. Mandarin Plaza, completed in the early 1970s, was the first to be built, and is across Broadway from the East Gate of the Chinatown Central Plaza.<sup>11</sup> Bamboo Plaza, just north of the Central Plaza was completed in 1989. In the blocks to the south along lower Broadway and Hill Street, heading toward the central city, there have emerged several other new plazas, including Dragon Plaza, Saigon Plaza, Chinatown Plaza, Dynasty Center, Far East Plaza, BC Plaza, and Asian Center. The Chinatown Central Plaza began a decline in the 1970s with the suburbanization of the Chinese population, as well as the market competition caused by the plethora of new malls. By 1984, Vietnamese Chinese owned half of Chinatown's estimated 1,400 businesses.

The Vietnam War and its political and economic dislocations caused an influx of ethnic Chinese, especially of ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, Cambodia, and other areas of Southeast Asia. Members of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) traveled to a Vietnamese refugee settlement in Camp Pendleton to encourage them to settle in Los Angeles Chinatown. Quite visible is a colony of Teo Chew (also Chao Zhou) Chinese. The Teo Chew Association is a transnational network with centers in Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America. The Teo Chew Chinese in Los Angeles Chinatown came from Southeast Asia, but the diaspora originated in the Chao Zhou region of China. The members speak the Chao Zhou dialect or Cantonese. The Teo Chew Chinese spearheaded the Chinatown Gateway Project with a community pledge drive combined with public funds to complete the \$500,000 structure in 1989. This sixteen-foot bridge stretches over the North Broadway entrance to Chinatown at Cesar Chavez Avenue, with neon lighting and pagoda crown, and acts as a strong visual statement for visitors to Chinatown entering from the south. The business style of the more assimilated, established Cantonese origin merchant community



clashes with the plucky entrepreneurialism of the Teo Chew and other Southeast Asian Chinese, who operate sidewalk tables and open-air stalls, and are willing to bargain on prices and eschew sales tax. Language acts as a divide, as the Teo Chew Chinese are only just beginning to become members of such organizations as the CCBA or the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, which hold their meetings in English.

Language, culture, and regional origins thus differentiate the mass of Chinese immigrants to the United States. These ethnic subcultural differences reflect the breadth and diversity of China as a nation of cultural, geographic and sociohistorical complexities. While the traditional leadership organizations, the CCBA (founded in 1907) and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (founded in 1955) work to integrate the new immigrants into a new pan-ethnic Los Angeles Chinatown, new organizations have emerged to broker economic and political relationships with non-Chinese developers and public officials in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Chinatown Business Council was thus created in 1999, with a more explicit focus on coordinating infrastructure and land market redevelopment than the Chamber of Commerce, which retains a more boosterish role by taking charge of annual events such as the Chinese New Year Festival and Auto Show, the Miss Chinatown pageant, and the Autumn Moon Festival events.

#### Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID)

An significant creation of the Chinatown Business Council was the Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID) in August 2000, when a majority of Chinatown property owners voted 56 to 43 in favor of the BID, creating a special assessment to be levied on property owners. The money is used to pay for graffiti removal, private security patrols, sidewalk sweeping, tree and shrubbery planning to lure visitors to Chinatown and improve the area. Successful BID projects have been implemented in Santa Monica, Old Town Pasadena, and Hollywood. The Los Angeles Chinatown Business Council is the management entity for the BID.<sup>12</sup>

BID president Kim Benjamin is also president of Manhattan Beach-based Laeroc Partners, Inc., a real estate development company that also owns prominent parcels in Chinatown. He and other non-Chinese members of the BID board of directors mark a growing trend of extra-ethnic, or outside investor and developer interest in Chinatown. The investment and redevelopment boom began to accelerate with the opening of the Gold Line Metro station



on Alameda Street in 2003, with investors converting old shopping malls and undertaking new construction in several condominium and commercial mixed-use development projects. Blossom Plaza, for instance, is a \$150 million mixed-use project that includes two residential condominium towers as well as a cultural plaza, with retail and commercial uses. The City of Los Angeles provided \$36 million in funding, negotiated by City Councilmember Ed P. Reyes, announced in January 2007. In April 2007, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) approved a five-story mixed-used project called Chinatown Gateway that converts previously commercial space to 280 residential condominiums with pool and landscaped plaza along with retail uses.

