

# Maintaining Authenticity in Ethnic Enclaves:

**Chinatown, Koreatown, and Thai Town, Los Angeles**

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Abstract

## Maintaining authenticity of ethnic enclaves:

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Over the past fifty years, much research on ethnic enclaves has been conducted, especially from historical, sociological and economic perspectives. However, little attention has been paid to the built environment, spatial meaning and its functions. In a global city like Los Angeles, many ethnic enclaves have emerged, both naturally and legislatively. This study investigated six internal and external factors and how they have affected the authenticity of three ethnic enclaves, Chinatown, Koreatown and Thai Town, in the context of the evolving Los Angeles. By the time immigrants are assimilated and become part of American society, they are structurally assimilated and the immigrants' identity gently reconstructed. In contrast, they struggle to preserve and inherit their original national identity. The investigation revealed an irrelevance between physical expression of the ethnic enclave and spatial utilization of the immigrants. Together these findings suggest the contribution of people and places in the process of place making for an ethnic enclave. The presented findings are valuable for planning and future development of the discussed enclaves.

**Keywords:** ethnic enclave, authenticity, immigrant, Chinatown, Koreatown, Thai Town, Los Angeles, location, residential mobility, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation, commodification

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## Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis begins with the assumption that immigrants benefit from being attached to their origins, which contributes to their ethnic identity, or sense of belonging to a particular cultural group. Having cultural shock from coming to a new land, together they build up their own social structure and economic network, and create their comfort zone with their co-ethnic group who speaks the same language, consumes similar products and shares common background. However, they eventually adjust to the new host society and start to disband their traditional enclaves. Thus it also begins with the assumption that ethnic enclaves are ever-changing neighborhoods and not stabilized areas. This thesis investigates the “authenticity” of three Asian ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles, with authenticity being defined as the presence of characteristics that make these enclaves unique to Asians. In particular, it focuses upon the architectural characteristics that contribute to authenticity. Further, it investigates the subsequent loss of ethnic identity among the populations that inhabited these enclaves.

Because of the combined characteristics of Los Angeles as a transnational city, a tourist destination, and a city undergoing a recent influx of large numbers of Mexican and Latino immigrants, many Asian ethnic enclaves face dispersion of the historic ethnic population, displacement by other ethnic groups, and commercial gentrification. Moreover a linear assimilation due to a generational progression coupled with an acculturation to mainstream society would seem to contribute to a dilution of Asian ethnic identity. To explore this phenomenon, this thesis specifically focuses on three Asian ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles: Chinatown, Koreatown, and Thai Town. In particular, the thesis explores how internal and external factors have affected the authenticity of these three Asian ethnic enclaves. It is particularly interested in how these factors changed as Los Angeles developed. Finally, it brings forward the unique architectural characteristics that contribute to the authenticity of each of these Asian ethnic enclaves.

Ethnic enclaves are commonly seen in inner city across the United States. The mobilization of the labor force, incoming refugees from overseas, and an influence of capitalism in the twentieth century have continuously attracted people from all around the world. As a global city, Los Angeles is a magnificent gateway for the newcomer, and home to one of the largest and most diverse immigrant groups in the United States. Immigrants gradually shape Los Angeles into a multiethnic and multicultural urban space<sup>1</sup>. Although most of Los Angeles' immigrant population is Hispanic/Latino, the presence of diverse Asian neighborhoods can be seen from Chinatown to Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Little India, Little Saigon, Historic Filipino, and other minority immigrant communities such as Thai Town, Little Bangladesh, and Cambodia Town.

Deteriorating areas that many immigrants were pushed to live in have been revitalized and now flourish with a unique cultural ambiance and economic networks. The ethnic enclaves come to be a living memory and physical evidence of the community's roots, as well as a transition space for new arrivals. For the locals, the ethnic enclaves conjure up images of foreigners whose languages and customs are different. They evoke interesting heterogeneous times and places, with diverse cultures and different spatial qualities, and they provide as well a source of exotic products. However, some ethnic enclaves are declining or facing a process of commercialization that involves branding and marketing due to their attempts to attract ethno-cultural tourism. This raises one of the questions investigated in this thesis: Is the commodification process dissolving the authenticity of these ethnic enclaves?

Without the exclusion of previous times, the immigrants can advance their economic status as well as education. These fundamental improvements benefit in immigrations' structural assimilation and increase their residential mobility in order to find better living conditions. Especially in an automobile city like Los Angeles, a dispersed population decreases the proportion of immigrants in a particular enclave. It is not only because immigrants can spread out in decentralized loci but also because ethnic businesses can appear elsewhere

<sup>1</sup> According to U.S. Census data, as of 2013 a foreign born population in Los Angeles accounts for 38.8 percent of Los Angeles' estimated population of 3,884,300.

away from its center. Moreover, the escalation of ethnic populations overtime causes an overcrowded residential area and exceeds the enclave's capacity to house everyone. Americanization of both a foreign-born generation and subsequent American-born generations means that ethnic populations become less attached to their ancestors' origin and intermix into the mainstream culture. In some cases, an ethnic enclave faces a demographic polarization and gentrification by other ethnic groups that turn the original ethnic group into a minority within its own enclave as occurred in Koreatown. Furthermore, the Hollywood industry coupled with the cultural tourism business in Los Angeles capitalize on ethnic enclaves as a commercial business. Although benefiting the enclaves' residents in making their living, the literature reviewed in the next chapter will show that the process of branding makes the enclave become more inauthentic.

With these aforementioned influences, this thesis investigates whether the authenticity of the three case study enclaves has dissolved through their commodification and de-concentration of ethnic residents. Holding second place as a large immigrant population, the Asian immigrant population is far behind the Hispanic one. Therefore, the Asian ethnic enclaves risk being displaced by the influx of Hispanic immigrants. Within the three case study enclaves, one of the questions investigated is how the enclaves maintain their authenticity given the residential mobility of a particular ethnic group within an ethnic de-concentration situation. Specifically related to immigrant behavior, the thesis asks: How do the ethnic groups in each of the case studies sustain and cultivate their ethnic identity throughout the period of generational assimilation? How is the identity of each group shaped and being shaped by its particular ethnic enclave? And how does this identity contribute to the authenticity of each of the ethnic enclaves?

This thesis has selected these three particular immigrant communities because they developed within different time frames and had contrasting origins and reasons for creation. Thus they are excellent examples to examine how development in Los Angeles influenced its ethnic communities. Chinatown has roots reaching back to the 1880s, and is the oldest of the selected enclaves. Although it is currently in decline due to a

recent development of Chinese ethnoburbs in suburban areas, the area has a long history of settlement and successful survival even after a relocation in 1938. Koreatown was settled almost a century later in the 1960s in the declining area of the Wilshire district of central Los Angeles. While it has recently had an influx of a substantial Hispanic population accompanied by a decrease in the Korean population, the area has a strong Korean-dominated business district. Lastly, the area called “Thai Town” in East Hollywood was formed only recently through the establishment of legislation in 1999 although its presence was not widely perceived in the larger society. Nowadays, Thai Town has a lack of diverse activities, social structure, and few ethnic residents. Because the timeline of the formation of each community and their evolution differ, they provide scenarios in which to study the evolution of diverse immigrant communities in relation to the development in Los Angeles. Despite these differences, these ethnic areas share many similarities, such as the presence of a Chinese influence on Asian culture, language barriers, and commercialization, making them suitable for comparison. The intention of this thesis is to use Los Angeles as a case study to develop a model of influencing forces in the evolution of Asian urban ethnic enclaves. It is not, however, intended to present an exhaustive critical review of all Asian ethnic enclaves, but rather simply to set out the internal and external forces that have shaped three such enclaves, and to understand how these forces have affect the authenticity of each of those enclaves.

This thesis draws on literature that demonstrates how immigrants’ behaviors composed of residential mobility, ethnic identity generational assimilation intersect with commodification and commercialization to influence the dispersion of groups and the accompanying diffusion of ethnic identity. This literature identifies the location of ethnic businesses and institutions as critical in this process. Moreover, the literature establishes that the presence of ethnic groups in their enclave along with the growth of other immigrant populations within the enclaves affects ethnic identity. This thesis investigates how the factors identified in the literature as significant in the cohesion of ethnic enclaves play out in shaping the authenticity of the three case study enclaves and how these factors changed over time. In particular, it asks:

1. How have internal and external factors affected the unique characteristics (or authenticity) of three Asian ethnic enclaves in the city of Los Angeles?
2. How did these factors change as the city developed?
3. What unique architectural characteristics contribute to the authenticity of each of these Asian ethnic enclaves?

Therefore, it is crucial to review the literature on both the external and internal forces that shape the enclaves in order to understand the theories of why ethnic enclaves disperse and the possibly undergo loss of ethnic attachment. The six internal and external forces identified in the literature are:

- 1. Location:** spatial distribution and pattern of ethnic residents and ethnic businesses
- 2. Residential mobility:** ability, opportunity, or limitation of ethnic groups to move out of the enclave to other parts of the city, which can lead to a dispersion or cohesion of an ethnic group
- 3. Ethnic proportion:** ethnic concentration or de-concentration within the traditional enclaves along with the intermingling of other ethnic groups.
- 4. Ethnic identity:** identification with a particular ethnic' affiliative construct, which is influenced by natal, symbolic, and cultural factors
- 5. Assimilation:** process by which immigrant groups acquire the social and psychological characteristics of a host society in both acculturation and socioeconomic assimilation
- 6. Commodification:** transformation of goods, services, and ideas into commodities that are marketed by mainstream businesses

Reviewing this literature will help with identifying the advantages and disadvantages of each case study in terms of encouraging cohesion and maintenance of ethnic identity. The goal is to analyze the influences of these factors in order to draw conclusions about what affects the authenticity of Asian ethnic enclaves. It will also help predict potential obstacles facing each of these ethnic communities and will provide recommendations for how each community might maintain its unique characteristics. The investigation was undertaken in a two-stage methodology as follows:

In stage one; a theoretical framework was developed related to the internal and external factors shaping the three immigrant enclaves under study. First, a focused investigation of theory about location, residential mobility, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation, and commodification were undertaken to understand how these factors contribute to immigrant communities' development over time.

Second, a literature review of the history of Los Angeles was undertaken to understand the local forces over time. It includes economic growth and commercialization, as well as a demographic composition of Los Angeles as a consequence of expanding immigrant groups, which, in turn, influenced the formation of ethnic enclaves. This literature specifically focuses on the development of enclaves in relation to the external factors and their contribution to the ethnic economic structure. Research on ethnic entrepreneurship and social networking specific to immigrant populations, reveals the social conditions in a larger geographic framework. This review of external and internal factors led to identification of the dimensions to be investigated in each case study.

Stage two of the research consists of an in-depth investigation of the people, products, and places in the three case studies. Although the specifics of this study derive from the literature review and the theoretical framework that evolved, in general the case studies explore the history and demographics of the three immigrant communities in Los Angeles. The investigation includes a review of documents, demographic maps, and census data on immigrant populations, the presence and location of Chinese, Korean, and Thai

households in the city of Los Angeles. It also includes an investigation of the cultural and architectural dimensions of the ethnic identity in each enclave defined as the attractiveness or reinforcement an authentic place.

This two-stage investigation will provide the analytical information for understanding the authenticity of an ethnic enclave. Conclusions about the authenticity of an ethnic enclave will help frame and position an enclave as a spatial product of a society, the socioeconomic structure of immigrant groups, and a place of changing cultural heritage.

## Chapter 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the literature reviewed seeks to lay a foundation for the thesis research by investigating the six dimensions of maintaining authenticity of ethnic enclaves. Drawing from critical literature, the spatial pattern and social values of the ethnic enclave were explored through a concept of an enclave's development and transformation. It intends to create a theoretical framework for how ethnic enclaves maintain authenticity, especially with respect to their unique architectural characteristics. In general, the literature emphasizes that ethnic enclaves are dynamic, fast paced, and ever-changing neighborhoods with many challenging factors rather than a stabilized area.

The chapter starts with the definition of an ethnic enclave and a historical background of the three studied enclaves. It continues with an examination of location, residential mobility, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation, and commodification in order to provide a collective understanding of how these aspects inform the authenticity of the case study enclaves and its effect on the diffusion of identity among their ethnic populations. The discourse of transformational forces draws on literature from philosophy, sociology, immigrant history, cultural geography, socioeconomics, urban planning, and architecture in order to reach a definition of ethnic enclave that will inform this investigation and point out process of maintaining authenticity of the enclaves.

## Ethnic enclave

Enclaves are generally defined as “neighborhoods or sections of a community whose key institutions and business enterprises are owned and operated by members of an ethnic group clustered together” (Jaret 1991, 327). They are where ethnic concentrations operate as a social and economic complex within a geographic boundary regardless of segregation (Li 2006). The fundamental concept of an ethnic enclave is explained as social capital that lays the foundation for the establishment of migrant networks and their associated advantages. The term usually refers to a geographic area with a high minority ethnic concentration within a culturally distinct minority community that creates economic activities separate from those of the generally larger communities that surround them (Ambraham 1996, 781-782). Portes and Shafer (2006, p.6) explain, “Well-developed enclave economies were exceptional, being associated with only a few immigrant groups, such as the Korean and Chinese”. Based on their concept, “immigrant enclave” has two characteristics:

1. A critical mass of immigrant-owned business firms that employ a critical mass of co-ethnic workers.
2. Spatial clustering of enterprises.

Moreover, Portes and Rumbaut (1996, 163) also describe the physical appearance of immigrant enclaves as follows:

“Near downtown Los Angeles there is an area approximately a mile long where all commercial signs suddenly change from English to strange pictorial characters. Koreatown, as the area is known, contains the predictable number of ethnic restaurants and grocery shops; it also contains a number of banks, import-export houses, industries, and real estate offices. Signs of “English Spoken Here” assure visitors that their links with the outside world have not been totally severed. In Los Angeles, the propensity for self-employment is three times greater among Koreans than among the population as a whole. Grocery stores, restaurants, gas station, liquor stores, and real estate offices are typical Korean businesses. They also tend to remain within the community because the more successful immigrants sell their earlier business to new arrivals”

Los Angeles County has always had the region's greatest ethnic diversity (Allen & Turner, 2013). Specifically, Los Angeles itself has the highest concentration of Mexicans outside Mexico, Koreans outside Korea, Thais outside Thailand and even Samoans outside Samoa. In addition to this, Los Angeles is home to other ethnic groups such as Japanese, Indian, Ethiopian, Armenian, Bangladeshi, Cambodian, and Russian. Because of preexisting ethnic minority communities and ethnic economic structures, metropolitan area, like Los Angeles, generally equips an ideal location for ethnic economies, and cultural institutions that meet the newcomer's need (Li 2006). According to census data, in 1960, non-Hispanic whites comprised over 80 percent of Los Angeles County's population with less than 2 percent of Asians. However, the non-Hispanic white population has been decreasing due to its move to outlying counties and other states and the increased immigration of other groups. In 2010, census data shows that, as of the 2005-2009 period, Non-Hispanic whites comprised around 30 percent of Los Angeles population. While the percentage of Asian population has increased to over 10.7 percent, slightly higher than black/African American at 9.7 percent, the majority of the population is Hispanic or Latino at 47 percent. Moreover, about 40 percent of Los Angeles residents are foreign-born. And among the foreign born, 64.5 percent were born in Latin America, 26.3 percent in Asia, and 6.5 percent in Europe. Even though this research chose to focus on Chinatown, Koreatown and Thai Town, they are just three of the many ethnic enclaves dispersed throughout greater Los Angeles.

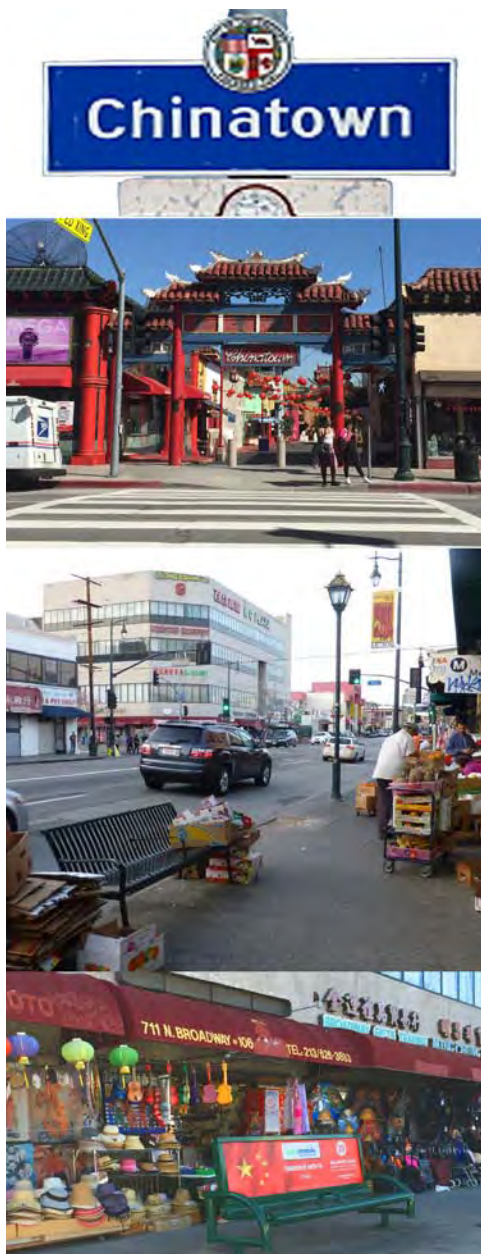


Figure 2.1 Chinatown's atmosphere

## Chinatown

After completion of the transatlantic railway, Chinese laborers were dispersed. While some chose to settle in San Francisco, some chose to settle in Los Angeles. Chinatown, Los Angeles, was originally established around 1880. The Chinatown was located on Alameda and Macy Streets, adjacent to downtown Los Angeles. It reached its peak between 1890-1910. However, in 1938 it was demolished and relocated to make way for Union Station. During that time, the Historic Chinatown housed many commercial businesses, a Chinese Opera Theater, temples, and the city's first ethnic media outlet, the Los Angeles Chinese newspaper, Wah Mei Sun Po. Not far from the Historic Chinatown in the area that used to be part of Little Italy, New Chinatown was developed by the displaced Chinese American community, led by Peter Soo Hoo Jr., on North Broadway. The New Chinatown, which was designed by Hollywood film set designers, is an American interpretation of traditional Chinese architecture – Hollywoodized Shanghai. New Chinatown is marked by a Golden Dragon gateway, along with street sign banners advertising Chinatown. The exotic architectural expression became part of the ethnic commercial identity of New Chinatown's central plaza and also spread out to other institutions, community centers, residential buildings, and entrepreneur offices all over the neighborhood.



Figure 2.2 Koreatown's atmosphere

## Koreatown

Koreatown, Los Angeles was formed by the third wave of Korean immigrants after immigration laws were liberalized in 1965, which led to a major increase in Korean immigrants<sup>2</sup>. The immigrants settled in the west side of downtown along Wilshire Boulevard and 6<sup>th</sup> Street between Western Avenue and Vermont Avenue. The exquisite area of Mid-Wilshire Boulevard was declining and became vacant, creating a perfect place for Korean immigrants to start their businesses. Koreatown or K-town contains a full range of businesses and services and much investment by Korean companies in offices, shopping, entertainment and healthcare, and other activities such as religious services and senior centers. Even though it is a vibrant commercial district, most of Los Angeles' Korean population reside in the suburbs, leaving the area residentially multiethnic, with Latinos typically in lower-rent apartments with Koreans, other Asians, and whites in more expensive housing. Due to intense gentrification and higher rental prices over the past decade, the percentage of Latinos has diminished and the percentage of Asians has increased. In the present, Koreans constitute about a third of the neighborhood's population.

<sup>2</sup> The first wave of Korean immigrants is contract laborers of Hawaii's sugar plantation around 1900s. The second wave is war brides and adopted children between 1950-1989. The third wave consists of Koreans who came under the occupational and family reunification preferences of the 1965.



Figure 2.3 Thai Town's atmosphere

## Thai Town

The history of the Thai community in the United States started in the 1960s. Although Los Angeles is the largest Thai-populated city outside of Thailand, Thai is considered a minority in comparison to other Asian immigrants. In much data such as the census or language spoken, Thai is in the category of “other Asian.” Whereas, Chinese and Korean have a specific category, Thai do not. Los Angeles is home to the first US Thai Town, designated in 1999 by Los Angeles City Council under the campaign of the Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC) as a part of a cultural tourism economic strategy. Thai Town is located in the East Hollywood district of Los Angeles, a six-block area centered along Hollywood Boulevard between Normandie Avenue and Western Avenue. It aims to encourage and develop a depressed and neglected section of East Hollywood. Started with only a few Thai businesses and with only 2 percent of the population in the area being Thai, Thai Town was and is still struggling to establish an identity in the designated area. At present, much smaller in size compared to Chinatown and Koreatown, Thai Town proliferates with Thai entrepreneurs including Thai silk and souvenir shops, grocery stores and bookstores, beauty treatment outlets, fortune tellers, and especially many Thai restaurants.

## **Authenticity of an ethnic enclave**

The question of authenticity of ethnic enclaves has been raised many times by scholars due to their commodification for commercial businesses, culturally based tourism, and generational assimilation. Although authenticity is subject to individual perception and interpretation of cultural experience of neighborhood (McClinchey, 2008), many theorists' studies explain the questions and factors that lead to authenticity or inauthenticity of the ethnic enclave. They generally agree that residential components crucially contribute to a celebration of authenticity in ethnic enclaves. However, no evidence exists that as long as ethnic groups live in an enclave, they will be able to preserve their ethnic identity in an authentic way because traditional or ancestral identities can reemerge through historical events and particular circumstances. Additionally, it is the commercial identity of an ethnic enclave that encourages business and attracts tourists. According to a study of ethnic neighborhoods in Toronto, Hackworth and Rekers (2005) explain that the merchants that maintain their commercial ethnic identities can attract more tourists regardless of whether the enclave has a residential identity. However, the study continues to argue that a decline in the number of ethnic groceries in comparison an increased number of restaurants and tourist attractions is a sign of inauthenticity in an ethnic enclave because of its catering more to tourists than its own residents (Harney, 1985). Moreover, Sharon Zukin (2010) argues that although the concept of authenticity can be contentious since cities are dynamic places, there is a loss of authenticity as immigrant neighborhoods experience gentrification. Therefore, the perception of "existential authenticity" accounts for ethnicity as a social construction. Authenticity does not hold a fixed meaning but depends on how a society defines what ethnicity means. The potential differences in interpretation of authenticity may lead to intragroup and intergroup disagreement when some stakeholders perceive a place to be losing its authenticity while other stakeholders celebrate the marketing of the neighborhood.

A study of Han Dieter Laux and Günter Thieme (2006) on socioeconomic polarization, ethnic attachment, and residential patterns in the Korean community of Los Angeles is used to structure the thesis' theoretical

framework and methodology because it explains how social and spatial structure change in the ethnic group. Moreover, their investigation of the Los Angeles context sheds light on how to examine the transformation of the city as it affects to the commodification of ethnic enclaves. The methodology of their research includes the investigation of the de-concentration and assimilation process among ethnic groups, human and social capital, and ethnic attachment of Koreans, followed by the analysis of spatial distribution of Korean-populated areas, socioeconomic data, and assimilation in order to draw conclusions about this study. For example, Laux and Thieme conclude that Koreans in Los Angeles have been able to maintain strong ethnic attachment while attaining upward mobility and economic success.

For the purpose of this research, “authenticity” is defined as a spatial quality and architectural characteristic that enhance the socioeconomic of the dominant ethnic population. Moreover it includes a spatial meaning and spiritual quality contributing to cultural and social place making of the ethnic group and their ethnic enclave. According to the literature, it includes an organic process in which the ethnic group transforms the space and products to supports its behaviors, socioeconomic structure, and ethnic identity. The commodification process through which an ethnic group transforms its spatial quality or products for commercialization could lead to potential inauthenticity of an ethnic enclave. On the other hand, as a source of socioeconomic structure, the commercialization of an ethnic enclave could initiate cohesion of the ethnic population and lead to a more authentic ethnic enclave due to the increased critical mass of that population and its businesses.

## Push and pull

The dissolution of authenticity and commodification of an ethnic enclave are affected by many factors. Adopted from theory of migration, coupled with the study of Laux and Thieme, push and pull theories were used to lay a foundation for this research. The push factors are a result of economic, social, political, and cultural changes in an enclave and the host society. Their framework includes the ethnic conflicts, economic situations, uncontrolled increase of the population, and economic difference. The pull factors are antipode of the push factors. They include lack of workers, good social measures, positive economic situation, democratic system, political and social stability, and historic connections between the countries, and common language.

Constructed from these push and pull factors, based on the study of Laux and Thieme, the internal and external forces were framed into six aspects: location, residential mobility, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation and commodification. In order to assess potential development of the study ethnic communities, it is crucial to learn their population concentration, cultural characteristics and ethnicity acquired in their country of origin as well as their sociopolitical condition in the context of Los Angeles to define their residential mobility. These factors influence the path of assimilation and integration of ethnic communities in the US society.

Understanding the influence of push and pull forces from both external and internal makes it possible to lay a foundation to examine the processes that develop in ethnic enclaves. Furthermore, an examination of location, residential mobility, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation and commodification helped in evaluating the degree of authenticity through the relationship of the ethnic groups to their ethnic enclave. The following literature review illustrates how these six aspects were investigated. The discourse of these investigations was applied as a context for understanding an authenticity of Asian ethnic enclaves, in particular the three enclaves investigates in this study.

## **Location:** spatial distribution and pattern of ethnic residents, institutions, and ethnic business

In a traditional sense, generations of immigrants have followed their predecessors to locations in which they can benefit from social and familial networks, the feeling of security, and the economic opportunities that may be available in a community with people of the same racial background (Stillwell & Duke-Williams, 2005). However, Los Angeles characteristics allow dispersion of ethnic populations from its inner city to suburban areas, which may cause the diffusion of ethnic identity of the residents in urban enclaves.

With whom immigrants live relates to where immigrants live. The spatial concentration of immigrants in urban areas raises questions about the neighborhood effects on the ethnic enclaves in which they live. These concentrations can provide enhanced social capital through various forms of support from the ethnic community and a population base for the provision of ethnic retailing and community services. At the same time, however, are questions concerning the implications of such concentrations for functional integration, especially language, education, and the labor market as well as for participation by immigrants in various aspects of society and their sense of belonging to both United States and to their ethnic group.

In order to understand the characteristics of an ethnic community, as well as address spatial patterns, the location of ethnic economy and institutions of each community was examined within the Los Angeles context. The investigation of ethnic activities would explain reasons behind the development patterns of residential clustering. Several theorists classify the reasons into two sets: cultural and economic. Cultural explanations argue that immigrants tend to locate close to each other in order to take advantage of their closely integrated social networks and to retain valued elements of their cultural heritage, such as language and religion. Economic explanations draw attention to their functioning in both the labor and the housing markets, asserting that newcomers are compelled to cluster in the least expensive parts of the city due to financial limitations.

**Residential mobility:** ability, opportunity or limitation of ethnic groups to move from the enclave to other parts of the city, which can lead to dispersion or cohesion of an ethnic group

“Changes in residential locations within the urban area play an important role in altering urban systems and urban spatial structure, particularly with regard to neighborhood characteristics and the locations of market-oriented activities. While households change residences in response to changes in the urban environment and in the patterns of their daily lives, their migration produces changes in neighborhood characteristics, and in the spatial distribution and quality of the amenities which serve them.” (Brown & Holmes, 1971, p.307)

Residential mobility was examined in this research because of its contribution to neighborhood change. In particular, when a neighborhood faces very high residential turnover, the social control and social capital of immigrants can be drastically eroded. Moreover, high residential turnover may itself promote further mobility. As Coulton, Theodos, and Turner (2012) explain:

“If the characteristics and well-being of newcomers differ from those of movers, mobility can change a neighborhood’s demographic or socioeconomic mix, which in turn can reposition the neighborhood with respect to institutions, resources, and the marketplace. The evolving profile of a neighborhood’s population can further affect investments by both individuals and institutions through social and political processes that are reinforcing and evolve over time.”

Brown and Holmes explain a process of selective mobility that is influenced by macro forces, including public policy, housing markets, economic shifts, and racial segregation not simply only a collection of individual decisions. Despite changes in individual residents’ well-being, selective mobility can maintain the neighborhood’s existing state of affairs. As Brown and Holmes illustrate, when more successful residents leave a distressed neighborhood and are replaced by others who are less well off, the neighborhood will remain distressed, even though individual households in the neighborhood improve their economic status. In response to residential mobility, they offer further suggestions for interventions such as improving services for neighborhood residents, create employment and other opportunities (Brown & Holmes, 1971).

## **Ethnic proportion:** ethnic concentration within traditional enclaves along with the intermingling of other ethnic group

The demographic of an ethnic enclave is an important factor in understanding the community, its characteristics, and how it functions. An investigation focused on the proportion the ethnic population within the enclave would explain its potential to maintain economic capital as well as its risk of being absorbed by other ethnic groups. An urban population change is a common phenomenon that occurs in a world-city like Los Angeles. For instance, ethnic enclaves in New York face a problem of demographic shift, where the enclave remains but is demographically more mixed (“Analysis: NYC”, n.d.). Moreover Xie and Gough (2011) illustrate the consequence of demographic change in Little Italy, New York as:

“The traditional path has been for the immigrant to move directly to an urban enclave from his or her native country, moving to a more integrated area after greater assimilation. For this reason, enclaves ebb and flow as immigrants arrive and assimilate. In New York City, for example, Little Italy was long ago absorbed by Chinatown, and a Russian community emerged in Brighton Beach in the 1980s and 1990s. These ethnic communities retain some cultural distinction particular to their sending countries and also offer employment opportunities to new immigrants within a co-ethnic setting. Both the causes and the consequences of such ethnic enclaves remain unclear. Small groups might be more likely to assimilate simply because they lack a sufficient population base, while larger groups like Chinese might have an easier time remaining isolated. Although some groups may remain isolated because of racism in the larger community, others may remain isolated by preference. An ethnic enclave might function primarily as a cultural vehicle for the optional exercise of ethnic identity.”

When an ethnic enclave is not dominated by an ethnic group, insight into the ethnic proportion would help in explaining the relationship and position of the ethnic enclave as well as the ethnic group. Moreover, to better understand the performance of the ethnic group and intermingling of other ethnic groups, it is crucial to investigate the ethnic economy at the same time.

**Ethnic Identity:** identification of a particular ethnic's affiliative construct, which is influenced by natal, symbolic, and cultural factors

Identification is often used to define ethnicity. Schildkrout (1978) defines ethnic identity as: "a set of conscious or unconscious beliefs or assumptions about one's own or another's identity, as derived from membership in a particular type of group or category". Ethnic identity is treated as a conceptualization of one's membership in an ethnic group. The function and expression of ethnicity is viewed in a definite cultural context.

