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**Between Gentrifiers and Tourists: Walk-in Gentrifiers, Institutional Expansion and Space
in Boston's Chinatown**

Honors Thesis
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by
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Abstract

How does institutional expansion modify the process of gentrification, and how is this modified process experienced by residents of the gentrifying community? I explore how this modified gentrification process unfolds in the setting of Boston's Chinatown. I propose an analytical framework that joins the process of institutional expansion to the process of traditional gentrification, while also expanding this definition to include how the institutional expansion results in heightened social inequality and a loss in community resources along the lines of race and class. In Boston's Chinatown, Tufts Medical Center and School continues to expand its institutional presence. I propose that institutional expansion heightens racial and class disparities. Not only does institutional expansion alter the physical appearances of the neighborhood and its class and racial demographics, but it also changes perceptions of who spaces belong to when neighborhood spaces are inscribed with white, middle class meanings. This in turn creates a rift in how extant community members perceive and derive meaning from these new, institutional spaces that have been coded as aloof and unwelcoming by a combination of both the social and physical characteristics of those spaces.

Introduction

In sociological literature, institutions of higher learning and advanced medical research centers are bastions of middle class values (Rideway and Fisk 2012). And although these middle class institutions are generally seen as serving the public good, they do not exist in a vacuum. How do these institutions interact with the neighborhoods and communities where they are located? How do middle class institutions interact with working class/low-income communities? An example of this interaction process is Boston's Chinatown, where there are several middle class institutions present. In my research, I focus on Tufts Medical Center/University.

Since its "founding" in the late 1800s, the class and racial demographics of Boston's Chinatown have been primarily working class and low-income Chinese immigrants, laborers, and Chinese Americans (Leong 2010). However, because of urban renewal policies that began in the 1960s and the return of the white middle class to the city, the demographics and the landscape of Chinatown have changed. In Chinatown, institutional expansion has been a salient issue since the beginning of urban renewal policies, when Tufts Medical Center began land banking in Chinatown. This brings me to the focus of my research.

In my research I answer the following questions: How does the shift in the physical appearance of Chinatown and the increased presence of medical workers, who I call "walk-in gentrifiers," shape meanings in neighborhood spaces? How is the reshaping of meanings in these spaces indicative of institutional expansion and how is this experienced by members of the

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

Chinatown community? How does the meaning coding of spaces reproduce both the symbolic and material consequences of racial and class disparity in the United States?

To build a framework that answers the questions outlined above, I define the following terms and concepts, which will be expanded upon in the Theoretical Framework and Analysis sections. I define gentrification as a combination of Glass' original definition, while also expanding this definition to incorporate how Tufts' institutional presence in Chinatown interacts with that process. I define walk-in gentrifiers to be the workers and non-community members who come into Chinatown during working hours, and leave when their shifts end.

In the Analysis section of this paper, I examine how Tufts' institutional expansion is viewed by Chinatown community members, and how this changes the racial and class coding of spaces in Chinatown. The analysis is split into three sections. The first addresses how community members talk about Tufts, both in its historical context and in their everyday lives. The second addresses how community members talk about walk-in gentrifiers, and the role that these walk-in gentrifiers have in the coding of spaces in Chinatown. The third addresses how community members view the public/private spaces in Chinatown, and how they experience Tufts' ownership of these spaces.

Institutional expansion is a process that heightens racial and class disparity in affected neighborhoods. Not only does it alter the physical appearances and personal compositions of neighborhood spaces, but it also changes the social processes that occur in those spaces and give them white, middle class meanings. This in turn creates a rift in how community members perceive and derive meaning from these new, institutional spaces that have been coded as aloof

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown and unwelcoming by a combination of both the physical and social characteristics of those spaces.

Theoretical Framework: Gentrification, Class and Race

The literature surrounding my topic is split into three sections within my literature review. The first section introduces relevant sociological works about space and place, and brings up concepts of how spaces are encoded with meanings, and how individuals' biographies are shaped by space. The second section focuses on the scholarship surrounding gentrification, its definition within the body of research, and how my own research expands upon the present definition of gentrification. The third section introduces the history of Chinatowns in the United States, their racial and class histories, how Chinatowns are influenced by city and national policy, and how Chinatowns fit in as ethnic enclaves for place-making. In the three sections following Space and Place, Gentrification, and Chinatown, I discuss my operational definitions of three concepts: institutional expansion, walk-in gentrifiers and public/private spaces. These concepts serve as the framework for my analysis section, where they are expanded upon in detail.

Space and Place

According to Gieryn (2000), the geography of a neighborhood is central to how social interactions and social processes occur. In particular, he points to how the proximity of housing, perceived public spaces, and informal and formal gathering places can form feelings of community that are a part of what form place. When residents live in close proximity to one another, they are more likely to have "unplanned" interactions (Gieryn 2000:477). When there

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

are spaces that are seen as open to the public, strangers are more likely to interact, and the presence of small neighborhood businesses offers residents places to gather for formal and informal events.

Additionally, Harvey (1970) points to the importance of the geographical imagination for understanding place and space as sociological concepts. He writes that the geographical imagination allows an individual to “recognize the role of space and place in his own biography, to relate the spaces he sees around him, and to recognize how transactions between individuals and between organizations are affected by the space that separates them” (1970:24). The geographical imagination provides a lens for analysing how race and class are shaped by space and provides a framework for analyzing how the meanings encoded into spaces are shaped by class and racial inequalities.