The property owners of the Chinatown BID have created an urban growth machine that includes a coalition of Chinese developers, white developers, the City of Los Angeles, and the CRA. While many among the population of Chinese American residents, business owners, and community stakeholders recognize the benefits of economic redevelopment, there is also apprehension about displacement of the established businesses and residents in the neighborhood through commercial and residential gentrification also raising questions about cultural ownership and community identity.

Cultural heritage stakeholders in Chinatown are at a crossroads with the growth of tourism in the local economy. The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was founded in 1975 to pursue, preserve, and communicate knowledge of Chinese American history in the state. In 1995, the Society moved into two Victorian houses on Bernard Street, built in 1886 and 1888 by Philip Fritz, an emigrant from Alsace (on the German/French border), when the area was still Frenchtown. The site is now the location of the Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center. In 1988, the Friends of the Museum of Chinese American History formed with representatives from El Pueblo, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, and many local community members. This group worked for the next decade to raise public and private funds to establish a museum in the Garnier Building, which opened as the Chinese American Museum of Los Angeles (CAMLA) in 2003. The Chinese American Museum is equipped with spacious exhibition spaces and attracts many visitors entering the community from the Olvera Street and old City Plaza area. The Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center offers a significant archive and library, and is frequented by visitors entering Chinatown from the north who are visiting the Chinatown Central Plaza.

## The New Bohemian Art Scene

In the late 1990s, the Chinatown art scene emerged as a part of a wider cultural phenomenon known as the Los Angeles East Side art scene that encompassed the adjoining communities of Echo Park, Boyle Heights, Highland Park, and Eagle Rock. The availability of low commercial rents and property values and the appeal of an eclectic or “edgy” neighborhood quality drew many artists and investors to open studios, galleries, and shops in these locales. A succession of reporters has covered the hipster scene for the *Los Angeles Times* since 2000. The bohemian Chinatown art scene also drew reportage from *The New York Times* and comparisons to Manhattan’s East Village.<sup>13</sup>

The Chinatown art scene is centered in Chung King Road, a quiet pedestrian alley that forms a west wing to the Chinatown Central Plaza on upper Broadway. Sleepy Chinese art and curio shops proliferated among first floor business spaces before the gallery influx, while the second floor spaces are still actively in use as residential apartments. UCLA painting professor Roger Herman and his associate Hubert Schmalix were the pioneers, buying the Black Dragon kung fu studio in 1998 and transforming it into the district’s first modern art gallery. Jorge Pardo established a studio space in the main Chinatown plaza and eventually transformed it into the Mountain Bar with partners Steve Hanson, an artist, and Mark McManus, an architect. Other nightspots in the Central Plaza include the kitschy pagoda-style bar at Hop Louie restaurant, as well as the popular Grand Star jazz café and the Firecracker dance club upstairs.<sup>14</sup>

Said Pardo in an interview with Kimberly Cutter, “Its used to be that the people who went to Cal Arts and Art Center would move to New York the minute they graduated because it was difficult to have an art career here, but increasingly, that is no longer the case.”<sup>15</sup> In the same article, artist Pae White commented, “What’s nice about the Chinatown galleries is that they’re very organized. They’re in the same part of town that the artists themselves actually live in and hang out in, so there’s this sense of a whole community orbiting around them.”

In an interview with Alexandria Abramian-Mott (2003), Mark McManus, an investor in the Mountain Bar opined, “The normal cycle is that artists come, rents go up, artists leave. That’s not going to happen here. The community here is about a reputation economy, not a money economy.” Richard Liu, an architect who grew up in Chinatown, purchased an abandoned restaurant in



Visitors on Chung King Road. The Jade Tree gift and antique store has been a fixture since 1947. The Black Dragon kung fu studio was converted to an art gallery in 1998, then sold to the Jancar Gallery in 2008.

Photograph by Jan Lin

2002 and converted into a gift shop called Realm. He commented to Abramian–Mott, “I want the area to have unified lighting, benches, and planters, as well as later business hours. But I want to avoid gentrification. It’s all about the balance.”

An article by Frances Anderton for the *New York Times*,<sup>16</sup> however, suggests that the gentrification is already in progress. Anderton quotes Sherwood Lee, who played on Chung King Road as a child, and whose mother rents space to China Art Objects, “This [scene] is very positive, but the only drawback is that Chinatown may lose its flavor through all these other businesses coming in.” In the same article, Roger Herman, the owner of Black Dragon Society gallery, felt very wary of gentrification: “It was nice and quiet three years ago, but we are killing the goose, the charm has gone.”