Ethnic identity is a dynamic construct that evolves and changes in response to developmental and contextual factors. The process of ethnic identity formation has been conceptualized in terms of a progression, with an individual moving from having unexamined attitudes through an exploration of self in society in order to achieve ethnic identity at the end of adolescence. The stages of development depend on socialization experiences in the family, the ethnic community, and the larger setting (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001, p.496). The concept of identity is further explained by Hye-Kyung Kang in Gilroy's theory in community identity. With Gilroy's analysis of British Black urban social movements (1994), Kang further explains that creating a group identity is not as simple as an uncontested adoption of a priori category such as race. Because of the historically hegemonic use of race as an essentializing signification, the meaning of race must be re-defined by the social actors in their specific social and historical contexts (Kang, 2010, p.44-48).

Laux and Thieme (2006) explain that ethnic attachment and ethnic identity result from a combination of two major factors; 1) a high degree of cultural homogeneity and common historical experience; and 2) the concentration within a narrow segment of economic activities. In particular, a valid measurement of ethnic attachment and ethnic identity can be examined through variables of private and community life such as language spoken, membership in ethnic associations and community organization as well as a celebration of cultural and religious festivals. (Laux and Theiem 2006

**Assimilation:** process by which the immigrant groups acquire the social and psychological characteristics of a host society in both acculturation and socioeconomic assimilation

A traditional examination and analysis of adjustment and adaptation is categorized in four stages; 1) contact – groups first encounter each other; 2) competition – groups compete with each other to gain access to scarce political, economic, and social resources; 3) accommodation – groups begin to get accustomed to each other and start to cooperate, adapt to each other in supposedly peaceful and constructive ways; 4) assimilation – an interpretation and fusion in which individuals and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of others by sharing their experience, history and cultural life (Park, 1928).

The integration and assimilation of immigrants into American Society is categorized in three ways; First, cultural assimilation or acculturation is a fast process of behavioral changes, often with regard to language, norms, and values. Second, segmented assimilation is a primary concern for American-born generations and how they integrate into mainstream society i.e., gradual adoption of habits and norms, and re-orientation of values and norms to those of American society. And the third type is a combination of economic success with the deliberate preservation of traditional values within the immigrant community, which results in a state of integration (Laux & Thieme, 2006)

After the study ethnic identity, the analyses of the case studies addressed whether, and to what extent, the assimilation process accompanied the spatial and structural change of a particular ethnic enclave in Los Angeles. The analysis of assimilation of the ethnic groups was based on the examination of ethnic identity as continuity. It focused on an outcome of immigrants' assimilation into Los Angeles, as a social entity that is not dominated by a white middle-class population but rather is an ethnic and multicultural mosaic. The pluralistic characteristic of Los Angeles accepts and even encourages multiple avenues of assimilation. Thus the assimilation model in this research is weighted towards a cultural pluralism ( $A+B+C= A'+B'+C'$ ) and a transitive model ( $A+b+c = A+b+c$ )<sup>3</sup> in which each ethnic group blends into mainstream society at a different pace, maintains their distinctiveness, and forms a new identity instead of assimilating into one identity (Flanagan, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> A cultural pluralism model ( $A+B+C= A'+B'+C'$ ) is when different ethnic groups are able to maintain their unique cultural norms, traditions, and behaviors, while still sharing common national values, goals, and institutions  
A transitive model ( $A+b+c = A+b+c$ ) is when different ethnic groups remain unassimilated in the same scales.

**Commodification:** transformation of goods and services and ideas into commodities that are marketed by mainstream businesses

Loukaitou-Sideris and Soureil (2012) explains that in order to employ cultural tourism as an economic development tool in ethnic inner-city neighborhoods, it is essential to ensure active involvement of local actors and community groups in the identification, preservation, and promotion of their cultural assets as well as substantial civic and public/private participation in the marketing of these assets. The development of cultural communities reflects an orientation toward a comprehensive understanding of historical preservation and identity. They portray and commemorate sociocultural practices outside the predominant and mainstream culture. The cultural asset of ethnic neighborhoods e.g., food, ethnic products, art, language, customs, and rituals, which used to be preserved within the ethnic group are now widely publicized as parts of vital transnational communities that connect the city and the world. In many cases, marginalized communities apply this strategy and orientate their urban tourism toward a celebration of cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding in order to improve their economic conditions as well as making people conscious of their existence in the city.

However, cultural tourism can bring an inauthenticity of cultures and places because of the process of molding and tourist product packaging. The term 'tourists' refers to both local residents who live outside the enclave as well as people visiting from other cities. The tourism industry largely understands culture as a commodity, which results in the showcasing of marginalized cultures in ways that benefit mainly outsiders and not the host communities (Robinson & Boniface (eds) 1999). Studies of ethnic communities and their transformational process when they orientate themselves toward cultural tourism involve molding and packaging assets and services for easy consumption by tourist groups. For instance banners, logos, and color-coordinated street furniture make these communities more palatable and sanitized to the perceived tourist taste. Further, the number of restaurants in relation to grocery stores can be an indicator of the authenticity of ethnic communities be-

cause it identifies who is consuming ethnic products (Hackworth & Rekers, 2005, p.219-232). Moreover, when communities convert their neighborhoods into tourist places, they sanitize the unpredictability and insecurity of everyday life and thus isolate the neighborhood from the reality and actual experiences. By coincidence, they destroy elements of surprise in these neighborhoods and the chance of becoming culturally rich and authentic place, which leads to the perception of authenticity. However, there are differences between tourists of the same ethnicity and people of other races. The process of packaging is required for all tourists since they have short visiting time and prefer easily consumable products and a managed environment. In contrast, tourists of same ethnicity can easily orientate themselves in their distant community, where they are surrounded by people who speak their language. While ethnically similar tourists prefer authentic products, the other tourists potentially prefer an Americanized version of ethnic products that have been adjusted to their taste. Nevertheless, if cultural tourism becomes a major strategy in potentially gentrifying neighborhoods, it can become a code word for increasing inequalities and displacement.

Influenced by Laux and Thieme's research in the Korean community in Los Angeles along with other theories of the influential force of ethnic enclaves, the theoretical framework of six transformational factors has been articulated. A following chapter will explain the methodology that was undertaken in order to examine these six dimensions of maintaining authenticity of the case study ethnic enclaves within the context of Los Angeles.

## Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY

This thesis is a qualitative investigation of how six internal and external factors have affected the authenticity, or unique characteristics, of three Asian ethnic enclaves in the evolving city of Los Angeles. It is based on the literature review in which scholars identify six factors as affecting the dispersion of ethnic groups and subsequent potential diffusion of ethnic identity. The six factors are: location, residential mobility, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation, and commodification. The thesis posits that these factors will affect the authenticity, or uniqueness, of three case study neighborhoods, including the uniqueness of their architectural characteristics. Specifically, the research will investigate:

1. How these six factors have affected the authenticity of Chinatown, Koreatown, and Thai Town?
2. How the factors changed as the city developed into a multi-cultural mosaic?
3. What unique architectural characteristics currently contribute to the authenticity of each of these ethnic enclaves?

The beginning premise of the study is that immigrants benefit from being attached to their origins and that ethnic enclaves are ever-changing neighborhoods. Further it is informed by Laux and Thieme who argue that demographic changes in a multicultural society creates an ethnic mosaic where ethnic groups preserve their identity and cultural independence rather than eventually dissolving into mainstream.

The study was conducted over an 11- week period and thus is limited in its scope. This chapter discusses the research design in terms of the data that were collected, specifies how the six factors were studied, and explains how data were analyzed.

## Research design

In this research, data were collected through three protocols: document analysis, on-site observation, and survey and interview. These triangulated sources of data help increase the credibility of the findings of this limited investigation of what has affected the authenticity of three of Los Angeles’s ethnic enclaves.

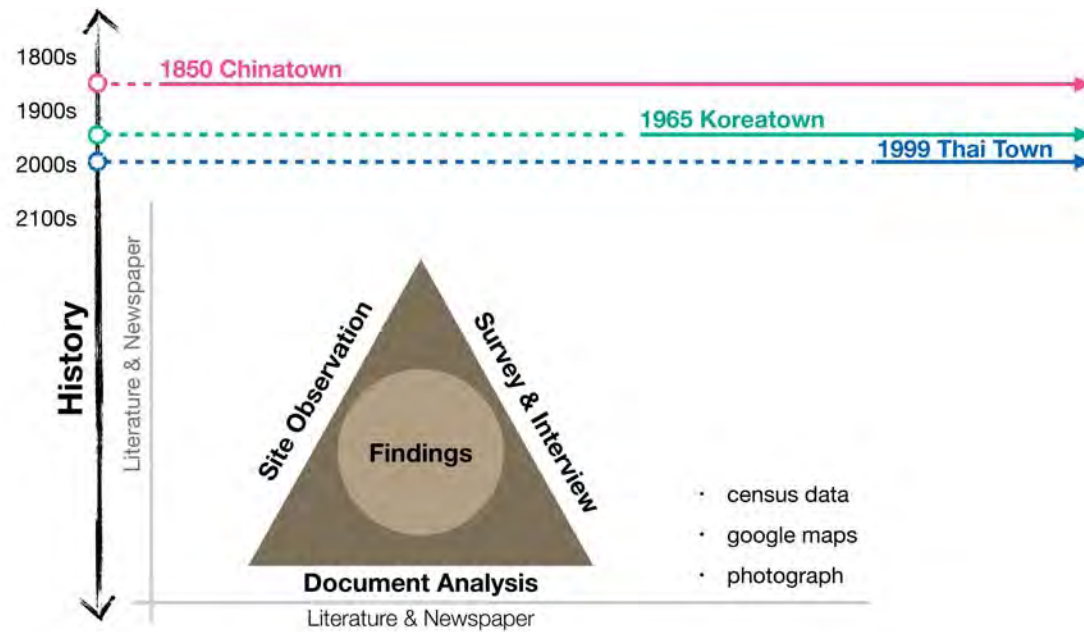


Figure 3.1 Research design diagram

### **Document Analysis**

Document analysis was used to develop an approach to this study and to provide supplementary research data. Information and insights derived from documents are valuable additions to a knowledge base as well as to tracking change and development of the ethnic neighborhoods, and to verify findings from various sources. In this particular instance, document analysis offered an efficient method of research as, within the time constraint of 11 weeks, many documents were available in public domain for repeated review.

Document analysis was conducted primarily on public records such as census data reports and demographic maps. Moreover, it included an analysis of newspapers, which even though not generally accepted as a research resource, provided a social reflection of the situation and historical events in that time.

### **On-site observation**

On-site observation was used to provide an understanding of general atmosphere, nonverbal expression of feelings and interaction, as well as to help developing questions that would be culturally relevant within the studied enclaves. In this research, on-site observation was conducted during daytime and nighttime to experience different uses as well as social and cultural ambience of the three ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles.

- Chinatown is located in downtown Los Angeles. The boundaries of the Chinatown neighborhood are: Beaudry Avenue, Stadium Way and North Broadway to the north, Los Angeles River to the east, and Cesar Chavez Avenue on southwest direction. The observation focused along North Broadway and North Hill Street.
- Koreatown is located in Central Los Angeles. The city of Los Angeles has set the official boundary for Koreatown neighborhood council as Olympic Boulevard from Western Avenue to Vermont Avenue on the south, Vermont Avenue from Olympic Boulevard to Third Street on the east, Third Street from Vermont Avenue to Western Avenue on the north, Western Avenue from Third Street to Olympic Boulevard.

However, Korean businesses scatter beyond this boundary. The area along Wilshire Boulevard and West 6<sup>th</sup> Street were the main focus for this observation.

- Thai Town is located on East Hollywood. Comparatively small in size, a six-block area along Hollywood Boulevard between Normandie Avenue and Western Avenue was observed.

For the on-site observation, the factors of location, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation and commodification were examined. Residential mobility was not included in the observation because of its invisibility. The observation was documented through photographs order to illustrate the ethnic landscapes, linguistic landscape, social interaction, and places of contestation found within each enclave. Moreover, photographs from each site will allow a comparison of the visible differences in the spatial utilization of the enclaves.

### **Survey and Interview**

As the scope of the research seeks to explore the development process in each of the three ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles, participants were representative of various ages in order to offer a unique perspective of navigating each culture while growing up in an American urban environment. Additionally, respondents represented a wide range of professional and socio-economic backgrounds. The participants participated voluntarily and were treated as autonomous agents able to exercise their autonomy to the fullest extent possible in accordance with IRB Human Subjects guidelines. The participants were asked to answer twenty questions providing in survey form (see appendix A). The survey was provided in English, as well as in Chinese, Korean, or Thai language, depending on which enclave participants belonged to. The interview was conducted after the survey was completed, the participants, again, were asked to have a conversation about their ethnic enclave and to provide their experience and personal perspective on that enclave. Due to time and distance constraints of the research, a minimum of ten participants for each ethnic enclave were interviewed.

## Factors investigated

This section explains how each of the six factors were investigated in the three enclaves.

### Location

Location of immigrant populations was investigated in order to understand how spatial distribution affect dispersion or cohesion of each of the case study ethnic groups. The location of ethnic residents and social infrastructure was critically analyzed to identify the aspect that contributes to the location selection as well as a concentration or de-concentration of an immigrant-active zone. It focuses on the analysis of census data demographic maps as well as mapping of ethnic institutional and infrastructures.

### Residential mobility

From aforementioned theories, residential mobility of immigrant population that was investigated in this research looked at de-concentration of ethnic residents as well as the level of integration of other ethnic groups within each of the three enclaves. Residential mobility was investigated in parallel with the location and spatial pattern of the ethnic groups. It was conceptualized through a critical analysis of Los Angeles' environment in relation to the development of highly integrated immigrants and dispersion of ethnic groups into suburban areas.

### Ethnic proportion

Ethnic proportion in each of the ethnic enclaves was examined in this study. It was conceived as the relationship of the co-ethnic group to the ethnic group specific to the enclave. The examination was primarily based on census data and supported with the on-site observation. Observation was included in this examination because it provided insight into the relationships and roles that occur between people and places rather than just numerical data. The ethnic proportion and demographic characteristic of the case study ethnic enclaves provide a better understanding of how and to whom the enclave has functioned, which the literature suggests would contribute to the authenticity of the ethnic enclave.

**Ethnic Identity**

The ethnic identity of the immigrant population that was investigated in the three case studies is not based on taxonomy but rather on a situational perspective of cultural behaviors such as language, cultural products as well as traditions and spiritual norms e.g., religious beliefs. The ethnic identity of these populations will be conceptualized through a critical analysis of the Los Angeles environment specific to the development of immigrant identity. It focuses on both physical and behavioral expression of ethnic identity informed by historical, political, and social forces of the three ethnic enclaves to understand the dialectical relationship between the person and the environment.

**Assimilation**

The analysis of assimilation of the ethnic groups could be categorized into two aspects, structural assimilation and acculturation. Structural assimilation investigation was based on the examination of income level and education level of the residents in each ethnic enclave. Acculturation was investigated based on language speaking and ethnic attachment along with ethnic identity as a continuity. It focuses on an outcome of immigrants' assimilation into the pluralism characteristic of Los Angeles, as a social entity.

**Commodification**

The investigation of commodification was based on the examination of ethnic businesses and commercialization in relation to ethnic identity in the three case studies. It focuses on an outcome of immigrants' assimilation into Los Angeles, as a social entity. In particular, the entity of Los Angeles which is not dominated by a white middle-class population but rather is described as an ethnic and multicultural mosaic.

Table 1 shows how each of these factors was investigated to determine their effect on authenticity.

Factor	Issue Investigated	Document Analysis	On-Site Observation	Survey Interview
Location	spatial distribution and pattern of ethnic residents, institutions and ethnic businesses.	○	○	○
Residential mobility	ability, opportunity or limitation of ethnic group to move to the enclave or other part of the city	○		○
Ethnic proportion	ethnic concentration within the enclaves along with the interminglement of other ethnic groups	○	○	
Ethnic Identity	identification of a particular ethnic' affiliative construct, which influenced by natal, symbolic, and cultural factors	○	○	○
Assimilation	process which the immigrant groups acquire the social and psychological characteristics of a host society in both acculturation and socioeconomic assimilation	○	○	○
Commodification	transformation of goods and services, as well as ideas into a commodity in mainstream business	○	○	

Table 1 Factors of Authenticity Investigated

## Data analysis

Regarding aforementioned purpose of this research, it focuses on the examination and of the ways in which individuals and groups have influenced the authenticity of three Asian ethnic enclaves in Los Angeles, given the city's transformation into an ethnic mosaic. Based on John W. Creswell's method for qualitative research, an analysis of the three sources of data was conducted. First, the different types of data were prepared for analysis; the document analysis looked for an alignment of the ethnic groups with six factors; notes and photos from on-site observations were placed into a matrix of various categories to compare each of the ethnic enclaves. Interviews were transcribed and interviews conducted in Thai were translated (all the other interviews were conducted in English). These findings were assembled for each ethnic enclave, and visual data were also organized per site.

Themes, patterns and categories were constructed from the interviews, observations, and document analysis by coding to understand the negotiation patterns of cultural and ethnic identity and assimilation of each ethnic group in Los Angeles. Analysis of these data began with constant comparison of the data that translates to themes found in the literature on the six factors of location, residential mobility, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation and commodification. The six factors were then scored in scale of 1-10. The score was based on survey and interview responses, on-site observation and support from the document analysis (see appendix B). Visual data were studied to identify evidence that supports this comparison of surveys and interviews and observations to the literature. The themes resulting from this triangulated comparison were interpreted and their meanings assessed. After interpreting the information, the data were represented and visualized as graphic diagrams in order to display the characteristic of the three ethnic enclaves. Moreover selective sets of photos were used to illustrate the atmosphere, environment and conditions of the ethnic enclaves.



*a man tells his son, trying to explain  
the wisdom of learning a second tongue.*

*It's the same old story from the previous century  
about my father and me.*

*The same old story from yesterday morning  
about me and my son.*

*It's called "Survival Strategies  
and the Melancholy of Racial Assimilation."*

*It's called "Psychological Paradigms of Displaced Persons,"  
called "The Child Who'd Rather Play than Study."*

*From Behind My Eyes by Li-Young Lee, 1957*

## Chapter 4 STUDY CONTEXT

In order to better understand Chinatown, Koreatown, and Thai Town development, it is essential to study the context of host society as well as the ethnic communities and their enclaves. This chapter provided information about the study site of Los Angeles, specifically focusing on its the history and patterns of urban development. Importantly, it looked at the evolution of Chinese, Korean, and Thai immigrant communities as these populations arrived in Los Angeles at different points in the city's urban development.

### The city of Los Angeles

The name “Angeles” came from “Rio de Nuestra Senora la Reina de los Angeles de Porciuncula” or River of Our Lady Queen of the Angels of Porciuncula, the name of a local river. It was given by Gaspar de Portola, a Spanish explorer and California Governor. The Spanish settlement was established in the area in 1769, the same time as a land route to Monterey Port was opened. From a pueblo, the area was developed into a grid plan of Spanish settlement with a plaza function as a civic center along with missions, businesses, and especially agriculture and livestock. During that time, the majority of the people were not Spaniards but African bondsmen who sought freedom in “the New Spain”, and retired soldiers who had been rewarded gifts of fertile land (Weaver 1980). The economy was highly tied with Indian laborers, with intermarriage attracting this population to the pueblo. The American trading ship did not arrived in San Pedro Bay until 1805 and the first American Angelinos did not settle in Los Angeles until 1818.

Los Angeles was one of the largest agriculture communities in Southern California by the time Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1821. The community continuously expanded and was declared a ciudad, or a city, by the Mexican Congress in 1835 and became the official capital of Alta, California. In this time, a lot of Mexicans moved into the city and took over the labor force from the Indians. Although Los Angeles had been developed as a self-contained agriculture community with cultivated farming and vineyards, mills and sawing,



Figure 4.1 Los Angeles Plaza 1869



Figure 4.2 San Pedro railroad station



Figure 4.3 LA 1875, View of Main Street from the junction with Spring Street at Temple



Figure 4.4 Los Angeles Cable Railroad viaduct at Spring Street and College Street, 1888

workshops and entrepreneurs, it had not developed many civic amenities over three decades. While people lived happily and were free of politics, the city was well known for its smuggling and gambling activities and was described by some as a “den of thieves”. The discovery of gold at Placerita Canyon, near Mission San Fernando in 1842 caused the Los Angeles population to increase significantly. The foreigners from the United States and Europe started to flow into the city and played a pivotal role in the takeover by the United States later on. In 1848, California became part of the United States after a two-year Mexican-American war. Because of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, California was ceded to the United States and all the residents became U.S. citizens.

Soon after becoming a part of the United States, California boomed in a Gold Rush era with Los Angeles as a major food supplier for the miners. The first railroad connecting to San Pedro was inaugurated in 1869; meanwhile Los Angeles was growing at a moderate pace in farming and business. The city extended the streets, replaced their Spanish names with English ones, and began its first real estate business boom. By 1870, the original pueblo plan was replaced by street plans with a new civic center southwest of the plaza, which is currently City Hall. Real estate development began to fragment Los Angeles into elite residences on the outskirts and minority settlements of Chinese, Mexican, and European immigrants close to the plaza, which led to a decentralized urban plan. At the same time, a growing city with the population of 50,000 began to direct its attention towards politic and race.

During the 1878 celebration of Cinco de Mayo, José J. Carrillo headed the procession as grand marshal and was followed by a band led by Hinlo Silvas. Next came the respected orator of the day – Riginaldo del Valle and Eulegio de Celis, the editor of *La Crónica* and president of *La Junta* – who rode together in a flowered carriage. They were followed by Trinidad Muñoz and other California representatives of the City Guard carrying the American and Mexican flags. . . . Indeed, the parade also displayed the changing orientation of the city’s Spanish- speaking community. For example, under Mexican rule, most community celebration had been religious, the members of the upper class playing central roles. However, under American rule, religion and class became less important. The community began to place greater emphasis on political ideology and ethnic origin (Estrada, 2008, p.70).

## Chinese in Los Angeles

As of 1850, Los Angeles had a population of 3,530 and it was first time census data reported Chinese in Los Angeles. Two Chinese servants were listed in Los Angeles while there were about four thousand Chinese miners in California in the beginning of gold rush years. Although the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868 granted citizenship to all persons born in the United States, the Burlingame Treaty between the United States and China affirmed the mutual right of migration but blatantly discriminated against the Chinese in denying them the right to naturalization. Despite the restricted naturalization right, the Chinese community in Los Angeles became sizeable in 1870. With a population of nearly two hundred, the Chinese often endured racial violence and lived in a perilous area, Calle de los Negros.

“The decline in gold production, the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad, and drought that caused a sharp drop in farm production brought large numbers of unemployed white laborers into California towns from Sacramento to San Diego. Thus, in a climate of exploitative labor and corporate monopoly by railroad barons, white labor unions misdirected their attention to the Chinese, who they believed were lowering the wages and living standards of white workers. Combined with the inflammatory anti-Chinese news articles of the San Francisco press that Los Angeles journalists sought to emulate, the city was rife with anti-Chinese fervor”. (Estrada, 2008, p.73, citing Mark and Chih, 1982)

With the smoldering atmosphere against Chinese, the 1871 Chinese Massacre occurred in Chinatown, which is present day Union Station. The uprising began when an Anglo was killed in a fight between two competing secret societies of Chinese gangsters. The news spread and led to a mob of five hundred non-Asian Angelenos invading Chinatown. Within five hours, they hunted down and assaulted every Chinese they could find, killing nineteen Chinese men and injuring many others. They also robbed many Chinese residents and businesses. The incident drew national attention and provoked a grand jury investigation. Although seven men were held responsible and convicted for the riots, only one actually served any jail time. Despite this high level of legal injustice and difficult conditions, the Chinese resumed their life in what the Anglos referred to as “Chinatown.”

“The Race Riot That Didn’t Change a Damned Thing.” Although the event is said to have



Figure 4.5 Chinese gold miners in California, circa 1870



Figure 4.6 Chinese laborers working on construction of railway bridge, circa 1880



Figure 4.7 Chinese Rituals Procession in Chinatown LA, circa 1900

marked the end of the mob justice in Los Angeles, that was more likely the result of a gradual decrease in violent crime and improved law administration than collective shame over the lynching of innocent Chinese. In fact, anti-Chinese sentiment increased significantly in Los Angeles during the decade that followed the massacre. This may have been due to the influx of 330 Chinese workers who arrived in the area to dig the San Fernando railroad in 1875–76. (Zesch, 2012, p.213)

By 1876, the Southern Pacific Railroad, connecting San Francisco and Los Angeles, was complete and hundreds of Chinese workers settled in Los Angeles. *Los Angeles Times* article stereotyping the Chinese as dirty and uncivilized provides insight into the level of discrimination these immigrants faced:

“A Chinaman never dreams of observing even the simplest sanitary rules. He knows nothing of them and does not care to learn. When he dumps the household garbage outside the door, he troubles himself no more about it . . . Enter the average house, or rather room, and you are in a grimy apartment . . . No attempt at embellishment or even comfort are assayed. The average Indian possesses more luxuries, and can be no more unsavory. It must be remembered that *John* almost universally keeps bachelor’s hall, for women are merchantable chattled and are help at a price far above his means,...The culinary arrangements of a Chinaman are of the simplest, and his food is of the very cheapest. The strictest economy is practiced, and herein lies the secret of their ability to under-bid white labor and thrive on a pittance. A Chinaman can’t eat like a Christian. He prefers, if he has a stool, perching himself in a squatting position with his feet on the seat . . . For a Chinaman, while a fatalist and utterly regardless of life in some instances, is really an excessively timid being when under the influence of superstition. Ghosts and goblins, spirits good and bad are rigorously believed in by these people, and for this reason *John* will not sleep alone in a room if he can avoid it (The Heathen Chinese, 1881).”

In addition to discrimination, the Chinese in this time faced many legal barriers. They were limited to mostly hard labor work. Then the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) prohibited immigration of all Chinese laborers. Still, there was an evidence of smuggling illegal immigrants to serve in the prostitution business. It was a big business in Chinatown as because most of the laborers were not allowed to bring their families to the United States and intermarriage was not acceptable.



Figure 4.8 Oil field in Los Angeles 1904

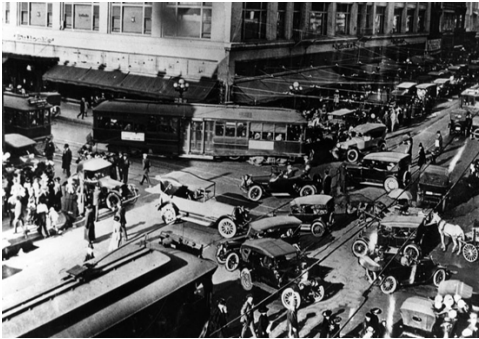


Figure 4.9 Los Angeles traffic, circa 1920  
Streetcars, automobiles, horse-drawn  
carriages, and pedestrians clog



Figure 4.10 Hollywood sign advertising of  
new housing development in 1920s

The Santa Fe railroad that connected Los Angeles to the East was completed in 1887, allowing an internal migration. Moreover, the discovery of oil in 1892 created the “Black Gold Rush,” attracting more laborers and fortune seekers to the city. Despite the negative consequences, oil and gas remained as a major industry in Los Angeles, making it a center of production at the beginning of twentieth century. At the same time, the city also had radically expanded its boundaries. It started in 1900s with a trolley, the Pacific Electric cars that linked beaches, mountains, and downtown together. This new mode of transportation made it possible for the city to weave a larger section into a harmonious unit and soon led to the sprawling development of the city. The railroad expanded and connected Los Angeles to other parts of the country. Mean while a plan for Union Station had been proposed, while the automobile began to play an important role in transportation. By 1910s, heavy traffic became a problem for the city’s economy and raised awareness of the need for expanding the transportation infrastructure. By 1920, Los Angeles continuously grew as an automobile city with the majority of the residents depending on private vehicles (Weaver 1980).

By this time, Los Angeles had become the capital of the film industry due to its ideal weather condition and picturesque landscape. The *LA Times* reported many motion picture studios cropped up all over Los Angeles. The city had become a backdrop for films “exhibited all over the civilized world . . . The motion picture had proved to be so powerful in ‘advertising Americanism outside of American boundaries’” (Weaver, 1980). The film industry created jobs and therefore increased immigration. Together the growing oil business and film industry escalated the rate of immigration both internally and externally more than ever before.

In the early 1920s, concerns over growing number of immigrants in the United States led to the Immigration Act of 1924. The Act created national quotas and guaranteed that immigrants would never qualify for naturalization or land ownership. The Asian Exclusion Act specifically targeted Asian immigrants. The number of immigrants severely dropped, however many Asians continued to immigrate into the country illegally.



Figure 4.11 Old Chinatown map overlaying with current street layout and Union station, Chinese American Museum



Figure 4.12 LA old Chinatown with the construction of Union Station in the back

“The success of the Chinese in making this transition, where other group had failed, was the result of their ability to make middle-class tourist feel secure in their enclave.” (Abrahamson, 1996, p.74)

By the 1890s, Chinatown had begun to be a tourist attraction. By the 1920s, the Chinese had Americanized their products to serve not only their ethnic group but also mainstream American consumers. New Chinatown, designed by a Hollywood filmmaker, was dedicated in 1938. The location is not far from the Old Chinatown, which was redeveloped as Union Station. New Chinatown housed many restaurants, malls, stores, and other Chinese businesses to supply the Chinese economy as well as Hollywood’s demands for an exotic oriental backdrop.



Figure 4.13 New Chinatown opened in 1938 on the site of L.A.’s former Sonoratown

If a film needed an exotic backdrop, it was going to be Chinatown, a neighborhood in the northeast corner of downtown Los Angeles. Charlie Chaplin filmed here, as did Buster Keaton. With its winding alleys and Chinese denizens, the neighborhood was the perfect “ready-made set, complete with actors and actresses,” Pauline Wong, the executive director of Los Angeles’s Chinese American Museum, told me. And on celluloid, Chinatown could be made to represent itself or any other Chinatown in the world. Even today, it stands in for the ambiguous Asian “anywhere” Hollywood producers want it to be . . . The intersection of a booming film industry and neighborhood upheaval made it a ripe era for Hollywoodized versions of Chinatown to form . . . When Old Chinatown was razed, proposals were put forth for a new Chinatown settlement that would maintain its coveted status as a tourist attraction for the city – as well as house a displaced population of over 2,500 Chinese. (Tsui, 2009, p.114-116)



Figure 4.14 Filming in Chinatown Los Angeles

After the 1940s, Los Angeles became one of the most powerful metropolises in the world. Not only because it was a production base for warplanes in WWII but also due to the political culture in Los Angeles. Additionally, World War II deepened racial divisions, resulting in major human rights abuses and intergroup social upheavals (Deverell & Hise, 2010, p. 202). Conflict occurred between Americans and all the immigrants especially after the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor, which intensified racial tensions and led to questions about the loyalty of Japanese Americans. Tension also existed between whites and Hispanics, leading to a series of

riots, called “Zoot Suit Riots”, involving white service men stationed in Los Angeles and Latino as well as a few black youth. As described in *LA Times* as “mobs of white servicemen, spurred on by hatemongers and biased media reports, traveling to East Los Angeles to beat up young Latino *pachucos*. Some of the zoot suiters were themselves GIs on leave (Newton 1989).”

