

Business Improvement Districts and Gentrification in Ethnic Enclaves Through Social Media:

A Case Study of Los Angeles Chinatown

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The research performed examines how business improvement districts (BIDs) contribute to the gentrification of historic urban ethnic enclaves, focusing specifically on the marketing goals of BIDs in Los Angeles Chinatown. BIDs have encouraged economic development and revitalization through marketing, security and cleaning, employing marketing tactics of touristification, boutiqueing or upscaling, and other measures that drive up the neighborhood value. While there is praise for BIDs for helping economic growth in certain areas, oftentimes the consequences of their actions have led to gentrification and forced displacement of traditional small business owners and residents, changing the character of the neighborhood. In 2020, there is an added layer of complexity in BID activities as COVID-19 has devastated many businesses in the area. A qualitative analysis will be performed on the social media of the BID working in Los Angeles Chinatown, analyzing their posts in 2016 and 2020 regarding marketing and target demographics.

A business improvement district (BID) is an urban policy designed to improve certain neighborhoods, usually ones that are economically struggling. Its goal is to clean up and modernize a neighborhood in order to spur economic growth, utilizing sanitation efforts and marketing tactics. BIDs, however, tend to contribute to gentrification. Often, the consequences of BID actions lead to displacement of traditional business owners and long-time residents and a changing character in the neighborhood, depending on how the BID is marketed.

Gentrification of neighborhoods can come in the form of economic growth, where a neighborhood expands and changes at the expense of its residents. In most Chinatowns across the United States, a majority of businesses are owned by the residents living there and consist of herbal stores, family restaurants, knick-knack shops and local grocers. However, business may become skewed towards these new trendier restaurants, clothing stores and art galleries, often displacing traditional stores. The growth from these new stores brings in a new demographic that does not necessarily repre-

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sent the original neighborhood and drives up the neighborhood value. Increases in overall rent prices can exceed the amount that local residents and shops can afford. This is the case with Los Angeles Chinatown, as mom-and-pop stores are gaining less attention and newer, less traditional shops are getting displaced due to higher rent prices (Hom, 2020). Additionally, there is the added layer of BIDs and how its work can contribute towards this trend.

This research project will focus on the marketing tactics that are employed by the BID in Los Angeles Chinatown, specifically on its target audience on Instagram. The research question guiding this project is how has the Los Angeles Chinatown BID marketed the neighborhood through its social media, and were there any changes during COVID? It is expected that the BID markets L.A. Chinatown towards a younger generation, through a modernized and trendy lens, and tends to promote newer businesses that are deemed “photo-worthy.” With the recent pandemic, there has been a strong emphasis in supporting local businesses, so the BID may have redirected its focus towards older establishments. The research will be conducted through a qualitative method that looks at social media posts, compiling the marketing framework of the posts and analyzing them based on their frequencies.

Research Question

How has the L.A. Chinatown BID marketed the neighborhood through its social media? Were there any changes during COVID?

Literature Review

BIDs are a tool used in urban policy to promote economic development in generally low-income neighborhoods. The goal of these strategies is to generate more economic growth by either improving the physical appearance of an area or by modernizing the neighborhood. While the residents and business owners see the desirability and advocate for the usage of BIDs, the impact of BIDs are often the opposite of its original goals, creating

new issues that cause gentrification and the displacement of native residents and businesses. There is a particular tension between the residents who want to bring in more money and those who seek to preserve the traditions and older stores in the neighborhood (Li, 2015).