The new Chinatown arts scene has received the blessing of many property owners and business interests, but it is quite apparent that the gentrification process is underway. There is a rather uncertain balance between art scene and the traditional world of Chinatown. The two social worlds do not really mix. Majority



Cindy Suriyani, owner of Bamboo Lane gallery, at a March 2005 art opening.

Photograph by Jan Lin

of the art galleries are owned by white investors. Two notable exceptions are LMAN Gallery (run by Lawrence Man, an immigrant from Hong Kong) and Bamboo Lane (run by Cindy Suriyani, an immigrant Indonesian-Chinese). There have been some efforts to bridge the generational and cultural divides, such as public art installations in 2004, that partnered Cindy Suriyani and L.A. Commons, a public arts community development organization, together with Chinese American seniors and youth artists.

Cindy Suriyani says in a December 2005 interview, that some galleries are beginning to become truly profitable in Chinatown, with some artists selling pieces regularly for thousands of dollars, to very wealthy transnational buyers who are increasingly coming from other places such as New York City and Europe.<sup>7</sup> The growing success of the art scene has contributed to a speculative property market in Los Angeles Chinatown that may ultimately threaten the existing Chinese American property ownership pattern in Chinatown.

**Ethnic Tourism, Chinese Heritage, and Community Identity**  
With the completion of the new Metro Gold Line transit stations at Chinatown and Union Station in 2003, a new era in cultural

tourism has come to Los Angeles Chinatown. What this new ethnic tourism means in terms of cultural ownership and the commercialization of Chinese culture is a serious question in the current environment. Eugene Moy, who is with the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California and also a volunteer with the Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center, states:

I think that people still come here but perhaps now with more of a strong interest in the arts, culture, and traditions of Chinatown. There is a lot more serious interest now in learning about the art and culture of China and Chinese Americans. I also meet families that are non-Chinese parents who have adopted children from China, who want to learn about classical Chinese history and culture so they can pass that on to their Chinese adopted children.

This is a 150-year-old Chinese community that has made tremendous contributions to the commercial and community development of Los Angeles and has contributed to the diverse economy. We have families who have been here for four, five, six generations. We have Chinese coming from affluent suburbs like South Pasadena. Their second-generation children who are college students are coming in searching out the history of Chinese in America.

Suellen Cheng, Interim Executive Director of the Chinese American Museum of Los Angeles (CAMLA) is similarly optimistic about the prospects for cultural tourism in Chinatown:

This is a new cultural tourism, not the earlier days of curiosity of cultural stereotypes. If there were more cultural institutions that people can understand, like classes in kung fu, tai chi, painting and art classes, even more people would be drawn to Chinatown, and to the museum.

The impact of gentrification on the elderly, the low-income residential community, and small businesses is a serious question in the current economic environment. Residents in Chinatown are generally poorer, less educated, less acculturated, and more recent immigrants than the Chinese as a whole in Southern California. The demand for housing in Chinatown outstrips the available supply, and many immigrants have moved into nearby areas such as Echo Park or across the Los Angeles River in Lincoln Heights.<sup>17</sup> The elderly population is especially challenged by the lack of affordable housing. When the CRA-subsidized Cathay Manor opened in the mid 1980s, there were ten times more applicants than units available. Low-income immigrants, the elderly,

and small Chinese mom-and-pop businesses are threatened with displacement by gentrification in Los Angeles Chinatown.

### Cultures and Classes Clash: The Future of Chinatown

The challenge that confronts Los Angeles Chinatown in the contemporary era is how to refashion itself to the opportunities associated with the postindustrial city in the new global economy. Culture has become a growing sector of growth in our urban economies, replacing some of the losses associated with the decline of manufacturing. We have seen the growth of “symbolic” or “creative” economy activities such as tourism, entertainment, and the arts.<sup>18</sup> The transition of the declining industrial district of Soho in New York City to an arts studio and gallery district that popularized the phenomenon of “loft living” is a well-known example of the value of culture in the postindustrial city.<sup>19</sup> In the declining manufacturing and warehousing districts of downtown Los Angeles, we see the intersecting of two economic sectors, namely the ethnic enclave economies of Chinatown and Little Tokyo, and the growth of arts studio and gallery districts. The completion of the Gold Line mass transit stations at Chinatown and Union Station has brought new opportunities to boost tourism in the ethnic enclave economies of Chinatown, Olvera Street, and Little Tokyo.<sup>20</sup>