Despite the wartime racial tensions, the public and press were increasingly calling for greater acceptance of immigrants. U.S. immigration policy also shifted positively toward Asian immigration after WWII ended. The Act to Repeal the Chinese Exclusion Acts was signed in 1943 to promote US–China relations. The Act permitted Chinese nationals who were residing in the United State to become naturalized citizens. Moreover, the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, or the G.I Bill, which provided loans to buy houses or to start businesses, as well as to pay for veterans’ education, included Chinese Americans. In addition, approximately 5,000 Chinese refugees came to the United States after China became the People’s Republic of China.

### **Koreans in Los Angeles**

Korean American history dated back to 1882 when a diplomatic relations was established. The U.S. and Korea signed a treaty of peace, friendship, and commerce. From then on, Koreans began to arrive in the U.S. as diplomats, political exiles, merchants, or students (Yuh 2003). The first wave of Korean immigrants arrived in Hawaii as sugar plantation laborers between 1885 and 1924. Meanwhile in Los Angeles, a small group of Koreans lived around Bunker Hill, the area where nonwhites were allowed to live. They started a Methodist mission, community center, and some Korean stores, and became a social support for recent Korean immigrants.

In the 1930s, the Korean community in Los Angeles eventually settled around the Jefferson Boulevard area, between Vermont and Normandie, near the University of Southern California campus . . . Meanwhile, the children of the First Wave were growing up American in Los Angeles. Many lived around Old Koreatown, where they attend schools such as the James A. Foshay Learning Center, Manual Arts High School, and Los Angeles High School. They graduated and matriculated into American universities and enlisted the military. Many Korean



Figure 4.15 “Helping Korean”  
American soldier in Korean War, 1953

American of this second generation joined the US armed Forces. As children of the Korean independence movement, some felt compelled to “fight the Japs,” but most of these veterans say they believed in the honor of serving their country as America citizens, despite the constant, egregious and systemic discrimination they faced (Kim, 2011, p.9).

The second wave of Korean immigrants came to the United States between 1950 and 1965. The majority of this group were Korean children who were orphaned during the Korean War and war brides of US soldiers. This group was not concentrated in a specific area but was scattered throughout the United States. The military wives formed their own network separate from the mainstream Korean immigrant communities, while the adoptees were distributed among mostly white American families in every part of the country.



Figure 4.16 Wilshire Boulevard circa 1950

Asian exclusion was put to an end by the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. The Act eliminated laws preventing Asians from becoming naturalized American citizens. Not so far after this, when the Civil Rights Movement reached its height in the 1960s, a liberalized Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 was passed. It led to a significant increase of immigrants from Asia, Africa, and Middle East. Due to its geographic proximity and as a consequence of prior Asian immigrants settlement patterns, a large portion of Asian immigrants chose Los Angeles as their destination. The new immigration law abolished discrimination against national origin and the exclusion of Asians. In order to be admitted to the United States legally, immigrants they had to meet one of the three criteria: they had to have certain skills, family relationships, or be refugees. As in the past, family reunification was highly prioritized, therefore, the new immigration policy increasingly allowed families to uproot and reestablish themselves in the United States. Because of the policies put into effect by the Immigration Act of 1965, during the following three decades, over 18 million legal immigrants entered the United States and greatly changed the face of the American population.



Figure 4.17 President Lyndon Baines Johnson signing the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 on Liberty Island

Third wave of Korean immigrants were another group that benefitted from the liberalization of 1965. The influx of Koreans to an underutilized area in Wilshire district, the northern boundary of the city’s black ghetto, con-



Figure 4.18 Map of Korean owned businesses destroyed or looted during the riots

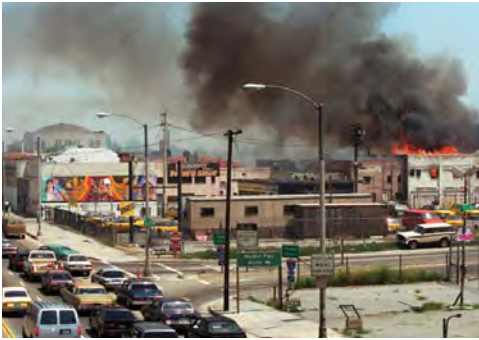


Figure 4.19 4-29 L.A. Riots (Kang, 1992)



Figure 4.20 People march calling for peace during the Los Angeles Riots in Koreatown



Figure 4.21 A crowd rallied in Los Angeles calling for healing between Koreans and the African-American community (Longstreath, 1992)

tributed to both social and economic development of Los Angeles. The area had its prime in the 1930s but became vacant after the Watts' riot in 1965, freeway decentralization, and Robert F. Kennedy's assassination in 1968. As a result, Los Angeles became an ideal destination for Koreans to settle and exploit. In a book about Koreans in Los Angeles, Light and Bonacic (1988) explain that 62 percent of Koreans found employment in the Korean ethnic economy. They created jobs and profit by injecting investment and skilled labor into the LA economy. Unlike the traditional enclaves, Korean businesses and firms gravitated to serve low-income, non-white neighborhoods as well as their own ethnic group. Moreover with their socioeconomic differences, Koreans and Latinos formed "a middleman phenomena"<sup>4</sup> where Koreans owned the business but employed other ethnic groups, especially Latinos, as their labor force. However, this relationship brought a mutual benefits between Koreans and Latinos, who became the majority residents in Koreatown. On the other hand, economic differences caused racial tensions between Koreans and African Americans (Zhou 2007). The LA Riots in 1992 lasted for six days in Koreatown and spread out to the LA metropolitan area. This civil unrest caused fifty-three deaths, over two thousand injuries, and ten thousand arrests. At the end of the incident, over thousand properties had been burnt down, two thousand Korean businesses were destructed, and over a billion dollars in damage was estimated. Due to the unfair aid or protection from police authorities for Korean Americans, the riots helped bring media and national attention to Koreans' political rights. The riots also brought attent to reforming the existing social structure of Korean Americans in the larger society, which brought about an increase in ethnic organizations.

Although Koreans, again, revitalized a deteriorated area into business prosperity in inner-city K-Town, the *LA Times* reported the decentralization of Korean to suburban areas:

<sup>4</sup> "middleman minorities" can be used by dominant elites as a buffer to deflect mass frustration and also as an instrument to conduct commercial activities in impoverished areas. Middlemen accept these risks in exchange for the opportunity to share in the commercial and financial benefits gained through such instruments as taxation, higher retail prices, and usury (Portes & Manning 2008, p.50).

About 1.4 million Koreans and Korean Americans live in the United States. The largest community, of about 350,000, is in Los Angeles County, where the population is centered in Mid-City's Koreatown. But as the Korean population has grown, mini-Koreatowns have sprung up throughout Southern California, in Hacienda Heights, Cerritos, Buena Park, Fullerton -- and the northwest Valley. Koreans have changed the face of Valley neighborhoods such as Northridge, Granada Hills, Porter Ranch and Chatsworth, where signs in Korean and English announce the presence of churches, hair salons, restaurants and home-goods stores catering to Koreans. Community leaders estimate 50,000 to 60,000 Koreans and Korean Americans live in the Valley. What's more, the San Fernando Valley Korean Business Directory lists nearly 1,500 Korean-owned businesses in the area, including acupuncturists, liquor stores and doughnut shops (Covarrubias 2008).

Churches, beauty salons, and real estate agents indicate spatial pattern and population distribution. In spite of persistently strong position of Koreatown as the unrivaled cultural and commercial center, the new suburbs are gaining ground (Laux & Thieme 2006, 105). This phenomenon is similar to what happened to Chinese community and their emergence of ethnoburbs. Light and Bonacic argue that although some Koreans moved out to suburban areas, the majority of businesses are still located in Koreatown because Korean firms were generally less mobile than Korean households. Unlike Chinatown, which was established in the time of discrimination and exclusion, Koreatown can define its boundaries and spread into a large area, allowing entrepreneurs, large-scale firms, and international cooperation to grow within the area. Thus, 'the mini-Koreatowns are unable to compete with inner-city Koreatown, even though, only one fifth of Korean population in county stays in Koreatown, many businesses are situated there.

Koreans generally value public education. Thus, the decentralization of Korean residents in Koreatown is not only due to seeking a better and safer place for living but it is also due to seeking a better education for their children. This means Koreans are willing to move out of city center where they can be closer to the best schools in the region instead of clustered around their business area.

Ironically, Koreatown might be the best place for recent investors but, simultaneously, one of the worst places for living and education. Indeed, many Korean residents whom we met often complained about frequent crimes and poor qualities of public schools. Before emigrating, people obtain information and guidebooks from their emigration agency, not only on Koreatown but also on which Los Angeles neighborhoods have safe and good schools. In this regard, the number and geographic location of whites is a primary measure by which Korean immigrants identify 'better' spaces. In South Korea, many emigration agencies advise those who plan to migrate to Los Angeles not to obtain housing in Koreatown, although they encourage them to invest in Koreatown. As a result, current investment-based, corporation-assisted transnational migration patterns differ significantly from previous ones in terms of where people settle in Los Angeles and the United States (Lee & Kyonghwan 2008).

In addition to success in operating businesses and restaurants, Koreans have maintained a high level of ethnic attachment through practicing their customs in daily life and participating in ethnic organizations. Other than food and language, a comparison of Korean, Chinese, and Filipino populations shows that about 75 percent of Korean Americans join at least one ethnic association, while only 50 percent of Filipino and 19 percent of Chinese do (Mangiafico 1988:174). Their social participation is manifested through various organizations, especially Korean churches and temples that scatter within Koreatown as well as within other Korean neighborhoods in greater Los Angeles.

### **Thais in Los Angeles**

Thais in Los Angeles were nearly nonexistent before 1960, although the office of Naturalized reports the first Asians who became U.S. citizens were Thais (Huping 2008). However, there were a considerable number of Thais in the 1970s, as a consequence of Immigration Act of 1965. The majority of Thai immigrants first entered as students and later on chose to settle in the United States. Unlike immigrants from other Indochinese countries, Thais are immigrants by choice in that there is no push factor from their country of origin e.g. natural disaster, war. The largest concentrations of Thai immigrants are in Los Angeles with the reasons being local social networks, opportunities for employment, and climate.



Figure 4.22 Ceremony for the Apsonsi, Thai “Angles”, to Thai Town



Figure 4.23 Tour Thai Town just like Anthony Bourdain: Jet Tila at Ruen Pair (Hansen, 2013)



Figure 4.24 Songkran festival at Wat Thai LA in North Hollywood

The Thai community in Los Angeles is undoubtedly the largest in the United States and is possibly the largest outside Thailand. Yet it is barely noticeable in the midst of the more numerous and more conspicuous Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Filipino communities. In contrast to these older-established Asian groups, the Thais have appropriated no section of the city to stamp with an unmistakable mark that could properly be called a Thai neighborhood. There is no “Little Bangkok” in Los Angeles. Instead the relatively high degree of intraurban dispersion of Thais allows their presence to be revealed only at specific place in the cityscape by the occasional Siamese script on the restaurant or grocery sign (Desberats, 1979, p. 314).

In a study of the Thai community in Los Angeles, Desberats tracked Thai settlement by mapping the locations of the Thai businesses. The study found dense clusters of Thai communities along Hollywood Boulevard, with a branch north toward the Teravada Temple in Cantara Street. It located another concentrated area at the intersection of Western Avenue and Olympic Boulevard. Desberats’ Thai business mapping confirms the results from the survey responses. She argues that due to the white craving for Thai food, many restaurants follow their customers and open in the Hollywood area. Similar to Desberats, Perreira (2008) uses restaurants and temples to indicate the spatial pattern of the Thai community. He explains that “food and Buddhism are arguably the two most important institutions in Thai life after the family.” Perreira argues that “although the majority of Thais are concentrated in California, the community as a whole is, in fact, widely dispersed throughout the nation. This is a significant finding, one that may be an important factor in why Thais have not experienced the same degree of racial tensions as have other Asian immigrants.” Desberats (197, p.316) further explains that:

This concentration of the Thai community can be understood in terms of two interconnected processes: ethnic businesses locate to serve most conveniently their specialized clientele, and in turn the residential choice of new immigrants is affected by the location of ethnic businesses, as well as by the locations of earlier immigrants and of employment opportunities. Because a significant proportion of jobs available to new Thai immigrants provide various services (food, legal aid, travel, and information) to Thai community, the process of agglomeration at the microlevel is further reinforced. As the Thais become better-integrated in the American community, it is likely that their employment opportunities will diversify and that the residential pattern will become more dispersed . . . As immigrants upgrade their economic status and

abandon the cheap apartment close to the downtown area for the better neighborhoods of the Hollywood and the Western-Olympic sections, the center of gravity for Thais has been moving to the northwest.

The LA Thai community is dispersed in the suburbs, with a high concentration in North Hollywood. However, the Thai Community formed an urban enclave in East Hollywood in 1999. The force behind Thai Town is the Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC) that promoted and lunched the campaign until it was successfully established. “Thai Town” was officially designated by the Los Angeles City Council and became the first Thai Town in the United States. It is situated between Western Avenue and Normandie. Although the area is still multiethnic, it has a high concentration of Thai businesses.

Situated in East Hollywood, “Thai Town was an economic strategy to revitalize an otherwise depressed and neglected section of East Hollywood through cultural-based tourism.” Thai-owned businesses proliferated over a period of fifty years. Recently they displaced Armenian businesses that had mainly occupied the area due to the encouragement of investment in Thai Town.

Eight years after the stretch of Hollywood Boulevard from Western to Normandie avenues was officially designated Thai Town, the neighborhood offers a colorful streetscape that matches the lively flavors found in the area’s crowded Thai restaurants and markets as well as its Armenian bakeries.

The rapid gentrification of Hollywood to the west is spreading Thai Town’s way.

But that tells only half the story.

The working-class neighborhood -- home to Armenian, Latino and Thai immigrants -- is one of the poorest sections of Los Angeles County, with many residents cramming into low-income apartments and working at minimum-wage jobs.

Now Thai community leaders are capitalizing on the neighborhood’s unique ethnic mix to attract more visitors, bolster the local economy and revitalize the area . . . In addition to creating business opportunities for fledgling immigrant Thai, Armenian and Latino entrepreneurs, the market is designed to promote social interaction among the ethnic communities.

Fueling the persistent poverty has been the arrival of thousands of working-class Thai immi-

grants in the last two decades who have flooded sweatshops, restaurant kitchens and, most recently, massage parlors, said Martorell, whose organization has conducted several studies on the plight of Thai Town. (Pierson & Gorman 2007)

With their ethnic economy remote from their residential area in the suburbs, Thai Town has not emerged through a natural process as an ethnic enclave but rather legislatively as part of economic development plan. Thai Town houses none of the social institutions for the Thai community but rather only has diverse types of Thai businesses, primarily restaurants. With a reputation as the place for sampling the cuisine and culture of Thailand, Thai Town has become widely known as one of “must go” attractions of Los Angeles. Consequently, it faces a similar problem as Chinatown, which has become a tourist destination.



1940



1950



1960

## Demographic change in Los Angeles

The dissolution of Los Angeles’ ethnic enclaves was greatly influenced by demographic changes, which might have been caused either by gentrification, acculturation, or assimilation. After the liberalization of immigration in 1965, the demographics of Los Angeles underwent a dramatic shift. Before the 1960s, the majority of the population was white, followed in descending order by Hispanics, blacks, and Asians. Allen and Turner (2013) identified five factors that influenced ethnic change in Los Angeles between 1960 and 1990:

- Change of immigration laws in 1965
- Economic opportunities in Los Angeles not available in less-developed countries
- Internationalization of the world economy
- Political changes that created a new group of refugees
- Massive emigration of whites from Los Angeles

Race/Acestry	1940	1960	1970	1990	2013
Total population	2,785,643	6,038,771	7,032,075	8,863,164	10,116,705
White alone not Hispanic or Latino	93.3	80.8	68.2	40.8	27.2
Black or African American alone	2.7	7.6	10.7	11.2	9.2
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	NA	0.1	NA	0.5	1.5
Asian	1.9	2.0	2.9	10.4	14.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	NA	NA	NA	0.3	W0.4
Hispanic or Latino	2.2	9.6	18.3	37.8	48.3
Two or More Races (added in 2000)	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.9

Table 2 Los Angeles county population by race/ethnicity<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Sources: 1940, 1970 U.S. Bureau of the Census reference from Ethington, Frey & Myers  
 1960, 1990 U.S. Bureau of the Census reference from Allen & Turner 1996  
 2013 U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06037.html>

Figure 4.25 Demographic in Los Angeles by ethnic majority



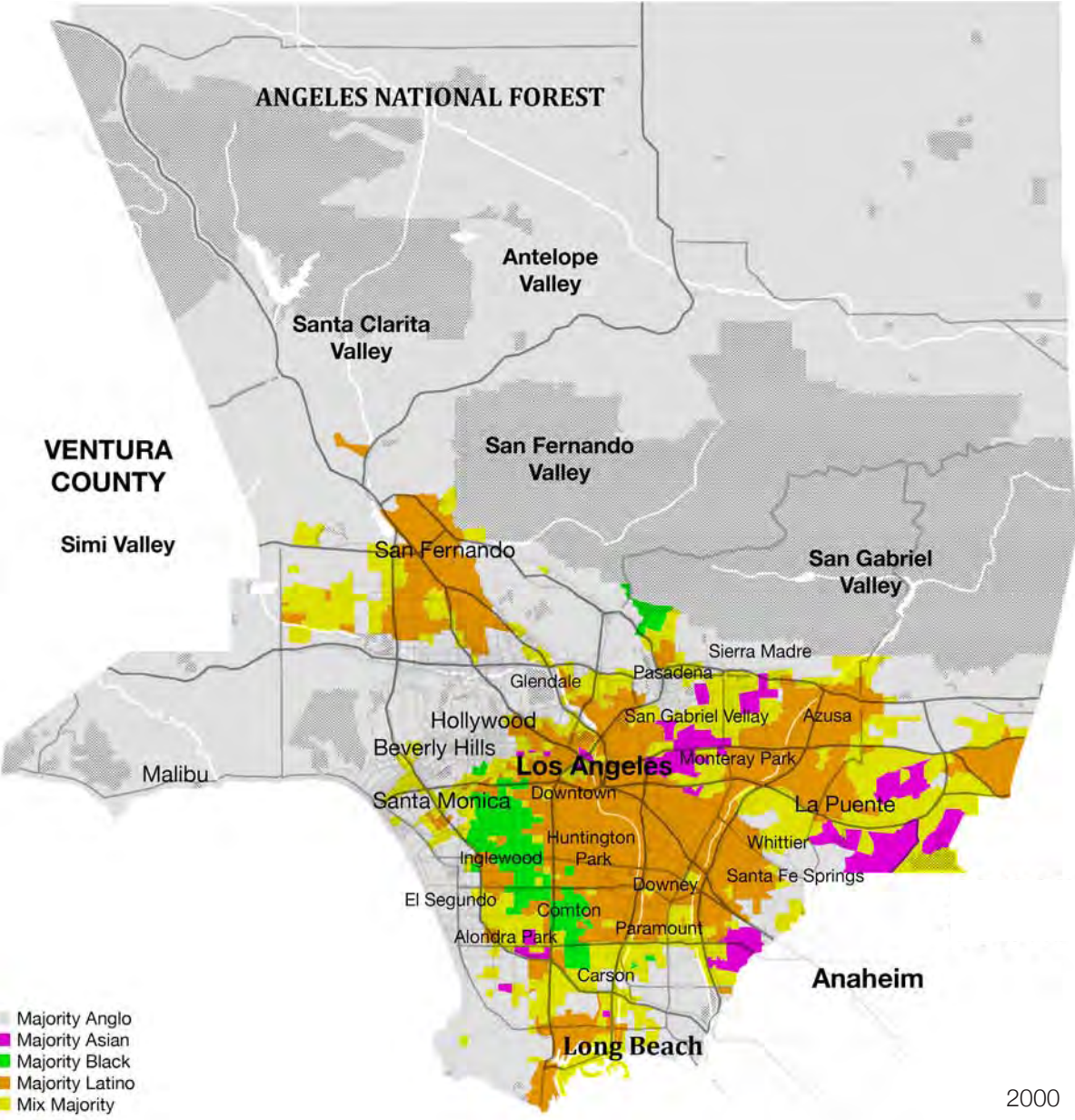
1970



1980



1990



2000

- Majority Anglo
- Majority Asian
- Majority Black
- Majority Latino
- Mix Majority

Figure 4.26 Demographic in Los Angeles by ethnic majority 1940-2000 (Zonta & Ong, 2008)

As demonstrated in table 2, while the white population significantly declined from 93.3 percent to 2.2 percent between 1940 and 2013, the Hispanic population grew from 2.2 percent to 48.3 percent. Since 1960, the Asian population has grown more than ten times. Still, the rate at which Asians are increasing is at a slower pace than that of Hispanics. Figure 4.25 illustrates the demographic change in Los Angeles by ethnic majority from 1940 - 2000. Because of the recession, one study shows that both whites and blacks are somewhat more likely to have Latino and Asian neighbors, but Latinos and Asians are decreasingly likely to have white or black neighbors. For Asians, their expectation for having whites neighbors has dropped overtime, but they increasingly expect to have Hispanic neighbors through are never likely to have Black neighbors (Ethington, Frey & Myers 2001). In 2000 these indicators were at the same level for both whites and Hispanics. Moreover, Hispanics are the least segregated racial group and have the least need to move in order to achieve full spatial integration. Asians are moderately segregated, have a consistent level of segregation; about half would need to move to even out their spatial distribution in the county.

The Chinese population (with varied origin in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Southeast Asian countries, and the People Republic of China) grew during the 1980s by 161 percent to surpass the numbers of Japanese and Filipinos. Perhaps the most important feature of the new ethnic diversity is the great range of nationalities present: ten different Asian and Pacific Islander groups number at least five thousand people. Los Angeles County has more Filipinos, Korean, Cambodians, Thais and Guamanians than any other county in the United States and rank second in the numbers of Japanese, Vietnamese and Samoans (see table 3) (*Allen & Turner, 1996, p.2*)

Nationality	1960 foreign stock	1990 race/ancestry	Percentage change	2010 race/ancestry	Percentage change
Chinese	19,286	245,033	1271%	449,538	183%
Filipino	12,122	219,653	1812%	374,285	170%
Japanese	77,314	129,736	168%	138,983	107%
Korean	2,587	145,431	5622%	230,876	159%
Vietnamese	N/A	62,549		104,024	166%
Cambodian	N/A	27,819		37,450	135%
Thai	118	19,106	16192%	29,792	156%
Indonesian		5,107		13,001	255%
Malaysian	N/A	1,494		1,496	100%
Loatian	N/A	4,101		4,067	99%
Asian Indian	1,945	43,829	2253%	92,179	210%
Pakistani	151	4,500	2980%	10,930	243%
Sri Lankan	N/A	2,304		5,380	234%
Bangladeshi		1,060		5,162	487%

Table 3 Los Angeles-Long Beach Metropolitan Area: Population of Selected Asian, 2020, 1990 and 1960<sup>6</sup>

While race is commonly used to identify demographic profile, it is crucial to refer to a country of origin or first report ancestry of the immigrant in order to define a common heritage and identity. Both Hispanics and Asians come from a diversity of countries and their socioeconomic background also differs significantly especially for Asians. These differences have led to the emergence of new ethnic communities both in the inner city and in the suburbs. Laux and Thieme (2006) argue that demographic changes in a multicultural society turn the assimilation process toward an ethnic mosaic where ethnic groups' preserve their identity and cultural independence rather than eventually dissolving into mainstream.

<sup>6</sup> Sources: 1960, 1990 U.S. Bureau of the Census reference from Allen & Turner 1996  
2010 U.S. Bureau of the Census reference from A Community of Contrast 2013 report

## Urban ethnic community to ethnoburbs

**Minority populations and immigrants spread out from the inner city to suburban areas called “ethnoburbs.”**

The reason ethnoburbs emerged is not because the number of new immigrants exceeded the capacity of their urban enclaves; rather they emerged due to globalization: the flow of capital, commodities, information, and people influenced their formation (Li 2006, Abrahamson 1996).

After they move out to the suburbs, the situation varies from totally dispersed, to relatively concentrated, to highly segregated settlement patterns, depending on the ethnic group in question. The total dispersion case corresponds to the assimilation outcome and characterizes the experience of many European immigrant groups. In contrast, the “downtown versus uptown” model posits that within one ethnic group, those who live in downtown enclaves are usually poor, less educated, and spatially concentrated, whereas residents of “uptown” (the suburbs) are well-off, professionally trained, and living in racially or ethnically mixed residential area (Kwong 1996). This suggests the persistence of ethnic difference, at least between the host society and those remaining in the enclave, and emphasizes class-base differences in ethnic residential location choice. (Li, 1996, p.78)

The immigration law in 1965 not only brought a significant number and diversity of immigrants to Los Angeles and to the United States, it also diversified immigrants from the same national origin. The immigrants now poor labors, wealthy entrepreneurs, and educated professionals (Li 2006, Abrahamson 1996). In addition to professional and economic opportunities, Taiwanese and Hong Kong Chinese immigrants escaped the communist threat of the People’s Republic of China. American dreams drove the well-off Chinese to look for a better quality of living, which beginning in the 1930s caused satellite communities to appear. But it was not until the 1960s that the Chinese population suburbanized and created their ethnoburbs in Monterey Park, San Fernando Valley, and San Gabriela Valley. Since the 1970s, Chinatown no longer contains the majority of Chinese population in Los Angeles due to this new form of settlement.

By the time China City burned to the ground, people had already begun to settle in other pockets around L.A. To the south, Chinese produce workers and distributors had increasingly clustered around City Market, a wholesale marketplace established some years earlier by local vegetable growers. Some Chinese residents ended up on the edge of Old Chinatown. The dispersal would eventually lead to the establishment of new suburban communities like Monterey Park, Alhambra, and other enclaves in the San Gabriel Valley around Los Angeles. The distinction between the original Chinese American settlements – Old Chinatown, China City and New Chinatown- and the more recent ethnoburbs, however, is an important one. While the older neighborhoods were formed under the pressures of racism and economic and cultural survival, the new were established by choice, reflective of the considerable advantages of wealth and mobility of the Chinese-American population today. *(Tsui, 2009, p.120)*

The ethnoburbs present a strong economic network of ethnic communities as well as world system of local, national, and international economic development of Pacific Rim nations. Although this demand and supply of entrepreneurship and labor force have been balanced, class differences and the diverse backgrounds of these immigrants leads to a problem of stratification as well as national factions among ethnic group. Chinatown became a destination for the poor and Chinese overseas. “Now people of several different nations, tied together only by Chinese ancestry, live side by side, often uneasily and divisively, in the one-square-mile community north of City Hall (McMillan 1990)” While ethnoburbs are a port for wealthy immigrants, they are still multiethnic neighborhoods but the majority of the population shares a common ethnicity such as Taiwanese in Monterey Park. Through real estate advertisements for “the Chinese Beverly Hills,” Taiwanese migrate directly from to their country to Monterey Park instead of stopping in Chinatown. With a potential of expansion, these ethnoburbs grew rapidly and by 2000s many of them such as San Gabriel Valley, had become an important economic network, detached from Chinatown.

## Rebranding and cultural tourism

Holding a position as the “Entertainment Capital of the world,” Los Angeles has numerous tourist attractions ranging from famous beaches and world-class museums to homes of Hollywood stars. Instead of presenting itself as “melting pot,” Los Angeles celebrates cultural diversity and creates a “salad bowl.” Community cultural development has appeared around the city, reflecting an interest indigenous development. Since the late 1990s the United State Economic Development Administration has understood the importance of cultural tourism in Los Angeles. It supports and funds the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA/LA) to study and encourage cultural tourism in areas such as San Pedro, Watts, Little Tokyo, and Chinatown. The strategy includes an identification of structural impediments to cultural tourism and it addresses the possibility of public improvement. Then in 2003, the “Experience LA” website was launched promoting cultural tourism and transit. Moreover, Experience LA has been designated as the official cultural events calendar by the County of Los Angeles by the County Arts Commission in 2004. More than cultural events, the website includes information on educational, eatery, and art attractions and on public transportation all of which promote the tourism for both locals and tourists.

Many of the Agency’s adopted Redevelopment Plans include goals and objectives that are supportive of Cultural Tourism activities. Tourism is a key component to economic growth within the Hollywood Redevelopment Project and the redevelopment project areas that comprise the Downtown Region.

While working with the community stakeholders in redevelopment project areas, the Agency was asked to assist in marketing Cultural Tourism. The Agency obtained funding from Metro and the City of Los Angeles and developed partnerships that included LA, Inc. — The Conventions and Visitors Bureau, LA City Cultural Affairs Department and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission to launch the website, ExperienceLA.com. An underlying goal of the Experience LA website is to bring visitors to redevelopment areas through the promotion of Cultural Tourism. (www.crala.org, 2015)

Started in 2003, LAcommons is another community development organization promoting intercultural collaboration and community history and culture via artistic and cultural discovery programs. It has fostered a grass-roots project in Chinatown and Koreatown as well as other neighborhoods. Besides art, it also provides an opportunity for tourists to experience the authentic food, music, festivals, and rich cultural history of the communities with an intention to increase cultural interaction and economic activity.

