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[Negotiating Global Chinatowns: Difference, Diversity and Connection]

Abstract: Over the past two centuries, diverse and changing Chinatowns have become global enclaves where separation from a surrounding city and society intersects with both the construction of "Chinese" communities and the processes that integrate Chinese into wider contexts while challenging or changing these contexts. Based on a decade of fieldwork in Chinatowns in the Americas, Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa, the investigators highlight the tensions of segregation and communit(ies) through the lenses of physical form and boundaries, social centers, and imagery. Drawing on Henri Lefebvres's tripartite vision of the social construction of urban spaces (les espaces perçus, conçus and vécus), this article shows that Chinatowns, as distinctive spaces within a city, encapsulate intense debates about place, citizenship, rights and diversity that speak more generally to cities, nations and global urbanism.

Keywords: Chinatown, Urban form, Representation, Transnationalism, Boundaries.

On September 14, 2013 we joined family and friends in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania's downtown Chinatown to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival. For many modern Mainland Chinese, this harvest moon festival has become a largely private celebration, with rich, dense mooncakes shared in family gatherings. While the People's Republic of China recognized this millennial celebration as part of China's intangible heritage in the 21st century, it only became a national public festival in 2008. For Wong, having grown up in densely-populated 20th century Hong Kong, the public and family holiday spilled over into public parks, entailing children's parades and elaborate, musical lanterns as well as competing brands of moon cakes. In the North American context, Philadelphia's mid-Autumn festival has taken on a public presence. Organizers close a downtown thoroughfare that cuts through Chinatown to erect a stage and host activities. The festival's lunar date gave way to a shared weekend celebration. And other "Asian-Americans", such as Filipino folk dancers joined Chinese-American performers and organizers, while the changing audiences reflected Philadelphia's racial and class diversity. The celebration climaxed with dragon and lion dances, incorporating multi-ethnic participants, while a multi-ethnic hip-hop group commandeered other street spaces to attract donations from the crowd. Finally, visitors wandered into shops and restaurants in Chinatown and the nearby downtown before winding home.

While celebrated as a "Chinese" event, shared with other Chinese (who would celebrate at home days later, according to the lunar calendar), this event also was clearly an American celebration (Yeh 2008). Its subtitle, *Promoting the Culture and Well-Being of Our Community*, situated Chinatown within a larger urban conceptual fabric where culture and well-being are questions built into a discourse of community rights and effective lobbying within a diverse city. While Asian Americans United (AAU) has patronized expansion of the public festival, its program recognized additional donors including historical Chinese associations such as the Chinese Benevolent Association or the Hip Sing Association. Other donor interest groups including the Philadelphia Overseas Chinese Women Association, the Fujian Fraternal Association of Pennsylvania, Chinatown businesses and government and philanthropic organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund. A diversity of Chinese-American voices linked residents to regional networks and wider civic organizations promoting diversity. Similarly, the activities in which we participated incorporated not only non-Chinese people and practices but also new traditions shared across some Chinese enclaves in the United States and other sites of

diaspora. The varied pan-Asian performances underscored Chinese-American relations to other ethnic/political groups, including overseas Chinese of varied heritages and other Asian immigrants from Vietnam, Korea, Japan and other areas who work with AAU. Lions whose colors were unfamiliar to visiting Chinese signal the ongoing creativity of immigrants and descendants. The vitality of generations was equally apparent in the multi-ethnic youth who manned booths and distributed literature, and the youth-oriented commerce that added urban music to the mix, blaring from a shop specialized in Bubble Tea, a concoction that has spread out of Taiwan since the 1990s across the Chinese diaspora and beyond. Meanwhile, on the streets we ran into multiple participants whom we knew, ranging from older Chinese-American friends to our own students from China and other parts of the world.

Urban celebrations such as these underscore the intense paradoxes of metropoles where barriers of space, language, class, religion, gender, sexuality, and imagery, among myriad characteristics, nonetheless prove crucial to the delineation of places of deep meaning and to engagement in complex urban life. Such celebrations, like their communities, proclaim difference while defying barriers and exclusion. The public engaged and created by mid-Autumn events embodied claims for Chinese-Americans in Chinatown and outside of it and an invitation to non-Chinese to visit, learn and consume. After years in which battle lines have been drawn between Chinatown and Philadelphia government and planners over civic issues ranging from rights to decide on institutions and functions in the area, to gentrification to bike lanes and their place in pedestrian-heavy neighborhoods (McDonogh, Wong 2012), the Mid-Autumn Festival creates a place to come together and to share. For us, as anthropologists of mixed Chinese and Euro-American heritages, it also offered a space to reflect on segregation and community.

For two centuries, densely populated residential/commercial/industrial enclaves associated with Chinese immigrants have been icons of segregation within cities worldwide (Tan, Wong 2012; McKeown 2001, 2008; McDonogh, Wong 2012). Such enclaves have been separate from the "rest" of the city because of both host action and immigrant desires, even in early areas of Chinese migration in Southeast Asia (Askew 2001; Skinner 1957). These places became more visible and distinctive with the migration of Chinese in the 19th century as laborers or sailors to port cities and other places of opportunity worldwide. From Canada to Peru, South Africa to Australia to Great Britain itself, local rejection and restriction intersected with the need for mutual support and communication to constitute an emblematic space of the global capitalist city: Chinatown (McKeown 2001; 2008). In the 21st century, Chinatowns have become ubiquitous, given new patterns of migration and the growing influence of China as an economic investor/trader. Old downtown tenements have been refurbished and joined by newly-constructed tourist destinations. Sprawling warehouse districts speak to transnational trade (with scarce residential functions or tourist industries), while suburban, sometimes gated communities set Chinese apart in ways that embody class and power. Cities worldwide, in turn, point to Chinatowns as markers of modernity, cosmopolitanism and globalization, while Chinatowns offer loci of community building for global Chinese, immigrants and travellers (Ong, Nonini 1997; McDonogh, Wong 2012; Tang, Wong 2013).