BIDs are able to change the physical appearance of a neighborhood by encouraging practices that make an area safer and cleaner. Residents became more satisfied as they saw their neighborhoods getting cleaner, safer and more economically desirable. A byproduct of the cleanliness of a neighborhood is increased foot traffic, leading to increasing sales for businesses and creating economic benefits for the entire community (Elmedni, 2018). An example of the improvements of neighborhoods is depicted in the growth of BID activities in Los Angeles' Chinatown in the 2000s. Property owners voted in favor of a BID that allocates funds towards sidewalk sweeping, graffiti removal, private security patrols and tree and shrubbery planning. Part of the BID's goal was to lure in visitors through neighborhood improvements. Many community stakeholders, residents and business owners saw these changes as positive as it brought economic benefits and redevelopment back to the area (Lin, 2008). Several other BIDs in Downtown Los Angeles go further to even mask and displace the homeless population in their neighborhoods in order to promote cleanliness and economic growth in a neighborhood. A particular BID did so with an A.C.T.I.O.N program that created “Purple Patrol” security guards. These policies and programs show the extent BIDs are willing to go to in order to ensure that an area is desirable to residents and businesses. Efforts to promote cleanliness and redevelop the neighborhood's aesthetic encourages economic growth, making the prospect of BIDs popular to the people within a community (Marquardt, 2012). While these efforts are often beneficial, the literature has conflicting accounts on the effects of BIDs in ethnic neighborhoods. Some argue that it brings on gentrification and displacement of cultures, while others see it as an economic opportunity to modernize and revitalize an area.

The strategies employed by BIDs vary by community. In ethnic neighborhoods, such as Chinatown, there is a different emphasis placed on

advertisements to promote the neighborhood. Some Chinatowns have BIDs that try to market a neighborhood by engaging in “touristification”, a phenomenon where the culture of a neighborhood is exploited to better advertise the area towards tourists. Making an area appear more “exotic,” yet friendly, encourages more tourism and economic activity. Chicago’s Chinatown has repackaged its narrative to appear more desirable in order to commodify the area, indirectly causing gentrification. Ethnic neighborhoods have been increasingly competitive in the tourism industry, as they see the industry as a method to enhance neighborhood businesses and values. City tours around Chicago present the city’s Chinatown as a familiar area but with “exotic” differences. The tours emphasize visual and symbolic images, such as oriental patterns, animals and colors. This pushes regular businesses to exploit these generic images in an attempt to modernize and bring in more business. The new characterization for Chicago’s Chinatown focuses on the foreignness of the area, such as referencing traditional holidays, foods and so on, while making the neighborhood appear welcoming and warm. This is a stark contrast to America’s past characterization of Chinatowns as dirty, impoverished and illegal. The discourse around Chinatown is still focused on institutionalized “othering” culture, in which the “other,” also known as the tourist, takes an Oriental trip minutes away from the downtown into another culture, commodifying the ethnic and traditional values that residents are familiar with. The tours reference certain aspects of the culture that are prominent but often do not reflect the actual practices and allow tourists to marvel at and exploit these ideas as a form of entertainment (Santos, 2008).

A similar narrative is seen in Singapore’s Chinatown where there has been an increase in tourist activity. Singapore’s Chinatown has been characterized similarly to Chicago’s, resulting in an increase in tourist activity. Its Chinatown is marketed towards tourists as a “free-frame theme park,” coordinating furniture, signage and garden greenery to create a certain aesthetic that is neither historically correct nor accurate representative of authentic Chinese culture. Tours often neglect major subcultures of China because they over emphasize the use

of Mandarin language as opposed to other significant Chinese dialects. As another marketing method, the Chinatown tourism industry draws the image of an “Orientalist caricature” that exoticizes cultural conceptions in order to satisfy the needs of tourism. These changes come at the expense of the local community and are a mere artificial image of Chinatown that lacks truth. However, these changes to Chinatown have not benefited residents, as they find it hard to go on with their everyday lives (Henderson, 2000).