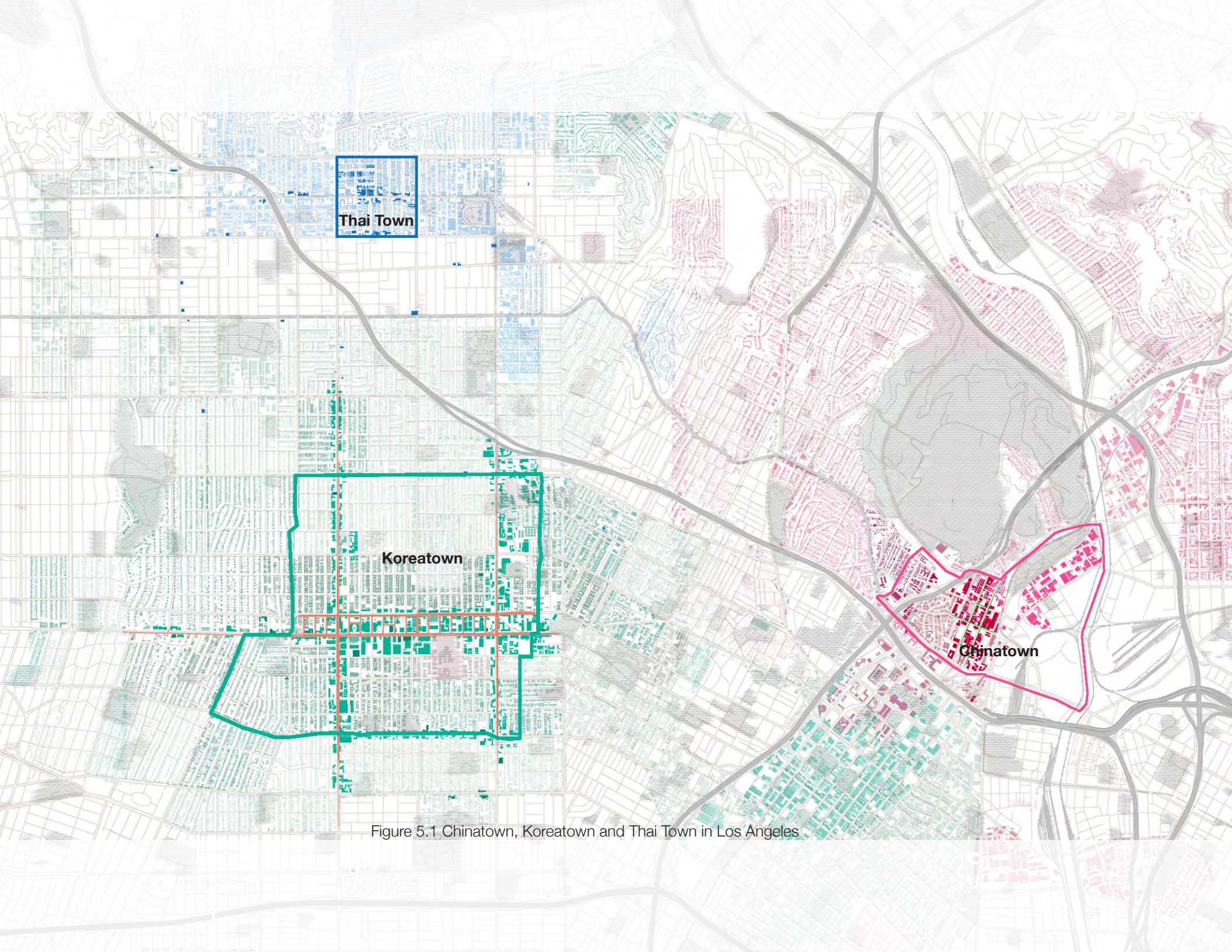
Additionally, in 2008 Preserve America recognized Chinatown and Thai Town as cultural heritage neighborhoods. Preserve America is a federal initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy the nation's priceless cultural and natural heritage. The neighborhoods were funded to conduct a critical assessment of their cultural and historical assets, develop hospitality training material, learn how to become self-sustaining heritage centers, and access other historic preservation services (<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov>, 2015).

Furthermore community cultural development also serves as a support not only for Asian communities but also for Latino communities, which account for almost 50 percent of the LA population:

Jimenez and other Latino leaders have teamed up to promote a common goal: carving out islands for their communities in Los Angeles' jumbled landscape — Peru Village, Little Venezuela, Paseo Colombia, Guatemalan Mayan Village, Oaxacan Corridor... Together, they want to emulate what Asians did with Thai Town, Little Tokyo, Historic Filipinotown and Little Bangladesh. Together, they're also hoping to keep Koreatown expansion at bay. (Bermudez, 2014).

With the government supports as well as an economic strategy, enclaves are motivated to revive their traditions. However, commercialization can lead to commodification. To make the culture easily digested by tourist or outsiders, ethnic groups have modified their products and they over decorate or stylize their environment to represent their ethnic identity (Terzano 2014). This circumstance, in the long run, potentially causes inauthenticity of the enclave because of its imitated representation of traditionalism

The next chapter will continue with an analysis of primary (observation, interviews surveys) and secondary data (census data, geographical maps) collected for the study. Drawing from the theoretical literature and the study site investigation, it will examine the physical conditions of the case study enclaves as well as the perspectives of the ethnic groups living or working in these enclaves in order to understand their settlement patterns, components, and evolution.



Thai Town

Koreatown

Chinatown

Figure 5.1 Chinatown, Koreatown and Thai Town in Los Angeles

## Chapter 5 Findings

The Chinese, Korean and Thai are apparent in the urban landscape of greater Los Angeles and contribute to an identifiable center of their respective ethnic enclaves in the inner city. As discussed in the theoretical framework, an enclave is generally perceived as the concentration of an ethnic group that serves its economy and social purposes, but LA's Chinese, Korean and Thai enclaves are having challenges in maintaining their authenticity. As demonstrated in the literature, Los Angeles has become global city as well as a world economy; with its changing immigration dynamics and accelerating patterns of dispersion, ethnic enclaves in the city risk being disbanded or rebranded. By reviewing the social purpose of the ethnic enclaves through data mapping analysis, observation, and interview, the thesis seeks to reveal the evolution of the Chinese, Korean and Thai ethnic enclave. Specifically, it asks: How have internal and external factors affected the unique characteristics of three Asian ethnic enclaves in the city of Los Angeles? How did these factors change as the city developed? What unique architectural characteristics contribute to the authenticity of each of these Asian ethnic enclaves?

This chapter reports the findings for each of the enclaves through an analysis of triangulated data, including: secondary data from of census and archival research, and primary data from observations and interviews with the neighborhoods populations. Each case study was examined in the six internal and external factors identified in the theoretical framework: location, residential mobility, ethnic proportion, ethnic identity, assimilation and commodification, in the context of evolving Los Angeles.

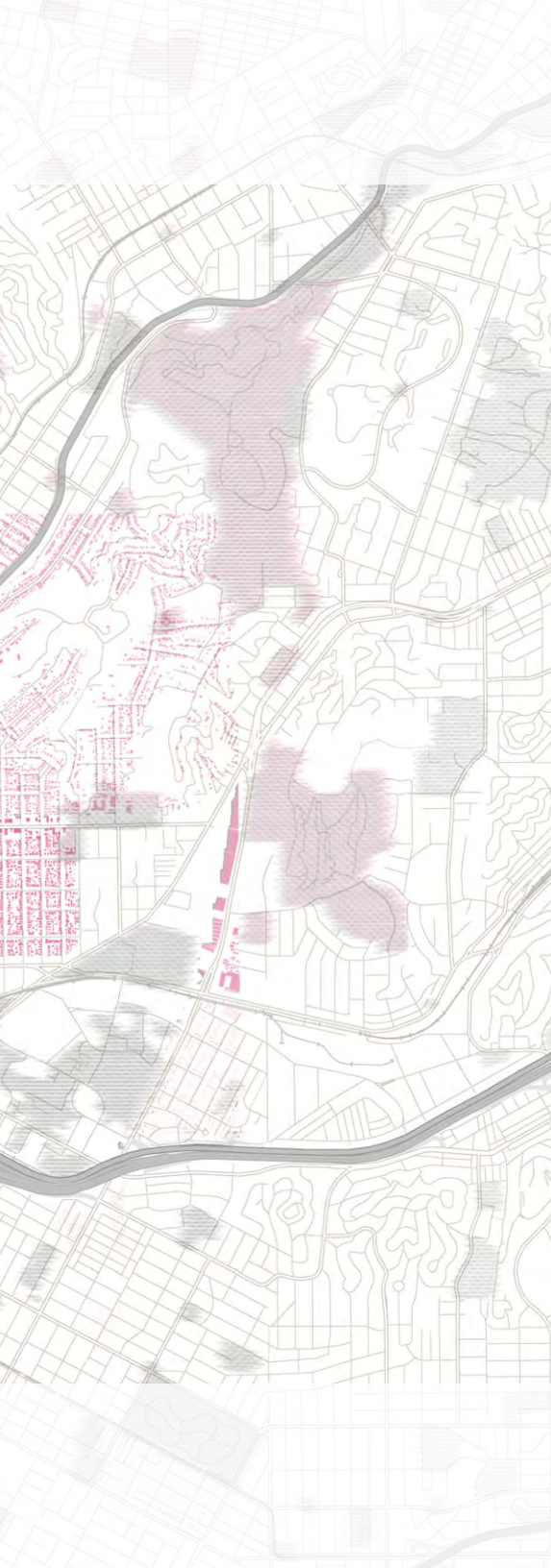




Figure 5.1.1 Dragon gateway



Figure 5.1.2 Storefront along N Broadway



Figure 5.1.3 Pedestrian mall designed in Chinese style featuring a variety of Asian shops & restaurants in Chinatown

## Chinatown and Chinese community

### Location

Relocated from a historic site that became Union Station, the present Chinatown Los Angeles is located in downtown area. Geographically bounded by the Los Angeles River and Arcadia Street, Chinatown is centered along N Broadway Street, N Hill Street and N Main Street and (see figure 5.1.4). The Dragon gateway marking the entrance to Chinatown is situated at the intersection of N Broadway Street and Cesar Chavez Avenue. In addition to the gateway, the Chinese infrastructure includes: Chinese Temple, library and schools, banking and real estates agents, associations, Chinese restaurants and many Chinese-related businesses, which shows the neighborhood is primarily associated with Chinese. Despite this highly concentrated Chinese infrastructure and an oriental image, the Chinese commercial center is weakened due to the dispersion of the Chinese population throughout greater Los Angeles and the emergence of new Chinese commercial centers in suburban areas.

The dispersion of the Chinese population has resulted in new ethnic economic networks and social support systems in suburban areas, thus decreasing the importance of Chinatown as a singular Chinese commercial center. The factors that contribute to Chinatown's decline relates to its historical settlers as well as their standing in American society. Although Chinatown has a prime location and easy access by public transportation, the geographic boundaries are the main obstacle that restricts the Chinatown from expansion and further growth. Still, Chinatown is a well known and important transitory neighborhood for newly-arrived immigrants providing essential supports for their adjustment. It is also a reputed tourist attraction of Los Angeles.

In addition, the interview and survey responses indicate that many Chinese people have a strong connection to Chinatown whether they live there or not. When asked about Chinatown's strengths, respondents indicated that affordability is not the main thing they value but rather it is the ethnic products, social support, and



Figure 5.1.5 Chinatown branch library with Chinese section



Figure 5.1.6 Thien Hau Temple



Figure 5.1.7 Alpine recreation center



Figure 5.1.4 Map of Chinatown Los Angeles

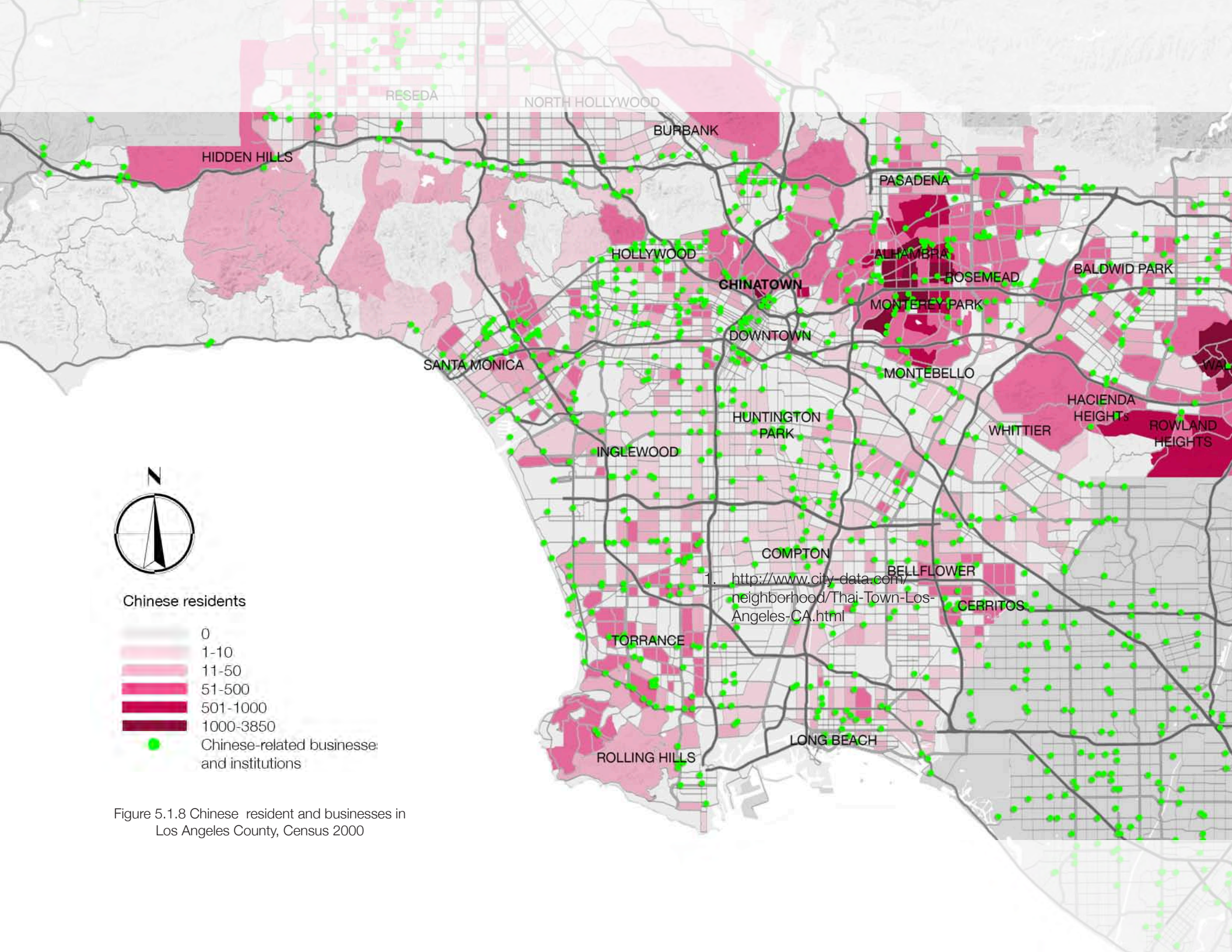
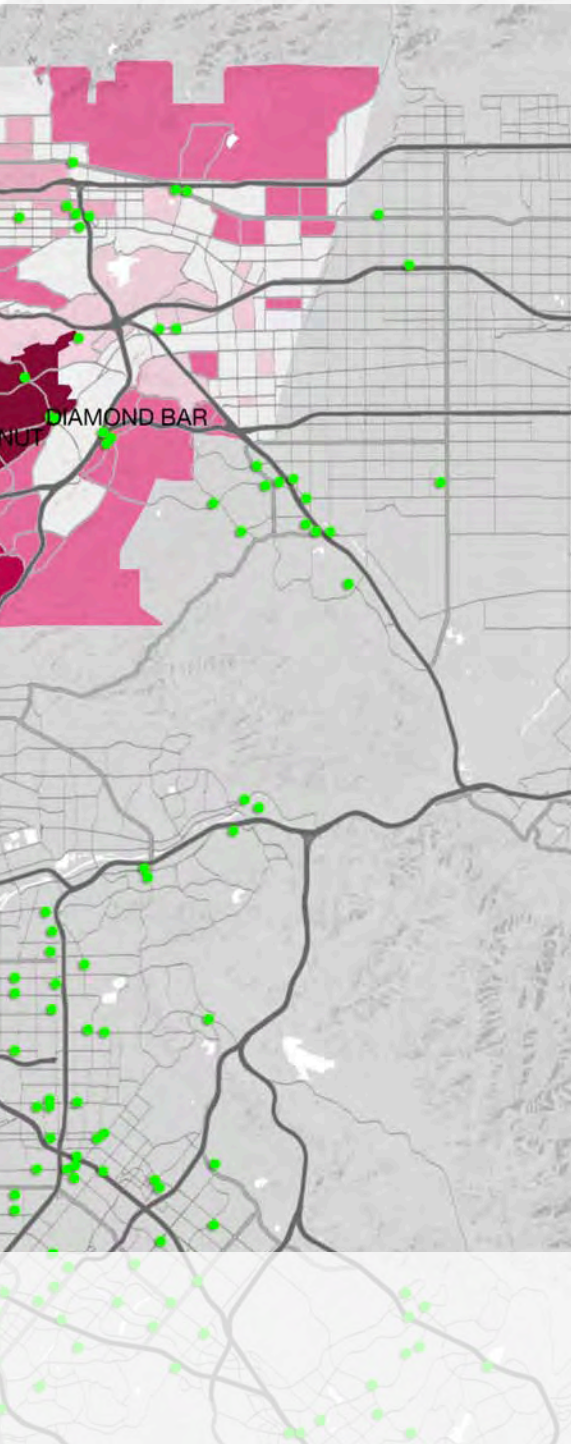


Figure 5.1.8 Chinese resident and businesses in Los Angeles County, Census 2000

1. <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Thai-Town-Los-Angeles-CA.html>



business opportunities that Chinatown offers. Some respondents explained that they decided to live in Chinatown because they use the library, sport facilities, and senior housing. This infrastructure supports their lives even though they are no longer work in the area. Other respondents explained that although they live in the suburbs, they benefit from having a business in Chinatown even through it means commuting. In addition, most respondents (59%) reported that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” that Chinatown allows them to be close to their family and friends, and even more (67%) said they either “agree” or “strongly agree” that Chinatown allows them to use their native language.

In summary, considering a wide-range of Chinese related infrastructure in Chinatown, a fragmented spatial distribution, and positive responses from the interview, the effect of location on Chinatown ranked 9 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Chinatown’s unique characteristics are very much weakened by the spatial distribution of ethnic residents, institutions, and businesses.

### **Residential Mobility**

During the time of discrimination, the Chinese were segregated in their living spaces and their geographic mobility was controlled. As the spatial distribution of Chinese businesses and the Chinese population demonstrates, they are no longer limited to any certain area (see figure 5.1.8). The reasons include finding better places for living, strengthening the ethnic economy in ethnoburbs, and assimilating into American society. Many new wealthy Chinese immigrants come directly from their country and move into peripheral areas or ethnoburbs. Moreover, the analysis of spatial distribution in relation to demographics shows that although the business and residents are dispersed, social and economic status influences the choice of living, whether in the center or periphery. Census data show that 90 percent of housing in Chinatown is rental units with majority of the population having low-income level. Many of the interviewees said they were foreign-born Chinese and had lived by themselves in the Chinatown for more than 30 years although there was no limitation for them owning



Figure 5.1.9 Residential area in San Gabriel Valley, Chinese ethnoburbs



Figure 5.1.10 Chinese shopping mall in San Gabriel Valley



Figure 5.1.11 Hsi Lai Temple in Hacienda Heights

a home.

The interview and survey responses show that the residential mobility of interviewees in Chinatown area is not limited by affordability or work opportunities. About 59 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that they cannot afford to living outside of Chinatown and 42 percent strongly disagree that they cannot get good jobs outside of Chinatown. Only a small number of respondent (8%) replied that they cannot find social support outside of Chinatown. These results illustrate the spatial fragmentation of Chinese business and the Chinese population. However 50 percent of the respondents strongly agree that Chinatown supports interaction with my ethnic group and ethnic culture. Interestingly, while 50 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that spending time in Chinatown helps them avoid ethnic conflicts in other neighborhoods, 25 percent agree that being there helps them avoid the ethnic conflict. For at least some Chinese people, residential mobility has not meant the end of discrimination.

To summarize the residential mobility of residents of Chinatown as documented by archival research as well as observations and interviews: to some degree, residents of Chinatown have outward mobility from their urban enclave to suburban neighborhood, but, some residents do not choose to be mobile. Considering the potential growth and inward mobility, along with the feedback from the interview responses, the effect of residential mobility on Chinatown ranked 3 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Chinatown's unique characteristics are sufficiently weakened by ethnic concentration and the ability of the Chinese to move to other parts of the city.

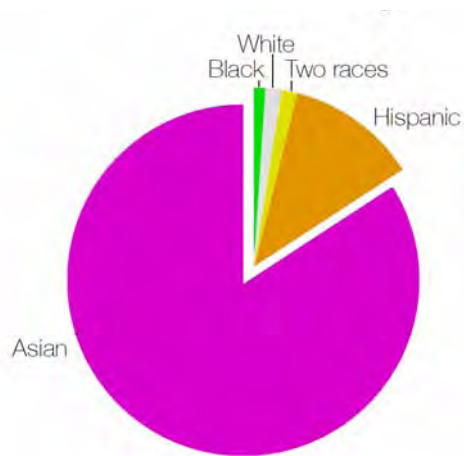


Figure 5.1.12 Ethnic proportion in Chinatown (City data, Chinatown)

### Ethnic proportion

Based on the 2010 City-Data, Chinatown’s population is comprised of over 80 percent Asians, followed by Hispanic, mixed races, whites, and blacks (See figure 5.1.12). While the majority are Asians, Census 2000 reports that about 56 percent of the Asians are Chinese with 17 percent being Mexican. In terms of language and nativity, 67.3 percent of Chinatown residents speak English not well or not at all in comparison to only 17.8 percent of Los Angeles residents; 57 percent of Chinatown residents are foreign-born in comparison to only 39 percent of Los Angeles residents

The linguistic landscape in Chinatown exhibits the presence of Chinese’s businesses in this area, with many of them using Chinese and English characters to express Oriental-ness. However, the census data reports a demographic change in the neighborhood with many Chinese immigrants coming overseas from Hong Kong or Taiwan rather than from Mainland China. This falls in with the observation of the presence of Chinese Vietnamese and Chinese Indonesians in Chinatown as laborers, customers, and residents. With their commonality in ancestry, some customs, and religion between Chinese and Chinese migrants to other countries it is typical to see Chinese Vietnamese or Chinese Indonesian at the temple. On the other hand, the Chinese migrant groups use different languages and thus they do not benefit much from the library or some social supports that specifically serve Chinese residents.

Although Chinatown holds high ethnic proportion, when comparing the number to spatial distribution of Chinese in Los Angeles, it does not stand out. However Chinatown still maintains its importance as an Asian enclave contributing to Chinese socioeconomics and culture with more diverse ethnic origins. In summary, considering the demographic profile, the ethnic presence, and their social participation the effect of ethnic proportion on Chinatown ranked 8 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Chinatown’s unique characteristics are sufficiently strengthened by distinct ethnic concentration of Chinese population and the high presence of the ethnic group.



Figure 5.1.13 Golden dragon parade in Chinese New Year Celebration  
(Courtesy of Golden Dragon Parade 2013)



Figure 5.1.14 Celebration in Chinese restaurant, Chinatown



Figure 5.1.15 Products offered in Chinese gift shop, Chinatown



Figure 5.1.16 Ethnic store in Chinatown

### Ethnic Identity

The long history of immigration, coupled with the influx of new immigrants that occurred after immigration policy changed in 1965, has resulted in a Chinese/Chinese American population that is diverse in generations and country of origin. Chinese languages are extremely varied in dialect though having the same written language. Moreover the incursion of Chinese migrants makes it difficult to assess the ethnic identity of the population in Chinatown. In this research, the examination of Chinese ethnic identity in Chinatown is evaluated through the interview responses, language used, and physical presence of traditional characteristics. With respect to cultural tourism, cultural events were observed and documented as were the services and products provided in Chinatown.

The interview and survey responses show that the majority of interviewees who are Chinese or of Chinese ancestry “agree” or “strongly agree” that Chinatown contributes to their sense of belonging to their ethnic group and helps them preserve their culture engage with their cultural practices, and take pride in their ancestry. Moreover, all Chinese/Chinese American respondents preferred answering the questions in Chinese and 60 percent refused to speak English though they were willing to participate the survey.

The physical presence of the Chinese can be seen in the Chinese-style architecture scattered around Chinatown (see figure 5.1.17). However, as discussed in the literature, the existence of Chinese-style architecture is a result of Hollywood film industry not from the residents themselves. The architecture is also a commercial strategy to attract Chinese clients to American businesses, for example to a Chinese version of Bank of America. Furthermore, many signs of cultural tourism can be seen all around Chinatown including logos and banners, pavement patterns, and other decorative (see figure 5.1.18).

In contrast to the existence of Chinese branding and Hollywood inheritance that results in many tourist-oriented souvenir shops and general products, many shops in Chinatown offer various products for a Chinese clientele related to particular customs such as religious product shops. The presence of the Fengshui shrine



Figure 5.1.17 Chinese-style architecture in Chinatown



Figure 5.1.18 Decorated banners in Chinatown area



Figure 5.1.19 Lion dance in Chinese restaurant, celebrating business opening

and Confucian temple are also evidence of the cultural behavior of the Chinese. Moreover, Chinatown has traditional Chinese celebrations like the Lion Dance and Chinese New Year that are popular for both Chinese and Chinese migrants. A Lion Dance performance is a common festivity on special occasions such as business openings or wedding ceremonies (see figure 5.1.19).

Considering the evidence from document analysis, Chinatown observation and interview response, it is possible to say that although Chinatown businesses orient toward tourism, residents maintain their ethnic identity through a high degree of cultural preservation and celebration as well as through religious practices. Specifically, the effect of ethnic identity on Chinatown ranked 6 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Chinatown's unique characteristics are moderately strengthened by residents' identification with natal, symbolic, cultural factors as well as the residential ethnic attachment.

### Assimilation

During 1800s, Chinese immigrants faced a distressing situation of racial discrimination and segregation. Fortunately, today's better situation allows Chinese to access higher education as well as better working and living opportunities. Overtime the Chinese/Chinese Americans gained political power and built an ethnic economy due to the rise of China coupled with role of Los Angeles as a global city. However, as discussed in the literature, the influx of new immigrants to Chinatown as well as the arrival of Taiwanese and Chinese from Hong Kong brings about class differences among the Chinese immigrant group. Considering the socioeconomic assimilation of Chinese/Chinese American population in Chinatown with regards of ethnic identity as previously discussed, this research examines the assimilation of Chinese in Chinatown by analyzing and reviewing census data related to language spoken, education, income, and employment as well as residential location along with their historical background.

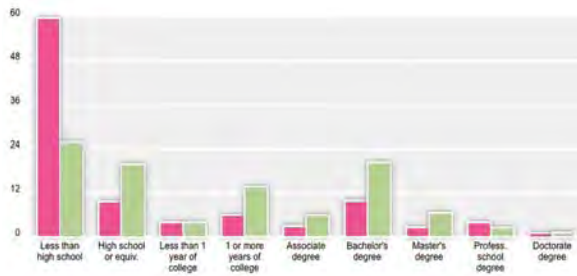


Figure 5.1.20 Education attainment in Chinatown (city-data, Chinatown)

In examining the social and economic indicators of Chinatown’s population, the city data reports as follows:

- 83 percent of the population is Asian within this population about 56% is Chinese, follows with 17% Mexican. The median age (47.8) is considered old for the city of Los Angeles and the county due to large number of elderly.
- Chinatown's density is 17,599 people/ mi<sup>2</sup> compared to density in Los Angeles of 8,143 people/ mi<sup>2</sup>
- Median household income (\$16,758) is considered low for the city of Los Angeles and for the county. Approximately 44 percent of residents in Chinatown are below the poverty level.
- The majority of the residents have less than a high school education. Only 8 percent of residents have a four-year college degree, which considered low for the city of Los Angeles and for the county.
- Over 67 percent of the population speaks English “not well” or “not at all.”

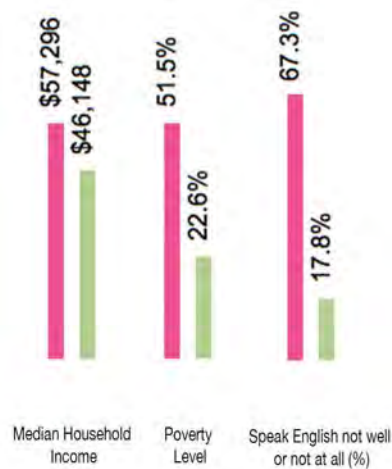


Figure 5.1.21 Demographic profile in Chinatown (City-data, Chinatown)

Consistent with the aforementioned data were observations of the Chinese population in positions as employers and laborers in ethnic businesses. While some Chinese that were observed communicating in English, the majority of them do not speak English very well. As discussed in literature on Chinese immigrants’ stratification, the residents of Chinatown have a low level of education and low household income in comparison to Los Angeles, indicating that it is more difficult to assimilate into American society when life opportunities are unequal. However, the residents of Chinatown have constructed the socioeconomic and social supports that allow them to raise their living quality in Chinatown.

However, the interview and survey responses show that only a small percentage feel comfortable using other than their native language, and that most experience difficulty practicing their culture or living outside of





Figure 5.1.22 Metro station in Chinatown



Figure 5.1.23 Decoration of bank,  
Chinatown brand



Figure 5.1.24 Film shooting advertisement at  
restaurant in Chinatown

Chinatown. Majority of the respondents “disagree” or “strongly disagree” that; they do not feel comfortable using any language other than my native language (88%); they do not feel comfortable being with people other than my ethnic group (67%); they find it difficult to live or work outside Chinatown (67%); and they find it difficult to practice their culture outside Chinatown (88%). In line with these responses, 82 percent of the respondents “strongly agree” or “agree” that they associate themselves with American society as well as their ethnic group.

Nevertheless, the self-reported responses on assimilation point out that the residents of Chinatown personally feel themselves be a part of the host society. In contrast to this, the indicators from observation and data analysis demonstrate that they possess a non-linear assimilation due to the many social supports, institutions, and organizations available in Chinatown that allow residents to access an improved living quality while retaining old cultural traditions and being somewhat isolated from American society. These institutions also support them in maintaining their ethnic identity and practicing their culture comfortably although they are varied in their country of origin.

In summary, considering the historical background from the literature, the social and economic indicators of Chinatown’s population along with the interview responses,, the effect of assimilation on Chinatown ranked 6 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Chinatown’s unique characteristics are only moderately weakened by generational assimilation of the Chinese into American society while the majority of Chinatown’s residents still hold high ethnic attachment.

### Commodification

Chinatown is a cultural destination for many tourists as well as for the Chinese. Moreover the Chinese also develop transnational businesses in the Pacific region that market the culture. This intention to commercialize Chinese culture coupled with the Hollywood influence gives Los Angeles Chinatown a high degree of



Figure 5.1.25 religio products and souvenir



Figure 5.1.26 Tourist map in Chinatown

commodification that is apparent in its cultural landscape (see figure 5.1.22 - 5.1.24).

Regarding products provided in Chinatown, Chinatown offers diverse products from, very specific products for Chinese customs and authentic food to souvenirs; some shops are crowded with Chinese customers, others with tourists. While the shops that supply Chinese demands are mostly on the side streets, shops that mainly serve tourists are along N Broadway and Old China. Moreover, a visitor center with maps, signage, and decorated banners oriented to tourists are all over the Chinatown area. Commercial and cooperative buildings, residential buildings, and the streetscape are decorated with Chinese traditional style to recall a Chinese atmosphere. However the atmosphere is more a reflection of the 1930s Hollywood industry, which has been carried on in other buildings rather than an organic creation.

