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Phantoms of the past, Spectres of the present: Chinese space in Johannesburg

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29 Phantoms of the past, spectres of the present: Chinese space in Johannesburg

PHILIP HARRISON, KHANGELANI MOYO AND YAN YANG

> Respect ghosts and gods but keep them at a distance.
>
> – The Analects of Confucius, 6.20

> Phantoms lie about the past whilst spectres gesture towards a still unformulated future.
>
> – Colin Davis, 2005

> Spectrality does not involve the conviction that ghosts exist or that the past (and maybe even the future they offer to prophesy) is still very much alive and at work, within the living present: all it says, if it can be thought to speak, is that the living present is scarcely as self-sufficient as it claims to be; that we would do well not to count on its density and solidity, which might under exceptional circumstances betray us.
>
> – Frederic Jameson, 1999

Phantom spaces

In the seventh lunar month of the Chinese calendar the gates of hell are opened and ghosts are released to roam the world. Those who died a wrongful death – Diào Sǐ Guǐ – or those who passed away far from home – Gū Hún Yě Guǐ – are often restless and vengeful, seeking recompense. It is a dangerous month to be out and about in Johannesburg for nearly 3 200 Chinese mine workers died on the Witwatersrand in the short period between 1904 and 1910. Faced with primitive conditions in the mines and prison-like conditions in the compounds in which they were housed, the lives of mine workers

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were ended by 'execution, disease, opium overdoses, accidents, homicide and suicide' (MacLellan 2008: 78). The dying suffered the terrible loneliness of being 7 000 miles away from home.[1]

Around 63 000 Chinese were brought from the northern provinces of Henan and Shandong after the South African War to work on the gold mines as indentured labour. It was a move that restored production to the mines that had been closed during the war but provoked near hysteria among Johannesburg's white citizens and helped bring down Lord Arthur Balfour's government in the United Kingdom. By 1910 all the surviving Chinese workers had been repatriated except for the handful that had absconded and avoided capture (Kynoch 2005).

Over time, this episode of Johannesburg's history faded into distant memory. It was repressed deep in the collective psyche. In 1981, the newsletter of the Johannesburg Historical Foundation noted that there was still a diminishing pile of stones among the bluegums where the Fordsburgspruit enters Crown Mine properties, although the ceramic pagodas that are traditionally left on the graves had all been stolen.[2] Not far away, along Main Reef Road, the ruins of one of the largest Chinese compounds could still be seen. Today, there is almost nothing to mark the presence of the Chinese mine workers save for some old postcards exhibited in 2011 in the University of the Witwatersrand library, some artefacts in private collections, and the human skeletons that are unearthed on occasion during construction works along the old mining belt.

Another group of Chinese lived in early Johannesburg and their ghosts also walk the city, although sometimes mingling with the living. The most poignant reminder of this small group may be 'a beautiful monument in the Chinese section of the cemetery in Braamfontein erected in memory of a young man who died of frustrated love'.[3]

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Guangdong, a province of south China, was ravaged by disasters – famine, drought, rebellion and war. Peasant and artisan families emigrated en masse to North and South America, Australia and New Zealand. From the 1870s a small number found their way to South Africa. Hakka families settled mainly in the coastal cities of the Cape Colony while Cantonese immigrants found their way to the Witwatersrand after the discovery of gold in 1886. There they worked mainly as petty entrepreneurs, opening small shops and laundries. They kept a low profile, worked hard and courted social respectability. Their numbers were small. By 1904, when immigration controls prevented more Chinese from arriving, there were only around 3 000 nationally, of whom 900 lived in Johannesburg. Today, the descendants of this group – known as SABCs (South African born Chinese) – number little more than 8 000 across the country.