Another marketing initiative implemented by BIDS is the method of creating a youthful, trendy atmosphere that welcomes in new demographics. New opening businesses are specifically targeted towards the younger generation. For instance, new boba milk tea shops or aesthetic dessert shops are opening up in neighborhoods so that the youth are attracted to them. One revitalization plan to garner support from the younger generation is by having night markets. Though it is not a BID activity specifically, the revitalization plan’s motivations are similar to the BIDs: economic growth. In Vancouver’s Chinatown, businesses hold Night Markets that provide cultural foods, goods and music. The mantra of the Chinatown Night Market is to push a “live-work-play” philosophy, encouraging fun along with everyday life (Pottie-Sherman, 2013). New residents eagerly consume the “live-work-play” narrative and visit only the trendier shops displayed in markets rather than less-marketed businesses (Li, 2015). These markets create a “consumptionscape” view, where businesses are able to capitalize on ethnic consumer preferences towards Chinatowns. Not only do these night markets appear cultural, but they also generate more revenue for the neighborhood. Beyond that, the new phenomenon occurring across Chinatowns is the growth of trendier shops that appeal to a younger generation that ultimately kicks out smaller knick-knack grocery shops and phases out the older traditions and culture (Pottie-Sherman, 2013).

BIDs and local governments also may promote boutiquing, the act of building new boutiques in a neighborhood, and upscaling to advertise an area, consequently causing gentrification. In New York’s Harlem area, state and local governments have enacted policies to support business improvements

and developments to increase the neighborhood value. City funds that go towards empowerment zones allow many new boutiques to be built. Often, boutiques replace stores with strong community ties because as a neighborhood's value goes up, so does the cost of living. Residents and businesses have left the area and also experienced extreme inequalities because they are unable to pay for the housing and rental costs. Long-term residents are uncomfortable with the new stores because the ethnic ownership and characters of local stores are no longer there. Boutiques make an area appear higher-end and "mark" an area as "safe" for investment. Small, locally-owned shops are replaced with pricey designer shops, chain stores and branches of Chase Manhattan Banks. Small grocery and hardware stores or ethnic clubs morph into trendy restaurants targeted towards a different audience (Zukin, 2009). Similarly, the L.A. Chinatown has displaced many mom-and-pop shops because the BIDs push for a new bohemian entertainment scene in the neighborhood. Redevelopment efforts have disrupted community stability and the new trendy boutique shops being built are displacing traditional mom and pop shops (Lin, 2008). BIDs and the government are often so focused on capitalizing off the neighborhood that they neglect small businesses and low-income residents. The initiatives of the BIDs reflect the visions of an upscaled, revitalized city where the urban space is used for capital gains. The social infrastructure, regulations, new shops, and public space are all dictated by local policies and BID efforts. While they seek to revitalize an area, many practices are targeted towards investors and newcomers as opposed to the residents and small businesses. Many mom-and-pop shops, traditional herbal and small grocery stores, have been displaced by new chains that play a vital role in the changing landscape of Chinatowns (Li, 2015).

With all this taking place, there has been a recent growth in the resistance against the gentrification that BIDs may be encouraging. This includes grass-root organizations within the Chinatown communities who are engaging in activities that cater to residents, rather than outsiders. The recent efforts in Singapore's Chinatown have brought about a lot of mixed responses from stakeholders and people

within the community, as the organizations note how traditional trades and shops are replaced with trendy restaurants, expensive boutiques and souvenir shops (Henderson, 2000). Similar movements are occurring in the United States as well, especially in Manhattan's Chinatown. Grassroots organizations argue that preserving the culture of the neighborhood is more of a priority than other economic incentives (Li, 2015). The younger generation and women from the neighborhood are engaging in what is known as "shop talk," or the informal discourses with elderly residents and business owners. Younger generations can inform the elders about politics surrounding Chinatown, and the elders can tell the youth what they want for the future of the neighborhood. Shop talk allows for a new engagement and connection for the community to their roots and each other, which is a powerful resistance against the new trendy era for Chinatowns that promote gentrification and modernization (Wong, 2019).