In terms of place making and cultural events, Chinatown hosts many celebrations and festivals such as the Chinese New Year, Moon Festival, and temple ceremonies as well as Chinese art exhibitions and other events such as a Chinese beauty pageant. These celebrations are effective both for promoting Chinese tradition and preserving Chinese cultural heritage, but with the dispersion of the Chinese as an ethnic group, these cultural events are also hosted in the Chinese ethnoburbs as well nowadays. This re-orientation to peripheral areas combined with declining ethnic interest in Chinatown makes the celebratory events that occur there tend toward being tourists attractions.

This investigation showed that, while there is some degree of authenticity in Chinatown, the area has a high level of commodification to attract tourists. Traditional decorations are the most noticeable artifacts in Chinatown. Although the decorations contribute to Chinese traditionalism, they do not speak to newly arrived immigrants, who are not attached to a China of times past but rather to a modern China. The China of today is as a contemporary and developing country, thus traditional Chinese decorations cannot represent China in the present.

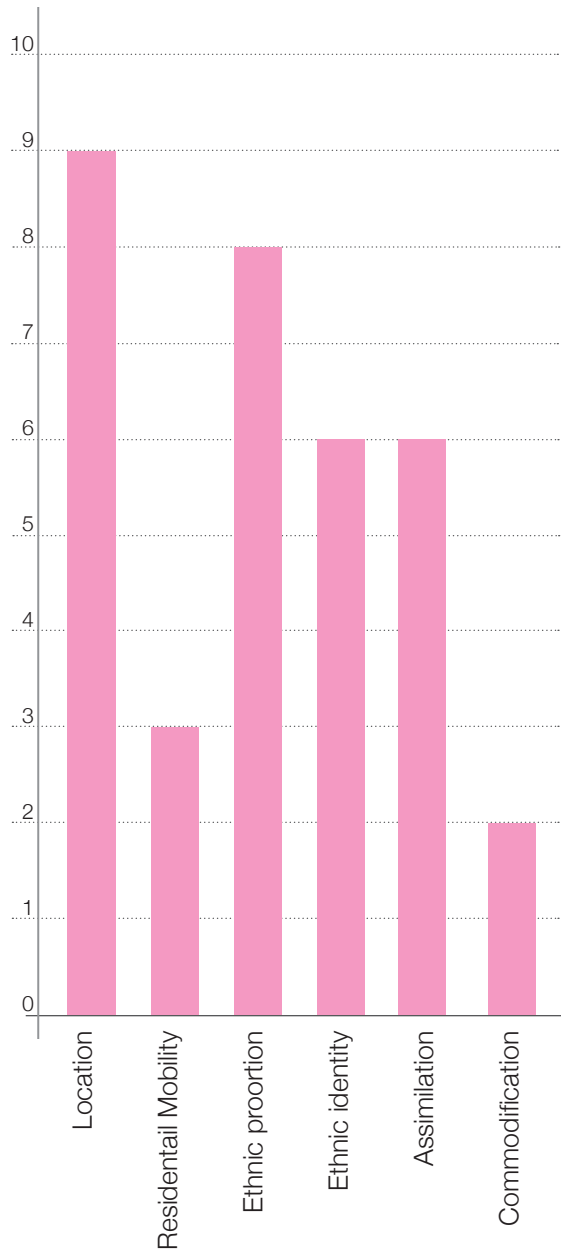


Figure 5.1.27 score of investigated factors in Chinatown

In summary, considering cultural tourism, products offered, and the neighborhood’s position in Los Angeles, the effect of commodification on Chinatown ranked 2 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the lowest commodification. That is, Chinatown’s unique characteristics are sufficiently weakened by the transformation of goods, services, and ideas into mainstream business commodities. The commodification of Chinatown becomes a barrier to expressing an authentic Chinese essence.

In conclusion, the residents of LA’s Chinatown create their sense of place with their establishment of ethnic businesses along with their socioeconomic structure. The external factors affecting Chinatown that resulted in the spatial distribution of the ethnic populations are the transformation of Los Angeles in world economy as well as immigrant policy, which led to diverse groups of Chinese immigrants. The internal factors affecting Chinatown that resulted in the spatial distribution of the ethnic populations is an inevitable generational assimilation that leads to dispersion of the ethnic group. In contrast, the arrival of new immigrants from low income Chinese and Chinese migrants has resulted a more complex socioeconomic and social structure than previously existed in Chinatown. As figure 5.1.8 demonstrates, the spatial distribution of the Chinese throughout the LA metropolitan area comprises the biggest threat to Chinatown authenticity as an ethnic enclave. Their outward mobility to ethnoburbs, where many well-to-do Chinese initially choose to reside, their numbers in relation to other immigrant groups, and the commodification of the culture to attract tourism also comprise threats, as does assimilation to a lesser degree. However, the strength of Chinese ethnic identity in Los Angeles serves to counterbalance these threats.

Nowadays as Chinese immigrants become more diverse in social status and generationally, Chinese ethnoburbs have taken on greater importance as commercial center while Chinatown stands as a symbol of a Chinese

historical presence in Los Angeles and as a port of entry for low-income newly-arrived immigrants. With such a high ratio of elderly residents in Chinatown, the area soon will become vacant. Then Chinatown will face even more serious gentrification and commodified than has already occurred in the present.

As the city developed, especially in Hollywood film industry, Chinatown held an important role in portraying an image of an exotic oriental world. Chinese ethnic identity was celebrated and Chinese businesses were promoted to cultural tourists. However time has passed, China has changed, and this image of China is no longer the relevant to the Chinese's demand in the present. The artifacts that portrayed a Chinese image in the 1930s put Chinatown on to a reluctant stage in the present. While, to some degree the artifacts contribute to ethnic identity and benefit cultural tourism, they do not communicate an image of China in the present and become an obstacle in creating sense of belonging to Chinatown.



Figure 5.2.1 Koreatown: Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue



Figure 5.2.2 Street front around Koreatown



Figure 5.2.3 Pio Pico Library with Korean section

## Koreatown and Korean community

### Location

Located in Central Los Angeles, Koreatown is centered along Wilshire Boulevard between Western Avenue and Vermont Avenue (see figure 5.2.4). Although the boundary of Koreatown is not clearly determined, and yet continues to expand, Korean signage is visible throughout the area representing diverse kind of Korean businesses and Korean institutions such as Consulate General of Korea, Korean Cultural Center and Korean American Museum. Additionally, the Korean infrastructure includes: churches and a temple, public library, senior center, immigration services, Korean media and many Korean-related businesses, which shows the neighborhood is primarily associated with Koreans. With a higher concentration of Korean businesses than other parts of the city, the enclave plays a leading role as a Korean commercial center despite the fragmentation of Korean residential pattern in greater Los Angeles (Laux and Thieme 2006: 104)

Even though the Korean population spreads out and creates many residential clusters in suburban areas, there are many factors that contribute to the importance of Koreatown as a civic center for Korean/Korean American population. The existing social support and infrastructure coupled with the success of Korean investment in both the entrepreneur level and especially in large scale firms which have less mobility and require prime location are the key components of Koreatown's prosperity. Moreover, the factors that contribute to the growth of Koreatown are accessibility by public transportation and potential of expansion. Thus, with the current thriving along with potential development due to location of Koreatown, the enclave has a competency to maintain its role as a center of Korean/Korean American population in Los Angeles.

The interview and survey responses indicate that Koreatown plays a significant role for the Korean community, commercially and socially. When asked about the preference of Koreatown, respondents indicated that



Figure 5.2.5 Consulate General of Korea on Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles



Figure 5.2.6 Korea Center: Cultural and Tourism



Figure 5.2.7 LA Korean Festival Foundation

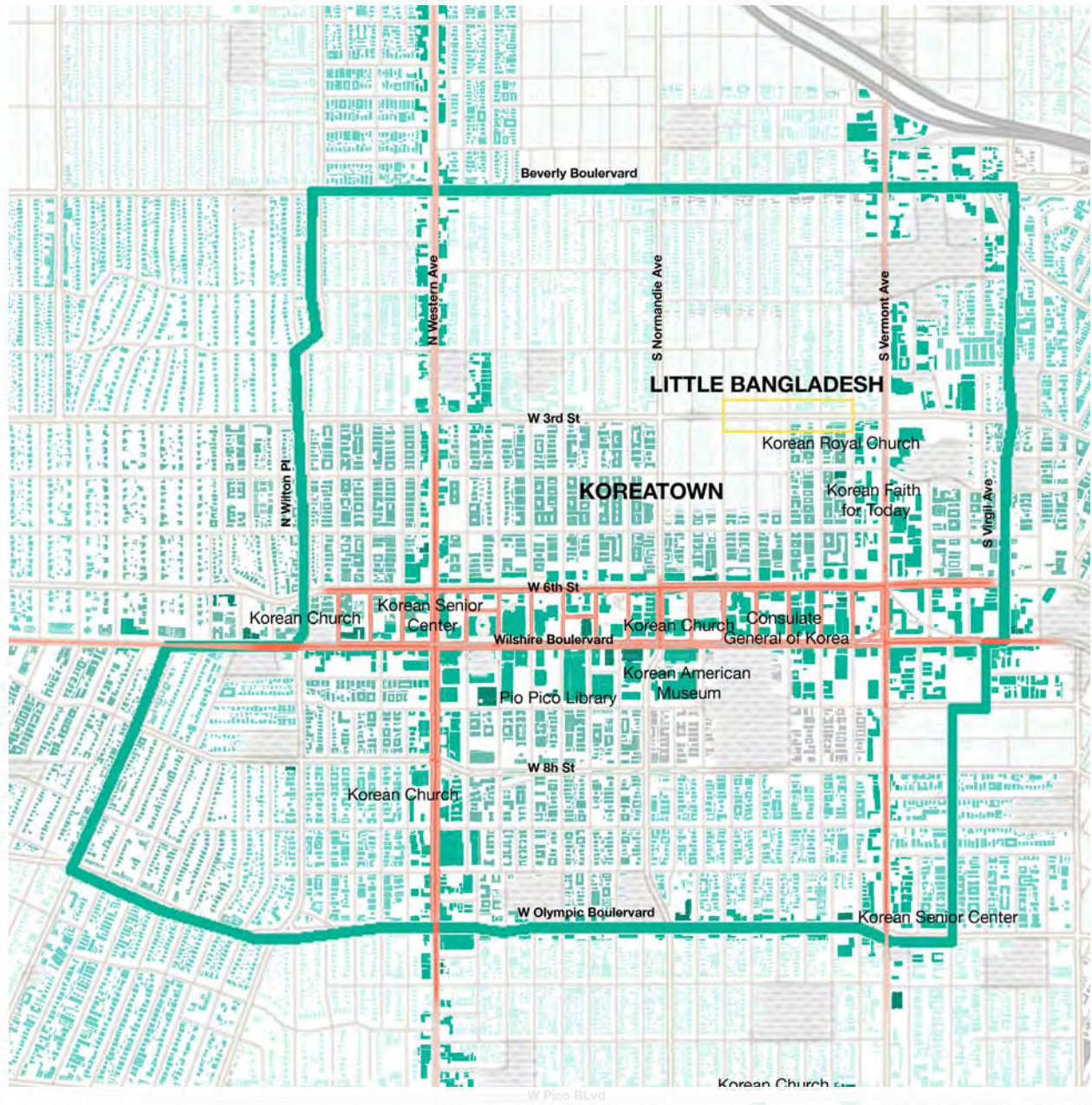


Figure 5.2.4 Map of Koreatown Los Angeles

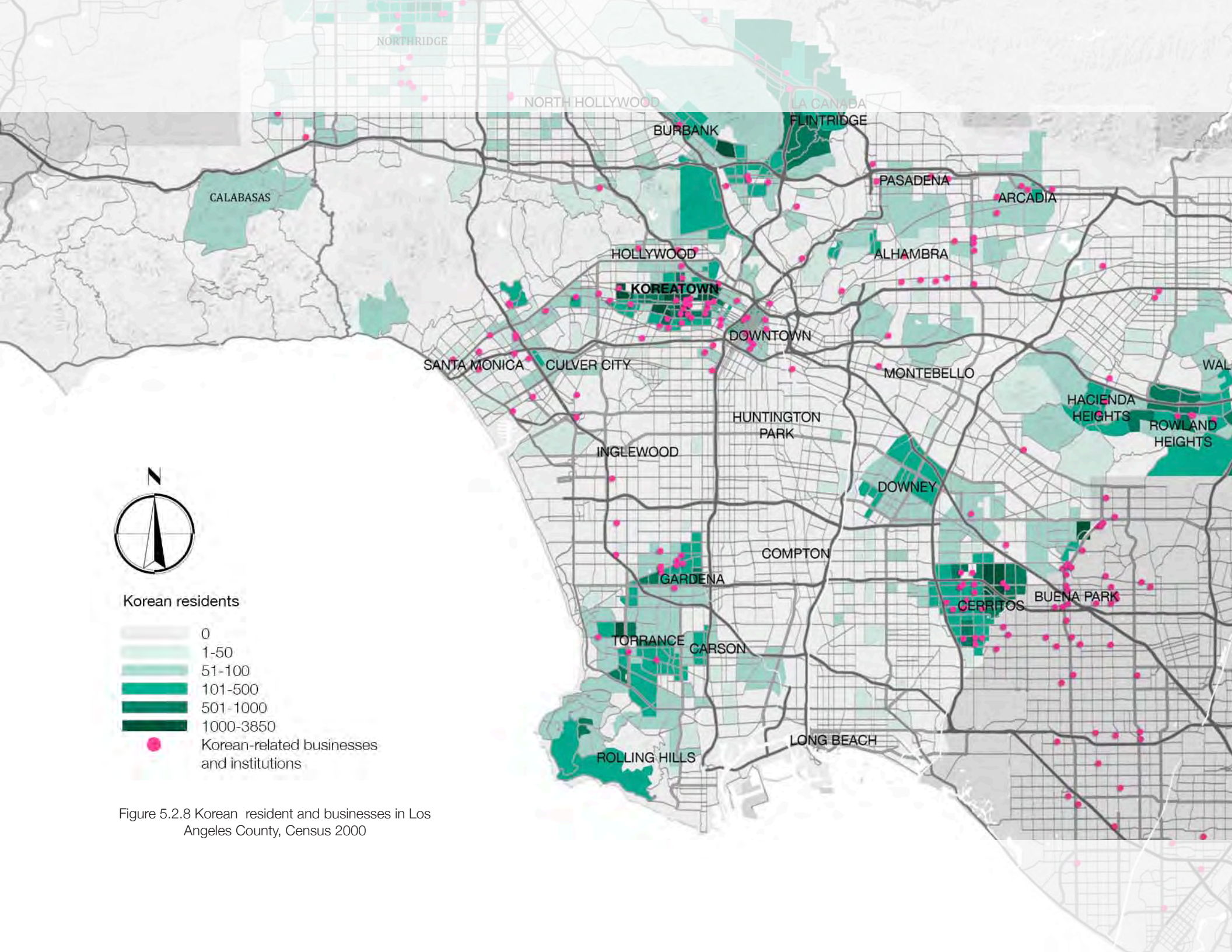
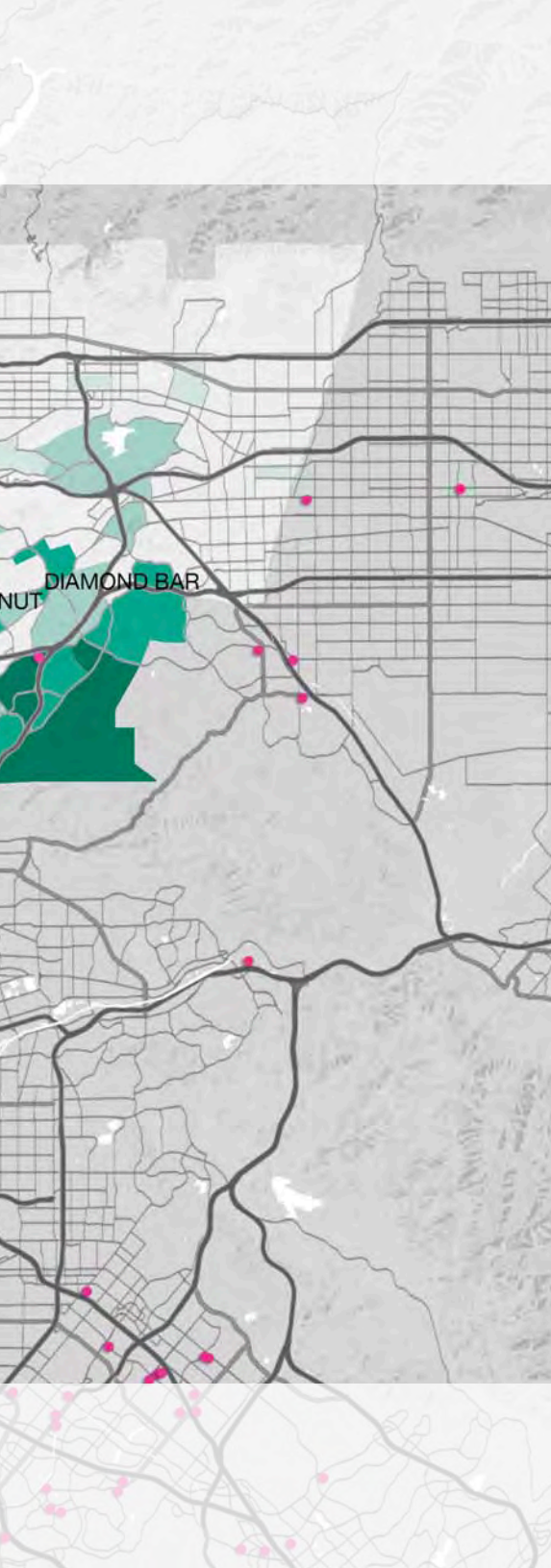


Figure 5.2.8 Korean resident and businesses in Los Angeles County, Census 2000



although affordability is crucial for them, they like Koreatown because it is convenient to commute but it is not cheap to live there. Respondents particularly agree that having social support such as the sport center, library, senior center, ethnic school, and religious institution add to their preference for Koreatown as well as the ethnic products it offers. In addition, respondents reported that they either “agree” or “strongly agree” that Koreatown allows them to be close to their family and friends (73%) as well as allows them to use their native language (67%), similar to the survey in Chinatown.

In summary, considering an exceptional commercial and social value, a fragmented residential pattern, and positive responses from the interview, the effect of location on Koreatown ranked 8 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Koreatown’s unique characteristics are much strengthened by the intensity of ethnic residents, institutions, and businesses.

### **Residential Mobility**

The analysis of spatial distribution and demographic profile shows that although the business and residents are dispersed, Koreatown is still the commercial center of the Korean community (see figure 5.2.8). According to the study of Laux and Theime, Koreans demonstrate insignificant residential mobility between the periphery and the center. “Thus, Koreatown plays a minor role in the process of Korean residential mobility and community building.” Moreover the study reveals that there is a remarkable movement for elderly into Koreatown. The observation and interview suggested a high level of day-to-day commute between outlying neighborhoods to Koreatown. Regardless of the fact that only one third of the Korean population in Los Angeles stays in Koreatown, Koreatown is their economic core at the same time it provides both employment and social supports. However, there are many development plans to construct upper-class condominium in Koreatown; if successful, they potentially will change the direction to inward mobility to the center as well as supply the demands of move-in elderly.



Figure 5.2.9 Linguistic landscape in Koreatown



Figure 5.2.10 Linguistic landscape in Koreatown



Figure 5.2.11 Linguistic landscape in Koreatown

The interview and survey responses show that the residential mobility of interviewees in Koreatown is not limited by affordability or working opportunities. About 40 percent of the respondents disagree that they cannot afford to living outside of Koreatown and 40 percent disagree that spending time in Koreatown help avoiding ethnic conflicts in other neighborhoods. In contrast to this number, 40 percent of the respondents indicate that visiting Koreatown supports their interaction with their ethnic group and ethnic culture. When asked about job opportunities and social supports the result are evenly distributed and not interpretable. Similar to the responses asked about place of living or working, the response distribute evenly in Koreatown, nearby Koreatown or other part of Las Angeles.

To summarize the residential mobility of Korean immigrants as documented by prior research as well as observations and interviews: the residential mobility of Korean immigrants does not influence the construction of community; it represents an attempt to attract more Korean residents and bring about inward mobility to Koreatown. Considering potential growth and development plan of Koreatown, inward mobility and feedback from the interview responses, the effect of residential mobility on Koreatown ranked 7 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Koreatown’s unique characteristics are strengthened by ethnic concentration and the ability of the Koreans to move to other parts of the city.

### **Ethnic proportion**

Based on the 2010 City-Data, Koreatown’s population is comprised of 58 percent Hispanics, while Asians are accounted for only about 30 percent followed by whites, blacks, and mixed races (See figure 5.2.12). Within these numbers, Census 2000 reports that about 22.4 percent of the residents are Mexican and 21.2 percent are Korean. In terms of language and nativity of Koreatown residents’ reports, 39.4 percent of Koreatown residents speak English not well or not at all in comparison to only 17.8 percent of Los Angeles residents; 63.9 percent of Koreatown residents are foreign-born in comparison to only 39 percent of Los Angeles residents.

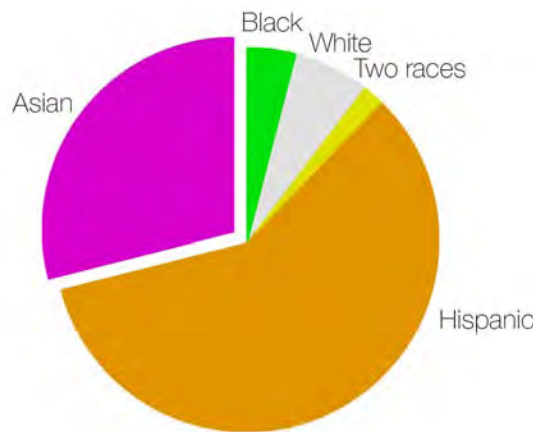


Figure 5.2.12 Ethnic proportion in KOREatown  
(City data, Koreatown)

The linguistic landscape in Koreatown clearly exhibits the presence of Koreans in this area (see figure 5.2.9-5.2.11). Nonetheless, the census data reports the demographic shift in the neighborhood with almost 60 percent being Hispanic, followed by 30 percent Asians and whites, blacks and mixed races respectively. This goes along with the observation, which shows that while the majority of the businesses in Koreatown associate with Korean, the customers of these businesses are diverse in ethnicity with a predominance of Latinos as well as other Asians. The considerable other Asian includes Filipinos, whose ethnic enclave, Historic Filipino, is located nearby Koreatown as well as Bangladeshis whose Little Bangladesh is situated within the area of Koreatown. According to the observation, Koreans still dominate the businesses in the enclave although their co-ethnic group is outnumbered in comparison to the Hispanic population. It aligns with the literature review discussing the middleman phenomena between Korean businesses and Latino laborers. In contrast to social supports in the area, the religious institutions and library in Koreatown provide services in Korean, Spanish, and English language for users from multi-ethnic groups. Still, the community center such as senior center, service center, immigration service and cultural center mainly contribute to Korean residents.

The study of ethnic proportion in Koreatown shows that although the Koreans do not hold a high ethnic proportion in their ethnic enclave, the Koreans are laboriously presented in the business and social sectors. Even though the population of Koreatown suggests that the Koreatown is an immigrant enclave rather than ethnic enclave. Their prominence in socioeconomics and social structure coupled with a high percentage of foreign-born generations contributes to Koreatown's genuineness. In summary, considering the demographic profile, the ethnic presence, and their social participation, the effect of ethnic proportion on Koreatown ranked 6 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Koreatown's unique characteristics are sufficiently weakened by lack of ethnic concentration and the interminglement of other ethnic groups.



Figure 5.2.13 Korean Parade on Olympic Boulevard (the Korea Times 2014)



Figure 5.2.14 Practicing traditional music in Koreatown senior and Community center



Figure 5.2.15 Worship in Korean, Spanish and English available at Wilshire United Methodist Church, Koreatown



Figure 5.2.16 Korean group praising God, Sunday pray at Church in Koreatown

### Ethnic Identity

With majority of the population migrating during the Korean War and after 1965 immigration policy, the ethnic identity and ethnic attachment that have resulted in among the Korean/Korean American population is a collective identity and more contemporary than traditional. American influence in Korean culture has happened before the migration to the United States. For instance, a majority of Koreans were Buddhists but after an evangelism of Christianity to Korea they become Christians. This acculturation is considered a crucial identity change of Koreans. In this research, the examination of Korean ethnic identity in Koreatown is evaluated through the interview responses, language used, and physical presence of traditional characteristics. With respect to cultural tourism, social participation and cultural events were observed and documented as were the services and products provided in Koreatown.

The interview and survey responses show that the majority of interviewees who are Korean or of Korean ancestry “agree” that Koreatown contributes to their sense of belonging to their ethnic group and helps them preserve their culture and engage with their cultural practices. In contrast to the social aspects, when asked about the contributions to Korean cultural learning and ethnic pride, the responses are fragmented almost evenly from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Moreover, all Korean/Korean American respondents preferred answering the questions in English language. The interviewees also explain that Korean perception towards Americans is as a hero and helping hands during the Korean War. Thus, Koreans are willing to be part of American society.

Pavilion Garden at Olympic Boulevard and Normandie Avenue is the only traditional Korean structure standing in Koreatown, but it is fenced and does not attract much attention (see figure 5.2.14). This deficiency is a result of the settlement of Koreans in preexisting buildings in the Wilshire district after the area became degenerated and vacant. The prosperity of Korean business is due to ethnic products including grocery stores, karaoke, nightclubs and Korean restaurant rather than traditional culture. The architecture in Koreatown is economically



Figure 5.2.17 Dawooljong: Korean Pavilion



Figure 5.2.18 Social participation at LA Open Door Church

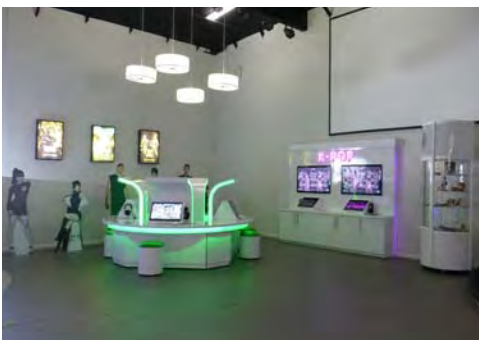


Figure 5.2.19 K-pop exhibition in Korean Cultural Centre

viable and thus traditional artifacts or signs of commodification are not commonly seen in Koreatown.

In contrast to the absence of traditional artifacts, the Koreans maintain their ethnic identity by participating in their ethnic organizations or ethnic institutions especially in Korean churches. Many researches show that majority of the Korean population is a member of in at least one organization or religious institution. One of the Korean American interviewees expressed that being born and growing up in America, she feels herself American until she went to university. During that time she started to join Korean club and feels she belonged to Korean community. After she graduated, she participates in a Korean church every week, which helps maintain her identity and relationship with her ethnic group (see figure 5.2.15).

Regarding the observation and information from interview, it is possible to conclude that the Korean identity is maintained through cultural practices and social participation of Korean community. The fact that there are many institutions and Korean organizations situated in Koreatown contributes to the high involvement of the Korean community in Koreatown. The success of Korean business is based on transnationalism as well as local consumption of ethnic products from Korean entrepreneurs, which provide a contemporary image of South Korea rather than a traditional one. Specifically, the effect of ethnic identity on Koreatown ranked 8 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Koreatown's unique characteristics are highly strengthened by residents' identification with political and social participation as well as ethnic business.

### Assimilation

Unlike the prior immigrants such as Chinese or Japanese who faced severe racial discrimination, the Koreans benefited from better social acceptance and diverse ethnicity. Moreover, the Los Angeles riots encouraged the political activities for Koreans in the United States. Considering the socioeconomic assimilation of Korean/Korean American population in Koreatown with regards of ethnic identity as previously discussed, this research examines the Korean assimilation factors by analyzing and reviewing census data related to language spoken,

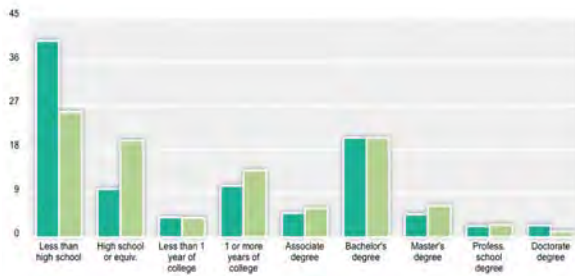


Figure 5.2.20 Education attainment in Koreatown (city-data, Koreatown)



Figure 5.2.21 Demographic profile in Koreatown (City-data, Koreatown)

■ Koreatown (Wilshire Center) ■ Los Angeles average

education, income, employment, and residential location along with their historical background, and political position in host society.

In examining the social and economic indicators of Koreatown’s population, the city data reports as follows:

- 53 percent of the population is Latino within this population about 22 percent is Mexican, followed by 21 percent Korean. The median age (30) is considered average for the city of Los Angeles and the county.
- Koreatown’s density is 35,779 people/mi<sup>2</sup> in comparison to 8,143 people/mi<sup>2</sup> of Los Angeles density.
- Median household income (\$34,136) is considered low for the city of Los Angeles and for the county. However, this income is double that of the median household income in Chinatown. About 28 percent of residents in Koreatown are below poverty level.
- The majority of the residents have less than a high school education level. 21 percent of residents have a four-year college degree, which is considered average for the city of Los Angeles and for the county.
- About 39 percent of the population speaks English “not well” or “not at all”.

Consistent with the aforementioned data were observations of the Korean population in positions as employers and laborers in ethnic businesses and also as customers. While some Koreans that were observed do not speak English, the majority of them are bilingual. As discussed in literature on Koreans’ valuing of education, which contributes to the assimilation of Koreans/Korean Americans into the host society as well as economic success of. At the same time, Koreans are able to maintain their ethnic identity with language used, social participation and consumption of the ethnic products. In contrast to Korean, Latinos in Koreatown serve the labor sector in Korean business. While presuming that language ability is not a barrier, they tend to have lower



Figure 5.2.22 Korean restaurants around W 6th street



Figure 5.2.23 Grocery store in Koreatown



Figure 5.2.24 Korean newspaper

education, lower income and lower economic status in comparison to Koreans, indicating the barriers in the process of assimilation.

The interview and survey responses show that only a small percentage do not feel comfortable using a language other than their native language, experiencing difficulty practicing their culture or living outside of Koreatown. While a majority of the respondents (47%) “strongly disagree” that they do not feel comfortable using any language other than their native language, a majority “disagree”; they do not feel comfortable being with people other than their ethnic group (47%); they find it difficult to practice their culture outside Koreatown (47%). However, 47 percent of the respondents indicate that they feel neutral about the difficulty in living or working outside Koreatown. Within this survey, 79 percent of the respondents “strongly agree” or “agree” that they associate themselves with American society as well as their ethnic group.

