

COSMOPOLITANIZING AUSTRALIAN SUBURBIA: ASIAN IMMIGRATION IN SUNNYBANK*

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(ABSTRACT)

In the past, immigrant impacts on Australia's urban development was merely manifested in and restricted to inner-city enclaves. Recent changes in immigration however have seen some important distinctive impacts on urban development outside of inner-city. This paper argues that the settlement of affluent immigrants from Asia, especially those from the northeast region including Hong Kong and Taiwan, into traditionally high socio-economic, Anglo-dominated and culturally homogeneous dormitory suburbia, has brought many dramatic changes. Particularly apparent is the case of Sunnybank in Australia's third largest city —Brisbane— where it was infused with consumer cosmopolitanism, accompanied by an increase in the intensity of commercial and recreational activities, and ultimately followed by a total transformation of the built environment.

Key words : urbanization, Asian immigration, Immigration in Australia, Cosmopolitanism

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澳洲城郊的世界化： 以亞洲移民在桑尼畔為例

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(中文摘要)

移民定居澳洲，一向被認為只會聚居在城內舊區，自成一國，但最近從亞洲較富裕地區如台灣或香港到澳洲定居的移民，似乎把這論調完全改變。就以澳洲第三大城市里斯本的桑尼班區為例，自港台兩地移民大量遷入以後，區內原有的白人單一文化及生活方式，均被完全改變步向以消費為主的國際模式，商業活動及建築環境亦隨之國際多元化。

關鍵字：都市化；亞洲移民；澳洲移民；移民影響

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According to Harvey (1973), contemporary urban forms are mostly characterised by continual restructuring. Essentially such restructuring is influenced by the role governments play in providing tax concessions to investors, and in the setting up of particular credit arrangements and financial institutions to facilitate certain types of investment in the urban sector. Friedmann (1986), however, argued that urban development should be reconceptualised to include the notion of a global economy. Concomitantly with economic restructuring around the globe, in both relative shifts in industrial sectors and increasing deregulation, international capitals have switched from manufacturing to real estate and commercial land uses (Berry and Huxley, 1992). This has drastically altered much of the built environment in many developed nations. Whilst it has been well established that much of these capitals are important for urban (re)developments (Fainstein, 1994), many north American researchers have also begun to acknowledge that other pathways of capital are beginning to play a new role in the process of urban change. Feagin and Smith (1987), for example, recognise the diverse urban and social players in urban development. He purports that

Changing urban development patterns are best understood as the long-term outcome of actions taken by economic and political actors operating within a complex and changing matrix of global and national forces...

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rather than expressing general economic laws of capitalist development.
(Feagin and Smith, 1987:17).

Sassen (1988) also highlights that the diversification of immigrant components has led to important patterns of spatial restructuring in cities. Recent changes in immigration, most notably in North America, have seen some important distinctive impacts on urban development outside of inner-city. For example, in New York, Los Angeles and Vancouver, the arrival of affluent immigrants from Asia, especially those from the north-east region including Hong Kong and Taiwan, with their substantial quantities of capital and skills, has brought many districts outside of the traditional migrant enclaves or ghettos dramatic changes. Studies by Smart and Smart (1994), Li (1993), Zhou (1992) and Lary (1990) have illustrated that the input of immigrant capital, enterprise and labour that accompany a new component of immigration, particularly those of the 'overseas' Chinese, has produced rapid urban restructuring and the emergence of new urban landscapes over the last 20 years. More importantly, Smith and Tseng (1994), in documenting the role of international migration between Asia and the United States, point out that no longer are Asian immigrants simply the recipients of and respondents to external changes. They are now initiating events that will have a direct impact on patterns of economic and urban growth in other parts of the world.

While recent disjunctures in immigration and their impact on urban development have been investigated rigorously in North America, little serious Australian research has inquired into what new connections exist between a differing portrait of immigration and urban change. In the past, immigrant roles in Australia, perhaps as in many developed nations, were far less interesting than the contemporary picture presented by the researchers we mentioned earlier. During the 1950s and 1960s immigrant impacts on Australia's urban environment were restricted by policies such as designated places and periods of initial settlement and work, assimilation policies limiting the public display of cultural 'otherness'. Their impact on urban development was merely manifested in and restricted to inner-city enclaves (Jupp, 1991; Collins, 1991). What are the specific recent immigrant, urban and economic outcomes holding up for Australia? In this paper, we argue that the recent

affluent Asian immigrants, particularly those from Taiwan and Hong Kong and the north-east Asian region, in their settlement into traditionally high socio-economic, Anglo-dominated and culturally homogeneous dormitory suburbia, they have infused them with consumer cosmopolitanism most often accompanied concomitantly by an increase in the intensity of commercial and recreational activities as well as a transformation of the built environment in the local region.