My own research uses Gieryn's idea of how community is facilitated by geography and Harvey's definition of the geographical imagination and uses them as a framework for analyzing interviews and observations from my fieldwork. These observations pertain to how feelings of community are formed, and how institutional expansion shapes how spaces are coded with new meanings with respect to class and race.

Gentrification

Glass' original definition of gentrification refers to a shift in the socioeconomic demographics of a neighborhood (1964). The middle class would move into working class neighborhoods and slowly displace the previous residents, which would change the social characteristics of working class neighborhoods until the neighborhood became unrecognizable (Glass 1964). In this paper I expand this definition of gentrification to include how changes in

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

the social characteristics of neighborhoods are also tied to changes in the racial demographics of a neighborhood. I also explain how this process is influenced by a middle class gateway institution, such as a hospital or school, where people of various class backgrounds are forced to interact within an organization that typically holds to and represents middle class values (Ridgeway and Fisk 2012). As sites of cross class interactions, these gateway institutions serve as focal points for the reproduction of class status and inequality, and as sites for interactions across race and ethnicity.

There is also the issue of modern gentrification. In the 21st Century, the primary focus of gentrification is not the renovation of older, dilapidated buildings in the inner-city, which was characteristic of gentrification during the 1960s and 1970s, but is instead focused on the development of new highrise condominiums (Freeman 2016). The people who are moving in as gentrifiers are no longer primarily concerned with the character of the neighborhood they are moving into, but are instead more concerned with living in the city and being close to their work and shopping centers. Although this aspect of modern gentrification, which focuses on the intents and desires of gentrifiers, is not the focus of my research, I do aim to expand who we call gentrifiers. A private institution like Tufts is not a person, but it affects many of the same neighborhood changes that gentrification entails. And although not all of its personnel are white, race and class intersect in such a way that institutional spaces become coded as such due to meanings associated with middle class, gateway institutions. It is this kind of gentrification that has been occurring in Boston's Chinatown over the past twenty years. Whereas the South End experienced the renovation of brownstones and other dilapidated buildings, Chinatown is experiencing demolition and redevelopment.

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

Gentrification also influences residents' financial outcomes differently. Although it is typically associated with the displacement of working class and low-income residents and a shift in the socioeconomic composition of a neighborhood, there are both economic benefits and drawbacks for extant residents in a gentrifying neighborhood. However, whatever benefits these residents receive are minimal when compared to the economic benefits experienced by the gentrifiers moving into the neighborhood (Ding and Hwang 2016). My research builds on this literature, expanding on how both residents and workers within a gentrifying neighborhood experience these economic changes differently from one another.

This is reflected within the scholarship, where there is a debate as to whether gentrification worsens class, racial and ethnic segregation, particularly in metropolitan areas. One point of view argues that the gentrification process increases racial segregation and worsens racial discrimination (Wyly and Hammel 2004), while another points out that gentrification is actually correlated with increased economic and social diversity on the neighborhood level (Freeman 2009). Although these viewpoints seem opposed to another, in the context of my research they both may inform how racial and class inequality is either intensified or not when gentrification does not only involve white gentrifiers.

So far, the literature introduced in this section has covered space, place, and gentrification. The focus of my research is Boston's Chinatown. As an immigrant community located in the downtown area of a growing city, Chinatown is a neighborhood at the intersection of race, class, and both traditional and modern gentrification. With the changing physical appearance and socioeconomic demographics of Chinatown, it is important to understand the history of Chinatowns in the U.S.

Chinatown

Historically, Chinatowns have rarely been the focus of sociological study. Instead, much of the research conducted regarding ghettos has been in the context of African American and European immigrant communities (Lee 1949). Today, Chinatowns serve as hubs for Chinese immigrants to gain their bearings upon arrival in the United States, and as cultural centers for Chinese Americans.

In Chinatowns, placemaking is an important part of becoming American and staying true to one's cultural identity. According to San-Juan (2005), many Vietnamese Americans in Boston call Fields Corner home, though it is sometimes hard to distinguish between that space and Chinatown. A space such as Fields Corner that is identified as Vietnamese provides Vietnamese Americans with a space to find hold onto their Vietnamese identity while also negotiating ways to be Vietnamese in America (Aguilar San-Juan 2005). This idea of the ethnic enclave as a space to both retain one's cultural identity and as a space to become American is crucial to keep in mind when discussing Chinatown, and where it fits into a Boston that is increasingly becoming more affluent and white.

But changes in the urban context of Chinatowns are nothing new. Chinatowns in the U.S. have a long history of undergoing fundamental changes in response to external factors. Many of the early Chinatowns across the U.S. had a reputation for being seedy places, due to the presence of opium dens, brothels, and gang violence. White tourism in these early Chinatowns put merchants and gangs in conflict with one another, and eventually the vice economies of early Chinatowns transitioned to tourism economies. These tourism economies promoted cleaner and safer streets in Chinatowns in order to attract white tourism (Light 1974). Although the latter

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

kind of tourism paints a more family friendly picture of Chinatown, I believe that both of these stages of the economic growth of Chinatown still locate it as a non-white space of otherness.

As spaces of otherness, foreign policy and immigration laws have done much to shape the development of Chinatowns in the West. That is, the way that a Chinatown develops is heavily dependent on both city, state, and national and international policies (Hatziprokopiou and Montagna 2012). This is especially useful for thinking about how Chinatowns have grown, shrunk, and changed in response to national initiatives, such as urban renewal and the construction of interstate highways.

