

Introduction

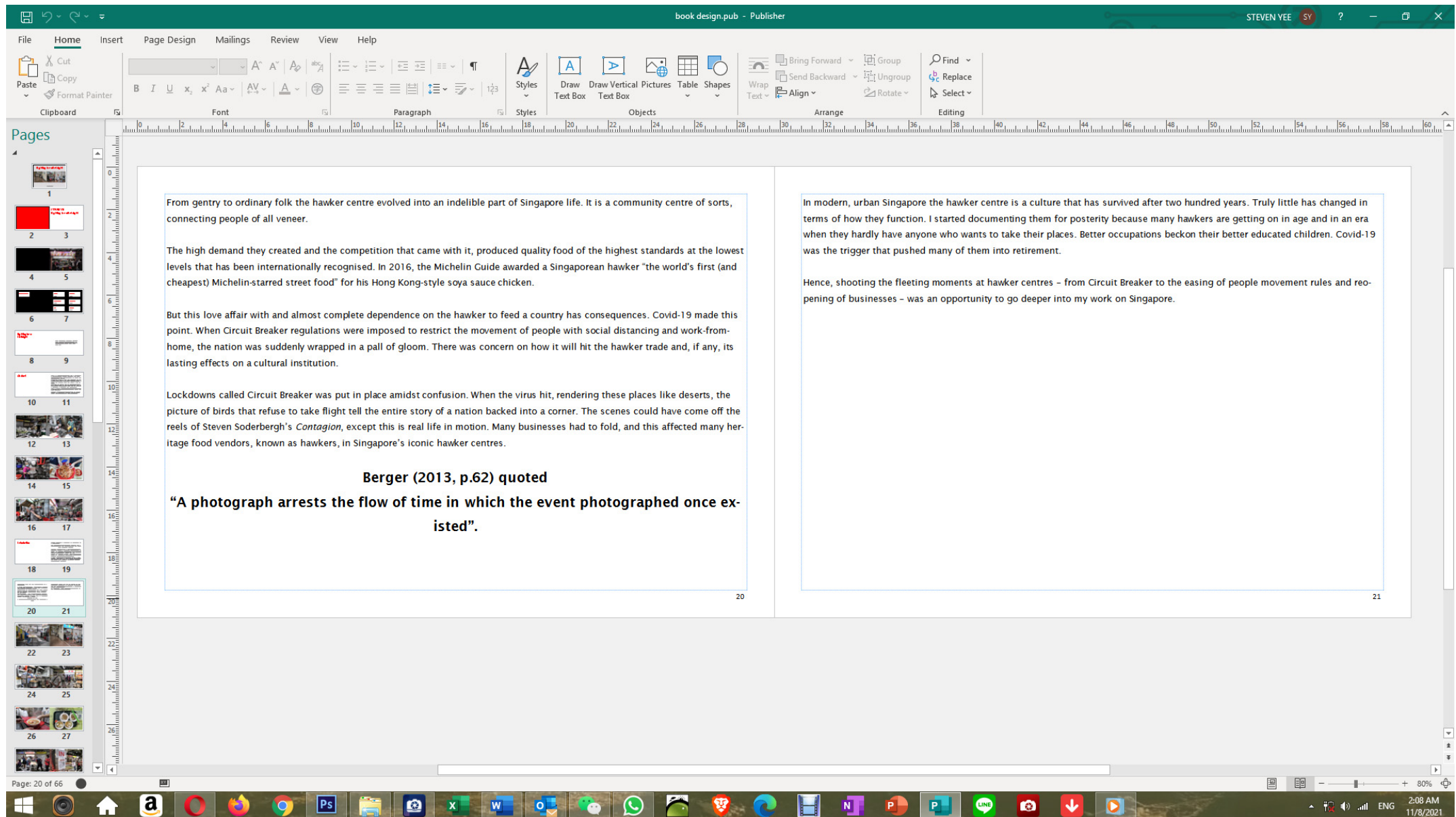
It dawned upon me a couple of years ago that I had to record images of Singapore hawker culture that may be lost in time because this country is changing constantly.