There are phantom spaces across the city where immigrants from south China found temporary homes. As shopkeepers, the Chinese needed to be close to their markets of low-income earning Africans and coloureds and, to a slightly lesser extent, less affluent whites. The Chinese therefore lived and traded across the poorer parts of the city, including in Alexandra, Kliptown, Doornfontein, Prospect, Denver, Sophiatown and Western Native

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Township (now Newclare) (see Figure 29.1). Their biggest presence was in Sophiatown and the adjoining Western Native Township, where, by 1950, there were around 1 000 Chinese out of a total population of 60 000. A Chinese-owned shop traded on almost every street corner, and the Chinese presence is noted in recollections of that time. Gwen Ansell wrote in her book on township jazz and popular music:

> Lenny Lee was one of the great jazz trumpeters in Sophiatown – he was Chinese, very strongly Chinese, but he had broken away from the Buddhist Chinese cultural hold, so he mixed freely with young players like Hugh Masekela. There was another Chinese family – Ah Lun – who had all black women – his children today are still walking around, and his young brother Giap; they had two beautiful sisters and oh! they were just crazy Chinese women; but they didn't live a Chinese life – they lived with black people; they intermingled with the so-called coloureds and Indians in Sophiatown. Then there was the Yung family; also Chinese – one of the handsomest families – they wore the best American clothes, they spoke *tsotsitaal*; they mixed with the people. (Ansell 2005: 67)

Dugmore Boetie remembers the Chinese numbers game, *Fafi*, being played in Sophiatown while Dorothy Masuku recalls discovering North American jazz in a small Chinese shop next to her boarding school. This all came to an end in the late 1950s when the apartheid state destroyed Sophiatown and built the suburb of Triomf on its ruins. Jack Shear writes of the 'ideological haunting' of Triomf as 'Sophiatown's buried past rises to the surface' (2006: 71).

The Chinese who were dislocated by the removals dispersed into the few remaining mixed-race areas in Johannesburg. Around 800 Chinese found a temporary home among the Indians and Malays of Fietas (later renamed Pageview). In the 1970s, the apartheid bulldozers arrived in Fietas too, leaving another phantom space. At this time the government made a final attempt to cluster the Chinese in their own group area. A small cultural hub, known to the Chinese as *Malaikem*, had developed along Commissioner Street in Ferreirasdorp during the 1890s. Social clubs, a Chinese language school and the offices of a Cantonese-language newspaper operated here. However, Chinese patterns of work and residence remained strongly dispersed in Johannesburg and *Malaikem* had only a few shops and a population that never exceeded 200. In the 1950s, the idea of a Chinese area was first mooted, and the Chinese Association of South Africa told Prime Minister DF Malan that the small community of Chinese shopkeepers would not survive if they were forced into a ghetto where they could only sell to each other (Liss 2011).

In the 1970s, when the government again proposed an 'informal' Chinese group area in Ferreirasdorp, the Chinese Association told the government that it 'would not tolerate any exclusive grouping, whether this be voluntary or enforced' (Liss 2011: 423). At the time, the increasingly isolated South African government was looking towards the East – to Japan and Taiwan – for trading ties and political support, so it quietly dropped the idea of a Chinese group area, leaving a small chink in the apartheid edifice. Chinese were now

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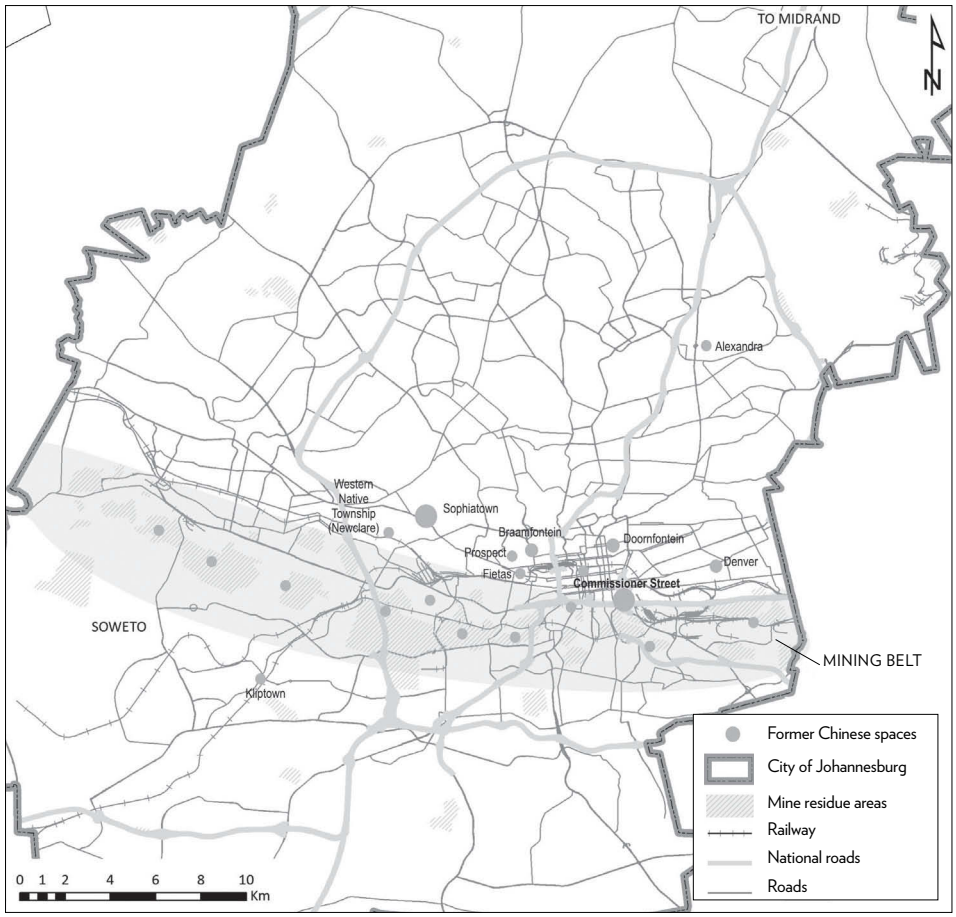