More specifically, in defining cosmopolitanism, we refer to the idea suggested by Hannerz (1990:239) that cosmopolitanism is "an intellectual stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences... a search for contrasts rather than uniformity". It is often interwoven into consumerism as an international consumerist style that traditionally has been characteristics of cities rather than suburbia. This cosmopolitanism does not present the urban landscape in a specific ethnic or exotic form, but rather, its 'looks' and 'style' is consciously international or 'global' emphasizing 'the globalness of everyday life' rather than a locational character. The aim is to heighten the excitement of "multiple consumption environments" rather than the provision of an ethnic niche market. It highlights heterogeneity as market sophistication, experimentation and innovation without sacrificing differentiation and consumer choices.

This process of cosmopolitanization thus could be best illustrated by a number of signature changes as suggested by Murphy and Freestone (1994): the design of new, self-conscious 'post-modern' buildings; the rise of leisure and tourist based landscapes. Underlying these changes are also the increasing value people have placed on the consumption of signs and symbols, the consumption of more traditional forms and mediums of culture (movies, 'exotic' cultures), spectacles, culture diversity. These changes are most popularly and commonly converged in shopping malls. They contrast dramatically with the traditional utilitarian suburban commerce that offers little diversity, spectacle and 'experience' but much emphasis on standardization, conformity and convenience.

In this context, our paper proposes that amongst the diversity of determinants in contemporary Australian urban development, the vanguard of change is the economic, but equally important is the sociocultural agency of recently settled affluent Asian

immigrants. They brought with them ideas, skills and capital to initiate certain impetus to reshaping (sub)urban forms. Such changes however are expressed less by ethnic lines but more according to economy and a general consumer-cosmopolitanism. Specifically, their involvement in shopping mall development has been most vital in decentralising a cosmopolitan lifestyle, consumerism, economy and leisure-based landscape that are often associated more with metropolitan urban centres to the more affluent suburban locales where the population is better educated, and whose occupations are mostly non-laboring. Whilst it may be true that such cosmopolitanism has been spreading from the city to other suburbs, and often at various speed and in varying degrees, our observation is that the cosmopolitanizing process is most vibrant and active where Asian capital and settlers converge.

To illustrate the impact of recent Asian immigrants within these processes, a case study of Sunnybank, an expanding 'hub' in the south side of Brisbane, the third largest city in Australia is undertaken. This involves firstly a review of the changes in Australian immigration, the historical background of Sunnybank, the recent Chinese settlement in the locale before the process of cosmopolitanization of the suburb is examined and highlighted by focusing on the rapid transformation of economic and social landscapes shaped by shopping mall development spearheaded by Asian capital.

Immigration to Australia

Australia has a long history of international immigration that was until the late 1960s, largely sourced from the United Kingdom and Europe. In the decades since, particularly in the 1980s, there has been a sea change in the source and characteristics of immigrants. These changes could be summarized under three headings:

a. From organized to unorganized:

In the past, the Australian government had organized migration programs to

Australia drawing from southern Europe and the United Kingdom (Jupp, 1991; Cope, Castles and Kalantzis, 1991; Collins, 1991). This was a government response to the shortage of skilled labor in the country and in response to major industrial or public work projects such as the Snowy Mountain Scheme. Immigrants were recruited, given assistance with their passage and when they arrived were sent to locations where the new industries or major public works were being carried out. The White Australia Policy also imposed restrictions on who may migrate to Australia thus effectively prevented Asians from migrating to Australia in large numbers.

The present immigration program, largely in place since the early 1970s, is based on merit and selection is based on a number of factors, including education, qualifications, skills and family links in Australia (Castles and Miller, 1993). The consequences of the new policy are that the recent migrants are usually well educated, with professional qualifications, trade skills or managerial experience and for those who come under the "Business Migration Program," with capital to invest. These migrants tend to locate themselves in the capital cities where there are employment and business opportunities (Byrnes, 1994).

b. From Europe to Asia:

Whereas in the past Australia had actively sought migrants from UK and Europe, the present migration schemes, in combination with a host of other factors such as Australia's relative economic strength and the perceived political stability of the places of origin, have resulted in major shifts in the composition of settler arrivals.

Pre-War migration was dominated by those of British-extraction (70 percent of all settler arrivals between 1947-48) (Bell, 1992). Postwar migration was dominated by refugees from Eastern Europe and then migrants from Northern and Western Europe. The Vietnamese boat-people arrived in the late 1970s and the majority of migrants from Hong Kong and other North-east Asia locations came after 1980 (Inglis, 1997). Table 1 illustrates well the changing face of Australia's immigrant profile.

