

HOMESCAPES/WARSCAPES ²⁵/₃₀

Asian American Spatial Politics: A Case Study of Neighborhood Change in Post-1965 Los Angeles Chinatown

November 17, 2016

12:30 p.m. - 1:50 p.m.

Humanities Interim Classroom Facility 100K

University of California, Irvine

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Urban Chinatowns are experiencing changes that challenge its identity as simply a historic Chinese ethnic enclave. The oldest Chinatowns in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, for example, are recognized as historical Chinese American spaces and a home for more recent low-income ethnic Chinese immigrants and refugees who are diverse in language and national origin, but still in need of social services. Because of their proximity to the downtown core and other older neighborhoods experiencing rapid development and increasing housing costs, Chinatowns are also part of gentrification debates in these cities. The neighborhood demographic and cultural changes, along with these broader urban pressures, are not only reshaping the physical and social landscape of Chinatowns, but also the political landscape as individuals are engaging in various forms of political participation and organizing to advocate and bring resources for the community in response to the changes. This presentation will examine these issues through a case study of Los Angeles Chinatown, specifically highlighting how the neighborhood has been embedded within urban development and revitalization trends since the 1965 Immigration Act.

Lauren D. Hom is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Planning, Policy & Design at UC Irvine. She holds a B.A. in Anthropology and Art History from UCLA and an M.P.H. from Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. Prior to attending UC Irvine, she was a community-based researcher for health and social service programs targeting Asian American and immigrant communities in New York City. Lauren's dissertation research is a historical ethnography of neighborhood change in post-1965 Los Angeles Chinatown to examine the process of how revitalization and redevelopment in urban ethnic neighborhoods contribute to changes in community and local political formations.