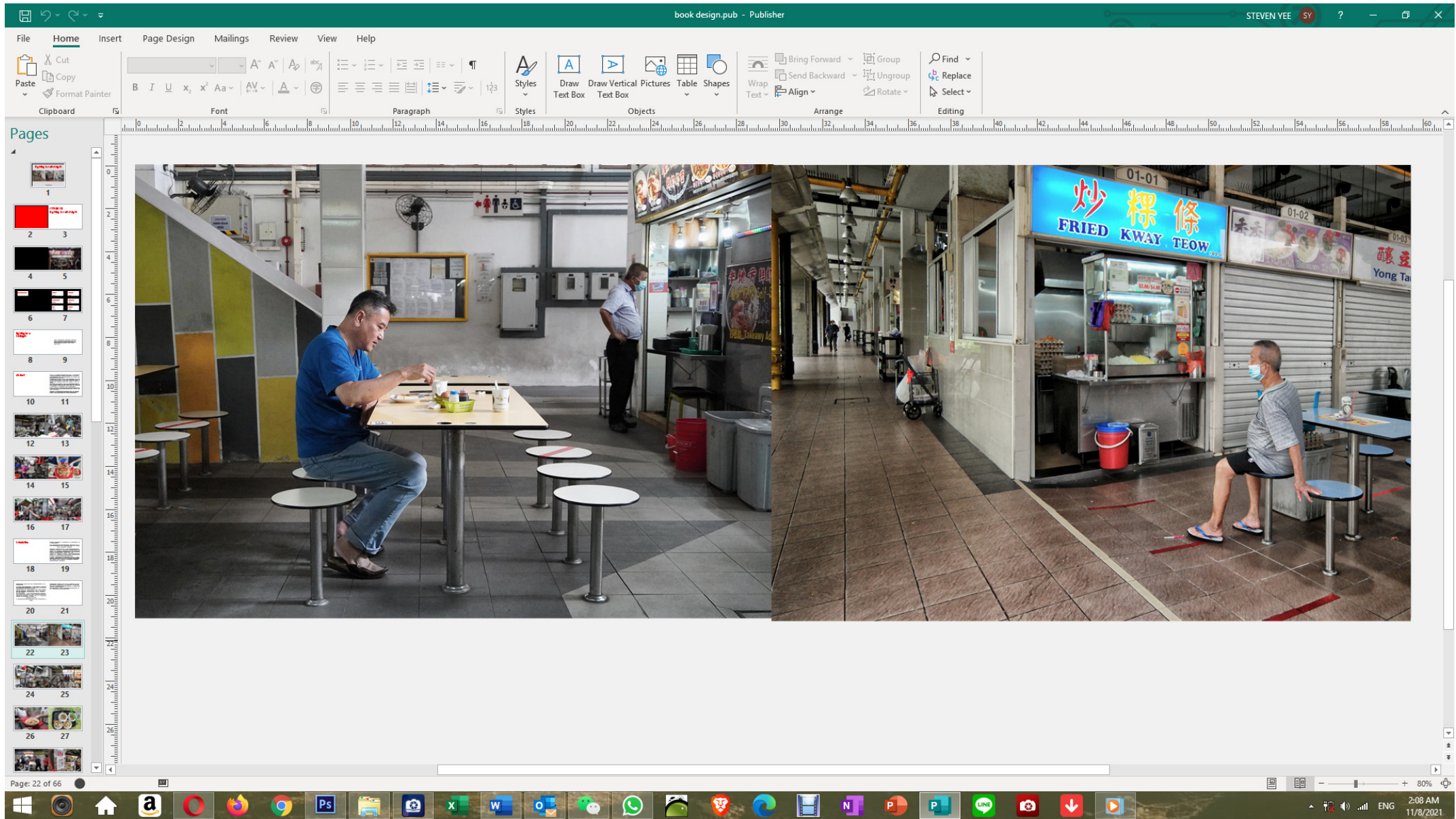
Junod (2014, p.168) mentioned “The photographer is no stranger to history; he knows it is something that happens later. In the actual moment history is made, it usually happens in terror and confusion”.