Table 1: Source of Migrants to Australia by Major World Regions of Birth (Percentage of Total)

World Region	1994-95
Oceania	15.5
Europe & Former USSR	29.2
Middle East and North Africa	8.2
Southeast Asia	17.0
Northeast Asia	11.3
Southern Asia	8.7
North America	2.9
Central & South America	1.5
Other Africa	5.6
Total	100.0

Source: Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research (1996)

c. From the blue-collar to the professionals:

Whereas Australia deliberately sought to import skilled migrants to fill jobs in the industrial sectors, the present policies are more sophisticated in fine tuning the program towards the perceived present and future needs of the Australian economy. The clear shift in the skill level of the immigrants are due to a number of factors, including the changing structure of the Australian economy, the relative position that Australia has in the world economic growth stakes, and the selection criteria for immigration (Stahl *et al*, 1994).

Compared to the general population of Australia, recent migrants from Asia have significantly large percentage with university degrees or diplomas and higher percentage with trade certificates or qualifications (Inglis and Wu, 1992).

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Settlers by Qualification, Period of Residency, Age & Sex

	0-4 Yrs Settlers				5-9 Yrs Settlers				All Australia			
	18-34		35-64		18-34		35-64		18-34		35-64	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Degree/Dip.	13.4	12.1	21.0	12.7	10.0	9.8	17.5	12.2	10.0	10.7	11.4	8.0
Trade Cert.	28.5	22.6	32.8	21.1	28.3	20.7	35.9	21.3	30.7	19.8	31.2	16.0
No Qualification	49.7	56.6	39.3	56.6	54.7	61.9	40.2	58.1	51.8	61.7	49.9	66.8
Not Stated	8.4	8.8	7.0	9.6	7.1	7.6	6.4	8.4	7.5	7.8	7.5	9.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Inglis and Wu (1992)

This very brief summary of the major changes in the source and characteristics of the immigrants to Australia is meant to give a general understanding of the impacts of the recent Asian migrants on urban restructuring and business enterprises in Australia. Asian migrants with higher income capital, professional backgrounds and entrepreneurial skills are likely to seek housing in residential areas of people with similar socio-economic backgrounds and they have the language and professional skills to function in the wider community without having to confine themselves to the ethnic market. For some, their business backgrounds give them an edge on seeking out emerging opportunities in Australia. The entrepreneurs who were interviewed in this study exemplify these qualities.

Methodology

Little's advocate for methodological pluralism parallels Fontana's (1994) discussion of the trend in postmodern research, particularly in using data derived from ethnographic interviews -- that is, the employment of multitextual and polyphonic modes and varieties of data in ethnographic accounts. As Fontana (1994:220) maintains: "Postmodern ethnographers do not advocate any one way of doing and reporting ethnography; instead, they favor a multiplicity of approaches." To this end, an expanded range of methodologies was employed in the case study.

In defining the locational parameters prior to and after the dramatic influx of north-east Asian immigrants, a quantitative approach was utilised to extract information from the 1986 and 1991 Census. In addition, other data sources from DILGEA (Department of Immigration and Local Government and Ethnic Affairs), the Brisbane City Council as well as the Queensland Government Land Department were consulted. Similarly, the profiling of immigrant agency in the locality was compiled through the statistics provided by the ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) Census as well as data sources from immigrant associations such as The Taiwanese Friendship Association and The Taiwanese Women's League.

To become familiar with the present locational parameters and to understand the multicontextual intensity of economic activities, consumerism, the distinctive

residential pattern as well as the characteristics of built environment associated with the immigrant agency, field work included site visits, participant observation and in-depth interviews.

The site visits were short but thorough expeditions of the areas of Sunnybank, McGregor, Sunnybank Hills, Calamvale, Stretton, Runcorn, Robertson, and Eight Mile Plains throughout the months of July and August, 1995. The objectives of these trips were to heighten the reflexivity and awareness of the researcher in understanding, interpreting and selecting relevant qualitative data pertaining to the metanarratives. These excursions were often accompanied by spontaneous interactions and dialogues with local real estate agents, business owners and residents. Observations, impressions and interpretations were often recorded immediately during and at the end of such field trips. Information gathered through participant observations in cafes, shopping centers as well as street corners were also used to supplement in giving a more detailed picture of everyday life experience/activity of local residents.

For the purpose of highlighting the emerging consumerist processes which have been taking place in the Sunnybank locality, attempts were also made to reconstruct its past. This was accomplished mainly by using content analysis of the Yellow Pages published in 1986. The result was then compared to the findings from the 1995 Yellow Pages.