Nonetheless, the self-reported responses on assimilation point out that the interviewees in Koreatown personally feel themselves be a part of the host society. It falls in line with the indicators from observation and data analysis demonstrating a high degree of structural assimilation and acculturation due to their high level of education, average level of household income and success of the Korean ethnic entrepreneur. At the same time, the availability of social supports, institutions and organizations available in Koreatown which allows Koreans to maintain their ethnic identity as explained in many studies that Koreans/Korean Americans hold dual-identities or segmented assimilation.

In summary, considering the historical background from the literature, the social and economic indicators of Koreatown’s population along with the interview responses, the effect of assimilation on Koreatown ranked 8 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Koreatown’s unique characteristics are greatly weakened by high level of structural assimilation and acculturation of the Korean into American society although they hold a degree of ethnic identity.



Figure 5.2.25 Cluster of Korean-businesses with Korean-essence architecture



Figure 5.2.26 Banner telling history of Wilshire Boulevard

### Commodification

Apparently Korean immigrants are able to advance their businesses and institutions in Koreatown. While Koreans maintain their ethnic identity via participating in ethnic institutions and present a high degree of assimilation, not many signs of commodification were observed.

In terms of products provided in Koreatown, they offer variety of products that fit with Korean lifestyle from food, groceries, clothes, art as well as entertainment media such as Korean dramas, movies and music. Instead of providing traditional products for tourists as main business, Koreans are able to advance their business to other groups; industries such as garment and ethnic food; mass media such as Korean radio, newspaper; service sector such as immigration service and healthcare. These businesses provide employment that favors Korean and specifically serve Koreans. The variety of ethnic businesses answer Korean demand of daily life consumption and relate Korean American to current culture in South Korea.

In terms of place making and cultural events, the celebration that occurs in Koreatown is “Korean Festival”, which is an inventive festival. While promoting Korean culture and tradition, it is not a traditional celebration. This festival is considered a commoditized tradition that makes Korean culture easier to digest, both for Korean American and American. Moreover, the investigation showed that, although Koreatown has an annual “inventive” celebration, most of the businesses contribute to Korean consumption and employment rather than other traditionalism. While being a Korean commercial core, it has presented a low level of commodification.

In summary, considering cultural tourism, products offered, and the neighborhood’s position in Los Angeles, the effect of commodification on Koreatown ranked 9 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the lowest commoditized. That is, Koreatown’s unique characteristics are only weakened by the transformation of cultural events while they are able to penetrate their genuine goods, services, and ideas into mainstream business. The commodification of Koreatown becomes a cultural presentation rather than a barrier to expressing an authentic Korean essence.

In conclusion, the residents of LA's Koreatown create their sense of place with their establishment of ethnic businesses as their socioeconomic structure along with maintaining their ethnic identity via participating in ethnic organization. The external factors affecting Koreatown that resulted in the spatial distribution of the ethnic populations are the transformation of Los Angeles in the world economy as well as immigrant policy, similar to Chinatown. Regarding the influx of Latino population as a labor force of Korean business in Koreatown, it accelerates Korean dispersion to suburban areas. As figure 5.2.12 illustrates, the ethnic proportion of Koreatown comprises one of the biggest threat to Koreatown as it has a high risk of being displaced. Additionally, the internal factors affecting Koreatown that resulted in their spatial distribution of the ethnic populations is an inevitable generational assimilation that leads to dispersion of the ethnic group. However, the Los Angeles Riots in 1992 brought a spatial cohesion to Korean businesses and constructed a political voice for the Korean community. Moreover, their outward mobility, where many well-to-do Koreans initially choose to reside also comprise threats a lesser degree. However, the strength of Korean ethnic identity in Los Angeles serves to counterbalance these threats although they are well assimilated, as does the few commodification signs occurring in Koreatown.

While the architectural expression in Koreatown is not distinguished from other part of the city, and the Koreans are well assimilated into the host society; the Korean community in Los Angeles is politically, economically and socially strong. With the influx population of Latinos, they have become a majority of Koreatown residents; still Koreatown is able to maintain its role as a civic presence in the Korean community in the present. Moreover, Koreatown is still a commercial center despite the fact that ethnic economy in suburban areas is becoming more dominant. However, once the Latinos become well assimilated with political voice and equal economic status, Koreatown will potentially face with a severe dissolution of ethnic attainment.

As Los Angeles becomes a global city, the enclave develops its commercial role in transnational city of South



Figure 5.2.27 score of investigated factors in Koreatown

Korea. The absence of cultural artifacts in Koreatown becomes an advantage in portraying a contemporary image and modernized Korean. At the same time it helps promote a transnational economy of Korean businesses. Moreover, the blur boundaries and the potential growth of Koreatown that allows upper class condominiums to be constructed and advance development will help intensifying Korean presence in the area.

## Thai Town and Thai community

### Location

Designated in the inner city with relatively high concentration of Thai businesses, Thai Town is located along Hollywood Boulevard between Western Avenue and Normandie Avenue (see figure 5.3.4). The statues of Apsornsri mark the entrance of Thai Town. However Thai Town's boundaries are blurred into Little Armenian's, another ethnic enclave that overlaps with Thai Town. Specifically, Thai businesses include: Thai restaurants, beauty salons, real estate agents, a few ethnic institutions as well as a penetration of non-Thai businesses, which suggest that although Thai business have intensified in Thai Town, the neighborhood is associated with many ethnic groups. The factor that contributes to the success of Thai Town is the cultural tourism strategy, accessibility of public transportation as well as business opportunities. However, due to high land prices, low social capital and a dispersion of Thai population in outlying Los Angeles, it is difficult for Thais to establish their social support or institutions in the inner city. This absence of social support and infrastructure diminishes Thai Town as a civic presence of the Thai community.

Thai restaurants are the most common business that appears in every corner not only in Thai Town. Although it helps intensify Thai-ness in the neighborhood, an ethnic enclave requires more activities to be successful. The factors that contribute to Thai Town's significance relates to its business opportunities as well as their economic strategy. In addition to the absence of social support infrastructure that weaken the social value of Thai Town, this lack of ethnic services are the main obstacle that limits Thai Town from becoming Thai commercial core and expanding its social value. Still, Thai Town is a widely promoted tourist attraction of Los Angeles and an important transitory neighborhood for newly-arrived immigrants, especially in providing employment and business opportunities.



Figure 5.3.1 Cluster of Thai businesses on Hollywood, Thai Town

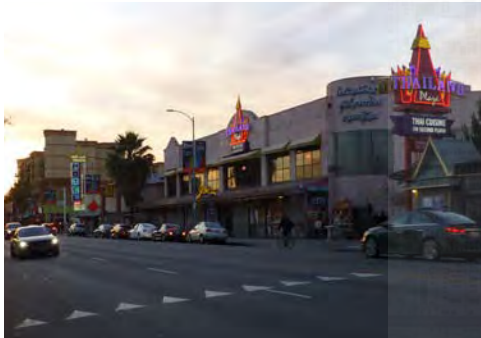


Figure 5.3.2 Thai Plaza on Hollywood, Thai Town



Figure 5.3.3 Cluster of Thai businesses on Sunset Boulevard, Thai Town

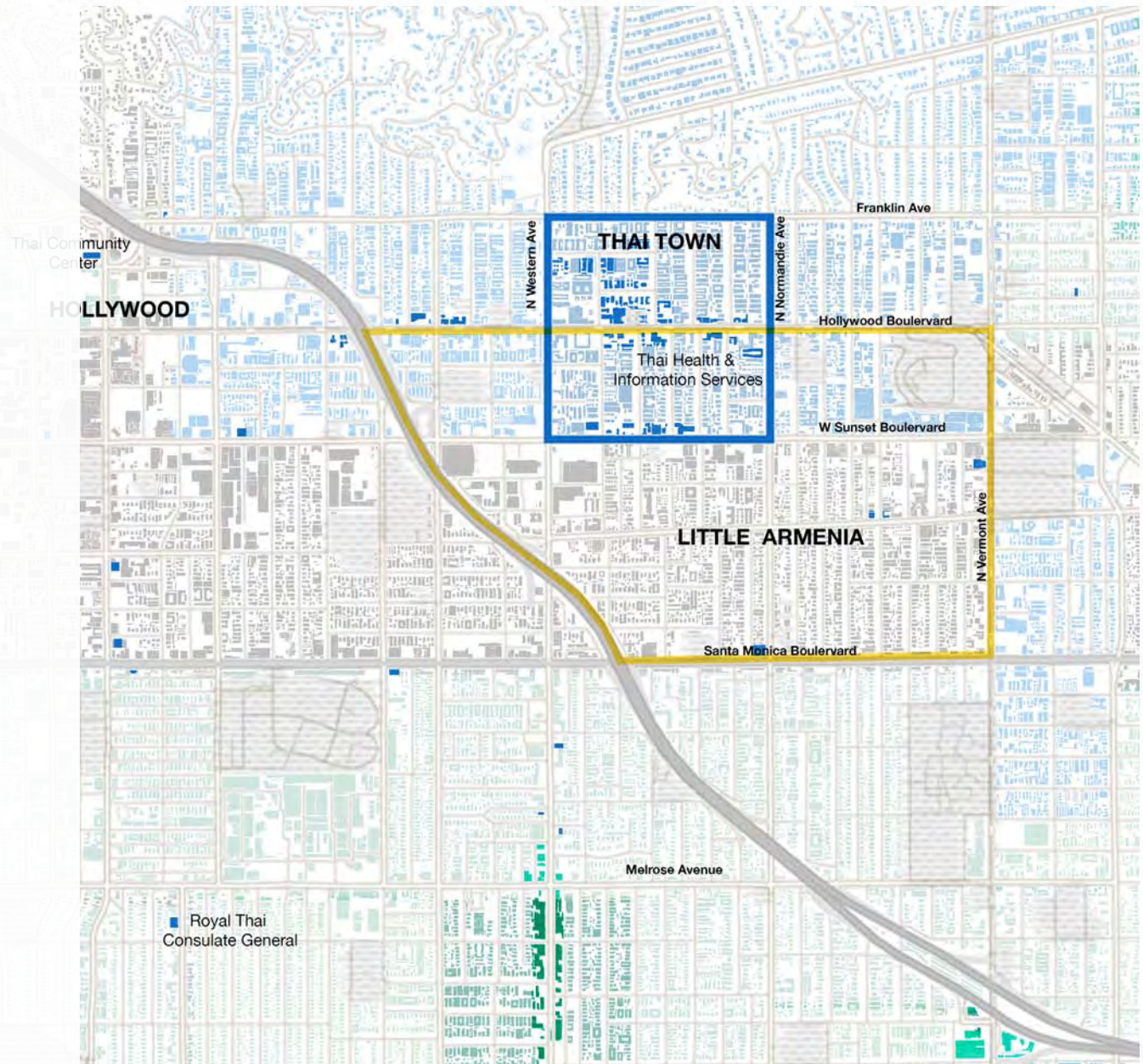
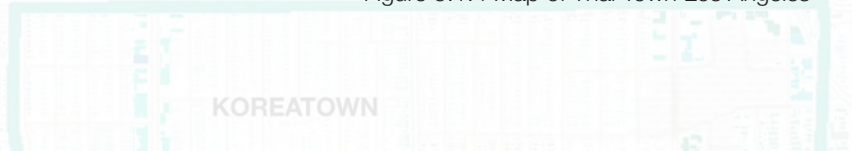


Figure 5.1.4 Map of Thai Town Los Angeles



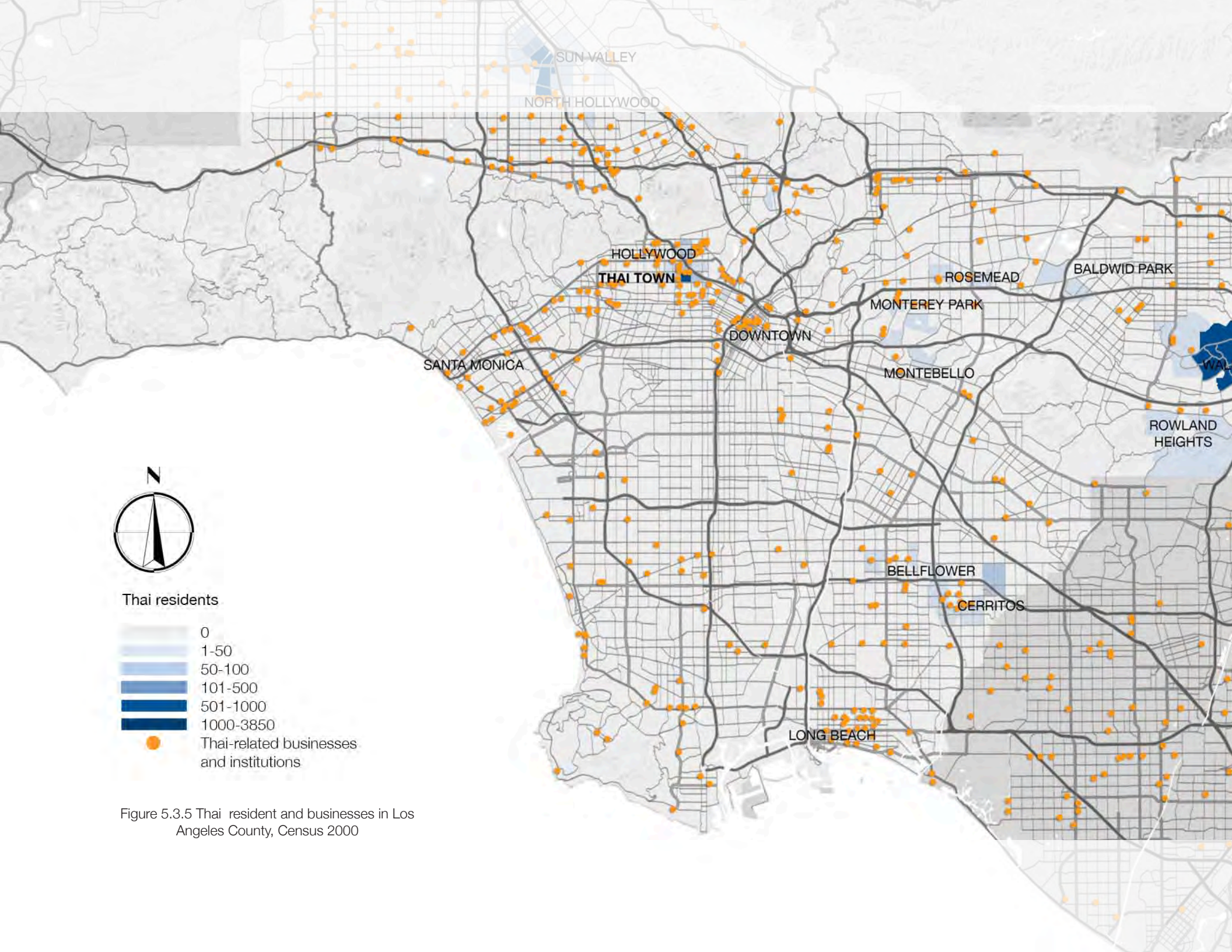
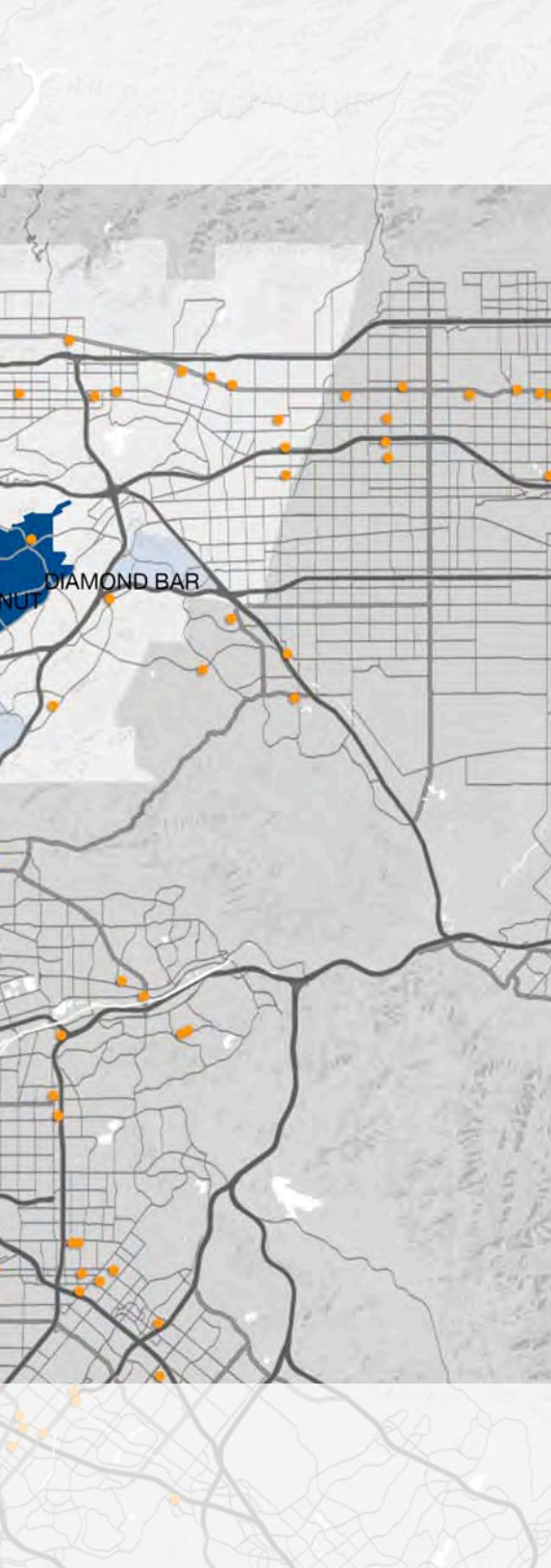


Figure 5.3.5 Thai resident and businesses in Los Angeles County, Census 2000



Moreover, the interview and survey responses indicate an accessible location contributes to their preference of Thai Town rather than affordability or ethnic institutions. When asked about the preference of Thai Town, 60 percent of respondents particularly “agree” that they prefer Thai Town because of the specific ethnic products offered in Thai Town. On the other hand majority (65%) of respondents “strongly disagree” that they prefer Thai Town due to the social support that Thai Town provide. Because of an inadequate of social support and institutional, Thai Town does not encourage social life among the Thai population. Moreover, some respondents explain the although the cost of living in Thai Town is expensive and business is very competitive among Thai restaurants, having Thai Town helps promote Thai business for tourism and provides jobs for new arrival immigrants.

In summary, considering a concentration of ethnic businesses, spatial distribution of ethnic residents and business, as well as a dissatisfaction feedback from the interview, the effect of location on Chinatown ranked 3 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Thai Town’s unique characteristics are very much weakened by the absence of social support infrastructure and ethnic institutions as well as the lack of diversity of ethnic business.

### **Residential mobility**

With the recent legislation in 1999, Thai Town is designated on Hollywood Boulevard. However, some businesses in Thai Town have been situated there for over 40 years. For this study, there is no prior study about Thai residential mobility or data available. However, the interview and observation demonstrate that there many new business have opened in Thai Town and that it potentially will continue to grow. Furthermore, Thai Town has become a destination providing jobs and attracting new residents. Only 20 percent of the respondents indicate that they live in Thai Town over 20 years. A pattern of inward mobility to center by the ethnic group could be implied the due to employment opportunities.

The interview and survey responses show that the residential mobility of the interviewees in Thai Town area is not limited by affordability, availability of social support, working opportunity or avoiding ethnic conflict. About 40 percent of the respondents “strongly disagree” that they cannot get good work opportunities outside of Thai Town. 40 percent strongly replied that spending time in Thai Town does not help them avoid ethnic conflicts. In contrast to this number, when asked about whether Thai Town supports their interaction with their ethnic group and ethnic culture, the responses are not interpretive.

To summarize the residential mobility of Thai Town’s residents, heavily based on observation and interview responses due to limited archival data: there is potential inward mobility of Thais to Thai Town with the main reason being business opportunities. This mobility pattern will hopefully help build up and strengthen the Thai community in the area that currently holds a segmented demographic ethnic profile. Considering potential growth and feedback from the interview responses the effect of residential mobility on Thai Town ranked 4 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Thai Town’s unique characteristics are sufficiently strengthened by business opportunities and increasing ethnic concentration of the Thai population to move into Thai Town.

### **Ethnic proportion**

Based on the 2010 City-Data, the population of Thai Town is comprised of about 40 percent Hispanic and 40 percent white, while Asians are accounting for less than 10 percent with 3 percent being Thai, followed by mixed races and blacks (See figure 5.3.6). The majority of the populations in Thai Town are Armenian whose ethnic enclave is overlapped with Thai Town and who have resided in the area prior to Thai immigrants. In terms of language and nativity, 34.5 percent of Thai Town residents speak English not well or not at all in comparison to only 17.8 percent of Los Angeles residents; 59.3 percent of Thai Town residents are foreign-born compared to only 39 percent of Los Angeles residents.

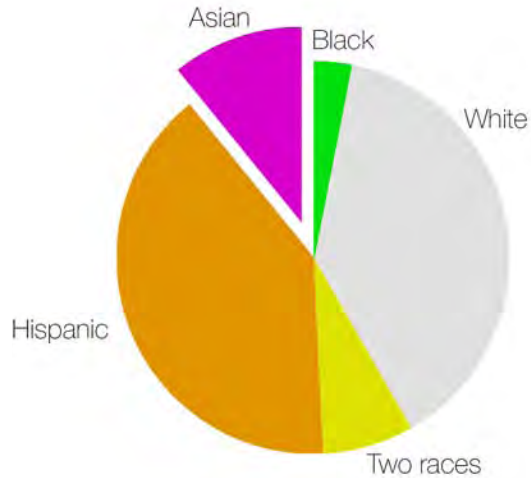


Figure 5.3.6 Ethnic proportion in Koreatown  
(City data, Koreatown)

Although the clusters of Thai business are evidently apparent in the enclave's area, the ethnic proportion of Thai population is very low. Elson Trinidad describes that; most Thai are recently immigrated to the United States and have low voter registration. Most Thais in Thai Town work long hours in low-wage jobs, thus they have very low participation in community activities and much less time for social life. Moreover, major cultural institutions are far away in North Hollywood. Regarding the observation although Thai business prevails in the enclave, their customers are mainly tourists, both Thai tourists and other ethnic groups. Focusing at Thai businesses, most of the Thai business prefers to employ co-ethnic group in their business rather than other ethnic groups, which helps them prevent middleman phenomena that happens in Koreatown between Korean and Hispanic laborers.

The study of ethnic proportion in Thai Town shows that the Thais hold an extremely low ethnic proportion in their own enclave. Moreover, with the absence of ethnic institutions in Thai Town, Thai Town does not offer social importance as a Thai community but rather as a source of socioeconomics. In summary, considering the demographic profile, the ethnic presence, and their social participation, the effect of ethnic proportion on Thai Town ranked 4 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Thai Town's unique characteristics are sufficiently weakened by lack of ethnic concentration and the interminglement of other ethnic groups.

### **Ethnic identity**

As discussed in the literature, the majority of Thai immigrants recently migrate to the United States after 1965 by choice rather than push factor from Thailand. The fact that they seek job opportunities or choose to settle in the United States after coming for education indicates that they are mentally prepared for a different environment and society. Thus they tend to have less ethnic attachment and are open for new cultural experiences as well as a different lifestyle. Moreover, the change of national immigration policy indicates that the country is opened for the immigrants and exclusion is no longer a critical problem.



Figure 5.3.7 Thai Parade in Songkran Festival 2015



Figure 5.3.8 Thai restaurant in Thai Town crowded with American customers



Figure 5.3.9 Religious product shops



Figure 5.3.10 Linguistic landscape in Thai Town

The interview and survey responses present that all the interviewees in Thai Town are all foreign born but not all Thai. The majority of interviewees who is Thai “agree” or has “neutral” opinion upon the contribution of Thai Town to Thai identity when asked about; their sense of belonging to their ethnic group; Thai Town helps them preserve their culture: Thai Town encourages them to engage with their cultural practices; Thai Town supports them in learning Thai culture and heightens their ethnic pride. When asked about the cultural contribution of Thai Town to their ethnic identity, many of the respondents explain, “Thai food here is the most authentic one unlike Thai restaurants in other cities.” This is also supported by the explanation of Don Nakanishi, a UCLA professor and director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, Thai food “is a cuisine that has been able to [become] mainstream and maybe through it, other aspects of Thai culture and history will become better known to the people of Los Angeles.” However cultural events like the Songkran festival or Thai New Year celebration, the biggest event of Thai Town, is not widely known (see figure 5.3.7). Moreover, all Thai respondents either prefer to answer the questions in Thai language or are comfortable with both languages.

While using Thai culture as a selling point, Thai Town lacks of traditional Thai presence in terms of architectural expression. It includes Apornsri statues, street decorations, exhibits of traditional Thai art as well as some house of spirit that reflects belief of Thais (see figure 5.3.14). Nonetheless, Thai Town houses many distinct Thai shops that offer very specific Thai products, which can only be found there such as traditional Thai costume store, Thai bookstores, Thai flower shops and religious product shops (see figure 5.3.9). Many of respondents say, “I am Thai no matter where I live I can speak Thai, eat Thai and act Thai inside and outside Thai Town, and here in LA everyone is foreigner.”

Regarding the evidence from the observation and information from interview, it is possible to say that due to their minority immigrant status, there are insufficient institutions or association to promote Thai ethnic identity both within Thai Town or outside. To some degree, Thai Town is able to supply authentic Thai products for both the Thai population and tourists. However, the area is not recognizable enough to say that Thai Town

helps celebrate Thai identity. Specifically, the effect of ethnic identity on Thai Town ranked 5 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Thai Town's unique characteristics are moderately strengthened by residents' identification with natal, symbolic, and cultural factors.

### **Assimilation**

Similar to Korean immigrants a majority of the Thai ethnic group migrated to the United States after liberalization of Immigration Law in 1965; therefore they did not face severe racial discrimination. While the Thai immigrants have shared the same historical background, language used and national origin, they are stratified due to their education and economic status, similar to Chinese immigrants. As minority immigrants, Thais do not possess high social capital or a strong political voice in the host society. Considering the socioeconomic assimilation of the Thai population in Thai Town with regards of ethnic identity as previously discussed, this research examines the assimilation of Thais in Thai Town by analyzing and reviewing census data related to language spoken, education, income, employment as well as residential location.

In examining the social and economic indicators of Thai Town's population, the city data reports as follows:

- 36 percent of the population is Latino followed with approximately 30 percent White alone, 10 percent Asian alone and 4 percent two races. However, there is no information about Thai residents in Thai Town available to date.
- Thai Town's density is 42,106 people/ mi<sup>2</sup> compared to density in Los Angeles of 8,143 people/ mi<sup>2</sup>.
- Median household income (\$21,428) is considered low for the city of Los Angeles and for the county, About 47 percent of population in Thai Town is below the poverty level.
- The majority of the residents (36%) have less than high school education level. Only 19

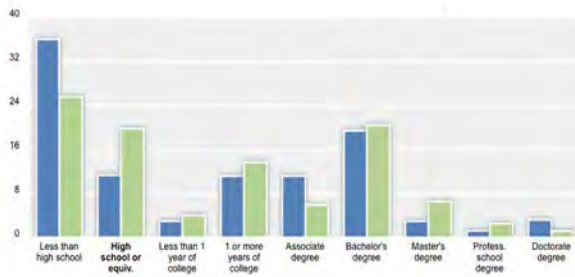


Figure 5.3.11 Education attainment in Thai Town (city-data, Thai Town)

percent of residents have a four-year collage degree but about 8 percent have master’s degree or higher.

- About 34 percent of the Thai Town population speaks English “not well” or “not at all”.

Consistent with the aforementioned data were the observations of the Thai population with a high degree of stratification. One group consists of Thais who play a crucial role in providing demand and supply in socioeconomic structure of Thai Town. They potentially more assimilated due to their fluent language ability, better economic status, potentially higher education, which helping them to assimilate structurally into the host society. The second group consists of Thais who supply a labor force in the businesses in Thai Town. They generally have lower education, language barriers, lower economic status, which become their limitation in assimilating into host society.

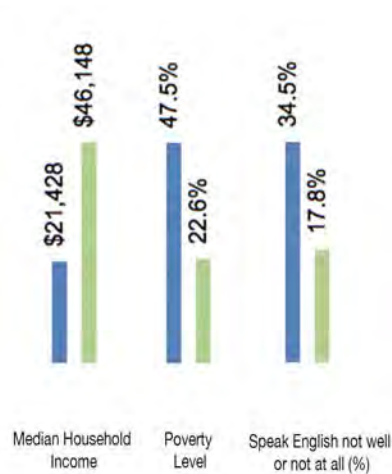


Figure 5.3.12 Demographic profile in Thai Town (City-data, Thai Town)

The interview and survey responses show that only a small percentage do not feel comfortable using other language other than their native language, and that most experience difficulty practicing their culture or living outside of Thai Town. Forty percent of the respondents “strongly disagree” that they do not feel comfortable using any language other than my native language; 40 percent majority “strongly disagree” that they do not feel comfortable being with people other than their ethnic group; and 45 percent state that it is more difficult to live or work outside Thai Town. Within this survey, 90 percent of the respondents “strongly agree” or “agree” that they associate themselves with American society as well as their ethnic group indicating high degree of assimilation.

Nonetheless, the self-reported responses on assimilation point out that personally the interviewees in Thai Town feel themselves be part of the host society. However, the situation differs from Chinese and Korean. It is likely to assume that due to their lack of political voice, social supports, institutions and organizations; Thais are more open to the host society than to striving to maintain their identity. Based on the indicators from observation and





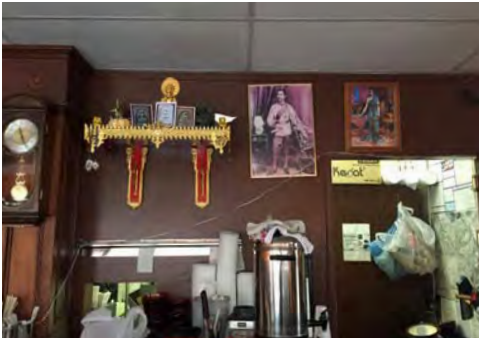


Figure 5.3.14 Deocration in Thai restaurant reflecting ethnic identity in Royal institution and faith



Figure 5.3.15 Spirit house reflecting a Thai belife in a protector spirit of land



Figure 5.3.16 Statue of Brahma in the front of a grocery store

document analysis along with prior discussed about two groups of Thais; the first group of ethnic entrepreneur or highly educated have better assimilated into the host society similar to Korean immigrants; the second group which supply labor force segment, experience many barriers to assimilation, including language, education or economic status, similar to the Chinese in Chinatown.