FIGURE 29.1: Ghostly spaces across Johannesburg
Data source: GDARD (2011); MDB (2010). Cartography by Miriam Maina

permitted to reside in white suburbs provided their neighbours did not object. At first, the Chinese filtered into less desirable white working-class areas, and then into higher-income neighbourhoods. By then, the third- and fourth-generation Chinese were mainly middle class and established in professional occupations.

The Commissioner Street precinct had remained a lingering cluster of activity but went into decline in the 1990s as crime increased in the inner-city environment, and as SABCs joined their white counterparts leaving South Africa for countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada. In 2009, the city-owned Johannesburg Development Agency upgraded the precinct in a modest makeover that involved replacing paving, erecting bollards, planting trees, placing cultural markers and reinstating Chinese New Year festivities. The environment improved but only a few shopkeepers and restaurant owners struggled on in this location, their shops shuttered against crime, creating a nostalgic space for a dwindling community where ghosts still mingle with the living.

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Spectral geographies

Colin Davis drew on Derrida's representation of a spectre as 'a deconstructive figure hovering between life and death, presence and absence, and making established certainties vacillate' (2005: 376).[4] While ghosts come from the past, spectres haunt us with 'not yet formulated possibilities of the future' (2005: 379). Maddern (2008) brings 'haunting' into a discussion on transnational migration. She calls migration a 'phantasmagorical phenomenon … its essence, meaning and significance often difficult to adequately grasp'. She writes:

> Migration continues to be a ghostly phenomenon, something threatening and uncanny, on the outer edge of what is sayable. It remains something to be quantified, measured, tamed and understood – the 'other', the shadow, the outer force, that threatens to disrupt the centre. (2008: 375)

The idea of the haunted or uncanny also speaks to the experience of migrants themselves. Madden refers to migration as 'the condition of being *in place* and *out of place* simultaneously, or of feeling at home while simultaneously experiencing a sense of strangeness or foreignness' (2008: 365). This is not very different from Caroline Kihato's account of migrants in inner-city Johannesburg: 'The interstitiality of immigrant life implies that they live suspended in society. On the one hand, they are present but not rooted in the host society; on the other, they are absent from their homes yet feel rooted to them' (2009: 218).

Coming closer to home, Darryl Accone (2006) referred to the Chinese in South Africa as 'ghost people', although he did not elaborate on the metaphor. The contemporary Chinese presence in Johannesburg is phantasmagorical in the sense that Chinese migrants are suspended between places but also in the sense that the outcomes of the Chinese presence in Johannesburg are far from certain. While the original Chinese migrants – and the SABCs – were forced to make a leap of identity when ties between South Africa and mainland China were severed in 1949, more recent Chinese migrants hold a complex and ambivalent position across national boundaries. Is their presence transient? Will they acculturate and find roots in Johannesburg and in South Africa, gradually shifting from the fluidity of a transnational identity to the sense the SABCs have of being of Chinese origin in South Africa?