It is also important to understand and remember that Chinatowns are not only commercial spaces, but also function as residential neighborhoods as well. As Light (1974) describes in his history of the U.S. Chinatowns, Chinatowns gradually shifted from vice economies to tourism economies, with an emphasis on orderly neighborhoods. This tourism economy suggests a level of dependency on white tourists, and to an extent, catering to the desires of these white tourists. This is echoed more recently by Leong, who remarks that Boston Chinatown, in particular, is known for being a “quiet and politically inactive community” (Leong 2010:566). This characteristic of Boston Chinatown, in addition to the general idea of the tourism economy suggested by Light, makes it a complex site for studying how institutional expansion influences how spaces in the neighborhood take on new meanings.

My research aims to tie the scholarship on space and place and gentrification to the Chinatown setting, where low-income and working class immigrants come into contact with Tufts Medical Center/University, a gateway institution. I will expand on these interactions in the analysis section of the paper, along with the history between Tufts and Chinatown. Additionally,

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

My research builds on the historical context of Chinatowns in the U.S., exploring how the tourism economy in Chinatown has shifted to accommodate walk-in gentrifiers from Tufts, and how spaces that were once seen as foreign and dirty have taken on new meanings due to institutional expansion.

Institutional Expansion

Broadly, this means the physical or administrative expansion of a middle-class gateway institution such as a hospital, university, etc. In the context of Boston's Chinatown, Tufts Medical Center/University is the primary perpetrator of institutional expansion. Institutional expansion includes the privatization of community spaces (spaces that are not necessarily public, but are not restricted based on institutional access), which changes the meanings of those spaces for members of the affected community. This restriction of access is not always based strictly on legal grounds, but is encoded in the meanings that these spaces have.

Walk-in Gentrifiers

In the specific context of Boston's Chinatown, a walk-in gentrifier is someone who works or studies at Tufts or New England Medical Center. Even though most of these people are not residents of the neighborhood where the institutional expansion takes place, their presence is an extension of the institution, and they act as representatives of that institution when they are in their uniforms.

Public/Private Spaces

These are spaces that, despite being privately owned, are open for use by members of the surrounding community as spaces for socializing. While access to these spaces is not usually restricted on legal grounds, there are social meanings attached to these spaces that deter certain people from entering, to varying degrees. Examples of these spaces include the bakeries in Chinatown, which community members use as spaces to both eat and socialize, and Jahris Park. Jaharis Park is owned by Tufts and is open for public use, but the physical appearance and the meanings encoded in the space typically keep Chinatown community members out.

Methods

This section provides a brief justification for choosing Boston's Chinatown as the focus of my research and how it ties back to the literature surrounding space and place, gentrification and Chinatowns. In this section I also discuss my positionality as a researcher and provide an overview of the research methods that I used while conducting fieldwork, such as participant observation and in-depth interviewing.

Case Justification

Not only is Boston's Chinatown situated at the intersection of race, class and institutional expansion, but it is also a neighborhood that I have a personal connection to. Chinatown played a large part in my early childhood. I went to pre-school in the neighborhood and also spent a lot of time at the youth center there. I have sat through more family dinners and wedding banquets in Chinatown than I can remember. But, as I grew older I found myself spending less and less time

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown there, especially after I left home to attend college. I speak Cantonese and a little bit of Toisanese, which are two of the Chinese dialects spoken in Chinatown, so it has always been a place where I have been able to embrace my Chinese American identity. But coming into this research project as a student at a private liberal arts college changed how I felt when conducting my study. I felt like an outsider in a place where normally I am very comfortable.

As a historically non-white space that has been undergone changes due to external factors such as city and state policy, Chinatowns make an interesting case for the study of how institutional expansion intersects with class and race. Tufts, the largest institution in Chinatown, provides an alternative framework for viewing how institutional expansion and class and racial inequalities intersect with the gentrification process. Tufts' presence in Boston's Chinatown also provides an opportunity to examine how a middle class gateway institution interacts with a predominantly working class, immigrant community.

Research Methods

The process of gentrification in Boston's Chinatown provides a case to study the effects of gentrification on class and race. I came up with a qualitative research design that included participant observation and in-depth interviews in order to document these effects. A qualitative approach allowed me to focus on how members of the Chinatown community talk about and describe their interactions with the institutional presence in their lives, as well as how they define Chinatown. In-depth and semi-formal interviews allowed me to capture this dialogue, and observing the space allowed me to fit community members' descriptions into my own frame of understanding institutional expansion and gentrification in Chinatown.

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

Fieldwork was primarily conducted within Chinatown, although several interviews were conducted in other towns and cities within Greater Boston. A brief chunk of time before I went into the field was spent researching the historical background of Boston's Chinatown and getting in contact with one of the major community organizations in Chinatown, which proved essential for getting access to several of the people who I eventually interviewed for my research.

My fieldwork was conducted over a total of three months, beginning on May 27 and ending on August 26. This consisted of a combination of observing the spaces and people in Chinatown, as well as interviewing Chinatown community members, which included current and former residents, community activists, and people working in the community. Over the course of my research I conducted approximately 75 hours of participant observation, not including time that was spent conducting interviews. While observing in Chinatown, I took notes on public spaces, where they are, and who uses them. In these spaces I observed the interactions between race and class among walk-in gentrifiers, tourists, and community members. Observing these spaces and the interactions that took place in them helped me to develop interview questions and focus my research on the intersection of race and class in these spaces.