Yet, the diversity of Chinese settlements in time and space represents only part of the dialectic of segregation and diversification they embody. While urban planners and citizens take Chinatowns today as testaments to metropolitan cosmopolitanism, both good and bad, they are also sites of debate and struggle where divergent peoples, viewpoints and functions coexist, in which Chinese immigrants, non-Chinese, their hybrid descendants and other citizens have played multiple roles. Chinatowns are built, not given. Chinatowns, in turn, can anchor diverse definitions of community, whether localized, ethnic or global. Meanwhile, although the high visibility of Chinese enclaves –promoted in recent decades by both Chinese and urban growth elites often guides observers' gazes towards statements about exotic separations, we argue that Chinatowns stand at the center of cities as social and cultural constructs and illuminate fundamental questions of citizenship, rights, place and memory for many cities, features that become especially clear when posed in a comparative context.

In this paper, we draw upon a decade of research in some seventy Chinatowns in Europe, Asia, Australia, and the Americas as well as the rich writings that have emerged from social scientists, historians, cultural analysts, filmmakers and journalists.

We ourselves brought complementary exposure and interests to the project: Wong is a media scholar, raised in Hong Kong and exposed to Chinatowns initially through travel, then, via ethnographic filmmaking and finally

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as part of everyday life (2012). McDonogh is an Iberianist who came to this project after other investigations of urban space, conflict and power in Europe and the Americas. Our dual perspectives have evolved through longer-term engagement in some Chinese areas (Philadelphia, New York, Los Angeles, Lima, Barcelona, Paris) and intermittent visits to other sites linked to scholarly collaboration and reading. Thus, we have endeavored to compare Chinatowns as a fluid constructed category whose variations are often invisible to both participants and those around them.

To speak to other essays in this issue, we focus on three themes constitutive of urban neighborhoods in terms of both segregation and community that are present in our introductory vignette: (1) form, space and boundaries; (2) centers (especially social) and organization; and (3) imagery. We read questions of physical space through Lefbevre's triparate *espace con*çu (1992), including representations of space by *both* Chinese and urban practitioners such as planners through the delineation of gates and boundaries that embody the ambiguous physicality of community. Here, we briefly raise issues of rights to the city and recognition of spaces, memory and corporate structures (Development Corporations, Historic Districts, etc) that demarcate urban space.

The idea of centers take the paper towards community in a different way, while also raising new questions. Because of their evolution in often subsidiary positions within built cities, Chinatowns rarely have salient physical centers of their own, although monuments, public spaces and associations of an urban palimpsest are woven into the fabric of these communities. We contrast the *form* of community here with the social creation of central spaces as *espace perçu*, interrogating "community" and "neighborhood." We suggest features of difference and integration include language, schools and media, formal associations, and commerce even for residential neighborhood while underscoring visible and invisible unities and the creations of publics and public spheres.

Finally, we look at representation of space (*l'espace vecu*) — Chinatowns as highly-marked icons within cities. Here, well-studied images from stories, literature, cinema, television and the internet seem universalizing and segregating, building and concealing community. One of the most interesting questions we have faced has been *how* people *know* Chinatowns even before experiencing them, and how they relate diffuse images to sometimes different imaginations and experiences, whether they are Chinese or non-Chinese. Again, we can only touch on the flows of images of Chinatown, especially given multiple global media based in Chinese and non-Chinese production, distribution and readership. Despite the intensity of marking, organization, representation we are careful not to treat Chinatowns as sui generis, urban phenomena so different as to be intrinsically exotic and peripheral. Instead, this paper argues that Chinatowns distill and interrogate fundamental urban questions in laboratories made highly visible because of global history and presence and local attention.

Places and edges

In 2008, McDonogh traveled to San José, Costa Rica, following up on news citing plan to build Chinatown, "con los arcos y todos." This multi-year project, linked to Costa Rica's new recognition of the People's Republic of China (rather than Taiwan), reached fruition in 2012 with formal "opening" of a Chinese street, with lions dancing below arches while protesters raised issues of urban identities and rights. Organizers proclaimed «There are many cities around the world with China Towns …. we want to show that San José is a destination with activities for tourists»[1]. Here, a created but "authentic" Chinatown was defined by visible feature of entrance and boundary, decoration, activities and sensation: a space of representation. This process has global ramifications as well as it changes from city to city worldwide.

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1 Beyond such walls and gates, physical segregation and community are constructed on multiple levels involving preexisting rights, context and property negotiated by immigrant peoples over time. Chinatowns, except for new tourist attractions, are rarely built as new and cohesive developments despite important exceptions like the reconstruction of San Francisco's Chinatown after the 1906 earthquake or the translation of Los Angeles Chinatowns to new sites after the demolition of an older enclave to make way for Union Station. Indeed, even in oldest Chinatowns worldwide, fragments of an earlier past seep through —until recently, Philadelphia Chinatown, for example, still hosted a few sewing stores from its earlier light industrial past, while existing Roman Catholic churches in Manhattan and Paris have been engulfed by new contexts and congregations. Form indeed follows function if we recall that Chinatowns have also had populations in flows.

Philadelphia's mid-Autumn festival sited its stage directly under the Chinatown arch built in 1984 under another international treaty of cooperation. This arch also made "permanent" a community that had emerged one hundred years earlier. Similar gates are found in Chinese architecture and planning, often as memorial arches or incorporated into areas such as college campuses or palaces, areas in which physical gates may also have had earlier meanings. The Philadelphia arch resembles others found in contemporary global Chinatowns - colorful, ornamental, inserted into a variegated commercial streetscape as a gate without a wall. Ironically, given the one-way streets in Philadelphia's downtown, it represents an exit rather than an entrance for motorists. Other arches have been stranded or even lost in the movement of Chinatowns around the world. In subsequent years, additional historical markers, ubiquitous in a city that presents itself as the cradle of America, have marked Chinatown's place and history even as gentrification and urban plans chip away at its coveted downtown space.