In illustrating the cosmopolitanization of the Sunnybank area, particularly in the hub where the immigrant activity and consumer culture are seen most conspicuous, in-depth and semi-structured interviews with major developers and owners of businesses in the locality were conducted. For they are not only major decision-makers effecting conscious and systematic strategies to transpose Sunnybank from a dormitory suburb to an elitist consumerist process, their insights, motivations and visions for reinventing and redefining the Sunnybank area have significant implications in interpreting the future directions of cosmopolitanizing suburbia in Southeast Queensland.

Five informants were sought for in-depth interviews. They included Mr. Hsien-ta Fu, owner and developer of the two major shopping centers -- Sunnybank Plaza

and Sunny Park -- in the heart of Sunnybank; Mr Kevin Yuen, owner and developer of Market Square, the third major shopping center in the Sunnybank consumerist hub. Both interviews helped to explain and clarify much of the process of cosmopolitanizing of Sunnybank and how it could be linked intimately to the conspicuous presence and the efforts of the recent Asian arrivals in the area. Mr. John Chang, who is one of the owners of the Liquidity Cafe at Sunny Park, and Mr. Yi-song Pang, one of the owners of the recently opened Karaoke club located in the fourth corner of the economic and business center in Sunnybank, also expounded in the interviews their views of the transformation of Sunnybank. Mr. Steve Hsu, now owner of an import/export company in the suburbs of Coopers Plains but an ex-real estate agent in Sunnybank with the "Professionals", and Mr. Michael Law, the present owner of two newsagencies (newspaper outlets) in Fortitude Valley with a background in real estate development in 1987 with Century 21 specialising in the Asian immigrant market, were interviewed for their knowledge and comprehension of the changes that have occurred in Sunnybank.

Added to their credibility is the fact that they are all residents in the Sunnybank locale. With the exception of Mr. Fu, who is a resident of the prestigious McGregor Park, all others have been living in Sunnybank for some years (Mr Law, 10 years; Mr Yuen, 8 years moving from Eight Mile Plains; Mr. Hsu, 8 years; and Mr. Chang, 3 years).

Interviews with these informants were arranged through personal network and affiliation with the Taiwanese Australian Business Association (TABA). Three interviews were carried out in Mandarin (as Mr. Fu, Mr. Chang and Mr. Hsu are originated from Taiwan) and one in Cantonese (Mr. Law is from Hong Kong) in order to maintain the flow and the spontaneous nature of the dialogues. As Mr. Yuen was born in Brisbane after his father emigrated from Hong Kong some 40 years ago, he was interviewed in English.

All interviews in Chinese were conducted by our bilingual Brisbane researcher who speaks fluent Chinese (both Mandarin and Cantonese) and English. The researcher kept detailed notes for all interviews and they were then transcribed and translated into English no later than one day after the interviews were completed

when impressions of the research contexts and conversations were still fresh and vivid. Translations of the interviews were thoroughly checked for accuracy and consistency.

Sunnybank: brief history

Sunnybank at the end of the 18th century was mainly a rural area where farms and settlement houses were characteristics of its economy and built structures. It was an area where persimmons, loquats, macadamia nuts, bananas and various varieties of citrus were grown by the Chinese market gardeners who took leases along rivers and rail lines to Brisbane until the 1920s.

The first industrial activity in the area was a bone mill established in 1886, but the first thrust of urban development did not take place until 1957 when a permit was granted to a company to establish a tobacco leaf drying plant on 20 acres between Mains Road and Mimosa Creek. There were a number of smaller food and primary produce processing firms established in the area after that, but it was Amsted Industries, a Chicago-based corporation which consigned a local entrepreneur to employ on a large scale 250 to 300 on-site workers to produce 'Griffin Wheels' (general use steel wheels).

There were little commercial activities in Sunnybank between 1862, the time of its initial settlement, and 1914 when all supplies had to be brought in from Brisbane. The first sign of its commercial development only appeared with the coming of WWI when a series of corner shops began to appear. It was not until the 1950s when Sunnybank began to take on the appearance of a long established suburb with the emergence of a shopping block. From 1961 it also became the 'flagship' of the developer, Mater, suburb, with several large prize homes and gardens adding an element of prestige to the area. It was only in the early 1980s when a core of establishment began to form where Mains Rd and McCullough Street meet, establishing the hub of the Sunnybank area.

The total area of the Sunnybank district is 41.7 sq kilometres. The estimated residential population of this area which included Sunnybank, Sunnybank Hills,

Eight Mile Plains, Robertson, Wishart, MacGregor, Stretton, and Calamvale, in June 1991 was 45,877. Sunnybank Hills in fact had the highest suburban population in Brisbane in 1991 with 12,855 residents (Sunnybank State High School Parents and Citizens Association, 1995).