All of the research participants who I interviewed are of Chinese descent and identified as either Chinese or Chinese American. All participants were over the age of 18. I interviewed 11 participants in total, 3 of whom identified as male, and 8 of whom identified as female. The participants came from varying levels of socioeconomic status, from working class service workers to middle class professionals. But all were born into a working class or low-income background. Participants were in occupations ranging from tenured professors to youth program directors to hair stylists. All interviews were conducted either in English or in a mix of

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

Cantonese and English. Two interviews required the use of an interpreter to ask specific questions that I did not have the Cantonese vocabulary for. All of these interviews were recorded on an audio recording device with the consent of the research participants. Interviews in which the participant responded in Cantonese were translated into English by myself or an interpreter due to my general lack of Chinese writing skills.

The interviews focused on different themes depending on who the interviewee was and what I already knew about them. All interviews began by asking the participants about their general background and their relation to Chinatown. Interviews with community organizers and activists also focused on community actions against institutions like Tufts, and the history of change in Chinatown. Interviews with current and former residents focused more on demographic shifts and how they interact with Tufts and walk-in gentrifiers in their daily lives. Interviews with current and former workers in Chinatown focused more on how the changing demographics and institutional expansion in Chinatown have influenced their work lives. These demographic and physical changes in Chinatown do not just happen behind closed doors, but are recognizable even from a glance.

The Setting

On a typical weekday in Boston's Chinatown, the morning brings a massive surge of foot traffic coming through Chinatown, composed of medical workers, students, restaurant workers and elderly folks, to name a few. On Harrison Avenue, the smell of roast meats being prepared in the restaurants intermingles with the smell of sewage, and the constant chatter of Chinese dialects is audible over the honking of car horns. Harrison Avenue, the side of it that is not a cut

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown up by Tufts, is a collection of restaurants with water-stained awnings, bakeries, and other small businesses. Restaurant workers stand off on the sides of the sidewalk, cigarettes dangling from their mouths, and their dirty cooking aprons are contrasted immediately by pristine suits and brightly colored scrubs. Walking down Harrison Avenue, going towards the South End past Kneeland Street, the landscape changes abruptly. Suddenly, the three and four story brick and concrete buildings turn into skyscrapers of steel and glass, and there are trees dotting the sidewalks. This is Tufts.

Boston's Chinatown has not always had a grove of modern skyscrapers growing in the middle of the neighborhood. Institutional expansion by Tufts has changed the landscape of Chinatown drastically, and in the next section I will discuss Tufts' history and relationship with Chinatown through interview excerpts from Chinatown community members.

Analysis: Institutional Expansion in Chinatown

The analysis section containing interview excerpts and observations from my fieldnotes is split into three sections. I begin the first section with the history of institutional expansion in Chinatown and the community/institution relationship between Chinatown and Tufts. In the second I move on to talk about the impact of walk-in gentrifiers on community spaces and businesses. And in the third I follow up with a discussion of Tufts owned public/private spaces.

Institutional Expansion and Chinatown

In this section I present interview excerpts from Tim, Vincent, Janet, and Emma in order to show perspectives that are outspokenly critical of institutional expansion and gentrification, one that highlights the benefits, and another in which these processes are the norm. All of them,

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

however, highlight the visibility of these processes among residents and workers associated with the community.

The concept of institutional expansion goes hand in hand with the relationship between Tufts and the Chinatown community. Tim, a law professor and long-time advocate for Chinatown, described a critical moment for the neighborhood during his interview: the Parcel C struggle. He spoke about it in terms of the community members involved and the physical location, and talked about a specific instance where he and other community members organized a block party.

on Rec Day, for instance, where we closed off Oak Street and had all sorts of various different activities for the kids and the elderly. Street performers, magicians, from the Washington Street side of Oak Street closed off all the way to the Harrison Ave side. We had activities, we would bring in a water tank, throw a ball and you would see the guy dunked. All this stuff, balloons, face painting. So for rec day, I would go up to the third floor of 36 Oak Street with a banner that would say something like "save Parcel C for Chinatown," something like that. So I would throw the rope to the other side of Oak Street, from our side, the QSCC (Quincy School Community Council) side, over to Marie Moy's side, where she owns the house across the street. And that banner, as you drive down, as you walk down Oak Street, you see the banners. That was possible pre-Metropolitan, because we knew the neighbors, the neighbors knew us. They understood, they appreciated, they were activated and engaged in our struggle and survival, because it was not just, it was *our* survival, our struggle as a common identity neighborhood, as a Chinatown.

Tim described the struggle for Parcel C as a struggle for the survival of the community, and this language pits the Chinatown community as being entirely in opposition against the institutions that tried to buy the land in Parcel C from the city, although this view was not shared unilaterally across the other interview participants. For Tim, Chinatown as a community is characterized by the close-knit neighborhood and the way that the community members are able to come together and gather and organize. Tufts, the institution trying to buy Parcel C, was the interloper that

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

attempted to disrupt a key aspect of the Chinatown community. If Tufts had bought Parcel C, Chinatown would have lost even more land than urban renewal had already taken.

Vincent, a former professor and community organizer who grew up in Chinatown, also described Chinatown in a similar manner to Tim.

It was a small town feel because everybody knew each other. Everybody knew everybody's families, so if you were... if some adult saw you doing something you shouldn't be doing, it would get back to your parents... stuff like that. And because most of the parents were always working, um, then a lot of the kids kind of ran the streets and there were very few services.