The coming of the Gold Line Metro to Chinatown and Union Station in the new millennium is a marked contrast to the destructive episode of “ethnic removal” that beset old Chinatown several decades ago with the completion of the original Union Station railroad depot. An ethnic growth machine has emerged in Los Angeles Chinatown through the coalition of ethnic entrepreneurs as well as non-ethnic entrepreneurs. Rather than being victims of a conspiracy of interests as in the days of early Los Angeles, Chinatown is now part of the conspiracy of urban growth machine interests.

Globalization has brought opportunities as well as risks to Los Angeles Chinatown, as we find a delicate partnership between old Cantonese American businesses, the new Southeast Asian Chinese businesses, and a new bohemian arts economy working with the Metropolitan Transport Authority (MTA), the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and other city agencies to link Chinatown with emerging culture and tourism strategies. How it accomplishes renewal and growth while sustaining the social institutions and cultural integrity of its low-income and elderly residential community will be a continuing question as Chinatown moves into the future.



The current economic scenario in Los Angeles Chinatown is different from the stark socioeconomic polarization seen by Mike Davis<sup>21</sup> between the high-security citadel of the transnational power elite and the homeless and dispossessed minorities of postindustrial Los Angeles. Since the 1960s, a new fortress city of transnational bank and corporate office towers, hotels, museums, and elite cultural facilities has risen downtown and on Bunker Hill. Class polarization and spatial segregation can be seen also in Los Angeles Koreatown<sup>22</sup> where overseas capital has financed a landscape of hotels, department stores and bank towers in a fortress environment. A similar class polarization can be seen in between the low-income elderly residential community of Little Tokyo and the hotels, banks, and department stores financed by transnational Japanese banks since the 1970s. Class polarization in Los Angeles Chinatown may very well increase, however, if gentrification and redevelopment accelerates to the point of disrupting community stability. In the new “gold rush” to capitalize on the economic benefits brought by the Gold Line transit station, Los Angeles Chinatown may mortgage the future of its low-income residential and small business community if it moves too quickly to reap the benefits of redevelopment, gentrification, and cultural tourism in the new global economy.

## Notes

1. For a fuller interpretation of the political and economic interests that comprise urban growth machines, see John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). They discuss how urban boosters and “place entrepreneurs” manipulate the public into thinking that urban growth serves general public purpose while in effect self-aggrandizing their own economic and property interests. Among the power brokers associated with the aqueduct plan were M. H. Sherman (land developer), General Harrison Otis Gray (land developer) and Harry Chandler (publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*).
2. The film intermixes real-life events with fiction. Although the aqueduct was completed in 1913, director Roman Polanski set his sinister *film noir* in the 1930s. There are events in the film that are not historically accurate, including the notion that: a) William Mulholland raped his daughter, and b) that the conspiracy of real estate interests used the names of dead people. See Walton (2001) for more contrast and comparison of the film to real historical events.
3. Saskia Sassen, *The Mobility of Labor and Capital* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
4. See the World Urban Forum, *Dialogue on Urban Cultures: Globalization and Culture in an Urbanizing World*, Report presented at UN-HABITAT, World Urban Forum, Barcelona, Spain, July 23, 2004 for an interesting discussion on the role of culture in globalization and urban redevelopment.



