

Photographic essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Critically reflect on the positives and/or negatives of ethnic residential concentration as perceptible within specific landscapes in Sydney.

Introduction Cabramatta is a suburb located in south-west Sydney, New South Wales and is part of the City of Fairfield government area. The largest Vietnamese community in Australia is found in Cabramatta (source).

According to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing of Cabramatta conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (footnote), of the 22, 676 total responses, 6, 330 people listed their heritage as being Vietnamese, with only 29 stating that both parents were born in Australia.

These numbers are also comparable with the total population in Cabramatta of those of Chinese background residing in Cabramatta. Of the 6, 157 people with this recorded ethnicity, only 25 were listed as having both parents born in Australia. Figure 1. Street map of Cabramatta Source: Google images

These numbers reveal a high concentration of people with ethnic background of both Chinese and Vietnamese in the Cabramatta area. Such ethnic residential concentration can have both negative and positive impact on both the individuals, the rest of the population in Cabramatta and society as a whole.

As revealed by the numbers above, a large number of the Vietnamese and Chinese ethnic residence are new arrivals or first generation Australians. This has resulted in a large number of non-English speaking peoples residing within the Cabramatta area with the 2011 census data revealing 62 percent. In this manner, the ethnic residential concentration of Vietnamese and Chinese peoples within Cabramatta can provide a benefit to these groups. For example, due to a high density of Vietnamese peoples within Cabramatta

many of the shop fronts are written in the Vietnamese language and sell products directly imported from Vietnam (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2. Asian Grocery, looking south along Arthur Street, Cabramatta, 3rd October, 2012 Source: 1/125 f/3. 4 5mm/Canon Power Shot SX200 IS/ S. A The entrepreneur of this Asian grocery has created a store mainly attracting people of the ethnic precinct in Cabramatta. This has been developed to include ethnic iconography; symbols and design to reflect the ethnicity of the precinct, a public spatial form of the commodification of ethnicity. This benefits Vietnamese, especially those with little or no English skill, by providing them with familiarity of culture in an easily accessible form.

This English barrier in regards to employment is also benefited by the ethnic residential concentration within Cabramatta. Fellow community members can provide job opportunities that suit migrant or non-English speaking workers in workplaces that also speak that language, including local shops and warehouses. See Figure 3 below- the delivery driver in this photo speaks Vietnamese and has poor English skills. He works for his Vietnamese cousin and delivers to Vietnamese store holders.

This reveals that the ethnic residential concentration in Cabramatta has created a job opportunity where there otherwise may have not have been in other areas for someone with such poor English skills. Figure 3. Kee Kee Roum grocery, transect line walked on Broomfield Street, Cabramatta, 3rd October, 2012. The focus is on the Vietnamese delivery man, right middle distance. Source: 1/125 f/3. 4 5mm/Canon Power Shot SX200 IS/ S. A Another

positive of the ethnic residential concentration in Cabramatta are the cultural and language based support networks.

These include religious groups and centres, education programs, migration centres and community groups. It is known that the locals in Cabramatta play a prominent role in co-ordinating and promoting cultural festivals related to the Chinese, Vietnamese and other ethnic calendars. For example, during field research it was noted that there was a current ethnic community festival ‘ Family Day’ (see figure 4 below). This area encourages an ‘ ethnic feel’ and a sense of family for the members of its cultural groups in that they are essentially a group bound together by shared values and language in an otherwise “ alien land”.

It was also noted the number of the different places of worship throughout the fieldwork. There are a large number of churches, temples, monasteries and mosques highlighting the significance of the different ethnic community groups and how they have shaped the surrounding environments in particular religious buildings. The presence of these religious places contributes to the profound cultural diversity of the suburb. Cabramatta’s religion statistics provide an indicator of cultural identity and ethnicity when being observed.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing in 2011 it was recorded that there was a large percentage of Buddhism and Christianity in the area. These places of worship in Cabramatta are confided in the emergence of the immigrant settlers from countries such as Vietnam and China. The ethnic concentration of the

population situated in Cabramatta may also have a negative effect on the community. These include, the lack of interaction with other cultures,
NEGATIVE?

Upon a fieldwork visit to the Cabramatta area, it was noted through observation that there was evidence of low socio-economic housing and specific “ poor” areas and indications of unemployment. Figure 2 below shows some women selling dogs in the street in order to make a profit. This shows the lack of education of some people in the area. Figure 3 is another example of deteriorated housing which was a common site in Bridge Street again showing Both these figures depict low economic status in the area. These are common factors which lead to increased crime rates due to lower education levels and unemployment rates. It was also observed