Vincent's childhood in Chinatown was during the fifties and sixties, but the way that he described the community is similar to how Tim described the small town feeling of knowing the neighbors. Vincent described his sense of the small town feel in relation to the lack of services. At that point in time, there was no heavy institutional presence in Chinatown. Combined with Vincent's history of community organizing and activism with the Chinese Progressive Association, Vincent's image of a neighborhood absent of Tufts' institutional presence begins to make more sense.

Unlike Tim however, Janet, a Chinatown youth program director, saw Tufts' institutional expansion in a different light.

The crime on Oak Street was unreal. We were calling the police all the time. And the people who lived on Oak Street, they were scared, because once nightfall came there was no foot traffic except for the criminals that were out there. They used to stand in front of YES once we closed our doors and if I had to come back, I would have to say "excuse me". So I think as much as people use the word "gentrification" of Chinatown, of the community, I don't quite use that word because of the connotation. Granted, some things are not affordable, and then I also look at who's living here. It's not like, all of a sudden, it's only wealthy white people living here. This building (the Metropolitan) has a lot of Asians living in it. Asians who are also wealthy or upper middle class. And that's good. I don't think anyone comes to America, and the goal is to be poor.

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

Janet acknowledged that while gentrification has made the neighborhood a safer place, particularly at night, it has also driven up the cost of living to the point of becoming unaffordable for many. She also posed a picture of a Chinatown that is very different from the traditional one recounted by both Tim and Vincent. Pointing to the new people moving into Chinatown, Asians who are “wealthy or upper middle class,” Janet saw the maintenance of the Chinatown’s character primarily as maintaining its ethnic composition. But, as the following sections in Walk-In Gentrifiers and Public/Private Spaces show, a shift in class composition is still heavily linked to race.

The relationship between Tufts and Chinatown today needs to be prefaced by the history of that relationship. In the interviews that I conducted, this history was brought up many times by respondents, and especially by those who had taken part in community organizing. Sitting around a table in the backroom of the Chinese Progressive Association, Vincent told me about Tufts’ early interactions with Chinatown.

Even though they were a medical center, they didn’t really serve the Chinese population. In fact, one of our early protests, one of the early things we asked them for, was to provide Chinese translation in their hospital, which they refused to do, because they weren’t interested in serving the population. So, even though the hospital was here, and it was beginning to grow, it was not that interested in Chinatown.

According to Vincent, there has been a historical precedent of Tufts setting boundaries between itself and the Chinese community. While in the past that boundary was set by ignoring community and refusing to put money into essential services, that boundary today looks different. It has become more inclusive, more malleable, while still not allowing full access to the community. The institution adapted to meet Chinatown’s demands without making a fundamental commitment.

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

Tim talked about how Tufts' expansion at the turn of the century damaged Chinatown's community resources. South Cove is a community health center in Chinatown built by the community, and still exists today, but it was at one point threatened by Tufts.

When healthcare got to become competitive... throughout the late 90s and the 2000s, they started, the institution, the hospital, basically took over and reinvented all of the various different programs that South Cove had. They stole staff that we had, bilingual staff, because they are able to pay wages, salaries, that were much higher than what we as a local healthcare center could provide.

Tim's excerpt goes back to the idea of how institutional expansion is similar to but still very different from the traditional, slower form of gentrification. White, middle class gentrifiers are not necessarily moving in, but community resources and services are leaving the community. It also points to how capitalism is an incentivizing force in regards to institutional expansion. Economic incentive was the reason that bilingual services were introduced at Tufts, and frames how Tufts' institutional expansion connects to the Chinatown community in a darker light. That relationship is predicated first upon the seizure of land from the community, and then second upon the seizure of community resources. And then these community resources are locked behind a barrier of accessibility in the form of health insurance or out-of-pocket expenses that exceed that of a community health center. There is an inverse relationship between Tufts and Chinatown. As Tufts expands, more and more resources and land are taken from Chinatown.

Not all community members remember a time when Tufts was the explicit enemy, however. Emma, a recent college graduate who grew up in and still lives in Chinatown, sees Tufts differently from Tim and Vincent, who are both forty or more years older than her. Emma did not see Tufts as an intrusive presence to the same extent that Tim and Vincent did, but she still talked about how Tufts has become noticeable, not just on the street, but even in her own

home. Even though there is a generational difference between Emma and the other two, they all pointed out the increasing visibility of Tufts. In the context of this excerpt, I asked Emma if and how Tufts was present in her everyday life, to which she answered:

I guess because of the route, honestly any route that people take from Chinatown to the South End area, you have to notice Tufts. It's kind of like really big. And like, I think even when you try to forget it's there, it reminds you. You hear sirens in the morning or late at night, you hear, I hear helicopters flying on the roof from my room... I have no idea, right, but I've definitely noticed it more.

There are two major points that come up in this excerpt. The first is the constant presence of Tufts in her life in Chinatown. The second is that there may be a generational difference in how people in the Chinatown community feel about Tufts. Emma grew up with Tufts already being a constant presence in the neighborhood, so institutional expansion may not feel as intrusive to her compared to people who have been in Chinatown longer. Even so, it is very noticeable to her as a form of noise pollution, which disproportionately affects existing residents compared to non-residential workers, and certainly when compared to walk-in gentrifiers.

Across the different participants' perspectives on institutional expansion, one thing remained constant. The physical aspects of institutional expansion are something that community members are very aware of, even those who might not know the history of legal disputes between Chinatown and Tufts. The physical aspects of institutional expansion are also reflected in how medical workers, walk-in gentrifiers, interact with the neighborhood.