In 2020, there may have been a greater shift towards preserving traditional cultures in ethnic enclaves like Chinatown. COVID-19 has not only wreaked economic havoc on businesses but has also brought about xenophobic sentiment. The unemployment rate among Asian Americans increased 450% between February and June of 2020. This high rate is partially driven by the lack of tourists and consumers due to the pandemic, but also partially due to the anti-Asian sentiment that has pushed many away from Asian businesses (Jagannathan, 2021). However, COVID-19 has also spurred a trend towards shopping locally, including in areas like Chinatown and other ethnic neighborhoods. 67% of consumers in a survey responded positively towards shopping locally and helping businesses that are struggling in their area (Schmidt, 2020). This gives hope to the many smaller stores in Chinatown, where the pandemic and anti-Asian sentiment has hit hard, but many are continuing to support them. With the changing times, the activities of BIDs could possibly shift away from the trendy oriental marketing methods previously employed and focus more on maintaining traditional shops and restaurants. This research explores the shift in BID marketing tactics during COVID-19, specifically whether it is occurring

and how it is occurring.

Methods

This is a qualitative research project, where the Instagram posts of L.A. Chinatown in 2016 and 2020 were examined. 2016 was used as a pre-COVID environment to background BID efforts and 2020 was used as a time during COVID to see if there were any notable changes in marketing tactics. The @lachinatown Instagram account is run by the Chinatown BID, so it informs this research in terms of understanding the advertising techniques they use to promote the neighborhood. The posts were then coded according to business type, generation, if it is a corporation or if it is an ethnic business. Each post was coded under the framework of Chinese American culture, youth-oriented culture, creative or artistic culture and foodie culture. A descriptive analysis of these nominal and ordinal variables was conducted by analyzing the frequency and cross-tabulation of these variables. The research is also informed by my RIO mentor, Professor Hom's ethnographic fieldwork collected from 2014 to 2017 consisting of interviews with Chinatown community leaders, including members of the BID, and observations of BID board meetings and BID-sponsored events.

Description of the Case

Los Angeles Chinatown was first established around the 1870s and was known as "Old Chinatown." Old Chinatown was demolished for the creation of Union Station due to urban planning and was rebuilt in 1938. The area was originally predominantly made up of European and Mexican Americans; however, after the 1964 Immigration and Nationality Act, which permitted more Asian immigrants to move into the United States, the area became majority Asian American. L.A. then went on to move Old Chinatown into what is now considered "New Chinatown" in order to centralize transportation efforts and to utilize the old area for something different, such as a downtown hub. This transition caused dissonance in the neighborhood and can be marked as the start of gentrifica-

tion in Chinatown (Hom, 2020). By the 1990s, new art galleries replaced old trinket stores and many storefronts were empty. This led to the creation of a BID focused on efforts to bring back economic growth into the area. Shortly after the BID was established, new restaurants and boutiques that catered to a different demographic were established, expensive modern apartments were built, and many chain stores, such as a Starbucks and a Walmart supermarket were added (Lin, 2008). This activity, paired with the way that the BID has marketed the neighborhood, has caused changing cultural activities, contributing to gentrification.

Findings

This research paper focuses on how the Los Angeles Chinatown BID has marketed its neighborhood through social media and if there were changes during the pandemic. After examining the BID-run Instagram account, it is clear that the advertising in the neighborhood centered around promoting events, restaurants and shops towards the youth, and if applicable, as "foodie culture." This trend started in 2016, as the rise of Instagram made aesthetic foods a popular commodity. However, as COVID-19 swept across America, along with a movement towards emphasizing local businesses, the BID has redirected its focus on older shops that have Asian roots.

The findings are organized by subsections depending on how a picture posted is coded. I will be analyzing the BID's posts that emphasize the neighborhood's aesthetics, youth-targeted market, foodie-culture marketing and non-Asian marketing. Within each analysis, the posts will be further split between businesses, such as restaurants or gift shops, and events, such as Chinatown Night Markets.

Role of Aesthetics

An important aspect of the BID is how it markets the neighborhood aesthetically. The literature discussed that BIDs focused on cleanliness and modernization in order to make a neighborhood comfortable and friendly (Elmedni, 2018). In do-

ing this, the BID is able to increase economic expenditures in the area. The L.A. Chinatown is no different, as it emphasizes the aesthetic nature of the neighborhood.