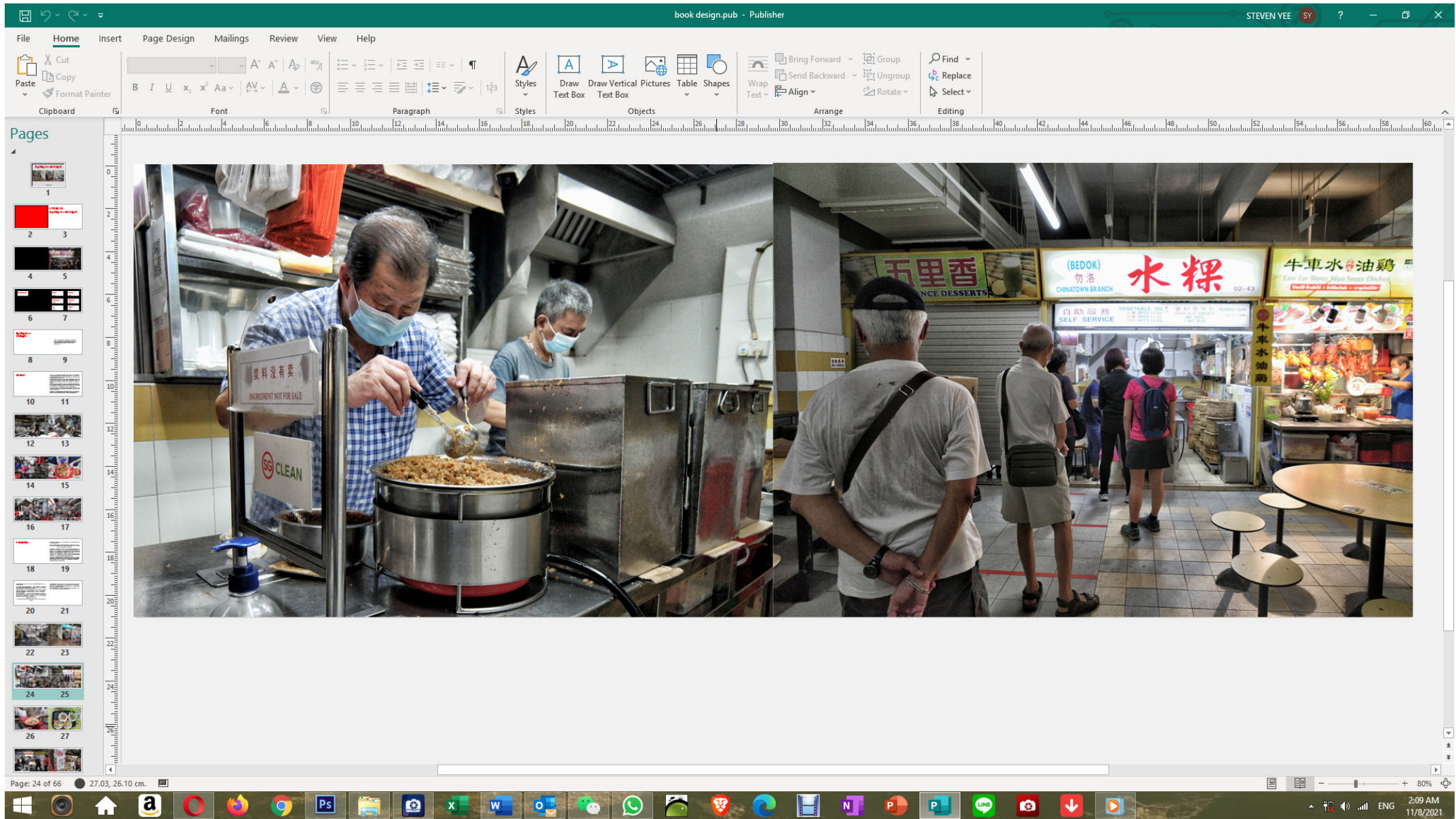
Modern Singapore was founded on the backs of migrants. They came from all corners of the world, chiefly from Asia, when Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles established a trading port in 1819. It was inevitable in a small island that over time their cultures fused, no more so than in everyday food. This literal melting pot inspired them to concoct new dishes from each other's ethnic food. The Chinese used ingredients from South and Southeast Asia to create their interpretation of curry and chilli recipes. In their turn, the Indians and Malays embraced, among others, the noodle, an East Asian staple, and gave it a spicy spin.