Suburb of Affluence

The Sunnybank area is not the most wealthy district in Brisbane. However, it is undeniably affluent in terms of its population's household income, occupational status and level of education which are important to its conduciveness to cosmopolitanism.

In terms of annual household incomes, 40% of its population were over \$40,000. This compares to Brisbane City's average in the same bracket of 33% and the total Queensland Local Area proportion of 25%. Further, the area had 19% in the \$60,000 and above bracket; 5% in the \$100,000 and above bracket (as opposed to 14% and 4% respectively in Brisbane City; or 9% and 2% respectively for all Queensland Local Areas) (ABS, 1992).

In terms of occupation profile, 38% of its population were managerial and professional workers whilst only 14% were plant operators/laborers. Respectively for Brisbane city the percentage in these two categories was 33% and 16%. For all Queensland Local Areas the percentage was 29% and 21% respectively (ABS, 1992).

In terms of educational qualifications, overall Sunnybank had comparative proportions to Brisbane city in the highly educated brackets (15% and 18% respectively) and higher than the 12% for all Queensland Local Areas (ABS, 1992).

These factors suggested that Sunnybank is a newly affluent and educated area which displayed a ready receptiveness to cosmopolitanism. However, one also has to recognize that these features are not unique within Queensland. For the area to become cosmopolitan, the additional element – capital from the north-east Asian immigrants and their eventual settlement in the area – appeared to play a key role in the transformation of the southside suburbia.

Settlement Pattern

Since the late 1980s the population in Sunnybank area has become not only increasingly, but notably more diverse, multicultural and multilingual. The greatest increases are constituted by Chinese immigrants, mostly from Hong Kong and Taiwan. In 1986 in the two suburbs of McGregor and Robertson, there was only about 4 to 5% concentration of Chinese settlers (the largest was about 7% in inner-city suburbs such as West End or New Farm) (ABS, 1989). In 1991, the proportional increase in Sunnybank district was about 12% (interview with Law).

Table 3: Settler Arrival of Taiwanese Immigrants by State of Intended Residence.

	1986/87	1990/91	1994/95
New South Wales	354	1240	292
Victoria	186	470	82
Queensland	128	1554	364
South Australia	67	67	15
Western Australia	25	107	32
Tasmania	33	0	0
Northern Territories	6	4	2
ACT	5	14	7
Total	804	3,456	794

Source: Bureau of Immigration Research (1996) *Settler Arrivals by State of Intended Residence, Statistical Report No.20*. Canberra: AGPS.

Table 4: Settler Arrivals of Hong Kong Immigrants Occupation Categories 1991

	Queensland		Australia	
Managers/administrators	208	(11.3%)	2152	(9.5%)
Professionals	362	(19.7%)	5545	(24.5%)
Para-professionals	75	(4.1%)	1017	(9.8%)
Tradespersons	269	(14.7%)	2396	(10.6%)
Clerks	198	(10.8%)	3225	(14.3%)
Salespersons & Personal Service workers	356	(19.4%)	3581	(15.8%)
Plant & Machine Operators & Drivers	40	(2.2%)	836	(3.7%)
Laborers & Related Workers	168	(9.2%)	1665	(7.4%)
Inadequately Described & Not Stated	158	(8.6%)	1705	(7.5%)
Total	1834	(100%)	22633	(100%)

Source: DILGEA, unpublished data, tables of settler arrivals by region/country of last residence by sex by major Australian Standard Classification of Occupation groups for financial years 1990-1992.

Table 5: Settler Arrivals of Taiwanese Immigrants by Eligibility Category 1986-1992 Financial Years

	Family Migration	Business Migration	Humanitarian	Other	Total
1986-87	344	539	0	104	987
1987-88	344	824	4	148	1320
1988-89	217	1474	0	193	1884
1989-90	156	2490	0	243	2889
1990-91	176	2909	0	176	3261
1990-92	258	2322	1	365	2946

Source: DILGEA, unpublished data, tables of settler arrivals by region/country of last residence for financial years 1986-1992.

Notes: Humanitarian includes refugees and special humanitarian program. Other includes skilled labor, independent, special eligibility, New Zealand citizen, Australian child born overseas, occupational skill share and employer nominees.

These immigrants' highly-skilled and affluent status as new consumers and investors as well as their ability to dictate to a greater extent the location of their residences (Tables 3, 4 and 5), they become the major forces to cosmopolitanize the previous sleeping suburbia of Sunnybank.

Cosmopolitanizing Sunnybank

The cosmopolitanizing of Sunnybank is best illustrated by the rapidly expanding commercial development centering on the main intersection of Mains Road and McCullough Street. It is the hub of commercial activities in the region. Its largest centers are two shopping malls – Sunnybank Plaza and Sunny Park – and a shopping center, Sunny Market.