In the 1980s, after nearly a century of prohibited migration, a new wave of Chinese immigrants arrived in South Africa. Responding to the Taiwanese government's initiative to move low-productivity industries offshore and to South Africa's efforts to attract industry into the homelands, the Taiwanese came to South Africa as 'settler-industrialists'. By the early 1990s there were around 30 000 Taiwanese in South Africa, but with the end of apartheid the industrial incentive scheme was dismantled, and South Africa shifted its political allegiance from Taiwan to the People's Republic of China. The numbers of Taiwanese in South Africa have since dropped to around 6 000.

In the early 1990s a trickle of Chinese arrived in Johannesburg, departing from Hong Kong where they had faced the spectre of a handover to Chinese (Communist Party) rule in 1997. This group had the advantages of being proficient in English and having roots in a vibrant entrepreneurial environment, and generally flourished in Johannesburg.

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The first of the new immigrants from the People's Republic of China were initially from Shanghai and came to Johannesburg via Lesotho in the early 1990s. They had worked in Chinese-owned factories in that country until 1991 when anti-Chinese violence flared there and they crossed the border into South Africa as refugees, eventually finding their way to Johannesburg. There they lived together in a cluster of apartment blocks in Hillbrow and made a living in the inner city as street hawkers selling cheap consumer goods. With low business overheads and low residential costs, they did well, and many opened small shops in the inner city. Their success was reported in the media in China and this attracted many others, including a well-educated entrepreneurial class who came from cities on China's east coast. It was this latter group that set up the large wholesale and retail malls that became a feature of China's investment in Johannesburg in the 2000s.

In 1998, the 15th Communist Party Congress took the strategic decision to 'grasp the large, release the small' (Wang 2002: 206). This opened the spaces for hundreds of thousands of small, privately owned Chinese enterprises to move to new locations across the world, but it also refocused Chinese state-owned enterprises on strategic locations across the world, including in Africa, which became an important focus of China's investment and foreign policy after 2000.

From around 2000 Johannesburg attracted large numbers of migrants from the rural areas of two or three districts of Fujian, an economically stressed province in south China which had a long tradition of emigration and extreme levels of competition for resources and jobs. The migrants came from poor families with few links into transnational business networks and they opened small shops or stalls, often in rural areas and small towns but also in Cyrildene and the China malls of Johannesburg. Many arrived illegally as part of 'the clandestine diaspora' (Ma 2002: 23), choosing South Africa because it was a relatively cheap destination and because controls on immigration to destinations such as Europe, North America and Australia had been tightened (Chen 2011). Today, the majority of the roughly 300 000 Chinese in South Africa are Fujianese and their large number has significantly changed the character of the Chinese immigrant society (Chen 2011).[5] Most of our informants from established Chinese immigrant communities in South Africa referred negatively to these new arrivals. However, a Chinese doctoral student, Fenglan Chen – herself from Fujian province – has provided an empathetic account of the travails of the Fujianese in South Africa: 'They struggle to make money, necessary to repay the loans they took out to immigrate; they struggle to communicate in the local languages; and they struggle with the loneliness of life in remote places' (Chen 2011: 10).

A new trend is the arrival of high-level Chinese professionals in the wake of large-scale investment in Johannesburg by China's state-owned enterprises. The catalyst was China's entry into South Africa's financial sector through a mega deal in 2007 in which the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China purchased a 20 per cent equity stake in the Johannesburg-based Standard Bank of South Africa.[6] Since then, almost all China's leading financial institutions have established offices in Johannesburg together with major Chinese construction and mining companies.