In periods of exclusion, Chinese enclaves have been more adamantly physically separated by urban elites: quarantined spatially, placed under special controls in the name of public health or contamination (Shah 2001; Zensch 2012), and limited in terms of rights of occupation and ownership. Controls on property have proven especially important in sites for poor immigrants lodged in tenements or industrial buildings whose fragile tenure might mean the eviction of whole quarters in the name of other uses, a pattern evident in cities as varied as Paris, Sydney and Los Angeles (below). Arches, like Chinatown designations and lobbies represent a claim to permanence as well as visibility. In contemporary Barcelona, by contrast, where recently-arriving Chinese have rented stores and settled in various areas that are identified as emergent Chinatowns, Chinese proposals to erect an arch were rejected by one urban administration because of their implications of place and difference (Beltrán Antolín 2003; Villarino 2012). This action resonates with a continuing sense of wariness among Chinese in Spain.

To speak of gates without walls, however, should not suggest that Chinatowns do not have spatial limits. In case after case, highways, railroads and harbor fronts act as boundaries against expansion from an early nucleus as they have for other ethnic communities. Indeed, many Chinatowns worldwide flank nodes such as train stations, ports or central markets whose functions ultimately act as limiters of growth. As we have noted in other writings, not all of these boundaries are "natural" in any sense, either: one of the recurring nightmares of older North American Chinatowns, for example, has been their 20th century vivisection by highways more easily placed through blighted or non-voting areas that strangle a gentler spread of Chinese-Americans in an area (McDonogh, Wong 2012).

Boundaries are permeable over time. In Manhattan, through the early 20th century, Canal Street divided an encroaching Chinatown from Little Italy to the north, In the 21st century, an aggressive performance of Italianness still characterizes Mulberry Street above Canal, constant festivals, street arches decorated in the colors of the Italian flag, stereotyped restaurants and goods, and bright lights with Italian names. As descendants of earlier Italians have moved out and Chinese have moved in, this space like other areas formerly identified with diverse Lower East Side groups, including Bowery and East Broadway, have become Sinicized. In 2010, the United States National Park Service recognized the complexity of the area by incorporating its dialectic nature as the Chinatown *and* Little Italy Historic District[2].

Chinatowns also entail written cities. The distinctive language and script, whether found on businesses, neon signs or street signs, demarcates a world that stands apart even in an ethnicized New York, Johannesburg or Paris. Ideographic script brings together Chinese who may speak different Chinese languages Cantonese, Shanghaiese, Wenzhounese, but language, too, can be a point of tension in planned spaces. Chinese have questioned the rules in Barcelona that require all menus and documents to be available in Catalan as a national language as well as Chinese and the state Castilian that is a lingua franca across mobile Spanish Chinese. Given the touristic orientation of many restaurants, local bilingualism is often overshadowed within an array of languages including English, French and German, which translate into service communication as well as Chinese possibilities of moving elsewhere in

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2 "Chinatowns" also learn from each other globally. Planners in São Paulo, Brazil, for example, studied American Chinatowns in order to clarify and enhance identity of Liberdade, the core of an earlier Japanese immigrant population as an Asian district. The addition of lanterns, gates, signage and celebrations have clarified the areas as Japanese-Asian-Brazilian area within a complex metropolis. Street furniture worldwide, like telephone booths in the shape of pagodas and even new gardens have become global hallmarks of an ideal Chinatown that participate in the renovation of older local spaces of variegated populations and origins. Even the form and use of gates, we suspect, has been as influenced by the actions of Chinatowns worldwide as by any direct heritage or architecture from China itself.

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search of opportunity (Krase 2012).

Overall, the "look" of Chinatown is profoundly sensual décor, language/calligraphy, lanterns, lights, sounds, smells and transformational, imposed upon an existing urban fabric. [1]This cinematic quality has been signaled in frequent filmic depictions of Chinatowns that became concrete at the intersection of spaces of representation and representation of spaces in mid-20th century Los Angeles. After the early tenements associated with the Chinatown massacre of 1879 were demolished for wider urban renewal (Zensch 2012), new Chinatowns were envisioned with Hollywood bricolage added to immigrant designs. One project, China City, was fostered by Christine Sperling, who had been instrumental in the conversion of the city's Spanish/Mexican core into a heritage/tourist attraction (Estrada 2008; Ward 2013). A Paramount Studios set director was hired as artistic director (Ward 2013:29), and Chinese motifs selected and recycled. Where architectural fragments brought weight to the illusion, recycled Hollywood sets brought flair. As Ward notes, one, from Paramount's *Bluebeard's Eight Wife,* included one thousand feet of imported Chinese bamboo; other attractions included houses from MGM's *The Good Earth.* Beyond architecture, hundreds of people who worked in China City were also actors in Hollywood films about China. Two additional attractions were a Chinese film museum – with sets, costumes and props donated by Paramount director Cecil B. De Mille – and a theater that screened Hollywood movies about China (Ward 2013: 29-30).

While China City was a commercial venture hiring many Chinese, its nearby rival, New Chinatown, was planned by Chinese-American engineers and businessmen. This plan combined residence and commerce, eschewing the pseudo-village ambience of Sterling, but remaining markedly Chinese, including a memorial entrance gate donated by businessman Y.C. Wong in memory of his mother, the Golden Pagoda restaurant (still surviving) and other buildings with lighted gables, mosaics and other features expected of Chinese buildings. As Ward concludes in her excellent analysis, these alternatives, «both were conceived to foster tourism and also community. The conundrum within these goals makes these places slipperier as subjects. Their stories blur the lines between presumed dichotomies of revival and fabrication, native and imported, genuine and insincere» (Ward 2013: 36).