Both Sunnybank Plaza and Sunny Park are owned by Mr. Fu, a Taiwanese entrepreneur who made the purchase since 1992 (*Australian Financial Review*, Dec 2 1994:55). These two malls now comprise over 170 shops, including 5 supermarkets. Sunnybank Plaza has around 20 eat-in/take-away restaurants, a 'Cinema 8' complex and by now probably around 1000 undercover car parks. However, both have gone through considerable expansion initiated by Fu. In particular, internationalism and consumerism, both in terms of expansion of the shopping malls as well as adding values to the properties, have been most obvious.

...when I took over Sunny Park...it had everything going for it... but it did not do well. The problem it had was a lack of careful consideration of its strengths and utilization of space...

First to go was an old Pizza delivery business and a light fitting shop.

...it was not like Pizza Hut which relies a lot of on-site, walk-in business.

It was more like a kitchen as its business was reliant on delivery. This means that the shop was not drawing people in. For a shopping center, this is not a good business to have because it does not help to increase the volume of people using the space.

Fu rearranged the floor plan, gave the shopfront better exposure and replaced the pizza business with a speciality hi-fi business.

...as for the light fitting shop, it was a specialty shop as far as I'm concerned. It had limited appeal and it never drew any large crowds in. I did not think it deserved to have a place in a shopping center like Sunny Park which needs to keep attracting new consumers. We had to let it go when its lease ran out and we replaced it with a Japanese restaurant owned by a Chinese couple and proved to be very successful in the city.

...Then there was the chemist. We wanted to get a chemist because it draws people and it is logical to have a chemist because already there is a medical center with two General Practitioners (doctors) in the mall.

Soon after that, Fu put a brand new building that housed an up-market Chinese restaurant serving Beijing cuisine and Cantonese Yum-cha in an empty lot which used to be a car park.

We decided the shopping center would not need so much empty car parks or idle space. So we put another building on the lot and turned it into a Chinese restaurant. Business has been good there and again, the restaurant helped to draw customers in.

In re-examining the use of space of the shopping mall further,

...we were also unhappy about a little courtyard located just outside of the shopping center. It had a pergola and a few bushes but there was hardly anyone who would use it. It was total wasted space and we had to

spend money to maintain it...

As a consequence, a café serving western breakfast, cappuccino throughout the day and Asian snacks in the evening in an al fresco setting was erected and was leased to a Taiwanese couple. The internationalism of the café was intentional. As the owner explained:

I don't see why one should run a business catered specifically for Chinese in Sunnybank because the Chinese are only a small part of the population in the suburb.... When my wife and I decided to take this cafe bar on, we determine to make the clientele cosmopolitan rather than ethnic.

We also employ non-Chinese (mostly Australian) in the cafe because as soon as you have a Chinese waiter or something, people will automatically put your cafe into a pigeon hole [that it is a Chinese cafe], and that just goes against what you try to achieve, a cosmopolitan joint.

Further, in order to enhance customer's shopping experience visually, stalls for florists and one specializing in Taiwanese bread were installed. The types of shops were also upgraded to emphasize luxury want items over and above the purely practical act of shopping.

Similarly, Sunnybank Plaza, under Fu's helm, went through an extensive make over.

...when we took over, it was busy but also quiet. Nothing really happened.

You'll have to make things happen. More activities, more people, and more consumption. That is why we decided to have a two stage expansion [to Sunnybank Plaza]. The first one was to put 8 cinemas, an international food court and more retail shops.

Fu wanted the cinemas in because there were no cinemas on the south side of the city and they "draw people in". Fu also wanted the food court to be international/multicultural to include Chinese, Irish, Turkish American, Japanese, Italian; Vietnamese and pan-national [serving Australian (hot roasts), Chinese (sweet and sour and black-bean sauced dishes) and Italian (spaghetti, lasagne) dishes].

Stage two was to put in yet another two storey car-park in the other end of the shopping mall not only to accommodate more vehicles, but also to house one of the

biggest chain-video shops on the ground level. He also replaced a low-end, no-frill supermarket (Bi-Lo) with 10 other specialty shops which included two banks, 2 travel agents, an Asian food shop (selling Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese groceries), a bakery specialized in fancy pastries and a Chinese noodle shop which at present is specially popular among the crowds craving for late-evening (after 9 p.m.) snacks. The anchor store at this end of the shopping center is a K-Mart store that draws in large numbers of shoppers.

At the third corner of this hub is Market Square, an established shopping center owned by the Yuen family. The shopping center in appearance is noticeably more Chinese because of a cluster of Asian businesses are concentrated at the western end of the center while in fact, according to Yuen, less than half of the business in the center is Asian-owned. At present, the shopping center is promoted as a seven-day center rather than a shopping 'experience' as in a mall. Its transformation, however slow has been quite remarkable.