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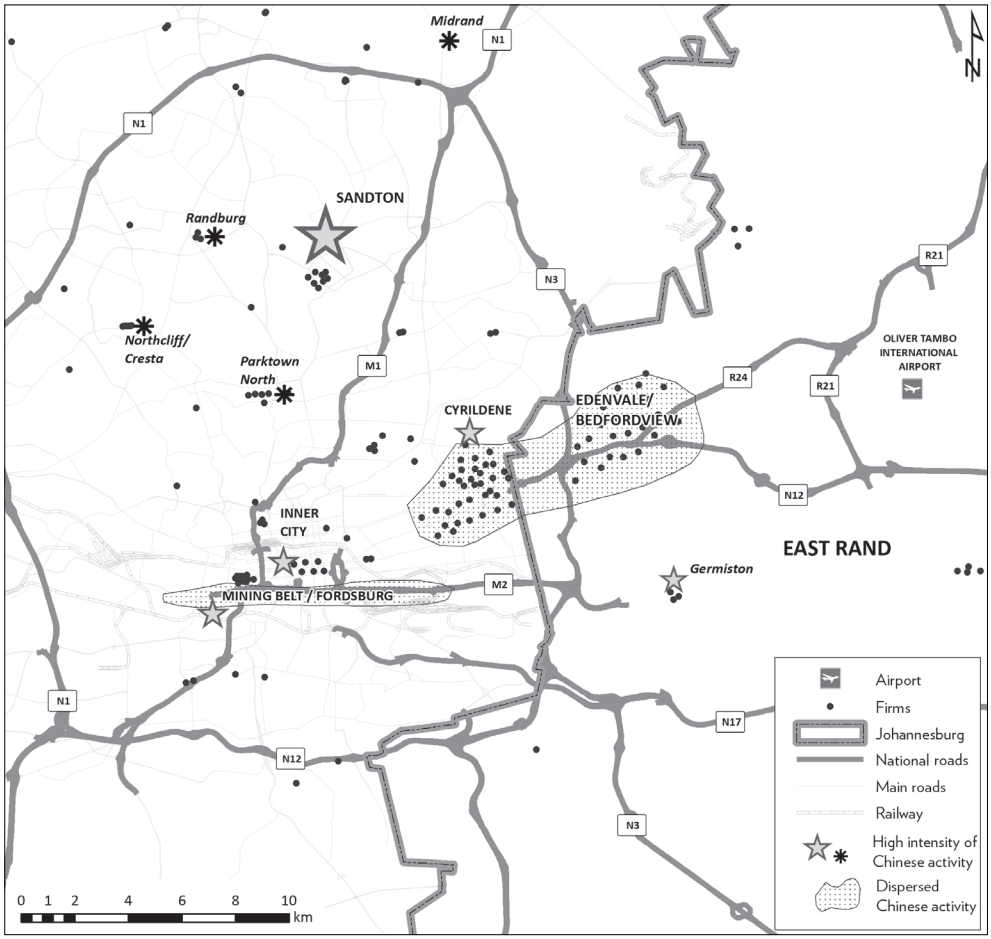


FIGURE 29.2: An impressionistic view of contemporary Chinese space in Johannesburg
Data sources: CIPC (2011); MDB (2010). Cartography by Miriam Maina

The multiply layered and shifting Chinese presence in Johannesburg is reflected in at least five new dimensions of Chinese diasporic space: the 'new Chinatown' in Cyrildene; the 'ethnoburbs' of Edenvale, Bedfordview and Kensington; the retail and wholesale malls clustered mainly along the old mining belt; multiple spaces of dispersal across the city; and the spaces of foreign direct investment (FDI) focused mainly on Sandton (Figure 29.2). Each of these is discussed briefly below.

'New Chinatowns'

Johannesburg's new Chinatown in the suburb of Cyrildene in the eastern part of Johannesburg emerged rapidly from the mid 1990s. The immediate catalyst for the emergence of the new cluster was the relocation of a popular Chinese noodle bar from Rockey Street, Yeoville, to Derrick Avenue, but the real driver of development was the huge

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FIGURE 29.3: Despite troubled beginnings, Chinatown in Cyrildene is a well-established immigrant space, and is likely to remain a visible marker of the Chinese presence in Johannesburg for many years to come.

increase in the number of Chinese immigrants arriving from the late 1990s. The Chinese arriving in Cyrildene replaced a mainly Jewish population which was emigrating from South Africa, and were able to purchase suburban properties at affordable prices.