Walk-In Gentrifiers

In this section present interview excerpts from Tim, Vincent, Emma and Shirley, as well as my own observations, in order to highlight how the presence of walk-in gentrifiers mirrors the

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

relationship between Tufts and Chinatown. I will also differentiate between what a walk-in gentrifier is and what a traditional gentrifier is.

Although the most obvious aspect of Tufts' institutional expansion may be the change in the neighborhood's physical appearance, there is another, more subtle aspect that is the change in demographics. The students, nurses, doctors, and the other various employees that Tufts brings into Chinatown. In my research I call these people "walk-in gentrifiers." Not only were these people immediately identifiable to me based on my own observations, but also to the research participants who I interviewed.

When I was talking with Vincent he brought up the recent increase in foot traffic going through Tai Tung Village, a complex of residential apartments towards the southern end of the neighborhood.

And so, another thing is that, I noticed more recently is that... cause I was in Tai Tung, I noticed that there was a lot of white people walking through the area, which I found kind of surprising, because you know there isn't restaurants, so what are you doing? Then I realized there's a lot of people walking from the new developments south of the Mass Pike in the Ink Block, they're walking to work or downtown from where they live, and that never used to happen, so it's quite different.

The concept of walk-in gentrifiers pertaining to both Chinatown tourists and Tufts workers highlights how separate the institution remains from Chinatown, even through its workers. Vincent points out that white people were walking through Tai Tung, and that he was surprised because there were no restaurants there. Vincent's assessment is also corroborated by my own observations. Oftentimes I saw large numbers of Tufts workers in their scrubs walking towards the Ink Block, where there is a Whole Foods and several trendy restaurants. This division of lunchtime spots, though it is hardly the primary reason, drives further separation between Chinatown and the institution.

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

On the other side of this, Jook Sing, a takeout style restaurant bordering Tufts and Tai Tung, caters to medical workers rather than the Chinatown core demographics. The majority of the customers there were either medical workers or students, and the restaurant resembles Panda Express more than it does a traditional sit-down restaurant. Many of the medical workers at Jook Sing were Asian and, despite not acting as white middle class gentrifiers, these walk-in gentrifiers are still representatives of Tufts when they go out to lunch with their scrubs and uniforms still on.

Emma, the university graduate and resident introduced earlier, also noticed an increase in medical workers going through Tai Tung and Chinatown.

Recently things I've noticed that are kind of surprising are the long lines in Chinatown for food at lunch. Like, I don't remember for some reason. I don't know, maybe white people started liking Chinese food recently. But recently I feel I've noticed more people eating, and I don't know if that's because the restaurants are catering to, specifically, medical worker's needs, or like they realize the food is cheap.

Like Vincent, the former professor who grew up in Boston's Chinatown, Emma has noticed an influx of white medical workers in Chinatown. These walk-in gentrifiers spend their money in Chinatown, but according to Vincent and Emma, they spend their money at places that do not cater to the Chinatown community, which is representative of the aloof relationship that Tufts has with the community. And despite representing the aloof relationship between Tufts and Chinatown, these walk-in gentrifiers still play a role in shaping the social landscape of Chinatown, particularly in how spaces are coded. I will come back to this in the later sections of the analysis.

Emma also talked about how community members use restaurants, providing a view that juxtaposes how walk-in gentrifiers from Tufts interact with business in Chinatown.

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

I think at night a lot of Cantonese restaurants that serve traditional Cantonese dishes get really busy at night, just because I think they cater more to families. Whereas I think for lunch, I think a lot of places cater more to the medical workers, and not really to the average resident, or like, tourist.

Emma's distinction between restaurants that cater to families and restaurants that cater to medical workers points to how much of the institution/community relationship is driven by temporal difference. The walk-in gentrifiers, the medical workers, are in Chinatown during the work day, and they may eat in Chinatown during the day, but at night they leave. They are not the ones in the restaurants come dinner time, which runs in the same vein as walk-in gentrifiers simply not eating at the same restaurants as community members. Despite working within the geographical bounds of the neighborhood, they are not a part of the community.

This lack of community between walk-in gentrifiers and Chinatown is in many ways similar to the relationship that tourists have with Chinatown. Tim, the law professor and community advocate, talked about the tourists who come into town and how their impact on the setting.

They are coming in for their very, very limited purpose in and out. And not only that, but they don't even understand what their ramifications are when they come in. We've done experiments and tests in Chinatown, and I'm sure it's happening across other Chinatowns as well, where we note garbage production. It's twice as much during the weekend from a Friday to Sunday night basis, versus Monday to Thursday. So that tells you the people that live there produce less garbage than the people who live there plus the tourists that massively invade Chinatown on the weekends. Whether it's to get their boba tea fix, or to eat, or to buy groceries. So that again informs you of who uses, who patronizes this particular space.

Although Tim's words speak more to how tourism affects Chinatown rather than how the phenomenon of walk-in gentrifiers affects Chinatown, they provide a baseline to compare walk-in gentrifiers to. While tourists generally come in at night and on the weekends and only visit the commercial district, walk-in gentrifiers are different. The walk-in gentrifiers, who come

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

into Chinatown on a regular or semi-regular basis during the work day, are not like the weekend tourists. This goes back to who the walk-in gentrifier is. As medical workers at an institution that exists within Chinatown, their presence is nearly constant and can be felt in both the residential and commercial parts of town. Even if it is the commercial part of Chinatown that is primarily affected by the economic influence of walk-in gentrifiers, they are a demographic that exists in the same space as the Chinatown community without being a part of that community. In a sense, these walk-in gentrifiers are somewhere between tourists and traditional gentrifiers.