Chinatown has been built and modernized in a way that encourages photography and social media. Professor Laureen Hom attended the Chinese New Year's Parade and Festival, and, according to her notes, she saw people "posing in front of the benches with the confetti gun and posing to take pictures at the right moment as they let the confetti gun go," realizing that the Central Plaza may have been designed to have a "good photo opportunity to get either a picture of the Chinatown gate or the different pagoda awnings" (Fieldnotes, Feb. 2016). In another visit, Professor Hom observes Chinatown Summer Nights, a popular event in Chinatown akin to a party where there are concerts, food and drinks. The attendees were observed taking pictures and having an "Instagram moment" (Field notes, July 2015). The BID successfully created a neighborhood that is photogenic and inspires the people visiting to take pictures and post. This is a successful strategy in marketing the neighborhood, framing it in a way that generates interest and encourages others to come.

Throughout the Instagram feed in 2016, the BID reposted pictures that other people took and tagged as Chinatown. A total of 54 posts were not of businesses or events, but rather of the aesthetic nature of Chinatown. These pictures were mainly of the temples, neon lights and hanging lanterns. A part of this is to show how photogenic the neighborhood is. The BID wants people to take pictures of the neighborhood and post because it draws attention to the neighborhood and encourages other people to visit and enjoy. This is evident because the BID reposted pictures of social media influencers to show how popular the location is. This also ties into how the BID markets towards the youth, as it is mainly the younger generation that visits places for pictures or enjoys an "Instagram moment." A lot of the pictures also note the neighborhood's distinct characteristics, which exoticizes the area. Many pictures are of a statue of Bruce Lee, pagodas and hanging red lanterns, all which are distinctly Asian and oriental.

In 2020, the BID posted significantly fewer

posts centered around the neighborhood's aesthetics, instead focusing on protecting and promoting neighborhood businesses. Instead of the 54 posts seen in 2016, there were only 5. Of that 5, all captions were either updates on the neighborhood during the pandemic or to write an uplifting and encouraging message. The data here suggests a shift in priorities of the BID after COVID-19, specifically towards spending in certain businesses.

Youth-Oriented Culture

The tables below examine how the posts advertised businesses in different generations in terms of framework for the youth. To be advertised towards the youth, the BID framing had to include a caption of how a business is fun or trendy. An example of this would be the many events advertised. In 2016, about a quarter of the events were categorized as youth-targeted. 2016 marks the beginning of the BID's efforts in creating events like Chinatown Summer Nights that bring in a younger audience to enjoy the concert music and street-vendor foods. These events are not catered to the older generation, especially the older Chinese residents. In creating a space where the younger generation can gather to enjoy events, older residents who do not attend such festivals are excluded. Professor Hom observed the general demographic of people attending Chinatown Summer Nights, noting that the crowd was "families with young parents, groups of friends, and young trendy hipsters" (Fieldnotes, August 2015). Another observation that clearly depicts the target audience was Professor Hom noticing that "three hipster 20 somethings crossing the street" towards an event and "three elderly Chinese people walking in the opposite direction" (Fieldnotes, June 2015). This observation captures the nature of the BID, showing how it targets the youth at the expense of the older residents.

Though there is not much of a distinction across the two years, especially in terms of the older businesses, it is still clear that the BID's main audience is the younger demographic. In Table 1, a majority of the contemporary businesses were framed as businesses that the youth should go to, like vintage pop-up stores. It is also usually the younger generation that are browsing Instagram for food and shop

recommendations.

There are many instances throughout Instagram where drinking, karaoke and other events are mentioned, and these events tend to be ones that the youth participate in. In both tables, it is clear that a significant portion (a little under half) of the posts are targeted towards this demographic, providing a skewed bias of the BID as the majority of the residents in L.A. Chinatown are not that young.