Chinatowns as decorated and delineated spaces are not merely suspended/ created between multiply imagined Chinas and myriad other hosts; Chinatown residents learn from other groups within cities as well as from other Chinatowns worldwide. Thanks to a wildly successful anti-graffiti campaign, for example, social murals have become widespread in Philadelphia neighborhoods. While such walls of meaning also decorate Chinatown, some are clearly not associated with the optimistic tone of the general project but express combative local concerns like the highly politicized history of Chinese struggles in America that marks another "gateway" to Chinatown.

Of course, these readings suggest the idea that Chinese are seeking and using visibility.

In reviewing Chinatowns worldwide, however, it is clear that not all enclaves are visible even in the contemporary global diaspora, nor are they visible to all citizens in the same way. Chinese commercial centers for distribution of wholesale goods, for example, have become flashpoints for dissension in neighborhoods whose residents feel that Chinese commerce in concentrated storefronts threatens social values and interactions. This complaint has arisen in the Sedaine -Popincourt district of Paris whose first floor businesses host scores of wholesalers to global clients or in the similar Trafalgar district of Barcelona (Pribetitch 2005; McDonogh, Wong 2012). Pribetich notes ironically that

(…) most wholesale business signs in the quarter are marked by the total absence of Asian references ….Many commercial signs use, in effect, a terminology borrowed from Anglo-Saxon or French vocabularies, that often take the from of first names like Frederic or Elodie. To these we add Fashion Style or Joly Mode. In all, only 15 of 450 boutiques of the quarter have names containing a word of Chinese, never in ideograms but in French letters…Red lanterns, Chinese dolls or bells with Chinese ideograms mark only a dozen windows (Pribetitch 2005:86/7).

Yet she concludes, «The essential marking of this territory by the Wenzhounese population is constituted by the physical presence alone of these individuals in the commercial quarter».

Manipulation of sightlines and motifs become more complicated in suburban areas. Here, some Chinese entrepreneurs have created large-scale big box malls worldwide to remove commerce from dense cities and facilitate regional or international supplies. These sites often prove minimally Chinese in physical features beyond names - Dragonul Rosu in Bucharest, China City in Johannesburg, or a proposed Dragon Mart in Cancún, Mexico

- bilingual commercial enterprises and occasional stylized motifs. The storeowners and goods are Chinese but the places of wholesale activity are "universal" in form (Chuang, Tremont 2013).

In still other suburban residential cases, Chineseness has been reduced to interior décor or occasional arguments, anchored, perhaps by a multi-ethnic commercial core (Fong 2008; Brunel 1992). Strip malls may glow with artificial Chineseness but apartments and homes seem indistinguishable from those of neighbors and their stories of mobility and assimilation.

Physical, conceptual spaces mark differences and evoke segregation within dense urban areas for Chinese as other urban neighborhoods. A closer examination of recurrent features and patterns, however, shows that these forms are negotiated both by multiple Chinese as communities and through Chinese descendant's participation in wider communities of physical neighbors, urban administrations, and Chinese diaspora: spaces of representation entail multiple publics. Forms, whether gates, lanterns or street signs, claim place as they invite tourists and others into Chinatown. The tension between ephemeral decorations pasted on to streetscapes and enduring constructions like arches also embodies the ways in which immigrants and their descendants claim community and space– while features of earlier occupants recall the impermanence of communities in space.

In her 2010 text on changes in contemporary New York, Sharon Zukin has counterposed the "authenticity" of mixed but often working class neighborhoods of the city to more commoditized visions of faux-bohemia where ethnicity is décor or consumption but not a life experience. Her mapping of the city provides the gentrification Harlem as a warning but does not grapple with the endurance of Chinatowns as authentic yet commoditized places within the conceptual space of urban development (2010). Even current concerns across many Chinatowns about gentrification, by Chinese, Chinese-Americans (Peruvians, etc) and non-Chinese, betray an ambivalence invested in a space for Chinese from which many hybridized Chinese have escaped while others feel they must compete against new buyers who see their space as an opportunity within a wider city (Li *et alii* 2013). To explore the implications of this omission, it is necessary to move beyond these considerations of place to those of people and communities.

Peoples and space: finding centers

Physically, it is easy to identify segregation in Chinatown at its edges, formal social, and culture. Yet community, as used across the social sciences also evokes more emotional senses of connection and centering, Lefebvre's everyday, social spaces. Chinatowns are not generally clustered around a central institution created by and for Chinese like the churches, synagogues and mosques that provided nuclei for other "organic" cities worldwide. Nor are there great public spaces or monuments although Chinatowns have absorbed and recreated these spaces in their growth. Chinese immigrants, for example, have revitalized a park in their industrial-residential recreation of Prato, Italy while old Chinese-American men bring their birds to sun while others practice tai chi in Sara Delano Roosevelt Park in Manhattan, opened in 1934 to provide play spaces to the European immigrant Lower East Side. Chinatowns, however, offer myriad, sometimes antagonistic associations that balance an imagined China, as homeland and ideological source of unity, against conflictive origins, orientations and outside pressures.

Overseas Chinese themselves form diverse groups divided before their migration by region, class/education, and conditions of migration as well as bygenerations of adaptation. Family associations, various hometown or provincial associations and lineage groups still have offices in Chinatowns worldwide. Some are strong, based in active ties and resources, especially property. Others survive as names and spaces while their primary exclusive welfare functions have disappeared: these are social clubs and even restaurants.