This idea of walk-in gentrifiers as existing between the category of tourist and gentrifier is also present in how Emma described the Chinatown community through her interactions with other community members on the street.

I think I'd describe it as, like, a community, I'd say. I think after going to college and hearing my peers talk about their experiences growing up for example in suburbs, I think it sounds very different. So like, for example, distinct memories are being able to walk downstairs from my apartment and see a bunch of other children I know, see a bunch of adults that I know and it's sort of overall a pretty trusting place. I have distinct memories of just walking through Chinatown and just seeing people randomly that I would know. I used to say that there could be no way that I could walk from where I live into Chinatown and not say hi to at least one person.

To start with, the idea of community in Chinatown is built on knowing who your neighbors are and knowing who the people in the neighborhood are. In contrast to that, people such as tourists and walk-in gentrifiers provide unfamiliar faces. As described in the previous section by Emma, the walk-in gentrifiers appear unfamiliar and out of place, even though they are present in Chinatown on most days of the week. From how Emma describes her sense of Chinatown as a community, walk-in gentrifiers are a non-factor in building that sense of community, and are viewed as transitory despite how constant Tufts' presence is. They come in for food or work, and then they leave. They spend their work days in and around Chinatown, but they do not add to

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

a sense of community. It may be that areas with a high concentration of walk-in gentrifiers removes a sense of community from those spaces.

Experiences with walk-in gentrifiers as being outside of the community are echoed by Shirley, a Chinese woman in her mid forties who works at a small beauty salon. She described a different way in which walk-in gentrifiers interact with the Chinatown community. In her interview she mentioned that many of her newer clients have been Tufts workers and students, and that they have been good for business. She also went on to say in her interview that she has had to change the way that she monitors the behavior of her Chinese clients, citing that “they talk loudly and curse,” and “you know how they like to be.” This presents an interesting side effect of institutional expansion by Tufts. Even though Shirley's new clients from Tufts do not make up the majority of her client base, she still has to curtail the behavior of her regular Chinese clients due to the potential loss of business if she does not. In a way, she ensures that Tufts clients, walk-in gentrifiers, do not have to share their salon experience with the Chinese customers.

Shirley's experiences with walk-in gentrifiers at her salon demonstrate what Vincent, Emma and Tim discussed in their interviews. In Shirley's case, it fell on community members to police their own behavior around walk-in gentrifiers in order to maintain the transactional relationship between walk-in gentrifiers and local businesses. Even though the walk-in gentrifiers are not a part of the residential community, their actions still have an effect on the overlapping spaces that Chinatown community members and these walk-in gentrifiers share.

Public/Private Spaces

In this section I present interview excerpts from Tim, Emma and Janet, as well as my own observations, in order to highlight how institutional expansion is reflected by Tufts owned

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

spaces in Chinatown, and how different community members interact with and view these spaces.

One overlapping space that was repeatedly of interest throughout my research is Jaharis Park. It is a Tufts' owned public, gated park next to Tai Tung Village. And despite being meant for public use, Chinatown residents do not necessarily see it as such. During my interview with Emma, I asked her if she had ever hung out or played in Jaharis Park as a kid. She said that, growing up, she "didn't ever perceive those (Tufts' green spaces) as public" because they are behind gates, and that "I kind of view it as 'I'm not supposed to go in.'" This points to an implied question in Emma's interview. If she is not supposed to go in there, then who is? In the context of the Jaharis Park, the space is behind a metal gate without an obvious entrance from the Harrison Street side, placing both a physical and a symbolic barrier between the Tufts owned space and Chinatown. The gate also gives meaning to the park. The gate signals that the space is a private space meant exclusively for Tufts, and it reinforces the power dynamic between Tufts and the community based on both racial and socioeconomic differences.

Additionally, during Tim's interview when I mentioned Jaharis Park, he added that "it's not only that it's gated, but it's locked, right? But that also tells you the kind of power... once these guys take over, they're not going to go back." The power dynamic that Tim talks about ties back to how spaces are encoded with meaning. Tufts has the power to put up physical barriers between the institution and the surrounding community, and these physical markers give their own meanings to the park space. Inaccessible, private, an extension of Tufts as an institution. Tim's wording is also important in understanding the significance of a space like Jaharis Park, which is supposed to be a community space, in the context of race and class coding. Sociological

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

literature identifies gateway institutions such as hospitals and universities, of which Tufts is both, as doing gatekeeping work for white, middle class society (Ridgeway and Fisk 2012). Gating the park conveys to the Chinatown community that the space is not for people like them, not for working class or low-income Chinese and Chinese Americans. And despite having improved on its relationship with Chinatown since the 1960s, which I will describe in detail later on, Tufts still draws a line between itself and the community through both class coding and physical gatekeeping.

My own observations of Jaharis Park not only point to the power dynamic and gatekeeping, but also to a specific class coding of the space. The people who typically used Jaharis Park were either nurses and doctors wearing scrubs or lab coats, or they were Tufts students. But they were not exclusively white. I saw Asians, Latinx, African American, and white folks all using the space. So, the race coding done by Tufts at Jaharis Park occurs in a non-explicit way. The racial component to this public/private space is built into its class coding. Because the space is gated and is used almost exclusively by members of the institution, it signals that it, and spaces belonging to the institution, are unavailable to members of the Chinatown community.