5. See Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (London: Blackwell, 1995) and (Zukin 1995, Lloyd 2005) and Richard Lloyd, *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
6. See Kyeyoung Park and Jessica Kim, "The Contested Nexus of Los Angeles Koreatown: Bohemianization as a Step to Capital Restructuring." Paper presented at the 2005 Association for Asian American Studies Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, California.
7. See Alejandro Portes and Robert D. Manning, "The Immigrant Enclave: Theory and Empirical Examples," in Susan Olzak and Joane Nagel, eds., *Competitive Ethnic Relations* (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986) and Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).
8. Jan Lin, *Reconstructing Chinatown: Ethnic Enclave, Global Change* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
9. Jerome Krase, "Ethnic Theme Parks: Images of Social and Cultural Capital." Paper presented at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Anaheim, CA.
10. These oral histories were published by Jan Lin of Occidental College as *The Chinatown Oral History Project*, Spring 2006. Copies of the manuscript can be viewed at the Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center, the Chinese American Museum of Los Angeles, the Chinatown Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library, and Occidental College.
11. When Mandarin Plaza opened, the major tenant was China Native Products, the first retail store to bring in goods from the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC), which previously the Chinese had avoided because of the political conflict between Taiwan and the PRC. The early 1970s were a time of normalization of relations between the PRC and U.S. Many Southeast Asian migrants, such as ethnic Chinese Vietnamese, and other dialect groups began to arrive and Chinatown began to really diversify. Eugene Moy, a member of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, made these points in a November 2005 interview.
12. The LA Chinatown Business Council offers walking tours, and a calendar of events through its website, [www.chinatownla.com](http://www.chinatownla.com).
13. A visitor named Autumn de Wilde, a thirty-two-year-old invitation designer, said, "Los Feliz and Silver Lake got expensive and overrun, so we came to Chinatown. If it gets corrupted here, we'll find a new area." See Monica Corcoran, "In Chinatown, Bohemia," *New York Times* (July 27, 2003): Section 9, pg. 7.

Even *Rolling Stone* covered the phenomenon, with writer Jonathan Craven reporting on a Saturday night opening where "a live unicorn hobnobbed with hundreds of revelers while Joel Mesler turned the basement of his Diannepruess Gallery into a speakeasy featuring live music (OK, it was just a white horse with a fiberglass horn)." See Jonathan Craven, "Hot Art Scene: Chung King Road," *Rolling Stone* (August 30, 2001): 78.

The ultra fashion trend publication, *W Magazine* ran a feature by Kimberly Cutter, who gushed of celebrity sightings in the crowds, such as actress Christine Ricci and musicians Gwen Stefani, Beck and Iggy Pop. See Kim-

berly Cutter, "East Side Story: Once a Wasteland of Stripmalls and Auto Shops, L.A.'s East Side is Emerging as a Fertile Ground for Artists," *W Magazine*, September 2001.

Alexandria Abramian-Mott covered the scene for *Sunset*, the travel, home, and garden magazine of the West, with thoughtful interviews of the new gallery and shop owners. The Chinatown art scene is also listed now in the entertainment and alternative newspaper *L.A. Weekly*, as well as the glossy *Los Angeles* metropolitan lifestyle and arts magazine. See Alexandria Abramian-Mott, "Orient Express: Once Sleepy, Now Hot, L.A.'s Chinatown Strives for a Balance Between Newfound Prosperity and Artistic Soul," *Sunset* (October 2003): 34-38.

14. David Pagel, "Storefront Galleries: In Some Low-Rent Neighborhoods, Arts is Home-Grown Delight," *Los Angeles Times* (November 11, 2001): F7.
15. Kimberly Cutter, "East Side Story."
16. Frances Anderton, "Chinatown Reborn as a Bohemian Outpost," *New York Times*, June 3, 2001: Section 9, pg. 7.
17. James P. Allen and Eugene Turner, *The Ethnic Quilt: Population Diversity in Southern California* (Northridge, CA: California State University, The Center for Geographical Studies, 1997).
18. See Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities*. (London: Blackwell, 1995); Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); and Terry Nichols Clark, ed. *The City as an Entertainment Machine*, a special issue of *Research in Urban Policy*, Volume 19. (Oxford, UK: Elsevier Ltd., 2004).
19. Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).
20. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has also been boosting cultural tourism throughout Los Angeles through a website: [www.experiencela.com](http://www.experiencela.com). A Chinatown self-guided tourist brochure was published in 2003 to coincide with the opening of the Gold Line Chinatown station by Angels Walk® LA, a tourist booster organization that is active mainly in the Bunker Hill area ([www.angelswalkla.org](http://www.angelswalkla.org)). The Angels Walk® LA guide to Chinatown was written by the author Lisa See, who wrote the autobiographical family memoir, *On Gold Mountain*.
21. Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990); and Mike Davis, "Chinatown, Part Two? The 'Internationalization' of Downtown Los Angeles," *New Left Review* 164 (1987): 65-86.
22. Kyeyoung Park and Jessica Kim, "The Contested Nexus of Los Angeles Koreatown: Bohemianization as a Step to Capital Restructuring." Paper presented at the Association for Asian American Studies 2005 Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, California.