The experiences of 4th generation Cantonese descendants are not the same as new immigrant from Taiwan, Shanghai, Chengdu, Kuala Lumpur or Lima, all of whom form associations around new interests both exclusive (regional, linguistic) and cross-cutting (professional, women's organizations, lobbying groups).

As already noted, language has epitomized the heart of Chinatown's community and its image, but sociolinguistic patterns we have observed and participated in underscore the diversity of Chinese speech, strategies and repertoires; immigrant entrepreneurs in Barcelona choose among Qingtianese (family, friends), Mandarin (other Chinese), Cantonese, Catalan, Castilian and perhaps English or French. Chinatown languages evolve over generational

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time. Learning Chinese is difficult, especially the writing system with its demands for memorization, and thus faced challenges when students are integrated into public schools emphasizing local traditions. While Chinese afterschool programs or Saturday schools have emerged amid public and private demands, new generations lack skills to read and/or lose flexibility in either "home" languages or Mandarin[3]. Other Chinese schools also become magnets for non-Chinese seeking global ties, as we have found in Lima and Panama City.

The tension of social centers that change, linking Chinese to others and permitting evolution of Chinatowns themselves, recurs in religion. Here, older "Chinese traditions" (a dangerous ideological concept) integrate rituals and behaviors through Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, permeating world views whether or not actual temples arise (although such buildings are found in Chinatowns as in China).

Recent migrants whose religious ideologies have also been infused with criticism and resistance under a socialist regime have integrated Confucian filial piety with new opportunities in other religious traditions and institutions as well. Philadelphia's Chinatown, for example, has visible and active Christian churches as well as Buddhist and Taoist temples (some of which are invisible from the street, ensconced in upper floors of converted commercial buildings). One primary stimulus to contemporary activism and identity in Chinatown, in fact, came from mid-twentieth century proposals for a highway that threatened the Roman Catholic Church of the Redeemer and school that had run missions to Chinese in the city and educated generations there. Eventually, both were saved although isolated from the older center of Chinatown by the completed highway. Churches were also active in recent campaigns against casinos in the nearby downtown. Moreover, they act as Sunday centers of integration for Chinese-Americans outside Chinatown who drive in for services and stay for food, shopping and socializing, increasing the power of Chinatown as a presence in urban debates.

In many cases, the drive to form a religious center has distilled the travails of community building, including en emergence from dependencies on local institutions, claims to place in Chinatown and the negotiation of transnational leadership. Isabelle Lausent-Herrera (2009: 133), for example, has documented the role of Catholic missionaries in forming generations of Chinese and mixed-race children into a community in Lima: the isolation, lack of support, and incomprehension felt by the Tusans (Chinese Peruvians) were compensated by the sense of belonging and recognition brought to them by the religious figures they encountered, particularly the Jesuits of the San Pedro Church. The strength of this association underpinned the development of Catholic communication through Chinese media and eventually the Chinese parish and secondary school Juan XXIII, outside the boundaries of the traditional downtown Chinatown. The creole Peruvian Dominga Garzón (1809-1879), meanwhile has been beatified for her work in evangelizing Chinese (Lausent Herrera 2009; http://jabenito.blogspot.com/2010/07/dominga-gazcon-1809-1879-apostol-de-los.html; López 2013). In Manhattan, Cantonese succeeded Irish and Italians as parishioners of Transfiguration Roman Catholic church, the only parish in the country run by the missionary Maryknoll fathers who had been active in China before 1949. In Paris, the Chinese congregation wandered through borrowed sanctuaries - holding mass at 15:30 on Sunday to accommodate those who could only come during a break in restaurant services - before gaining its own chapel in 2005, in the converted gymnasium of a church in the southern Chinatown area (Les chinois 2005). Across all these cases, the structuring of communities as "missions" or "national" churches reminds us of the segregation linked to community building.

Chinese relying on other traditions, both Chinese and Western, have built upon transnational connections while struggling with new conflicts in Chinatown. As Kenneth Guest has pointed out in his monograph *God in Chinatown*, Fujianese migration in New York have relied on Christian churches, Buddhist temples and Daoist temples to help immigrants who had already adhered to these traditions situate themselves after migration, while also attracting new immigrants. His work, with copious individual narratives, underscores how individual experiences and life choices create and recreate social space (Guest 2003). At the same time, he underscores divisions within emergent communities. Thus, Transfiguration Catholic Church, noted above, faced tensions between older Cantonese and Fujianese (including linguistic negotiations as Mass was first added in Mandarin as lingua franca since no priests spoke Fujienese). At the same time, Fujianese divided between those working with Maryknoll Fathers and those whose intense loyalties to the underground church of Communist China made them more dogmatically anti-

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3 At times, schools unite diverse global younger generations by their shared rejection of parental demands – hating Chinese school -- as much as by the propagation of culture.

Communist, splitting away to form another Chinese congregation at another Chinatown church. Again, readings on Chinatown churches from around the world remind us that conflicts form part of diverse communities, both within congregations and as congregations coalesce, against outsiders even if including those who occupy positions of religious authority.

Centers also underpin action as citizens. Chinatowns in many areas have been perceived as passive, less involved in issues of political activity, much less public protest. Waldinger and Tseng, comparing Chinatowns as communities in New York and Los Angeles in 1992, noted that the former had formed effective local groups and had lobbied the local administration to gain an Office of Asian Affairs, but had succeeded widely in elections because of low registrations[4]. Their report on Los Angeles area populations as political players, however, highlight shifting terrains in areas like Monterey Park, nicknamed America's first suburban Chinatown (Fong 1994), where an Asian majority propelled Chinese-Americans and other Asian-Americans into city wide offices:

> (…) Here, local politics in Monterey Park crystallized around issues of white resentment and Chinese interest mobilization. In 1986, the Monterey city council passed an English Only ordinance which made English the city's official language. Next, an anti-development movement supported by longtime residents started a successful campaign to defeat pro-development members of the city council. The newly-formed, anti-development city council quickly put a curb on residential and commercial development, a shift that principally affected the Chinese (1992:108).