However, that does not mean that everyone in the community is deterred from using Tufts' spaces. Janet told me about how the youths in her program, as well as other community members, make use of Tufts' spaces.

It's not just Tufts employees that use the Atrium, but people who go to the hospital, which includes many of us who have insurance and we go to Tufts. But even community people. They like going into the Atrium to sit and have coffee and chit chat with each other. We don't have AC in here. We say, "guys, no need to suffer in YES. Please go over there where there's AC." And it's not like they don't close their doors and don't let us in.

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

Here, we see the reverse of Jaharis Park, with community members actually going into Tufts' spaces and using them. However, Here, we can see the continuation of the rather non-committal relationship between Tufts and Chinatown. Even though community members and youth in Janet's program may sit in Tufts' buildings and drink coffee and hangout, the onus is still on Chinese community members to adapt to institutional spaces that are coded as middle class and white. Even though these institutional spaces are accessible to community members, Tufts is not actively doing anything for the community. And this brings to question whether thriving is really possible for Chinatown's residential core when these indifferent institutional spaces continue to replace community spaces.

The case of the kids in Janet's youth program making use of institutional spaces in spite of the race and class coding that might otherwise warn them away indicate how differences in community resources inform these decisions. Youth who do not have the same level of access to community resources, such as Janet's youth program, may have to rely instead on institutional resources despite the race and class coding to the contrary. This goes back to the previous excerpts from Tim and Emma about Jaharis Park, and the power dynamic symbolized by the gate. Even when it is not overt, this power dynamic still presents itself by forcing community members to take the initiative and make use of Tufts' resources (if they have the insurance) and spaces. It is a dynamic that is not only symbolized through Tufts owned spaces, but also through its walk-in gentrifiers and the seizure of land and resources from Chinatown.

Conclusion

While Boston is lauded as a hub of medical innovation, this glosses over the fact that the growth of the hospitals such as Tufts have displaced and then ignored inner-city communities. Gentrification is typically a gradual process, and one that is driven by individuals with faces. But, in the case of Boston's Chinatown, Tufts initially expanded into the community because it was aided by state and federal level policies. The role of Tufts and its previous and current expansion within Chinatown is important to consider when thinking about Boston as a space where race and class intersect. Tufts seized community spaces and replaced them with spaces that are viewed by some community members as inaccessible, and this process of institutional expansion also indicates how, in a dense urban environment characterized by heavy foot traffic, members of a gateway institution can segregate a neighborhood while still consuming products and services in that same neighborhood.

The institutional expansion of Tufts Medical Center/University complicates the traditional concept of gentrification in Boston's Chinatown. Tufts owned spaces in Chinatown are coded with meanings that make a distinction between the institution and the community. Tufts has coded existing neighborhood spaces with new meanings, signalling that these spaces are no longer meant for the Chinatown community. It would be easy to write off institutional expansion by Tufts as something that is only experienced negatively by members of the Chinatown community, but my research shows that there are nuances to the process.

The reality for members of the Chinatown community is not so one dimensional. While institutional expansion took community spaces away from Chinatown, some community

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown

members feel that institutional spaces do serve a limited role in filling some of their needs. For others, these institutional spaces are reminders of early community organizing and activism against Tufts, and a reminder that land was taken from them. And for others still, they have simply grown up with Tufts as a normalized presence while still being acutely aware of its physical differences compared to the rest of Chinatown. Yet, despite differences across age and personal experiences among the people I interviewed, they all had one thing in common. They have all noticed institutional expansion and how it has altered the physical and social characteristics of the neighborhood. Institutional expansion in Boston's Chinatown further compresses the already shrinking spaces of the Chinatown community, and Tufts remains aloof and unresponsive to the community members who do not have the necessary health insurance.

All of these characteristics of the relationship between Tufts and Chinatown are colored by the power dynamic. Tufts has the money and the power to both seize land and ensure that their land and their resources are coded as inaccessible. Chinatown is a neighborhood in which the community historically has had little money and little power in local politics. This power dynamic is where class and race intersects with the institutional expansion process, and it demonstrates the vulnerability of a minority community in the face of a large, private institution.

Gentrification and institutional expansion need to be studied using more than just quantitative methods. Qualitative methods allow the lived experiences of these processes to be captured, and additionally, are better able to capture the nuances of how spaces are coded and given meaning. In my research, qualitative methods allowed me to see how individual members of an institution can code and segregate spaces, highlighting how inequalities of race and class

Institutional Expansion and Gentrification in Boston's Chinatown can manifest outside the bounds of an institution due to the coding and segregation of space. A place is more than its geography and it is more than the individuals who inhabit it.

I believe that further study into the question of how residents experience the economic benefits and drawbacks of institutional expansion would help to draw further distinctions between traditional gentrification and institutional expansion. And not only in the context of Boston's Chinatown, but also in the context of other major urban cities where large institutions have established themselves among minority communities. Were I to pursue this research further, I would push harder to interview staff members of the other community organizations in Chinatown, many of whom hold very different views compared to the community organizers who I spoke with. Another direction for the future of this research would be to investigate Chicago's Chinatown, which until recently was actually growing, rather than shrinking, and has now fallen victim to massive gentrification in the form of luxury developments spanning acres. As a Chinese American and someone whose early years were heavily influenced by Chinatown, my hope would be to increase public exposure of the dangers facing Chinatowns.

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