“Foodie” Culture

Another way that the BID markets its neighborhood is through the lens of “foodie” culture. Foodie culture is defined as a trend that demands good food for the purpose of pleasure and enjoyment (Livingstone, 2019). Since its rise in popularity in the later 2010s, the BID has taken this idea and emphasized this in its marketing.

The data collected looked at the pictures on Instagram to see if the BID was encouraging its audience to visit Chinatown to enjoy the food there. In 2016, only 46% of the posts were of restaurants; however, this spiked in 2020, where 59% of the posts were of food establishments. Again, this could have been due to the pandemic, as more restaurants need advertisement in order to garner business. By promoting the food in the neighborhood, the BID paints Chinatown as an area that people should visit to get food that they would enjoy. It should be noted that events were counted in the pie chart, and certain events are not mainly for food, so there may be some overlap.

When cross examining the posts of food with the various generations of businesses and events, most businesses were framed with this trend in mind. In Table 3, 184 posts regarding businesses and events were framed as foodie whereas 126

Table 1

2016	Framing as Youth Culture		
Generation	No	Yes	Grand Total
Events	103	47	150
Legacy (before 1970s, Chinese)	8	1	9
New Immigrant (after 1970s, immigrant owned)	4	7	11
Contemporary Non-Immigrant	69	71	140
Grand Total	184	126	310

Table 2

2020	Framing as Youth Culture		
Generations for Businesses	No	Yes	Grand Total
Events	23	11	34
Legacy (before 1970s, Chinese)	4	7	11
New Immigrant (after 1970s, immigrant owned)	33	11	44
Contemporary Non-Immigrant	14	31	45
Grand Total	74	60	134

were not, illustrating how an overwhelming number of businesses were advertised in this way. A closer look indicates that of these 184 posts, 150 of them were of businesses that were framed as foodie. On the other hand, of the 126 posts, only 10 were from businesses. Comparing the number of restaurants and shops (150) that were considered foodie to the 10 that were not indicates a large trend. This trend follows into 2020, where foodie culture is more prevalent than ever. Of the 134 posts, 93 of them were businesses that were framed as foodie and only 7 that were not. Looking at the businesses generationally also provides insight. The BID mainly promoted contemporary or new immigrant businesses as foodie. The older restaurants mentioned may have already been established enough with loyal customers to not really need this sort of advertising. In 2020, there were also more

new immigrant businesses mentioned, so it could be that the BID has made a step back in promoting trendy restaurants. This does not affect the fact that a majority of the businesses promoted were still through a foodie lens.

Using this data, we can infer that the BID wanted to use a popular trend to market its neighborhood, emphasizing one sort of business over the other. This can have a negative effect on the neighborhood because shops that may not necessarily be restaurants are getting neglected and losing advertisement value, which can drive them out of the neighborhood and further gentrification.

Trend Towards a Non-Asian Demographic

Another lens used to observe the BID marketing on Instagram was if the business was considered

Chart 1

Business Type - 2016

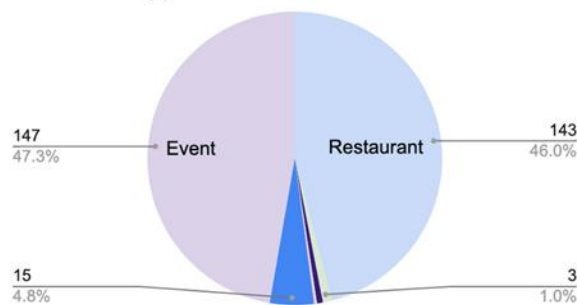
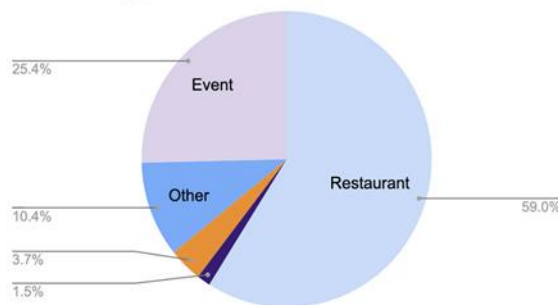