Cyrildene became an immigrant gateway, providing new arrivals with security and cultural comfort in an unfamiliar environment. Today there are over 160 Chinese-owned businesses along Derrick Avenue, and many more in the vicinity.[7] The space is more diverse than would usually be found in China itself, as Chinese from almost all provinces on the mainland, as well as from Hong Kong, Taiwan and other East Asian countries including Thailand, occupy one street (Figure 29.3).

No guiding hand led the development of the Cyrildene enclave and it emerged as an untidy strip comprising mainly retail outlets and restaurants. The early development was troubled. During the late 1990s, crime levels rose and the media ran sensational stories of mafia syndicates involved in extortion and kidnapping, although there was no evidence that Cyrildene was necessarily more crime-ridden than other parts of Johannesburg. Although Cyrildene developed as a diverse community with migrants from many parts of China, the Fujianese are now numerically dominant. Varying degrees of tension developed between the different Chinese groupings but, by the mid 2000s, a gradual and

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partial process of regularisation and community formation was under way. In 2003, a local business association was established to deal with safety and security concerns and this was formalised in 2005 as the Cyrildene Chinatown Community Association. The Association focused mainly on security issues, but since 2005 some individuals within the local leadership have promoted a new vision for the area represented. This vision includes, for example, the annual Chinese New Year festivities, the traditional arch opened by President Zuma demarcating Derrick Avenue as a Chinatown, and efforts to set up a city improvement district to improve the management of the area.

Some non-Chinese residents in the area have resisted the Chinese presence. Numerous objections were lodged against rezoning applications for Chinese businesses and the Derrick Street arch (which took no less than six years to receive approval). However channels of communication between Chinese and non-Chinese residents have improved since 2010. Today, the Cyrildene Chinatown is a well-established immigrant space. It continues to grow and is likely to remain a visible marker of the Chinese presence in Johannesburg for years to come. Of course, though, the future will always remain uncertain and depends to some extent on the success of the local leadership in forging a sense of community, or at least in containing conflict.

The 'Ethnoburb'

While Cyrildene is overwhelmingly and visibly Chinese, other parts of Johannesburg also house large numbers of Chinese although their presence is only subtly represented in the cityscape. In 1998, Wei Li (1998) coined the term 'ethnoburb' to refer to new forms of Chinese clustering in the San Gabriel Valley suburbs of southern California which deviated from the stereotypical Chinatown. In Li's ethnoburbs, cultural markers were largely absent although the Chinese were a large (although not necessarily majority) presence. Residents of these ethnoburbs possessed higher-than-average incomes, higher occupational status and better education than those in the traditional Chinatowns who were predominantly small traders.

The suburbs of Edenvale, Bedfordview and Kensington, extending across the Johannesburg-Ekurhuleni boundary, may represent the first case of a Chinese ethnoburb in South Africa (see Figure 29.2). The cluster is not featured in academic writing but is referred to by local Chinese as *Dong Qu* (meaning 'the east'), with the local Chinese media estimating that there are around 60 000 Chinese living in this part of the city, although this was not verified by Census 2011 (Stats SA 2012). This cluster is confirmed by our mapping, which revealed that 20 per cent of firms in Johannesburg and the East Rand with the words 'China' or 'Chinese' in their officially registered names are located in these three adjacent suburbs. This Chinese presence tends to be hidden, reflecting a general anxiety around crime, but also the intra-Chinese tensions in Johannesburg. Unlike in Cyrildene, the firms are not the 'traditional Chinese busineses' such as retail stores, restaurants and wellness centres, but operate in sectors such as travel, media and investment, which have links to transnational business flows. The close proximity of this area to OR Tambo International Airport is significant.

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China malls

Extraordinary changes are taking place along the old mining belt of Johannesburg as Chinese investment in wholesale and retail trade transforms derelict land. The story of this development began in 1995 when Chinese entrepreneurs in the inner city closed shop almost overnight following serious incidents of crime and moved to Ellis Park, setting themselves up adjacent to the sports stadium, where a Chinese businessman had refurbished an old Spar supermarket, turning it into a small shopping mall. A year later the owner of the mall hiked rentals and more than a hundred aggrieved Chinese tenants all left. Collectively they purchased a warehouse in Crown City, a newly established industrial township on mining land. The mall is known in Chinese as *Baijia* ('one hundred families') and in English as China Mart.