When the Yuen family first took over about 13 years ago, there was no Asian shops in the center. They were the first one to open a vegetable shop selling Asian type of vegetables to a largely Australian clientele but with little success. It was in the late 1980's when suddenly a sizable Hong Kong immigrant population moved into the Sunnybank area that they started to diversify their own Chinese supermarket in Chinatown to Sunnybank. And this was also the period when Asian-owned businesses started to knock on his door trying to get a place in his shopping center. In a short three year period, it has become a hub for Asian food serving Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Thai, Chiu-Chow Chinese, Japanese and Cantonese cuisine. A butcher serving Asian cuts of meat, a Chinese herbal shop, a Taiwanese bakery, a Hong Kong video shop/news agency also streamed in. According to Yuen, he did not see his center specifically 'Asian' but 'international', and in the future, "it will become more cosmopolitan".

...what I'm trying to do is to have the entire area, including the pavements, turned into a big al fresco café. We've submitted an application to the city council and we don't think there'll be any trouble... If I have my way, I want to set up a market here too on

weekends... just like Riverside or Southbank. Two of the areas in the city where weekend open air markets are held selling crafts and food...[also] we've acquired some houses adjacent to Market Square for future expansion.

Yet another indicator of the increasing cosmopolitanization of Sunnybank is the establishment of a Kareoke club by a group of Taiwanese investors at the final section of this hub. Although Kareoke is generally considered to be an entertainment/leisure activity more suited to the Asian taste, the club however did not aim at merely attracting Asian, or Chinese clientele. As the owner emphasized:

I think gradually they will 'discover' the joy of Kareoke as good, clean fun for the whole family, or even as a social function.... we are also attracting a lot of attention from the Australian media... All of them were surprised by what's been set up here. They all thought it was a great idea for the family... Since the stories got out, we had many enquiries from Australians and indeed, we now have Australian clients regularly coming in.

With the intention to broaden its appeal, the club changed its name from a distinctly Taiwanese 'Taisong' (or Cashbox in Chinese characters) prominently displayed by neon signs when it was first opened to a more Western flavoured 'Tremor' just two months later. The business of the club, however, has been hampered by the existing liquor licensing law. What was described by the club owner may one day cosmopolitanize the licensing regulations in Queensland.

...We set ourselves up to be a family club, a place where the entire family could come and have a good time. The Chinatown [kareoke] clubs have restaurant liquor license, and we have only a club license. This means that we cannot admit anyone who is under 18 without their parents.

But that is a bit harsh for us because we do not intend to sell liquor to the under-aged. The problem is, in Queensland, there are only three types of liquor licenses: restaurant, club and night club/hotel. And we don't fit into anyone of them. We appealed to the Liquor Licensing Board to give us special conditions. Their reply was that because it is a special case,

the first of its kind in Queensland, it will involve major reconsideration of existing regulations, therefore it will take some time for them to reach a decision.

Concomitant with the development of the Sunnybank hub, apparent in the Sunnybank area has also been the phenomenal growth in ethnic restaurants. Notably these restaurants are not primarily established to cater for 'ethnic' tastes but are increasingly up-market places which advertise 'cuisine' and the 'dining experience' rather than the mandatory 'Chinese take-away' or 'Italian Pizza Parlours' in the past. In 1986, the Yellow Pages restaurant listings for Brisbane had only around 8 restaurants in the whole Sunnybank area. Two advertised Asian food, the rest were mainly pizza joints and one 'Macdonalds'. In 1995 there were 27 restaurants advertised in the area with 15 Asian, serving not only Chinese but also Malaysian, Vietnamese, and Japanese. The remaining ones are also interesting because they include Italian and French cuisine, café bars and carveries.

Hsu who has been sharply observant of the cosmopolitanization of the area identified other services which were becoming increasingly international in their character. First it was the banks who specifically recruit tellers and managers to deal with north-east Asian immigrants. Then car yards started to employ Chinese-speaking salesmen, and insurance companies, real estate agencies, accountants, builders and carpenters and even medical doctors in the area were increasingly of non-Western ethnicity themselves, or were hiring non-Western staff to cater for the newly cosmopolitan area.

Such cosmopolitanism has extended into the residential and real estate market in the Sunnybank area.

...I don't think there is any property development project specifically designed for or aimed at the Chinese immigrant population in the southside. However, this is not to say that there are no specific peculiarities among Chinese property buyers.

Hsu observed that many new houses on the market in the area have modified their designs to cater for the Chinese belief of feng-shui (geomancy) to facilitate sales.