Chart 2

Business Type - 2020



Asian or not, meaning that either the business was founded by someone Asian or if the business served Asian goods. Table 5 shows that 139 of the posts made for businesses and events are in fact Asian, with a majority of them being contemporary. Of that 139, 107 are actual restaurants and shops. It is the same in 2020, where 90 of the businesses and events posted are Asian, with 79 actual businesses. However, there is still a significant number of posts that are not framed this way. The businesses usually promoted as non-Asian tend to be contemporary, such as Burger Lords or Howlin' Rays. This trend follows into 2020 as well, where older stores were framed as Asian and newer stores were not. This could speak to the changing look of the neighborhood in that the BID seeks to start new businesses that are not primarily Asian.

It is mentioned in Lauren Hom's observations

that the trendier restaurants next to Vietnamese and Cantonese restaurants are popping up, specifically ones like "Scoops, a trendy coffee and ice cream shop, Chego, Pok Pok, and a ramen place" (Fieldnotes, January 2015). These restaurants are diverse in their cuisines, which indicates a transitioning demographic in Chinatown and potential gentrification. When a BID board member was asked during an interview with Professor Hom what he made of the changing culture in Chinatown, he claimed that "the 'keeping Chinatown Chinese' rhetoric that has been happening and he says he fundamentally has problems with it" (Fieldnotes, August 2016). He believes that this is not gentrification, but rather a method of promoting economic growth in the neighborhood.

In a closer examination of the Asian businesses,

Table 3

2016 Generation	Framing as "foodie"		Grand Total
	No	Yes	
Events	116	34	150
Legacy (before 1970s, Chinese)	3	6	9
New Immigrant (after 1970s, immigrant owned)	1	10	11
Contemporary Non-Immigrant	6	134	140
Grand Total	126	184	310

Table 4

2020 Generation	Framing as "foodie"		Grand Total
	No	Yes	
Events	33	1	34
Legacy - before 1970s		11	11
New Immigrant (after 1970s, immigrant owned)	3	41	44
Contemporary Non-Immigrant	4	41	45
Grand Total	40	94	134

the shops can be broken down further in terms of whether they are ethnically Chinese or not. The results are depicted in Table 7 and 8 below, where in 2016, 90 of the businesses posted on Instagram were non-Chinese, all but 1 being contemporary. This speaks to the goals of the BID at the time and how the BID has contributed towards gentrification. If the BID is not promoting ethnic businesses, especially older ones that have a higher possibility of being displaced, then these restaurants and shops will run out of business. Instead of having a majority of its Instagram promoting the ethnic culture and food of Chinatown, it brings in a plethora of other cuisines that do not represent the neighborhood's residents. The shift in 2020 towards more Chinese businesses is a good

indication of the BID's changing goals amidst the pandemic. As anti-Asian sentiment grew, the BID found it important to promote authentic restaurants and shops, and to encourage economic growth in this area.

Events are also imperative to the data collected, as many posts are dedicated to events such as giveaways where individuals had to go on a scavenger hunt around Chinatown or Chinatown Summer Nights. While it was not possible to hold these events during the pandemic, a significant number of posts in 2016 were of such events. These events usually had little to do with Chinatown or its culture, but rather were a method employed to bring people in for economic reasons and engagement.

Table 5

2016 <i>Generation</i>	<i>Framing as Asian</i>		Grand Total
	No	Yes	
Events	118	32	150
Legacy (before 1970s, Chinese)		9	9
New Immigrant (after 1970s, immigrant owned)		11	11
Contemporary Non-Immigrant	53	87	140
Grand Total	171	139	310

Table 6

2020 <i>Generation:</i>	<i>Framing as Asian</i>		Grand Total
	No	Yes	
Events	23	11	34
Legacy (before 1970s, Chinese)	2	9	11
New Immigrant (after 1970s, immigrant owned)	1	43	44
Contemporary Non-Immigrant	18	27	45
Grand Total	44	90	134

Conclusion

The present findings indicate that the LA Chinatown BID marketed the neighborhood on its Instagram in order to gain interest in the public. Specifically, they targeted the youth, steered the conversation towards foodie culture, played into the photo aspect of the neighborhood and expanded its marketing to non-native businesses. While COVID-19 brought on a trend in marketing, where older local businesses are discussed more, the posts still skewed towards the younger demographic with photo opportunities and foodie culture.