Crown City proved to be an auspicious location. It is near a major interchange on the M2 motorway, land was relatively cheap, and it is situated between concentrations of low-income consumers in Soweto and the inner city. In 2000 Dragon City was opened in the nearby (mainly) Indian area of Fordsburg. In 2006 a Chinese businessman purchased the fire-damaged buildings of a large Makro store a little further along Main Reef Road, and established the highly successful China Mall (see Figure 29.4). There was a further surge of mall construction in 2010 and 2011, supported by a strong South African currency which allowed Chinese goods to be imported at very low cost. The Afrifocus development in Crown City is the most impressive, comprising an extensive mixed-use development incorporating warehousing, retailing, residential and recreational facilities. With its significant residential component, it may provide a nucleus for Johannesburg's 'third Chinatown'.

In mid 2011, we identified no fewer than 18 Chinese malls in Johannesburg, accommodating around 4 000 Chinese businesses. Half of these were in and around the Crown City/Fordsburg complex with the other half in an extended band along Main Reef Road, with a cluster at Bruma in Cyrildene, and individual malls in Ormonde and Newclare.

The mall owners come mainly from a handful of cities along China's east coast and are linked into transnational circuits of business that are largely defined by city of origin. They often also have strong links with top African National Congress politicians although the tenants in the malls are mainly Fujianese and many of them operate at a level that is barely more than survivalist.

The 'China brand' is a successful business strategy as it is associated with cheap consumer goods, with the 'Chineseness' of businesses openly advertised. It has been a successful strategy and initial investment has produced strong agglomeration and multiplier effects. However, the growing number of Chinese entrepreneurs, all competing on the basis of low prices, has increased competitive pressures, while the volatility of South Africa's currency is a risk for a business model that depends on the ability to import produce from China at low cost.

Local competition has prompted mall owners and tenants to establish malls and independent shops outside of Johannesburg. Large new China malls have been established in Cape Town, Pretoria, Durban and Mussina (to tap cross-border trade) as have Chinese

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FIGURE 29.4: China Mall on Main Reef Road, like many similar shopping centres dotted around Johannesburg, helps to mark Chinese space on the mining belt.

shops in small towns across southern Africa. As this happens, Johannesburg is changing its function from being the primary site of Chinese malls in southern Africa to being the hub of a distributed network of Chinese enterprise across the subcontinent. Significant shifts are occurring within Johannesburg as well. The opening of the China Discount Shopping Centre in Randburg in 2013 signals a move away from the mining belt and into the historically white and more affluent suburbs, with Chinese entrepreneurs now deliberately targeting the (mainly white) middle-class market.

Spaces of dispersal

Ethnic enclaves – the malls and Chinatowns – are an important haven for new immigrants but they are also associated with intra-Chinese conflict and competition. Following trends reported on elsewhere, migrants have been observed to leave such enclaves once they have acquired sufficient language competence and social and business networks, with the enclaves serving mainly as a receptor or incubator for new arrivals and new business. This dispersed space challenges the notion that clustering is a 'natural' cultural preference for Chinese. As one interviewee in the Cyrildene enclave put it, 'If we find opportunities,

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we will move.'[8] It is impossible to generalize about this, however; some well-established Chinese immigrants choose to remain in Cyrildene because new immigrants provide an important market for their businesses.

Of the 172 firms in Johannesburg on the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission database that have the words 'China' or 'Chinese' in their names, 79 (46 per cent) are located outside the ethnic clusters. Chinese supermarkets, restaurants and wellness centres – as well as Chinese firms in 'non-traditional' sectors – operate across the city but especially in the affluent northern suburbs. For example, we counted 50 Chinese restaurants outside the ethnic enclaves in 28 suburbs. Immigrants who arrived before 2000 – mainly from Taiwan, Hong Kong and the large east coast cities such as Shanghai – are disproportionately represented in these dispersed spaces (see Harrison et al. 2012).