About 10 percent of the Chinese property buyers in the area are really true believers of Chinese feng-shui (geomancy), and 40% would consider feng-shui as somewhat important concern. Briefly speaking, all Chinese buyers like to purchase brand new properties if they could afford to. They would pay a lot of attention to the orientation of the house (facing west is not a good sign) and the numbering of the house is important, particularly for the Hong Kong immigrants (4 is a number which rhymes with 'death' while 8 rhymes with 'prosperity'; 14 in Cantonese sounds more like 'sure death', whilst 18 sounds very close to 'sure prosperity'). In 1993, at the request of the real estate industry, the Brisbane City Council amended their regulation that residents could request the number of their occupied house to be changed if they wish. There were of course outcries about Asian buyers having their ways again, but if number 13 is considered bad luck in western culture and that in many streets number 13 simply does not exist, what's so different about the 4s and 8s or 14s?

Conclusions

What has been so significant about the transformation of the Sunnybank area is its increasing cosmopolitanism and consumerism. Usually considered as quintessential features of metropolitan regions, they have been transplanted to the Sunnybank area by recently settled Asian immigrants and capital. Fu sank A\$20 million to refurbish Sunny Park to create a more cosmopolitan mix of shops albeit the flavour is definitely more Chinese. Yet he emphatically noted that he did not give preference to Chinese businesses:

I don't want to make this into a Chinatown mall... I would attract Chinese to come in but I would not want to turn this into a Chinatown because there's no need for another.

Chang, the café owner similarly aimed at the wider cosmopolitan population in the Sunnybank area rather than catering for the Chinese ethnics. Most noticeably the

reading materials displayed in the café were of an international range: from Australian fashion rags to Japanese comics; from European car magazines to Hong Kong/Taiwan trendy news.

Yuen's Market Square at present is in a transitional phase. The signs of cosmopolitanism however is evident. A compact disc rental shop is being turned into an up-market Taiwanese with Hong Kong influence restaurant. A swimming pool supply shop has made way for a fancy Thai-Vietnamese 'post-Asian' restaurant. At the other end of the market, a nursery will be converted into a series of al fresco cafés. Even he himself admitted,

The volume of my supermarket business in Sunnybank has overtaken that in Chinatown. The clientele of my Chinatown business are Western tourists who wander in Chinatown. My regular customers in Sunnybank are locals, Asian or otherwise.

However, it is important to point out that underlying the process of cosmopolitanization in the area is the immigrants', or even the immigrant entrepreneurs' unique cultural motivation or disposition to bring a metropolitan lifestyle closer to where they reside. Fu remarked:

We just want to prove that southside residents don't have to go to the city to enjoy these wonderful things. The Chinese immigrants are particularly warmed to this; they do not have to go to Chinatown to have 'Yum-cha' or 'Dim-sum'; and they can do their Chinese grocery shopping in Sunnybank Plaza.

Similarly, Chang saw the reason for the success of his new venture, running a café serving Asian snacks in the evening:

...I suppose the Chinese all feel bored stiff staying at home...I suppose they are looking for night life...It's not the physical distance, it's the psychological distance. You want to go out to do something different rather than sitting home, but you don't want to be out too late... having to go to the 'Eiffel Tower' [Park Road] for a cup of coffee is just too far. I think our café is filling the gap.

The sentiment was echoed by the owner of the Kareoke club:

We [the Taiwanese] are too timid to go to the clubs in the city. The style of the clubs are not to our taste either... It is just too much work entertaining friends at home. Many Taiwanese immigrants actually missed the Kareoke clubs back home.

Yuen was even more perceptive. He stated:

Suddenly we found that these migrants wanted convenience. It was not that Chinatown was far away, at least not for us [established settlers], but for the immigrants it was a long drive having to go through the city... in their home country they got so used to having a shop close by anywhere. A five minute walk was a reasonable distance but a twenty minute drive is far.

It is the combination of these factors, the alchemy of the location's affluence, the settlement pattern of the north-east Asian recent immigrants, their capital and their unique craving for metropolitan features in the suburbs of their residence which exacerbated the rapid and distinctively cosmopolitanization of Sunnybank. The case study is important not only because it is the first time in Australia's urban history that some particular socially and culturally dispositioned immigrant groups who settled in a traditionally Anglo-dominated, typically dormitory suburb could infuse to it much intense economic and ethnic activities that it acquired a character of its own – being neither Chinatown nor ordinary suburbia, but a multicultural, cosmopolitan landscape where there is a degree of global and international coherence. More significant is that the case study has also provided evidence that indicates the immigrant agency, the previously unconsidered actor, is increasingly pertinent in shaping a new, interesting regional and economic ethnoscape. This also reaffirms the *passee* of the now defunct theoretical model for research on minority group incorporation: gradual but progressive assimilation.

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