The implications of BID marketing are clear in its bias towards the younger demographic. Instead of trying to help local residents and businesses in economic growth, the BID merely uses newer, trendier restaurants and events to target a different audience while still gaining the money. The youth-oriented outlook can be a driver of gentrification, taking the spotlight off of a majority of the resident's needs and instead highlighting another group that is not represented in the area. The many events mentioned are targeted towards the younger generation so that they can participate in a "live-work-play" narrative (Li, 2015). These Night Markets are a good source of revenue for the neighborhood, but do not cater to it. Many of the residents there do not participate in these

Table 7

2016	Ethnic Business?			
Generation	N/A	Chinese	Non-Chinese	Grand Total
Events	148	2		150
Legacy (before 1970s, Chinese)		9		9
New Immigrant (after 1970s, immigrant owned)		10	1	11
Contemporary Non-Immigrant	1	51	89	141
Grand Total	149	72	90	311

Table 8

2020	Ethnic Business?				
Generation		N/A	Chinese	Non-Chinese	Grand Total
Events	33	1			34
Legacy (before 1970s, Chinese)		9		2	11
New Immigrant (after 1970s, immigrant owned)		40		4	44
Contemporary Non-Immigrant	1	22		22	45
Grand Total	34	72		28	134

events and are even mystified by its occurrence. The new phenomenon occurring in the growth of trendier shops that appeal to a younger generation ultimately phases out the older traditions and culture (Pottie-Sherman, 2013).

The findings on photo opportunities and the role of aesthetics presented in 2016 is broadly consistent with the idea that the BID generates economic interest through photo promotion. By emphasizing the neighborhood's distinct oriental characteristics, taking pictures of aesthetically pleasing food, and creating a clean space, the BID allows the neighborhood to feel fun and new so that the target audience is interested in visiting. The visitors can enjoy food and shop, and also take pictures to post at the same time. However, this artificial image of the neighborhood robs residents from telling their true stories, especially in regard to the communities' struggles that should be addressed (Henderson, 2000). It also prevents many businesses that do not participate in trends and aesthetics from gaining visitors, as the visitors mainly go to the trendy spots promoted. The economic growth here occurs in these events and restaurants that are not necessarily native to the neighborhood, which can drive away older shops and residents that cannot afford to live in the neighborhood (Li, 2015).

Other marketing tactics mentioned were the promotion of foodie culture and a mixed heritage concept. However, these are not too prevalent in the BID's marketing. Many posts are foodie in

nature because they are promoting restaurants and drinks, so it does contribute towards the gentrification narrative. While foodie culture is a new phenomenon, many Chinatowns boast food, so this is not new. With that, a majority of the businesses are still Asian, often more Chinese than not. Especially with coronavirus, more businesses are ethnically Chinese and demographically Asian.

Looking forward, there are future studies that could continue to build upon the discussion of gentrification, especially in ethnic neighborhoods. Future research can extend explanations of the different generations of businesses that are promoted. As seen in this paper, most businesses are contemporary ones, and I don't really go into the discussion of why contemporary businesses are more desirable. Perhaps it could just be that the older stores have a set customer base already, but either way, this would be a fruitful source of information. Further attempts to examine the events promoted in the BIDs would also prove important. This paper focused primarily on businesses rather than events, but a large portion of the posts were towards promoting events. It would also be interesting to look at the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on the marketing goals of BIDs. Considering the shift towards promoting local businesses, BIDs in urban Chinatowns or ethnic spaces may be shifting in response to economic concerns about supporting Asian American communities that arise from this pandemic.

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