In summary, considering the historical background from the literature, the social and economic indicators of Thai Town's population along with the interview responses, the effect of assimilation on Thai Town ranked 7 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest. That is, Thai Town's unique characteristics are moderately weakened by high level of acculturation due to its lack of ethnic institutions and organization. However residents' of Thai Town do not posses abilities to be structural assimilated, they exhibit high level of assimilation due to the cultural pluralistic character of Los Angeles.

### Commodification

Thai Town is advancing their business strategy to attract more investment of Thai business and at the same time to construct a strong ethnic economy. Still it lacks of co-ethnic immigrants, both as entrepreneurs and customers, in comparison to Chinese, Korean, Vietnam or Filipinos. The commodification requires high investment while majority of Thais have low social capita. Their intention to commercialize Thai businesses as a cultural tourism strategy gives Los Angeles Thai Town a moderate degree of commodification that is noticeable in its cultural landscape (see figure 5.3.13 - 5.3.15).

Regarding products provided in Thai Town, Thai businesses and services are not diverse with most of the businesses being restaurants and beauty spas. However, specific ethnic products can only be found in Thai Town such as Thai grocery, Thai bookstores, Thai flower shop and holy objects, traditional costumes. These products specifically serve Thai customers because they are not well known by foreigners yet. For Thai



Figure 5.3.17 Street beautification: Apsara statue or Thai Angel



Figure 5.3.18 Advertisement of Thailand tourism at a grocery store



Figure 5.3.19 Thai costume shop

restaurants, as mentioned in ethnic identity, the restaurants in Thai Town seem to provide the most authentic Thai food rather than Americanized Thai food or so-called “sugar-coated Thai food”. Maintaining the originality of Thai food makes Thai restaurants in Thai Town distinct from other Thai restaurants elsewhere. Promoting authenticity becomes a commercial strategy that makes Thai Town stand out from other Thai businesses elsewhere.

In terms of place-making and cultural events, the most important celebration that occurs in Thai Town is the “Songkran Festival” or Thai New Year. Although the festival has been changed to promote more Thai culture at once, the celebration is effective both for promoting Thai tradition and preserving Thai cultural heritage. Moreover, Thai Town arranges a weekly Buddhist practice, offering food for monks by inviting the monks to Thai Town from Thai temples in other parts of the city. Although it is a short-cut way to substitute the absence of Thai institutions in the enclave, it helps preserve customs and beliefs of Thai residents in Thai Town.

This investigation showed that Thai Town presents a high level of commercialization but is still able to avoid commodification. Thais promote their businesses using authenticity as a selling point, which helps maintain their uniqueness. However, if Thai Town is unable to provide the services that match Thai demand, in time, maintaining their traditionalism can also be a threat to maintaining the authenticity of the enclave as well.

In summary, considering cultural tourism, products offered, and the neighborhood’s position in Los Angeles, the effect of commodification on Thai Town ranked 4 on a score of 1 to 10, with 10 being the lowest commoditized. That is, Thai Town’s unique characteristics are moderately weakened by the transformation of services and ideas into mainstream business commodities. However, the limited investment has resulted in lessening the signs of commodification. The commercialization of an authentic Thai essence becomes a strategy promoting Thai Town.

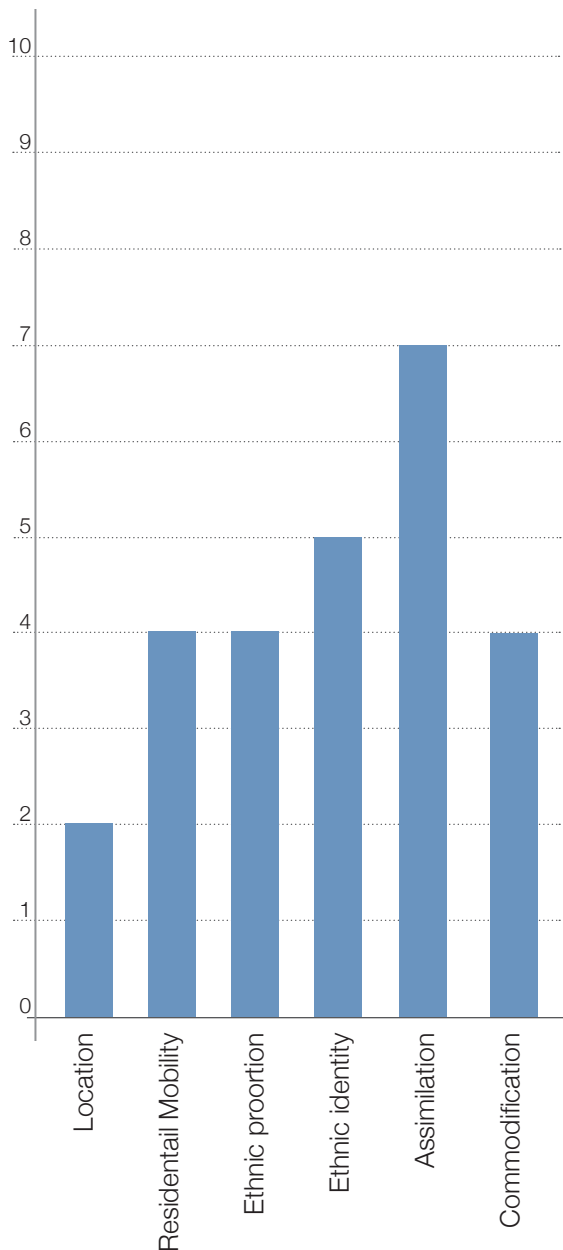


Figure 5.3.20 score of investigated factors in Thai Town

In conclusion, since LA's Thai Town was established to create a political voice as well as a civic presence for the Thai community, Thai Town has the intention to gain ground by advancing the ethnic economy. Thai Town is diminished in its development because the enclave can only provide one product that penetrates into mainstream society, Thai cuisine. A low social capital and lack of investors are the main problems of Thai Town development. The residents of Thai Town create their sense of place with their establishment of ethnic businesses as their socioeconomic structure. The external factors affecting Thai Town that resulted in the spatial distribution of the ethnic populations are the transformation of Los Angeles in world economy as well as immigrant policy, similar to Chinatown and Koreatown. The internal factors affecting Thai Town that resulted in the spatial distribution demonstrating the disproportion of ethnic populations' critical mass and the supply of ethnic business. Heavily weight their businesses on commercialization, they tend to rebrand their enclave for cultural tourism, which lead to a dissolution in their authenticity and contemporary identity. As figure 5.1.5 demonstrates, the spatial distribution of the Thai throughout the LA metropolitan area coupled with the low ethnic proportion comprise the biggest threats to Thai Town authenticity as an ethnic enclave. Their potential increasing commodification also comprises a threat, as the Thai strategize their tradition and culture to activate tourism and businesses. However, the strength of Thai ethnic identity in Los Angeles as well as their inward mobility to Thai Town serves to counterbalance these threats.

In the present, Thai immigrants' socioeconomic structure lies heavily upon one type of business. It is marketed to attract local consumption rather than their co-ethnic group, which could possibly lead to the modification of ethnic product to match the demand of host society. Moreover, with an small co-ethnic population that leads to a weak ethnic group, it is almost impossible to create their political voice. The absence of ethnic institutions or organizations in Thai Town is also another critical problem. Because of their absence, Thais are unable to develop interpersonal relationships without commercial benefit. Without progress in increasing ethnic concentration and social value of Thai Town, it will eventually face weaker identity, population displacement and commodified than has already started to occur in the present. There is a long way for Thai Town to strengthen their political, economical and social role when their development relies on cultural tourism strategy.

## Discourse analysis

Despite a distinct history of immigration and expressed characteristic of Chinatown, Koreatown and Thai Town, these enclaves are becoming ethnic economies that are internally fragmented and transforming into a hybrid space of ethnic mosaic with class and generational differences. During over 150 years of Asian immigrant history in Los Angeles and ongoing immigration, immigrants have developed a common ground that interconnects Los Angeles locally, nationally and globally. The characteristic ethnic entrepreneurship turns into a dominant role of the enclave where the space becomes a representation of collective identity through merchandise and commercialization as well as structural assimilation for the ethnic groups. While social purpose to some extent helps in maintaining residents from the ethnic group and attracting new arrival immigrants, the inner city ethnic enclave is becoming subordinated. One may argue that in order to integrate into American society, immigrant communities have a long way to go regardless of their economic success. For a global city like Los Angeles in 2015, the city possesses cultural pluralism characteristic and has assimilated its capacity to contain and celebrate various identities harmoniously and distinctively. At the same time the residents are able to maintain their identity while acculturating into American society. It is best to describe Los Angeles' society as a celebration of diversity of the self.

For Chinatown, the enclave becomes more complex with class and generational differences but also with nation of origin due to the Chinese overseas immigration. The collective hybrid identity of being both a member of the Los Angeles Chinatown community and having Chinese ancestry has overall united the community, despite the difference in native languages. While the newly arriving Chinese community has established itself into the social, political, and cultural fabric, they are benefitting from a common place-frame in which overarching national origin has united the ethnic community of Chinese ancestry in US society that prior immigrants have constructed. This research suggests that Chinatown should strengthen its role as a commercial center; at the

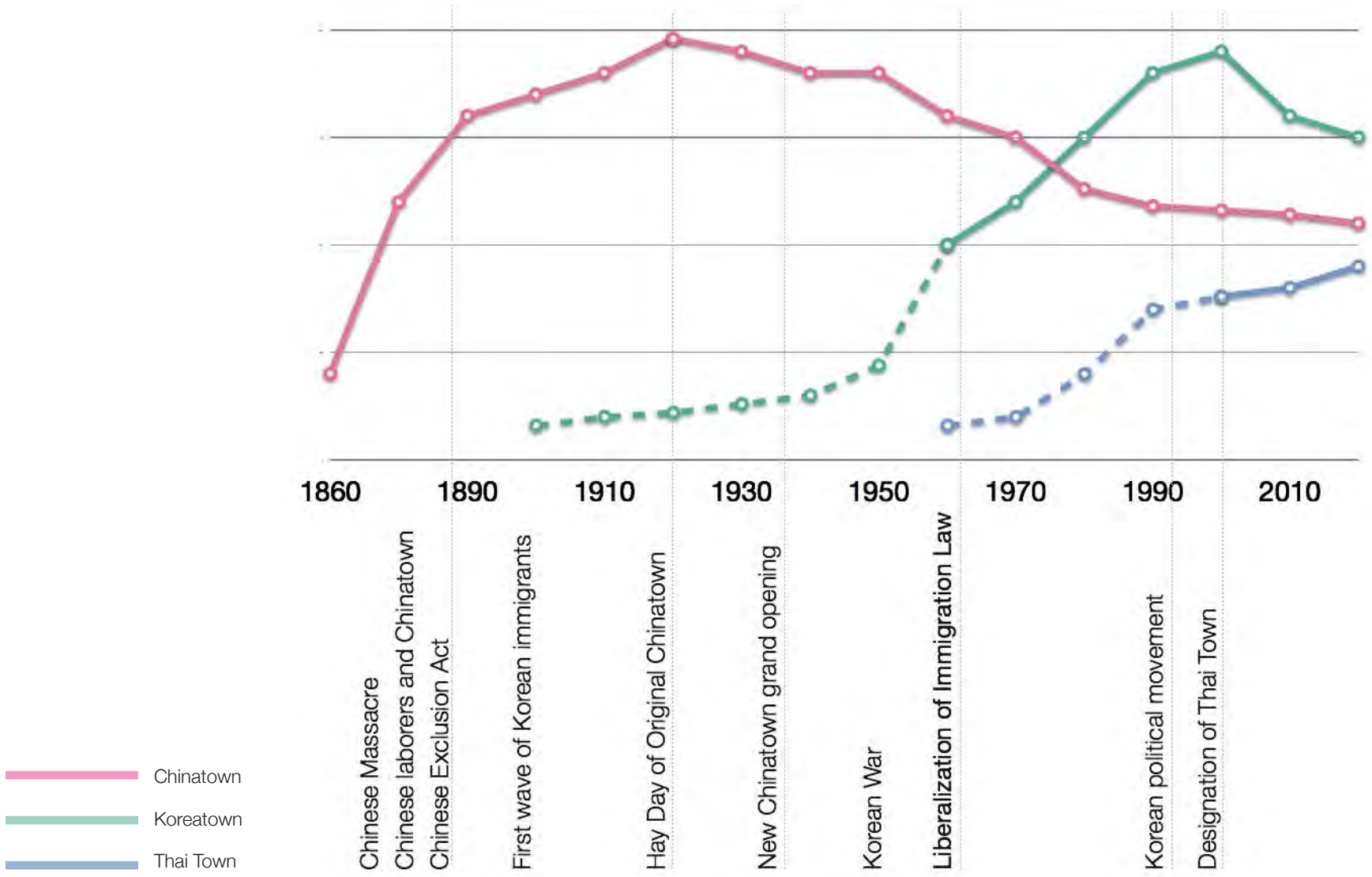


Figure 5.4 Changing authenticity of the three ethnic enclaves

same time it should rebrand its image as a contemporary Chinatown in order to step forward with the society not for cultural tourism but to maintain its importance to their residents as a living neighborhood.

For Korean community, they have gained the acceptance and assimilation into the city as a result of conflict over time. The contestation over place allowed the Korean community to gain their social and political position. Moreover, Koreans and Latinos have developed sophisticated business relationships that although they favor Korean entrepreneurship still benefit Latino consumers and laborers. With less traditional image attachment physically and culturally, the Koreans assimilate into the society and maintain their identity through the strategy of modern Korean products that refer to South Korea in the present. Moreover the participation of ethnic organizations helps preserve their customs, maintain their identity and strengthen social relationships within their ethnic group. This research suggests that while Koreatown demonstrates a contemporary authenticity of the ethnic enclave that is well assimilated and at the same time embraces the ethnic identity of the ethnic group, fostering residential capacity, encouraging inward mobility and quality in Koreatown will help balance its role as commercial core, civic presence and neighborhood life.

For Thai Town, similar to Chinatown that it acts as an agency between newly arrived Thais and prior immigrants except that Thai immigrants are not diverse in national origin and norms. Thai Town becomes a symbol of their territory in a foreign land as a port, transition and destination. With a smaller social capita in comparison to prior immigrant nations, Thais use legislation and a tourism strategy to promote and establish themselves into the social, political and cultural fabric of Los Angeles as well as into American society. Nevertheless, Thais are striving to secure their ethnic economy and maintain their cultural identity in a new context. With the official designation by the city, it reflects that the city has acknowledged the extent to which each ethnicity has become an integral player in the narrative of "Los Angeles Salad Bowl." This research suggests that Thai Town should provide more diverse services and ethnic products in order to affirm their socioeconomic structure. In terms of architectural expression, Thai essence is not required in order to preserve their cultural heritage while

it may exhibit their ethnic pride. Specifically, it requires a spatial quality that supports social participation of the ethnic group to create a strong community that is able to maintain and celebrate its identity.

These three case studies demonstrated multiple ways that spaces of representation place their roles in society. The immigrants are able to take advantage of diverse economic opportunities offered in their ethnic enclave and exist as transnational persons in a transnational city, as well as their ethnic neighborhood regardless of the fact that they are dispersed and create multi clusters of ethnic residents in a suburban areas. Moreover, both the built environment and cultural identity of Los Angeles have been greatly influenced by the development of diverse groups of immigrants and not specifically Asian immigrants. The intersection of national immigration policy, local history and individual perception of self and society have resulted in the vision of what type of places should emerge as Los Angeles transforms. The ethnic enclave economy will maintain its role of the node of commonality between actors, which have emerged in these spaces of intersection that has resulted in the development of uniqueness of place in the city. The hybrid transnational identity, which has developed among the community, has resulted in the place-making process producing places of multi-ethnicity into the city where complex socioeconomic relations at multiple scales influence contemporary immigrants' identities.

## Chapter 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

For the purpose of this research, ethnic enclave is characterized as a transitional space that helps immigrants adjust to a new host society, socially and economically. Authenticity is defined as a spatial quality that provides social and economic structure for the ethnic groups, enabling those groups to practice their culture and make their living. Having investigated six dimension of maintaining authenticity relative to the given definitions, this research now presents three key findings regarding the authenticity and relationship of physical environment, the immigrants' behaviors, the presence of ethnic groups and the commodification of Chinatown, Koreatown and Thai Town, Los Angeles.

### **1. *How have internal and external factors affected the unique characteristics (or authenticity) of three Asian ethnic enclaves in the city of Los Angeles?***

- a. Location:** Concentration of ethnic businesses creates a strong ethnic economy, which contributes the cohesion of the ethnic group and vice versa. A fragmented spatial pattern with dispersion of economic resources contributes to an emergence of another ethnic enclave, which affects the traditional enclave.
- b. Residential mobility:** if an ethnic enclave able to maintain its essence as both a commercial and social core, although the ethnic group possesses high residential mobility, the enclave will be able to serve the ethnic group and maintain its authenticity. In contrast, high residential mobility with a fragmented spatial pattern can lead to a dissolving enclave.
- c. Ethnic proportion:** High ethnic proportion offers a better chance for maintaining an enclaves authenticity and for reducing the risk of being displaced. However, the cultural pluralism of Los Angeles

means that an enclave will serve a multi-ethnic group. For example in Koreatown, Korean and Latino immigrants support each other; the middleman phenomena indicates a potential encounter point between the two ethnic groups, which can lead to structural change in the enclave.

- d. Ethnic identity:** Los Angeles characteristically supports Asian immigrants in having a dual ethnic identity (e.g. speaking English and a native language, consuming general products as well as ethnic products on regular basis). While a tangible presence of ethnic identity in the enclave promotes traditionalism, at some point, this identity is not spiritually related to the ethnic group. In contrast, the intangible identity (language, belief, customs) and temporal events (festival and celebration) are rooted deeper in an ethnic group's identity.
- e. Assimilation:** An ethnic group that has successfully assimilated structurally is potentially able to maintain its ethnic identity, which contributes to authenticity of the enclave. Because of their equal social status and secure finance, immigrants are able to contribute to the social and political aspects of their ethnic group than just to its economics. In contrast, acculturation potentially leads to ethnic identity estrangement and decreases the authenticity of an ethnic enclave.
- f. Commodification:** Many ethnic businesses (e.g. restaurants, gift shops, beauty salons) benefit from using their unique cultural identity to promote their business. Once the demand and supply do not have the same direction, these businesses generally became commoditized to serve the demands of the greater LA society. The success of commodification lies in the proportion of customers to immigrants and to meeting their preferences. However, the authentic enclave must benefit the ethnic group either as product supplier or source of employment. Thus, the case studies demonstrated that the contribution of commodification to authenticity in ethnic enclave relies upon meeting the demands of an ethnic group.

**2. *How did these factors change as the city developed?***

- a. A development of the city cause changes in pull factors, which leads to demographic change as well as ethnic proportion in the enclave. Not to mention a development of immigrants' origin country which influences push factor. Changes in local level (e.g. housing, planning, economic strategy) affect location and residential mobility and commodification of the ethnic group. Ethnic identity is influenced from both national origin circumstance and host society characteristic. Los Angeles becomes ethnic mosaic society, which allows the immigrants to maintain their ethnic identity. Moreover, a developed city has ability to provide equal service for all, which decrease a segregation and discrimination problems and allow the immigrant to structurally assimilated.

**3. *What unique architectural characteristics contribute to the authenticity of each of these Asian ethnic enclaves?***

- a. While architectural identity contributes to ethnic identity and traditionalism, it does not support a dynamic identity of the immigrants. The visual characteristic defines time and space in relation to the immigrants' memory. As ever-changing neighborhoods and not stabilized areas, the defined environment seems to become a limitation between newly migrated immigrants to root in new host society. The importance architectural characteristic of Asian ethnic enclave is a flexibility to serve diverse demands of an ethnic group because the continuously immigration indicate behavioral differences. For example, in addition to Hollywoodized Chinatown, Chinese immigrants coming from Mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong have different historical background, economic status and cultural value. Nowadays, there are Little Hong Kong and Little Taipei in Los Angeles. Koreatown presents another scenario where a Spanish church is now operated by Korean, provides service for all ethnic groups and preaches in Korean, English, Spanish and Filipino. This situation shows that architectural expression is less important than spatial utilization that is flexible to change in order to serve a rotating user groups.

Lastly, there are few points to discuss regarding an ethnic enclave as a spatial product of vicarious society where people and place are continuously shaping each other.

First, since the most powerful pull factor for immigrants is the economic opportunities in the United States, maintaining their cultural roots is not the first concern. The enclave's roles are offering an ethnic economy and source of socioeconomic structure, which contribute to its authenticity via the truthfulness of spatial utilization and the genuineness of the products. The ethnic enclave can cultivate its authenticity with an economy that places emphasis on the social identity of the producers rather than the consumers. If successful, the enclave will be able to avoid commodification and maintain its authenticity even if the enclave is challenged by being outnumbered by other ethnic groups.

Second, the most self-consciously "authentic" displays of behavior by immigrants are such acts as language speaking, practicing of faith and belief, and consumption of ethnic products. One might say that an ethnic enclave delays or even prevents an immigrant group from becoming part of American society. However, the presence of ethnic institutions contribute to the looking at the actual occurrences of spatial utilization, consuming products, and the relationship of ethnic groups' cultural practices.

Third, mentioning the authenticity, the most widely perceived "authentic" ethnic display usually refers to the traditionalism. However because the ethnic identity of immigrants is continuously shaped by their new host society, authenticity may not derive from their obsolescent traditions. Although the marketing of traditionalism is symbolically rich in commodities for the contemporary market economy, traditionalism benefits the degree of authenticity once it possesses either co-relation of ethnic lifestyle or traditional revival. However, the authenticity of an ethnic enclave as defined to this research is a spatial quality and the products that serve the demands of an ethnic group. The enclave that roots itself in pastimes, crafts, and skills of traditionalism, is not the most authentic unless it matches the ethnic groups' needs. Thus traditionalism is most likely to appeal to outsiders rather than to insiders and marketing of symbolically rich commodities in the context of the contemporary American market economy.

With these three key findings, the investigation of an authenticity of ethnic enclave shows that it requires a dynamic change of spatial quality that can reflect their transforming ethnic identity.

***Why should an ethnic enclave emerge and continuously exist, or become more self-consciously emphasized?***

To answer this question, two facets must be critically examined. First, the immigrant population and their behaviors indicate a demand for ethnic enclaves. As a transitional space, the importance of ethnic enclave builds upon the migration rates and their national origins. The immigration statistic of the United States shows the increasing number of immigrants and more diverse country of origins. This circumstance should lead to the emergence of various ethnic enclaves and enhance their existence. Still the national origins of immigrants hold an important role because it implies a cultural and economic difference. The pace of acculturation and structural assimilation can lead to the cohesion of ethnic group to form an ethnic enclave or, conversely, to dissolve and become part of society. Second, a characteristic of the host society and the ethnic enclave's position in that society are another facet that contributes to an ethnic enclave development. For Los Angeles, it has presented itself as a culturally pluralistic society where ethnic diversity is celebrated. To legislate an ethnic enclave like Thai Town is an encouragement of symbolic ethnic identity and history rather than a process of segregation. Thus, an ethnic enclave in Los Angeles is positioned as a source of exotic cultural ambience that is favored both by the host society and the immigrant group.

***Is it appropriate to legislate ethnic enclave or it is better to let ethnic enclave form organically?***

Within the context of Los Angeles where an ethnic enclave is used to encourage local business and promote cultural tourism, it is beneficial to promote and legislate the ethnic enclave. This research presented the case of Thai Town, in which the legislation took an important role in stimulating the cohesion of Thai business and ethnic group. However, it is important for the ethnic group to make their voice heard in the first place. The successful ethnic enclave is a two-way process. In order to become a strong community it requires a concentrated

ethnic population and robust ethnic economy. This competency lies upon the ethnic group's long-term effort to construct itself into a self-sustaining community.

***What is the lifespan of an authentic ethnic enclave?***

From this research, it would appear that an authentic ethnic enclave begins declining after it reaches its peak in thirty years, as illustrated in the graph of authenticity (see figure XX). This claim is supported by a supposition that thirty years is the duration of people's working life and also the duration of a generational change. It considers the factors that contribute to an enclave's downturn, which are not only a generational assimilation but also the strength of ethnic economy that becomes more independent. Within a thirty-year time span, the ethnic groups potentially have high residential mobility, which lead to the dispersion of their spatial distribution as well as setting up their relationship with a host society. However, additional research should be conducted in order to provide solid conclusion. This research would include the same ethnic's enclave in different host societies as well as diverse ethnic enclave in one host society.

Finally, in order to make different culture fit into new context, transformation and commodification are inevitable processes, which in one way may reduce the authenticity of an enclave but in another way, these processes create a sense of connectedness to a new host society. This resurgent contemporary ethnicity not only helps the ethnic groups utilize their uniqueness to support their livelihood but it also enables the transformation of their culture and identity. Thus, the authenticity of ethnic enclave should rely upon how the ethnic enclave serves the needs of an ethnic group and how well it can provides a contemporary spatial quality, which connects the ethnic group to new host society. The authenticity is not an attachment to tradition where it no longer serves the immigrants' behavior but rather commercial purpose. This brief examination of the ethnic enclaves' authenticity in Los Angeles hopefully can shed light on the construction and reconstruction of place making in an ethnic enclave.

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## **Appendix A** Interview Form

**W** UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON  
HUMAN SUBJECTS DIVISION

Date: 21 April 2015

PI: Ms. Paiwanee Chaiwat  
Architecture

RE: HSD study #49597  
"Commodification of Ethnic Community"

Dear Ms. Chaiwat:

The University of Washington Human Subjects Division (HSD) has determined that your research qualifies for exempt status in accordance with the federal regulations under 45 CFR 46.101/ 21 CFR 56.104. Details of this determination are as follows:

Exempt category determination: 2

Determination period: April 21, 2015 – April 20, 2020

**If the research becomes federally funded, supported, or regulated, the researcher must immediately cease research activities until IRB approval is obtained. This will require submission of a new application.**

Although research that qualifies for exempt status is not governed by federal requirements for research involving human subjects, investigators still have a responsibility to protect the rights and welfare of their subjects, and are expected to conduct their research in accordance with the ethical principles of *Justice, Beneficence* and *Respect for Persons*, as described in the Belmont Report, as well as with state and local institutional policy.

**Determination Period:** An exempt determination is valid for five years from the date of the determination, as long as the nature of the research activity remains the same. If there is any substantive change to the activity that has determined to be exempt, one that alters the overall design, procedures, or risk/benefit ratio to subjects, the exempt determination will no longer be valid. Exempt determinations expire automatically at the end of the five-year period. If you complete your project before the end of the determination period, it is not necessary to make a formal request that your study be closed. Should you need to continue your research activity beyond the five-year determination period, you will need to submit a new *Exempt Status Request* form for review and determination *prior to implementation*.

**Revisions:** Only modifications that are deemed "minor" are allowable, in other words, modifications that do not change the nature of the research and therefore do not affect the validity of the exempt determination. **Please refer to the [SOP on Exempt Determinations](#) for more information about what are considered minor changes.** If changes that are considered to be "substantive" occur to the research, that is, changes that alter the nature of the research and therefore affect the validity of the exempt determination, a new *Exempt Status Request* must be submitted to HSD for review and determination *prior to implementation*.

**Problems:** If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events or any problem that may increase the risk to the human subjects and change the category of review, notify HSD promptly. Any complaints from subjects pertaining to the risk and benefits of the research must be reported to HSD.

Please use the HSD study number listed above on any forms submitted which relate to this research, or on any correspondence with the HSD office.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at (206) 543-0098 or via email at [hsdinfo@uw.edu](mailto:hsdinfo@uw.edu). Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



Laura A. Henderson  
Human Subjects Review Administrator

4333 Brooklyn Ave. NE, Box 359470 Seattle, WA 98195-9470

main 206.543.0098 fax 206.543.9218 [hsdinfo@uw.edu](mailto:hsdinfo@uw.edu) [www.washington.edu/research/hsd](http://www.washington.edu/research/hsd)

# Interview Form 1A

Chinatown: English format

## **Questionnaire: Chinatown as an Ethnic Community**

This questionnaire is part of Masters' Thesis in Architecture of Ms. Pamanee Chaiwat at University of Washington, Seattle. In order to study the internal force that influence the commodification of ethnic enclave, this interview has been developed to gather personal opinion regarding how well your experiences in the ethnic community contribute to your ethnic identification.

The questionnaire should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Translations of the interview also available in Chinese, Korean and Thai, but the responses will be translated and scored for analysis in English. Responses will not be identified by individual names. All responses will be compiled together and analyzed as a group. Please know that taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time.

Thank you,

Pamanee Chaiwat  
Master of Architecture Candidate 2015  
College of Built Environment  
University of Washington, Seattle

Phone: 206 334-9865  
E-mail: pamaneec@uw.edu

**Personal information**

Age  <22  22-40  40-60  >60

Gender  Male  Female  not specify

I live  by myself  with roommate(s)  with my family

My ethnicity is

- Chinese or Chinese American
- Korean or Korean American
- Thai or Thai American
- Other (write in e.g. Latino, Black, White, Mixed): \_\_\_\_\_

Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

I have been living in the US for  <5  5-10  10-20  >20 years

I have been living in LA for  <5  5-10  10-20  >20 years

Where do you live?

- In Chinatown
- Nearby Chinatown
- Other part of Los Angeles (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you work?

- In Chinatown
- Nearby Chinatown
- Other part of Los Angeles (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not live or work in Chinatown, how often you go there?

- More than once a week
- Ever other week
- Once a month
- Once in a while

Why do you to go to Chinatown?

- Grocery shopping
- Ethnic food
- Socialize with friends
- Ethnic events or cultural celebrations
- Religious activities
- Cultural experience
- Other (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

(5) = Strongly Agree, (4) = Agree, (3) = Neutral, (2) = Disagree, (1) = Strongly Disagree

Preferences	5	4	3	2	1
I like Chinatown because it is affordable.					
I like Chinatown because it provides social support e.g. sport center, library, senior center, ethnic school, and religious institution.					
I like Chinatown because the shops have a variety of ethnic products e.g. Chinese food, grocery, clothes.					
I like Chinatown because it allows me to be close to my family and friends.					
I like Chinatown because I can use my language.					

Limitations	5	4	3	2	1
I cannot afford to live outside Chinatown.					
I cannot find social support outside of Chinatown e.g. sport center, library, senior center, ethnic school, and religious institution.					
I cannot find good work opportunities outside of Chinatown.					
I prefer to visit Chinatown because it supports interaction with my ethnic group and ethnic culture.					
I prefer to spend time in Chinatown to avoid ethnic conflicts in other neighborhoods					

Ethnic Identity	5	4	3	2	1
I feel that Chinatown contributes to my sense of belonging to my ethnic group.					
I feel that Chinatown helps preserve my culture.					
Chinatown helps me engage in my cultural practices related to food, music, religion, and so forth.					
In order to learn more about my culture, I have often talked to other people in Chinatown.					
I feel that Chinatown helps me have pride in my ancestry.					