Foreign direct investment

From 2007, China's FDI in South Africa shifted spatially from rural areas in provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal to Johannesburg, and especially to the financial and business centre of Sandton. This investment is represented in the physical landscape. The 17-storey Sinosteel Plaza along Rivonia Road, which houses the South African offices of one of China's largest ferrous and mineral companies, is a prominent part of Sandton's new skyline. Immediately adjacent is the South African headquarters of the China Construction Bank. The China Railroad Group, Asia's biggest construction company, entered South Africa in 2010 when it commenced talks with Standard Bank and the South African government on the construction of a US$30 billion rapid-rail link between Durban and Johannesburg. It also formed a consortium with a company to develop Sandton Skye, three luxury residential and business tower blocks.

Not all Chinese investment is as visible; many Chinese firms operate more discreetly within Sandton and in other nodes in the city, and a substantial but discreet Chinese business community lives in and around Sandton. Chinese presence is now also strongly represented in industrial areas with, for example, Huawei Technologies in Woodmead, HiSense in Midrand and First Automotive Works in Isando on the East Rand.

In November 2013, the deal struck between AECI and the Chinese company Shanghai Zendai Properties created a media sensation.[9] Shanghai Zendai agreed to purchase a 1 600 hectare portion of land on AECI's Modderfontein properties in the east of Johannesburg for R1 billion, with the intention of investing nearly R80 billion over a ten-year period in a massive upmarket mixed-use development between Sandton and OR Tambo International Airport. One media report referred to this as 'the New York of Africa'[10] and another as 'Baby Beijing'.[11] This investment, if successful, will mark the beginning of a new phase of Chinese FDI in Johannesburg and South Africa, with a direct focus on property development on a very large scale.

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Conclusion

The ghosts of the past remind us that we should never count on the density or solidity of the present (Jameson 1999). Throughout Johannesburg's history, Chinese space has been fluid, changing in response to state interventions and to the shifting social and economic profiles of Chinese communities in the city. In some places, all that is left are phantom spaces. Yet, in the relatively short period since the early 1990s, the Chinese footprint in Johannesburg has also expanded dramatically, and is now a substantial feature of the city landscape. Despite this, the Chinese presence remains ephemeral and continues to evolve in surprising ways. It is difficult to envisage what forms Chinese space might take in, say, ten years' time. For example, Johannesburg's 'third Chinatown' may be emerging in Crown Mines as accommodation is provided in mixed-use business sites. This is land where a hundred years ago Chinese mine workers were confined to compounds and where many were buried in anonymous graves; the ghosts may mingle with the living once again. Meanwhile Chinese entrepreneurial presence is moving with new confidence into the higher-income suburbs, targeting a new market, but how permanent will the new Chinese presence be in Johannesburg? Chen's survey of migrants conducted in 2010 suggests that the large majority of migrants aspire to return to China, and will do so once they have earned sufficient money. Some of our informants insist, however, that despite these aspirations, most migrants will eventually settle in South Africa. The surprise of massive Chinese investment in the property sector, which could significantly reshape parts of Johannesburg, also points to this fluidity.

In the words of Colin Davis (2005: 377), 'spectres gesture towards a still unformulated future'.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1 This section draws on writing on Chinese history including Yap and Man (1996), Accone (2004), Kynoch (2005), Park (2008), Harris (2009) and Liss (2011).

2 *Then and Now*, newsletter of the Johannesburg Historical Foundation, September 1981, No. 22, p.3.

3 *Then and Now,* July 1982, No. 23, p.7.

4 The references we draw on for this section include Pickles and Woods (1989), Accone (2007), Park and Chen (2009), Huynh et al. (2010) and Dittgen (2011). We have undertaken our own investigation into Chinese space in Johannesburg which draws on a number of formal and informal interviews. A comprehensive account of the study is provided in Harrison et al. (2012).

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5 The Fujianese Association of South Africa claims a membership of 70 000, with the total number of Fujianese in South Africa in a range between 180 000 and 240 000.
6 Standard Bank was of strategic importance to the People's Republic of China as it had a footprint in 18 African countries and had identified billions of dollars in potential infrastructural investments in Africa.
7 The figure of 160 was provided by the deputy chairman of the Cyrildene Chinatown Community Association.
8 Interview conducted for Harrison et al. (2012).
9 See *Enca* 6 November 2013; *Business Report* 6 November 2013; *Business Day* 8 November 2013; *Mail & Guardian* 8 November 2013.
10 *Business Report* 6 November 2013.
11 *Biznews.Com* 5 November 2013.

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