This reactive politics, based on others who live in an area *becoming perceived as* Chinese recurs worldwide.

In Monterey Park, Chinese responded by forming their own business and political coalitions and taking on the electoral system. By 1990, two Chinese-Americans had joined the city council; in subsequent decades multiple coalitions have emerged in this and other Asian-dominated enclaves across Southern California. At the same time, Chinese as leaders have negotiated compromises on areas and styles of growth as well as issues such as preservation that are important to longtime residents (Waldinger, Tseng 1992; Fong 1994; Cheng 2103).

In our introduction, we noted the political agendas that permeated "community well-being" in Philadelphia's mid-autumn festival, especially after decades in which interventions affecting the physical fabric of Chinatown - highways, public construction, gentrification, downtown gambling, bike lanes - have spurred responses that have spilled out into street protests and public media (McDonogh, Wong 2012). The enclave and immigrant status of many Chinatowns worldwide has meant that many political campaigns take shape as reactive protests against the system rather than working through elective office or even bureaucracies. Thus, in Spain in 2013, Chinese "protested" overzealous policing of Chinese businesses by publicly suspending any grand urban celebrations of the New Year's, a complex gesture that probably was more felt among Chinese immigrants than among urbanites for whom such celebrations were still new and exotic. Villarino (2002), however, notes that Chinese restaurant workers in an Asian chain restaurant that crosses among Chinese and non-Chinese communities had organized effectively within this space to seek better job security and salary.

Within these political activities, several key points deserve emphasis. First, political organization reminds us of the fragility of citizenship. Chinese arriving in the past as unwanted immigrants and in recent years as suspect ones, may be perceived as competitors in space and economics. Many were understandably reluctant to claim public stages in politics (nor have many immigrants brought much experience of these processes with them), although Chinese-American candidates have become visible in urban and state politics in California, Hawaii, Washington, New York and other areas of longterm settlement across the United States. In more general and global terms, reactive protests underscore community building both in terms of segregation and participation. In many cases, these processes remain nonetheless highly stratified —leaders as middlemen are quoted in the news media but may have few followers or organizations[5].

Second, the physical concentration and differentiation of Chinatowns also has allowed these places to serve as staging grounds for wider coalitions. This seems especially evident in how "Asian" issues are staged in Chinatown

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4 John Liu, New York City Comptroller, received only 6.84% of the vote in the Democratic Primary of 2013.

5 In 2013, for example, Wong attended a semi-private New Year's banquet for Chinese leaders and municipal authorities in Barcelona; dinner tickets at 100 euros effectively priced out most of the working families of the city.

streets, as in Philadelphia. Chinatown offers the physical, social and cultural space to perform an Asian *public sphere* that has grown in universities, social media and other news and information channels. Wider cross-cutting protests also demand further investigation; in 2012, for example, downtown workers joined Chinatown residents in Los Angeles in protesting plans to build a Walmart in the center city without respect to traditions of unions and wage struggles there[6].

Third, community building can also face issues of Chinatown divisions as well. Yeh (2008), in his compelling analysis of the transformations of space and community celebrated in Chinese New Year in San Francisco, includes an analysis of queer challenges. Despite increasing queer participation/recognition, Yeh concludes «partipating in the Chinese New Year Festival enabled queer Chinese Americans to queer the ethnic culture, but that strategy has yet to translate into political power or transform power structures in the ethnic community» (2008: 201).

Despite varied political activities based in Chinatown as space, were we to ask Chinese and non-Chinese where people assemble in Chinatown, they would steer us not to lobbies, associations or even to churches but to the commercial core, especially restaurants. In most Chinatowns, restaurants were among the first businesses, sustaining local immigrants (especially males without family) and linking them with home while attracting new clients from the wider society (Hsu 2000). In many cities, Chinatown has been defined by images (lights, smells, tastes) of food and related entertainment, legitimate and illegitimate. Even in discrete Lognes, outside Paris the invisibility of suburban Chineseness is broken by "les commerces alimentaires y quelques écritaux commerciaux" (Brunel 1992: 205).

Restaurants are also central to general Chinese sociability. Whether the banquets for celebrations of festivals or life passages, sociability after church or the simple marking of family in weekly gatherings for dim sum, food stands at the center of Chinese identity at home and in diaspora, despite myriad local variations. Rather than extending this sense of community too far, however, we will reconsider some aspects of food, diversity, gathering and difference within our discussion of media and representation of spaces as we conclude Lefebvre's framing[7].

Representation of space: myths and communities

When teaching in Barcelona in 2013, McDonogh asked students to describe "Chinatown." Students responded with images of dark and cramped streets, mystery and danger that hardly corresponded to the new Chinese settlements of the city (although echoing the mythic redlight district known as the *barrio chino* (McDonogh, Wong 2012). When McDonogh queried how they formed these images, the response was film and media – few students had actually been to "real" Chinatowns in London and the United States. Lest this mediation only be seen as Orientalism in the West, we must also cite the reactions of a Chinese (mainland) tourists to Manhattan's Chinatown, as reported in the *New York Times* in 2013: «I was really disappointed to see it's not like in the movies, where there are lots of lanterns and performances everywhere' On the upside, finding an abundance of Chinese food after days of consuming only strange Western concoctions redeemed the neighborhood» (Levin 2013).

