

From Settlement to Integration: Immigrant Place-making in Suburban Toronto |

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Place-making can be considered as a social, economic, cultural, and physical construct with the aim of creating inclusive, vital, unique, and identifiable places. The suburbs are often thought of as 'placeless' unsustainable developments that impede place-making opportunities. However, with the increasing suburbanization of immigrant settlement, stereotypically homogeneous suburban landscapes have been transformed by ethnic communities who bring new identities and new meanings to the space. This paper explores how the Chinese and South Asian communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), despite inter- and intra-group differences along cultural, linguistic, and religious lines, have readapted, redeveloped, and transformed existing suburban neighbourhoods to create vital community spaces that embody the social, cultural and political meanings of the community. Chinese and South Asians, as the two largest visible minority groups in the GTA and Canada, have established visible and sizeable retail facilities and ethnic-oriented institutions (e.g., places of worship, private schools, and community centres). The density and diversity of ethnic facilities and institutions satisfy the needs of co-ethnic community members, help to forge a sense of place, and create new community spaces.