Assimilation	5	4	3	2	1
I do NOT feel comfortable using any language other than my native language. .					
I do NOT feel comfortable being with people other than my ethnic group.					
It is difficult living or working outside Chinatown.					
It is difficult practicing my culture outside Chinatown.					
I associate myself with American society as well as my ethnic group.					

## Interview Form 1B

Chinatown: Chinese format

### 调查问卷：洛杉矶中国城的商业化

此调查问卷是华盛顿大学（西雅图校区）Pamane Chaiwat 的建筑硕士论文的一部分。为了进一步了解内在力对族裔聚集区商业化的影响，此调查问卷意在了解个体在民族社区的经历对于种族认知的影响。

完成此调查问卷大约需要 10-15 分钟的时间。此调查问卷已被翻译成中文、韩文和泰语，但是您的回复将被翻译成英语进行分析整理。您的答案将不会和个人姓名关联或被识别。所有的数据将被整合成组别进行后期分析。您可以自愿选择是否参与此调查并且您有权选择在任何时候退出或停止答题。

感谢您的配合，

**Pamane Chaiwat**  
Master of Architecture Candidate 2015  
College of Built Environment  
University of Washington, Seattle

Phone 电话: 206 334-9865  
E-mail 邮箱: pamaneec@uw.edu

**个人信息**

年龄  <22       22-40       40-60       >60

性别  男       女       不作答

您目前和谁住在一起?  自己       室友       家人

我的种族是  
 中国人或美籍华人  
 韩国人或美籍韩裔  
 泰国人或美籍泰裔  
 其他 (write in e.g. 拉丁美洲, 黑人, 白人, 混血): \_\_\_\_\_

出生地 \_\_\_\_\_

国籍 \_\_\_\_\_

您住在美国已经有  <5       5-10       10-20       >20 年

您住在洛杉矶市已经有  <5       5-10       10-20       >20 年

您住在哪里?  
 中国城/唐人街里  
 中国城附近  
 洛杉矶的其他部分(write in 请举例): \_\_\_\_\_

您在哪里工作?  
 中国城/唐人街里  
 中国城附近  
 洛杉矶的其他部分(write in 请举例): \_\_\_\_\_

如果您不住中国城也不在中国城工作, 那么请问您大概多久会去那里一次?  
 每周至少去一次  
 两周一次  
 一个月一次  
 很久才去一次

您去中国城是为了?  
 Grocery shopping 采购杂货  
 Ethnic food 品尝各国美食  
 Socialize with friends 参与社交活动  
 Ethnic events or cultural celebrations 庆祝民族节日  
 Religious activities 参与宗教信仰活动  
 Cultural experience 体验不同文化  
 Other 其他 (write in 请举例): \_\_\_\_\_

(5) = 非常赞同, (4) = 同意, (3) = 保持中立, (2) = 不同意, (1) = 非常不同意

喜好	5	4	3	2	1
我喜欢中国城因为这里的消费水平比较低。					
我喜欢中国城因为它提供了许多社会支持, 比如运动中心, 图书馆, 老年活动中心, 双语学校, 和宗教机构。					
我喜欢中国城因为这里有各式各样的商店, 比如中式美食, 杂货, 衣服等。					
我喜欢中国城因为这里让我离我的家人和朋友们更近。					
我喜欢中国城因为我可以在这里使用我的母语。					

不足	5	4	3	2	1
我在中国城以外的地方无法负担生活所需。					
我在中国城以外的地方无法寻求社会帮助, 如运动中心, 图书馆, 老年活动中心, 双语学校, 和宗教机构。					
我在中国城以外的地方无法就业。					
我喜欢去中国城因为它为我和我同种族人们的交流和互动提供了支持。					
我喜欢去中国城因为可以避免文化冲突。					

族群认知	5	4	3	2	1
我认为中国城加深了我个人的族群认知。					
我认为中国城为我的文化的保护提供了帮助。					
中国城帮助我更深刻的了解了中国的食物, 音乐, 信仰等等。					
为了更深层次的了解我的文化, 我经常跟中国城里的人聊天。					
我认为中国城让我更加为我的祖先们感到自豪。					

同化	5	4	3	2	1
我不喜欢除了我的母语以外的语言。					
我不喜欢和其他种族的人在一起。					
对我来说在中国城以外的地方生活或工作很困难。					
我认为在中国城以外的地方很难运用我的文化。					
我能够很好地融入美国社会就像融入我自己的民族一样。					

## Interview Form 2A

Koreatown: English format

### **Questionnaire: Koreatown as an Ethnic Community**

This questionnaire is part of Masters' Thesis in Architecture of Ms. Pamanee Chaiwat at University of Washington, Seattle. In order to study the internal force that influence the commodification of ethnic enclave, this interview has been developed to gather personal opinion regarding how well your experiences in the ethnic community contribute to your ethnic identification.

The questionnaire should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Translations of the interview also available in Chinese, Korean and Thai, but the responses will be translated and scored for analysis in English. Responses will not be identified by individual names. All responses will be compiled together and analyzed as a group. Please know that taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time.

Thank you,

Pamanee Chaiwat  
Master of Architecture Candidate 2015  
College of Built Environment  
University of Washington, Seattle

Phone: 206 334-9865  
E-mail: pamaneec@uw.edu

**Personal information**

Age  <22  22-40  40-60  >60

Gender  Male  Female  not specify

I live  by myself  with roommate(s)  with my family

My ethnicity is

- Chinese or Chinese American
- Korean or Korean American
- Thai or Thai American
- Other (write in e.g. Latino, Black, White, Mixed): \_\_\_\_\_

Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

I have been living in the US for  <5  5-10  10-20  >20 years

I have been living in LA for  <5  5-10  10-20  >20 years

Where do you live?

- In Koreatown
- Nearby Koreatown
- Other part of Los Angeles (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you work?

- In Koreatown
- Nearby Koreatown
- Other part of Los Angeles (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not live or work in Koreatown, how often you go there?

- More than once a week
- Ever other week
- Once a month
- Once in a while

Why do you go to Koreatown?

- Grocery shopping
- Ethnic food
- Socialize with friends
- Ethnic events or cultural celebrations
- Religious activities
- Cultural experience
- Other (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

(5) = Strongly Agree, (4) = Agree, (3) = No opinion, (2) = Disagree, (1) = Strongly Disagree

Preferences	5	4	3	2	1
I like Koreatown because it is affordable.					
I like Koreatown because it provides social support e.g. sport center, library, senior center, ethnic school, and religious institution.					
I like Koreatown because the shops have a variety of ethnic products e.g. Thai food, grocery, clothes.					
I like Koreatown because it allows me to be close to my family and friends.					
I like Koreatown because I can use my language.					

Limitations	5	4	3	2	1
I cannot afford to live outside Koreatown.					
I cannot find social support outside of Koreatown e.g. sport center, library, senior center, ethnic school, and religious institution.					
I cannot find good work opportunities outside of Koreatown.					
I prefer to visit Koreatown because it supports interaction with my ethnic group and ethnic culture.					
I prefer to spend time in Koreatown to avoid ethnic conflicts in other neighborhoods					

Ethnic Identity	5	4	3	2	1
I feel that Koreatown contributes to my sense of belonging to my ethnic group.					
I feel that Koreatown helps preserve my culture.					
Koreatown helps me engage in my cultural practices related to food, music, religion, and so forth.					
In order to learn more about my culture, I have often talked to other people in Koreatown.					
I feel that Koreatown helps me have pride in my ancestry.					

Assimilation	5	4	3	2	1
I do NOT feel comfortable using any language other than my native language. .					
I do NOT feel comfortable being with people other than my ethnic group.					
It is difficult living or working outside Koreatown.					
It is difficult practicing my culture outside Koreatown.					
I associate myself with American society as well as my ethnic group.					

## Interview Form 2B

Koreatown: Korean format

### 코리아 타운(Korea Town)에 대한 설문지

이 설문지는 시애틀 소재 워싱턴 대학교 University of Washington, 재학 중인 과마니 차이왓 Pamanee Chaiwat의 건축학 석사 학위논문을 위한 것입니다. 이 연구의 목적은 코리아타운과 같은 소수 민족 '거주지'의 상업화에 영향을 미치는 요소를 알아보는 것이며, 이 설문지는 소수 민족 공동체에서의 경험이 응답자의 민족적 정체성에 어떻게 영향을 미쳤는지에 대한 의견을 알아보고자 작성되었습니다.

이 설문지는 10-15 분 정도의 시간이 소요됩니다. 중국어, 한국어, 태국어로 번역된 설문지도 함께 준비되어 있으나 응답된 내용은 모두 영어로 번역되어 분석에 사용될 것입니다. 모든 응답내용은 합쳐져서 분석되기 때문에 개인의 응답내용이 따로 부각될 가능성은 없습니다. 연구 참여는 오직 자발적인 의지에 의해서만 가능하고, 설문 응답을 그만두고 싶으실 때는 언제라도 그만두실 수 있음을 알려드립니다.

많은 참여 부탁드립니다. 감사합니다.

과마니 차이왓 Pamanee Chaiwat  
Master of Architecture Candidate 2015  
College of Built Environment  
University of Washington, Seattle

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E-mail: pamanee@uw.edu

**개인 정보**

나이  <22     22-40     40-60     >60

성별  남     여     지정하지 않겠음

거주관련  나 혼자     룸메이트와     가족과    살고 있다

인종/민족  중국인 혹은 중국계 미국인  
 한국인 혹은 한국계 미국인  
 태국인 혹은 태국계 미국인  
 그 외(우측 빈 칸에 써주십시오): \_\_\_\_\_

태어난 곳 \_\_\_\_\_

국적 \_\_\_\_\_

미국에서 거주한 년수  <5     5-10     10-20     >20 (년)

LA 에서 거주한 년수  <5     5-10     10-20     >20 (년)

거주하는 곳  코리아타운 내부  
 코리아타운 근처  
 그 외 LA 의 다른 지역(우측 빈 칸에 써주십시오): \_\_\_\_\_

일하는 곳  코리아타운 내부  
 코리아타운 근처  
 그 외 LA 의 다른 지역(우측 빈 칸에 써주십시오): \_\_\_\_\_

코리아 타운에서 일하거나 거주하지 않으신다면, 얼마나 자주 코리아 타운에 가십니까?  
 일주일에 한 번 이상  
 이주일에 한 번 정도  
 한 달에 한 번  
 어쩌다 한 번씩

코리아 타운에 방문하는 이유는 무엇입니까?  
 식재료 쇼핑을 위해  
 한국 음식을 먹기 위해  
 친구들과 만나기 위해  
 민족적/문화적 이벤트를 위해  
 종교적 활동을 위해  
 문화 활동을 위해  
 그 외 (우측 빈 칸에 써주십시오): \_\_\_\_\_

(5) = 매우 맞음, (4) = 맞음, (3) = 보통, (2) = 아님, (1) = 전혀 아님

선호하는 이유 관련	5	4	3	2	1
나는 가격이 저렴하기 때문에 코리아타운을 좋아한다.					
나는 다양한 사회적 지원망(스포츠센터, 도서관, 노인정, 민족 학교, 종교기관)이 제공되기 때문에 코리아타운을 좋아한다.					
나는 이 곳의 가게들이 다양한 민족적 상품들(한국음식, 식재료, 의류)을 판매하기 때문에 코리아타운을 좋아한다.					
나는 나의 가족들, 친구들과 함께 할 수 있기 때문에 코리아타운을 좋아한다.					
나는 나의 모국어를 사용할 수 있어서 코리아타운을 좋아한다.					

제한점 관련	5	4	3	2	1
나는 경제적 이유로 코리아타운 밖에서는 살 수 없다.					
나는 코리아타운 밖에서는 다양한 사회적 지원망(스포츠센터, 도서관, 노인정, 민족 학교, 종교기관)을 제공받을 수 없다.					
나는 코리아타운 밖에서는 좋은 직장/직업을 찾을 수 없다.					
나는 코리아타운이 나와 같은 민족 사람들과 민족 문화를 제공해주기 때문에 이곳에 방문한다.					
나는 다른 지역에서처럼 민족/문화적 갈등을 겪지 않아도 되기 때문에 코리아타운에서 시간을 보내는 것을 선호한다.					

민족적 정체성 관련	5	4	3	2	1
나는 코리아타운이 내가 나의 민족에 속해 있다는 소속감을 느끼는데 기여한다고 생각한다.					
나는 코리아타운이 나의 문화를 지키는데 도움을 주고 있다고 생각한다.					
나는 코리아타운이 내가 음식, 음악, 종교 등과 관련한 민족 문화적 활동을 하는데 도움을 주고 있다고 생각한다.					
나의 문화를 더 많이 배우기 위해서, 나는 코리아타운에 있는 다른 사람들과 대화를 하거나 이야기를 한다.					
나는 코리아타운이 내가 나의 혈통에 자부심을 느끼도록 돕는다고 생각한다.					

동화/흡수 관련	5	4	3	2	1
나는 모국어 외에 다른 언어를 사용할 때 불편함을 느낀다.					
나는 나와 다른 민족(나라) 사람들과 있을 때 불편함을 느낀다.					
코리아타운 밖에서 일하거나 사는 것은 어려운 일이다.					
코리아타운 외의 지역에서 나의 문화를 실행하는 것은 어렵다.					
나는 나의 민족사회 사람들만큼이나 미국 사회 사람들과도 잘 교제하고 있다.					

## Interview Form 3A

Thai Town

Language: English

### **Questionnaire: Thai Town as an Ethnic Community**

This questionnaire is part of Masters' Thesis in Architecture of Ms. Pamanee Chaiwat at University of Washington, Seattle. In order to study the internal force that influence the commodification of ethnic enclave, this interview has been developed to gather personal opinion regarding how well your experiences in the ethnic community contribute to your ethnic identification.

The questionnaire should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Translations of the interview also available in Chinese, Korean and Thai, but the responses will be translated and scored for analysis in English. Responses will not be identified by individual names. All responses will be compiled together and analyzed as a group. Please know that taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time.

Thank you,

Pamanee Chaiwat  
Master of Architecture Candidate 2015  
College of Built Environment  
University of Washington, Seattle

Phone: 206 334-9865  
E-mail: pamanee@uw.edu

**Personal information**

Age  <22  22-40  40-60  >60

Gender  Male  Female  not specify

I live  by myself  with roommate(s)  with my family

My ethnicity is

- Chinese or Chinese American
- Korean or Korean American
- Thai or Thai American
- Other (write in e.g. Latino, Black, White, Mixed): \_\_\_\_\_

Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

I have been living in the US for  <5  5-10  10-20  >20 years

I have been living in LA for  <5  5-10  10-20  >20 years

Where do you live?

- In Thai Town
- Nearby Thai Town
- Other part of Los Angeles (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you work?

- In Thai Town
- Nearby Thai Town
- Other part of Los Angeles (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

If you do not live or work in Thai Town, how often you go there?

- More than once a week
- Ever other week
- Once a month
- Once in a while

Why do you go to Thai Town?

- Grocery shopping
- Ethnic food
- Socialize with friends
- Ethnic events or cultural celebrations
- Religious activities
- Cultural experience
- Other (write in): \_\_\_\_\_

(5) = Strongly Agree, (4) = Agree, (3) = No opinion, (2) = Disagree, (1) = Strongly Disagree

Preferences	5	4	3	2	1
I like Thai Town because it is affordable.					
I like Thai Town because it provides social support e.g. sport center, library, senior center, ethnic school, and religious institution.					
I like Thai Town because the shops have a variety of ethnic products e.g. Thai food, grocery, clothes.					
I like Thai Town because it allows me to be close to my family and friends.					
I like Thai Town because I can use my language.					

Limitations	5	4	3	2	1
I cannot afford to live outside Thai Town.					
I cannot find social support outside of Thai Town e.g. sport center, library, senior center, ethnic school, and religious institution.					
I cannot find good work opportunities outside of Thai Town.					
I prefer to visit Thai Town because it supports interaction with my ethnic group and ethnic culture.					
I prefer to spend time in Thai Town to avoid ethnic conflicts in other neighborhoods.					

Ethnic Identity	5	4	3	2	1
I feel that Thai Town contributes to my sense of belonging to my ethnic group.					
I feel that Thai Town helps preserve my culture.					
Thai Town helps me engage in my cultural practices related to food, music, religion, and so forth.					
In order to learn more about my culture, I have often talked to other people in Thai Town.					
I feel that Thai Town helps me have pride in my ancestry.					

Assimilation	5	4	3	2	1
I do NOT feel comfortable using any language other than my native language.					
I do NOT feel comfortable being with people other than my ethnic group.					
It is difficult living or working outside Thai Town.					
It is difficult practicing my culture outside Thai Town.					
I associate myself with American society as well as my ethnic group.					

## Interview Form 3B

Thai Town

Language: Thai

### แบบสอบถาม ไทยทาวน์ และชุมชนคนไทยในลอส แอนเจลิส

แบบสอบถามนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของวิทยานิพนธ์ ของนางสาว ปาเมณี ชัยวัฒน์ (Pamane Chaiwat) ภาควิชาสถาปัตยกรรม มหาวิทยาลัยวอชิงตัน ณ ซีแอตเทิล (University of Washington, Seattle) เพื่อการศึกษาวิจัยที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อเปลี่ยนแปลงของชุมชนไทยนอกประเทศ แบบสอบถามนี้ ถูกพัฒนาขึ้นเพื่อสำรวจความเห็นส่วนบุคคลของคนในพื้นที่เกี่ยวกับความสำคัญของไทยทาวน์ และอัตลักษณ์ของไทย

แบบสอบถามนี้ใช้เวลาประมาณ 10-15 นาทีและมีการแปลเป็นภาษาจีน เกาหลี และไทยเพื่อการสำรวจในชุมชนนั้นๆ อย่างไรก็ตามการวิเคราะห์ ข้อมูลจะทำในภาษาอังกฤษ ผู้ร่วมตอบแบบสอบถามไม่จำเป็นต้องเปิดเผยข้อมูลระบุตัวตน รวมทั้งการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลจะเป็นแบบกลุ่ม การร่วม ตอบแบบสอบถามเป็นไปโดยความสมัครใจเท่านั้นและท่านสามารถจะหยุดให้ความร่วมมือได้ทันทีที่ต้องการ

ขอบคุณในความร่วมมือ

ปาเมณี ชัยวัฒน์

Pamane Chaiwat

Master of Architecture Candidate 2015

College of Built Environment

University of Washington, Seattle

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E-mail: pamaneec@uw.edu

**ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคล**

อายุ  น้อยกว่า 22  22-40  40-60  มากกว่า 60

เพศ  ชาย  หญิง  ไม่ระบุ

ฉันพักอาศัย  คนเดียว  กับเพื่อนร่วมห้อง  กับครอบครัว

เชื้อชาติ

จีน หรือ จีนอเมริกัน

เกาหลี หรือเกาหลีอเมริกัน

ไทย หรือ ไทยอเมริกัน

อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ e.g. Latino, Black, White, Mixed): \_\_\_\_\_

สถานที่เกิด \_\_\_\_\_

สัญชาติ \_\_\_\_\_

ฉันพำนักอาศัยในสหรัฐอเมริกาเป็นเวลา  <5  5-10  10-20  >20 ปี

ฉันพำนักอาศัยในลอส แอลเจลิสเป็นเวลา  <5  5-10  10-20  >20 ปี

ย่านที่พักอาศัยของฉันคือ

ในไทยทาวน์

ภายในบริเวณใกล้เคียงไทย ทาวน์

ส่วนอื่นของแอลเอ (โปรดระบุ): \_\_\_\_\_

ย่านที่ทำงานของฉันคือ

ในไทยทาวน์

ภายในบริเวณใกล้เคียงไทย ทาวน์

ส่วนอื่นของแอลเอ (โปรดระบุ): \_\_\_\_\_

คุณไม่ได้พักอาศัย หรือทำงานในไทยทาวน์ คุณมาไทยทาวน์บ่อยเพียงใด

มากกว่า 1 ครั้งต่อสัปดาห์

น้อยกว่า 1 ครั้งต่อสัปดาห์

ประมาณ 1 ครั้งต่อเดือน

นานๆ ครั้ง

คุณมาไทยทาวน์เพื่ออะไร

เพื่อซื้อสินค้าใช้สอยทั่วไป

ทานอาหาร

พบปะสังสรรค์กับเพื่อน

โอกาสพิเศษ และงานฉลองทางวัฒนธรรมต่างๆ

เพื่อร่วมพิธีกรรมทางศาสนา

เพื่อเรียนรู้วัฒนธรรมไทย

อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ): \_\_\_\_\_

(5) = เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง, (4) = เห็นด้วย, (3) = ไม่แน่ใจ, (2) = ไม่เห็นด้วย, (1) = ไม่เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง

ความชอบส่วนบุคคล	5	4	3	2	1
ฉันชอบไทยทาวน์เพราะมีที่พักอาศัย และสินค้าราคาถูก					
ฉันชอบไทยทาวน์เพราะในไทยทาวน์มีศูนย์บริการต่างๆ และหน่วยงานเพื่อคนไทย เช่น ห้องสมุด ศูนย์กีฬา บ้านพักคนชรา โรงเรียน และศาสนสถาน					
ฉันชอบไทยทาวน์เพราะในไทยทาวน์มีร้านค้าและสินค้าไทยจำนวนมาก เช่น อาหารไทย ของสด เสื้อผ้า และหนังสือ					
ฉันชอบไทยทาวน์เพราะฉันสามารถอยู่ใกล้ๆกับเพื่อนคนไทย หรือญาติของฉันได้					
ฉันชอบไทยทาวน์เพราะฉันสามารถใช้ภาษาของฉันได้ในไทยทาวน์					

ข้อจำกัด	5	4	3	2	1
ฉันไม่สามารถจะพักอาศัยในย่านอื่นนอกจากไทยทาวน์ได้ เพราะข้อจำกัดในเรื่องค่าใช้จ่าย					
ฉันไม่สามารถหาศูนย์บริการต่างๆ และหน่วยงานเพื่อคนไทย เช่น ห้องสมุด ศูนย์กีฬา บ้านพักคนชรา โรงเรียน และศาสนสถาน ที่อื่นได้ นอกจากที่ไทยทาวน์					
ฉันไม่สามารถหางานที่ดีที่อื่นได้ นอกจากที่ไทยทาวน์					
ฉันเลือกที่จะไปไทยทาวน์เพราะฉันสามารถพบปะสังสรรค์กับคนไทย และส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้วัฒนธรรมไทยได้ที่นี้					
ฉันเลือกที่จะใช้เวลาในไทยทาวน์เพื่อนหลีกเลี่ยงความขัดแย้งกับคนชาติอื่นๆ					

เอกลักษณ์ทางเชื้อชาติ	5	4	3	2	1
ฉันรู้สึกที่ไทยทาวน์มีส่วนทำให้ฉันรู้สึกเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของชุมชนคนไทย					
ฉันรู้สึกที่ไทยทาวน์มีส่วนช่วยในการรักษาวัฒนธรรมของฉันไว้					
ไทยทาวน์ทำให้ฉันมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมไทยต่างๆ เช่น งานเฉลิมฉลองเทศกาลต่างๆ อาหาร และดนตรีไทย เป็นต้น					
ฉันชอบที่จะพูดคุยกับผู้คนในไทยทาวน์เพื่อที่จะเรียนรู้วัฒนธรรมไทย					
ฉันรู้สึกที่ไทยทาวน์ทำให้ฉันมีความภาคภูมิใจในเชื้อชาติของฉันมากขึ้น					

การปรับตัวเข้าสู่สังคมอเมริกัน	5	4	3	2	1
ฉันไม่รู้สึกสบายใจที่จะใช้ภาษาอื่นนอกจากภาษาไทย					
ฉันไม่รู้สึกสบายใจเมื่อถูกล้อมรอบด้วยคนชาติอื่นจากคนไทย					
การอยู่อาศัย หรือทำงานที่อื่นนอกจากไทยทาวน์นี้ทำได้ยาก					
การปฏิบัติตามธรรมเนียมไทยในที่อื่นนอกจากไทยทาวน์นี้ทำได้ยาก					
ฉันสามารถที่จะปรับตัวเข้ากับสังคมอเมริกันได้ เช่นเดียวกับสังคมคนไทย					

## **Appendix B** Evaluation Matrix

Location

Location investigation	Chinatown	Koreatown	Thai Town
From the observation, there are sufficient ethnic institutions and social support.	0	0	
The document analysis demonstrates an outstanding presence of ethnic institutions and social support in comparison to other part of the city.	0	0	
The ethnic neighborhood's location is significance due to its historically tie with the settlement of the ethnic group in Los Angeles.	0		
From the observation, there are diverse activities and businesses in the neighborhood.	0	0	0
The document analysis demonstrates an outstanding presence of ethnic business in comparison to other part of the city.	0	0	
The ethnic group presents a cohesion of ethnic business in the neighborhood.	0	0	0
Majority of the interview responses are satisfied with social supports offered in their ethnic community.	0	0	
Majority of the interview responses are satisfied with the proximity with their family and co-ethnic group that their ethnic community offers.	0		
Majority of the interview responses are satisfied with a convenience of transportation or location of the ethnic community itself.	0	0	
The ethnic neighborhood has a potential to grow geographically or not geographically limited.		0	0
<b>Summary score</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>

## Residential mobility

<b>Residential mobility investigation</b>	<b>Chinatown</b>	<b>Koreatown</b>	<b>Thai Town</b>
The ethnic group demonstrates a significant possibility of inward mobility.		0	0
The ethnic group does not currently possess a degree of outward mobility.			0
The ethnic enclave strategizes to increase residential capacity in the enclave to attract their co-ethnic group.		0	
The ethnic enclave supports and provides a better business opportunity for their co-ethnic group.		0	0
The ethnic enclave is equipped with infrastructure that help newcomer to settle in the U.S.	0	0	
The ethnic group presents a significant cohesion of ethnic residents in the neighborhood in comparison to other part of the city.		0	
Majority of the interview responses indicate strength social supports offered in the ethnic enclave.	0	0	
Majority of the interview responses indicate strength of better business and work opportunity offered in the ethnic enclave.			0
Majority of the interview responses indicate a benefit of social entity available in the ethnic enclave.	0	0	
Majority of the interview responses indicate that spending time in the ethnic enclave help them avoid ethnic conflicts in other neighborhoods.			
<b>Summary score</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

## Ethnic proportion

Ethnic proportion investigation	Chinatown	Koreatown	Thai Town
The document analysis reports that the ethnic group has a highest ethnic proportion in their neighborhood.	0		
The document analysis reports a high ethnic proportion of the ethnic group from their country of origin in their neighborhood.	0	0	
The ethnic group is the most visible ethnics in the neighborhood in business sector, as either ethnic entrepreneur or worker.	0		0
From the observation, the ethnic group is the most visible ethnic in the neighborhood as a visitor.		0	
The ethnic group strongly dominates the local businesses in the neighborhood.	0	0	0
The ethnic group has a strong political voice in the neighborhood.	0	0	
Linguistic landscape around the neighborhood demonstrates a strong presence of the ethnic group.	0	0	0
The neighborhood is rather an ethnic community than a multi-ethnic community.	0		
The neighborhood has a potential increasing ethnic proportion due to their development policy or economy.		0	0
In the present, the neighborhood does not have a risk of being displaced by other ethnic group.	0		
<b>Summary score</b>	8	6	4

Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity investigation	Chinatown	Koreatown	Thai Town
The majority of the ethnic group either prefers or has to use their native language, which is not English.	0		0
The ethnic group in the neighborhood shares a similar ethnic identity and historical background.		0	0
The presence of ethnic architectural style e.g. Chinese-style, Korean-style or Thai-style architecture is relevance to their historical background or traditions.		0	
The ethnic group presents a high involvement in social participation, ethnic institutions, traditional activities or political activities in the neighborhood.		0	
The ethnic group has established an ethnic organization to promote the presence of the ethnic group and assist co-ethnic group.	0	0	0
Majority of the interview responses “strongly agree” or “agree” that their ethnic community contributes to the sense of belonging to their ethnic group.	0	0	
Majority of the interview responses “strongly agree” or “agree” that their ethnic community helps preserving their culture.	0	0	
Majority of the interview responses “strongly agree” or “agree” that their ethnic community helps them engage in their cultural practices related to food, music, religion, etc.	0	0	0
Majority of the interview responses “strongly agree” or “agree” that communicating with people their ethnic community helps them learn about their culture.			
Majority of the interview responses “strongly agree” or “agree” that their ethnic community create ethnic pride among their ethnic group.	0	0	0
<b>Summary score</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>

## Assimilation

<b>Assimilation investigation</b>	<b>Chinatown</b>	<b>Koreatown</b>	<b>Thai Town</b>
The ethnic group in the enclave posses a relatively compatible level of education attainment in comparison to Los Angeles' statistic.		0	0
The ethnic group in the enclave posses a relatively compatible level of income in comparison to Los Angeles' statistic.	0	0	
The literature suggests a dual-identification of the ethnic group e.g. Chinese American, Korean American, or Thai American rather than American.	0	0	
The ethnic group in the enclave presents that they are able to integrate into mainstream society of Los Angeles.		0	0
The ethnic group in the enclave presents that no limitation in associate themselves with host society.		0	
Majority of the interview responses report language limitation affecting their interaction with other ethnic group.	0		0
Majority of the interview responses indicate that they do not feel comfortable being with people other than their ethnic group.		0	0
Majority of the interview responses indicate no financial or social limitation in working or living outside of their enclave.	0		0
Majority of the interview responses indicate no limitation in practicing their culture outside of their enclave.	0	0	0
Majority of the interview responses indicate that they associate themselves with American society as well as their ethnic group.	0	0	0
<b>Summary score</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>

## Commodification

<b>Commodification investigation</b>	<b>Chinatown</b>	<b>Koreatown</b>	<b>Thai Town</b>
The ethnic enclave has not been significantly modified or decorated to promote cultural tourism.		0	0
The architectural expression of the ethnic enclave demonstrates the traditionalism that is relevance with the original tradition or serves it purposes.	0	0	
The architecture in the ethnic enclave is able to serve the ethnic group's specific activities regardless of traditionalism expression.		0	
The cultural landscape of the ethnic enclave is not excessively decorated to attract tourists.		0	
The linguistic landscape of the ethnic enclave demonstrates a preference of ethnic group.		0	
The overall area of the enclave has not been decorated with banners, logo or enclave's advertisement of cultural tourism.		0	0
The ethnic product and services offered in the ethnic enclave have not been significantly commodized.		0	0
The ethnic product and services offered in the ethnic enclave genuinely serves its original purpose or intentionally customized to serve co-ethnic group.		0	
Cultural tourism of the enclave has not been promoted.		0	
Traditional practices in the enclave relevance to their authentic tradition with only minor modification.	0		0
<b>Summary score</b>	2	9	4