The mediation of Chinese presence preceded the arrival of Chinese populations in most global cities: renaissance and later Western images, for example, were as variegated as Marco Polo's fantastic voyages, Voltaire's exemplary novels, Jules Verne fantasies and English traditions (Yang 2012) that posed China as an example of ordered government. Literary and visual abstraction, however, was reshaped in gold fields, plantations and railroads where Chinese were coworkers and competitors. In the 19th century, negative images of Chinese emerged that would be replicated in new settings, haunting Chinese immigrants as well as assimilated populations and growing places (Light 1974; McKeown 2001, McDonogh, Wong 2012). By the early 20th century, mass media played a powerful role in fomenting the sinister reputation of Chinatowns and its immigrants. In 1931, a scholar noted that «A whole

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6 Despite campaigns in the streets and media, as we write this Walmart is nearing its opening http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2012/12/los-angeles-chinatown-wal-mart-victory.html.

7 Indeed, Zheng uses a Chinese restaurant in Paris as the laboratory for his exploration of fundamentals of culture and character (and contrasts with the French (1995).

body of prejudice has been made definite by the "dope" films and the films of the Dr. Fu Manchu series… Quite young children referred in their papers to abductions, to floors that gave way, to stealthy attack and secret murder on the part of the Chinese, and appeared to take for granted that such things made up the ordinary life of the Chinese they saw on the streets» (Green in Auerbach 2009:181).

What are the key images of this "body of prejudice"? Often, today, the "universal" myth of Chinatown, in a Barthian sense, is contradictory and incomplete, but insistently situates the enclave in opposition to the ordered bourgeois city. Where cities are places of law, Chinatowns are lawless. Where cities are planned and ordered, Chinatowns are characterized by warrens, confusing passages, underground constructions. Where cities are light, Chinatowns are dark and dangerous, especially for women of the "other city" (McDonogh, Wong 2012).

We can see the legacy of this discursive construction of Chinatown at work in a popular film like *La Fuente Amarilla* (1999), the first mainstream Spanish movie about Chinese in Spain, whose production preceded any large scale immigration or spatialization of Chinese. Instead, this admittedly mediocre film drew on global images without even finding a Chinese person to play the heroine. The use of a massive Orientalist restaurant as a setting, the motifs of violence, supernatural forces and interracial salvation seem hackneyed, yet, this film led Chinese actors to quit the movie and forced diplomats to protest (Wong 2012).

At the same time, positive negative stereotypes also set Chinese apart —in Spanish someone who is hardworking "trabaja como un chino." (works like a Chinese). While this recalls American stereotypes of a model minority, the end is not necessarily complementary since this stereotype reinforces division and seems to incite resentment as well as admiration.

Obviously, such reductive images, propagated from outside, are powerful instruments of segregation. Yet at the same time, these images are known and manipulated by those inside. As Ivan Light commented decades ago in his work on the transformation of American Chinatowns, after periods of gang control and vice, an increase in white middle class tourism helped restauranteurs and merchants who sought to clear up their home districts. Since these middle-class sightseers intended only to gaze at the houses of prostitution, gambling houses and open dens —rather than to patronize them —the tongman proprietors had no economic interest in the visitors. However, rubbernecking whites did represent potential customers for Chinese restauranteurs and retail tradesmen. Since Chinese were then being squeezed out of their remaining niches in the general labor market, they had a compelling economic motive for trying to turn a profit from tourists. The timely invention of chop suey made it possible for Chinese to lure American tourists into their restaurants. Frankly developed to please the American palate, this bland dish does not please the native Cantonese and is not part of their traditional cuisine.

Indeed, this interplay of stereotype, mediation and hybridization was also apparent in the physical reconstruction of Los Angeles Chinatown.

Languages, once again, separate worlds. Chinatowns have their media through Chinese newspapers (local and global), radio, television and internet, connecting Chinatowns across national boundaries including comments on what outsiders say and how to respond, whether confronting or concealing. The asymmetry of media remain powerful – while Chinese may read local newspapers and Chinese newspaper certainly cite and engage local news, we have never seen a local paper or news story cite the local Chinese press as a source, despite their insights into communities and issues. Hence, even the deconstruction of images follows a one-way street that does not escape Chinatown.

Having lived with this contradictory question of representation and readings for so long, it still brought home to us in new ways that illustrate the multileveled intersections of segregation and community even in an area that we have seen as being materialistic, like food. For us, in North American and global terms, food is one of the *raison d'etres* of Chinatowns where specialized and quality ingredients as well as varied preparation demand a certain density of demand and social control/critique as well as inviting non-Chinese into this space. Chinese food sites vary across world cities from expensive restaurants with general clienteles to fast, cheap and even dubious shacks, as varied as Chinese immigrants and their histories. Diversity also reflects origins and clientele: dim sum is normal as a morning social meal in Guangzhou but becomes an elaborate hotel event in Northern China and a nostalgic center for the Cantonese diaspora. Similarly, the spicy food of Sichuan is home cooking in the west of China but a fiery dining out experience in Hong Kong and a trendy variation on Chinatown in Manhattan.

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As all of these have been translated to new worlds by diverse immigrants, food palates and knowledge widen and changes. Cantonese as the first migrants set their culinary styles on many menus while creating compromise dishes like "chop suey" for non-Chinese. Some migrants who arrived in metropolitan centers through colonial displacements (Indochinese Chinese in Paris) or secondary migrations (Cuban Chinese in New York) shared this southern Chinese substrate, marked by real variations in quality of ingredients and expectations. One of our shocks in new Chinatowns in Europe and Africa created by Fujianese, Wenzhounese, and Qingtianese has been the "foreignness" of this food to southern tastes.

Chinese restaurants also adapt to Chinatowns as "segregated" destinations for eating. *Chifas* in Peru not only define the history and culture of its historic Chinatown (Balbi 1999) but underscore the integration of Chinese into Peruvian national culture. The first Chinese indentured servants (coolies) who escaped to the city built careers in selling food goods and hostelry, activities that constituted the nucleus of the downtown Chinese enclave. Others used the import-export and distribution centralized in this site (next to Lima's central market) to spread restaurants throughout the city, from upscale Miraflores and San Isidro to the *pueblos jovenes* (shanty towns) of the periphery. Chinese-Peruvian food became a unifying symbol of identity for a nation of immigrants and indigenous; arroz chaufa –fried rice altered by the inclusion of Peruvian potatoes and other crops – is served at restaurants of any background and in homes without Chinese members (http://perudelights.com/arroz-chaufa/). It has even traveled into Peruvian diasporas as a comfort dish from home http://diasporaperuananewyork.blogspot.com/2010/09/el-arroz-chaufa-peruano.html)

Hence, we were surprised in our longer fieldwork in Barcelona to see how foodways were relegated to a secondary position during our time in Barcelona. In fact, Chinese are much more identified with dispersed small scale retail stores (todo a un euro) or shadier dealings with massage parlors. Barcelona as a non- post-imperial city has lacked the extra-European immigration that shaped multicultural cuisine in Paris or London, while Catalan food and terroir are images of nationalist identity. Yet even among our friends, Chinese food was something cheap and accessible they might share with us but rarely pursue on their own, especially if it meant regular trips to a Chinese enclave. Why?

As both Chinese and non-Chinese explained, part of this reticence springs early incidents in the modern Chinese migration to Spain in the 1990s, when police cracked down on the first restaurants for hygiene and labor practices. Yet these incidents, which were serious enough to push immigrants into other venues, have taken on other dimensions in media and myth. Some urban legends are universal accusations that Chinese use dogs and cats in their food formed part of American folklore for decades (Light 1974). McDonogh, however, was shocked by how often another question, that of death and burial, also arose. Do Chinese die? And what happens to corpses? One explanation embedded in urban legend, in fact, was that these corpses, too, were carved up for Chinese food. Absurd? Even journalists and scholars of Chinese immigration have felt compelled to respond (Villarino 2012; Beltrá Antolín 2003).

As an alternative, some Chinese have taken over bars and continue to offer local Catalan and Spanish food. Yet here, too, individuals expressed surprising unease that "Chinese are too good at being Spanish but are not Spanish."

While the situation has improved in the 30 years since we ate our first (bad) Chinese meals in Barcelona, mediated attacks still continue In 2013, notorious programmer Aida Nizar, a Castilian-Palestinian television personality who emerged to prominence through reality shows targeted Chinese at several points. In a piece on restaurants, for example, she inserted "men on the street" who alluded to the disappearance of animals in the neighborhood or absence of old people as a setting. Then she appeared on camera, barging into restaurants, facing confused waiters and cooks who denied her access. She vividly mimed her disgust at what her camera could not show; in fact, her only on-camera visit actually showed a spotless kitchen. Once again, complaints and impact reached Chinese media and Chinese diplomats on a global scale[8].

Since Nizar had done another piece on Chinese merchants accusing them of unfair practices, it was easy to read these as media directed at a particular and vulnerable group. Yet these programs also resonated and reinforced urban folklore, to the detriment of Chinese who depended on hostelry for their livelihood.

Representations of Chinatowns have been studied intensely in film and television, news and crime stories

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8 http://www.telecinco.es/elpajarodelatele/2013/mayo/pajaro-China-carga-Aida-Nizar_2_1600755153.html.

(Light 1974; McKeown 2001; McDonogh, Wong 2012).

In linking these to Lefebvre's concept of representation of space and these few examples we are not so much generating new areas as underscoring variation and unity worldwide as well as tensions of community and difference constantly resonating around Chinatowns. Nonetheless, it is worth ending with simpler reaction of the Chinese tourist cited above to New York Chinatown food, despite the cinematic understatement of the streetscape: «The sight of rice moved me to tears» (Levin 2013).

Conclusions

As these readings and analyses affirm, segregation and community in global Chinatowns are intimately linked yet have evolved over time in changing perceptions and performance for Chinese (-Americans, etc) and others, as they have for most citizens and communities worldwide. Our readings, starting from the insights into the social construction of space fostered by Henri Lefebvre, have aimed not to set Chinatowns apart further but to explore data and implications that integrate Chinatowns into wider urbane debates as well. Working with Lefebvre's broad distinctions of conceptual mappings of space (l'espace conçu), everyday experiences of space (l'espace perçu), and representations of space (l'espace vécu), we have shown how all these processes of social construction are interwoven throughout the histories of individual and comparative Chinatowns, especially as we listen to hyphenated Chinese agents and others involved in these complex spaces.

At the same time, the global presence of Chinatowns underscores their values as global laboratories and forces us to expand Lefebvre's categories. As both Chinese and non-Chinese might imagine space on the basis of other Chinatowns or representations of Chinatown even as it evolves within a particular instance or networks, we must add new dimensions to any urban imaginary. In particular, the play of visibility and invisibility within Chinatowns (or metropolitan networks of enclaves) underscores an awareness of segregation(s) and communities that motivates some of the people engaged in their everyday and longer-term planned construction. Chinatowns certainly evoke the spatial imaginations of planners and creators as well as everyday life; yet they are also platforms from which to imagine new political communities (Asian-Americans) or public spheres, new global connections or new conditions of belonging and disappearance, including gentrification and competition for central urban spaces (Lee *et alii* 2013).

Yet, as we have insisted, while such intense and spreading globalization might set Chinatowns apart, our participation in this volume speak to the needs in theory and practice to bring Chinatowns into dialogue with wider urban studies and the issues posed by our colleagues here and beyond. For us, the socially produced spaces of Chinatown, however different in some social imaginations, are quintessentially urban. The stories of Chinatowns, from early merchants in Nanyang to migrant laborers in Lima, San Francisco, Paris and Johannesburg to new investors in Zambia and Bolivia are not only stories of community formation and complicated responses but also stories of urban life itself, as problem and promise in the twenty-first century.

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