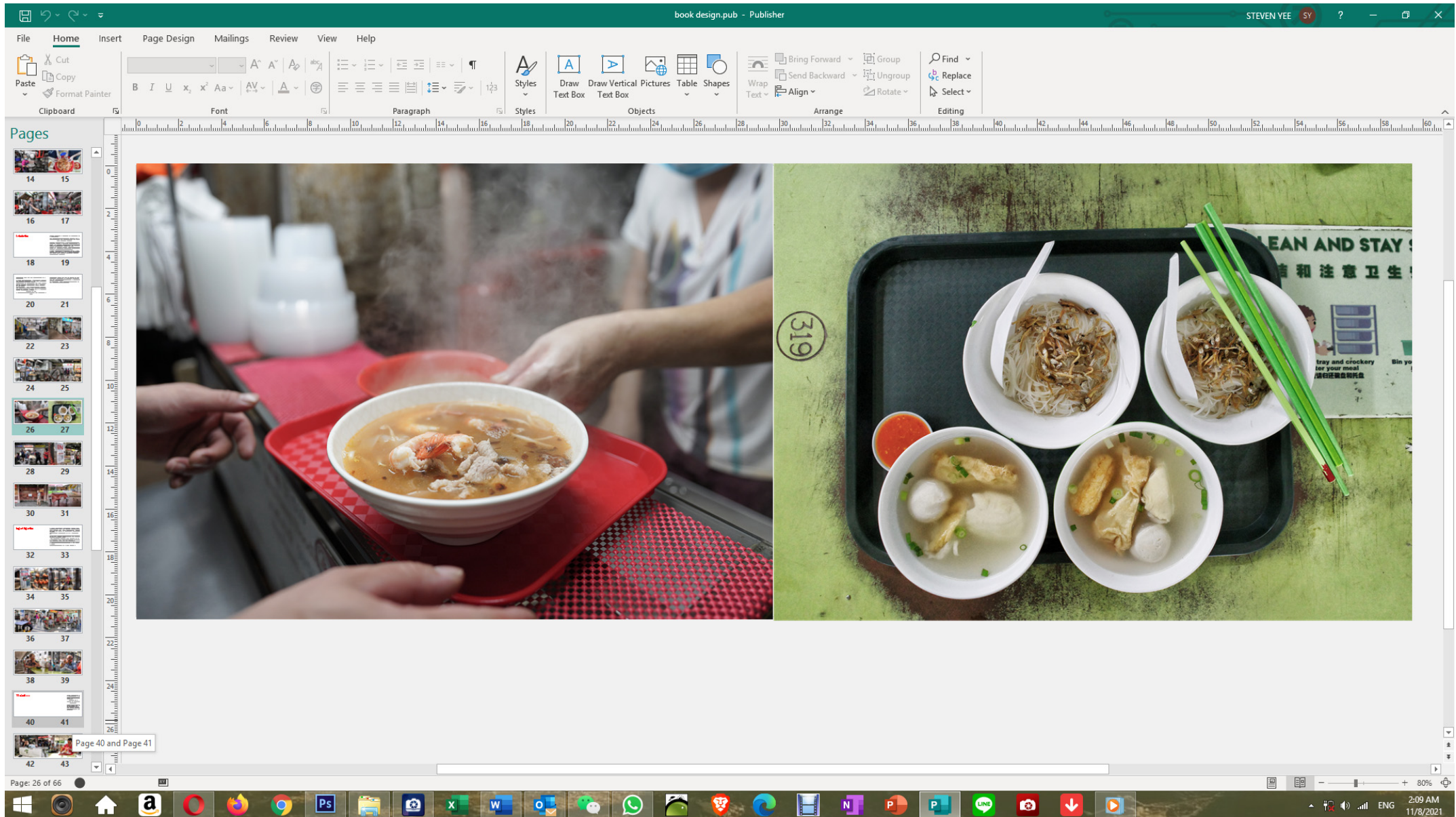
This gastronomical evolution eventually found its way into the alley ways of 19th century Singapore. With thousands of immigrants flowing into the colony in its nascent years, many turned to hawking cheap food to fill hungry stomachs. Over the subsequent decades and into the next century these vendors selling every variety of ethnic fare became ubiquitous.

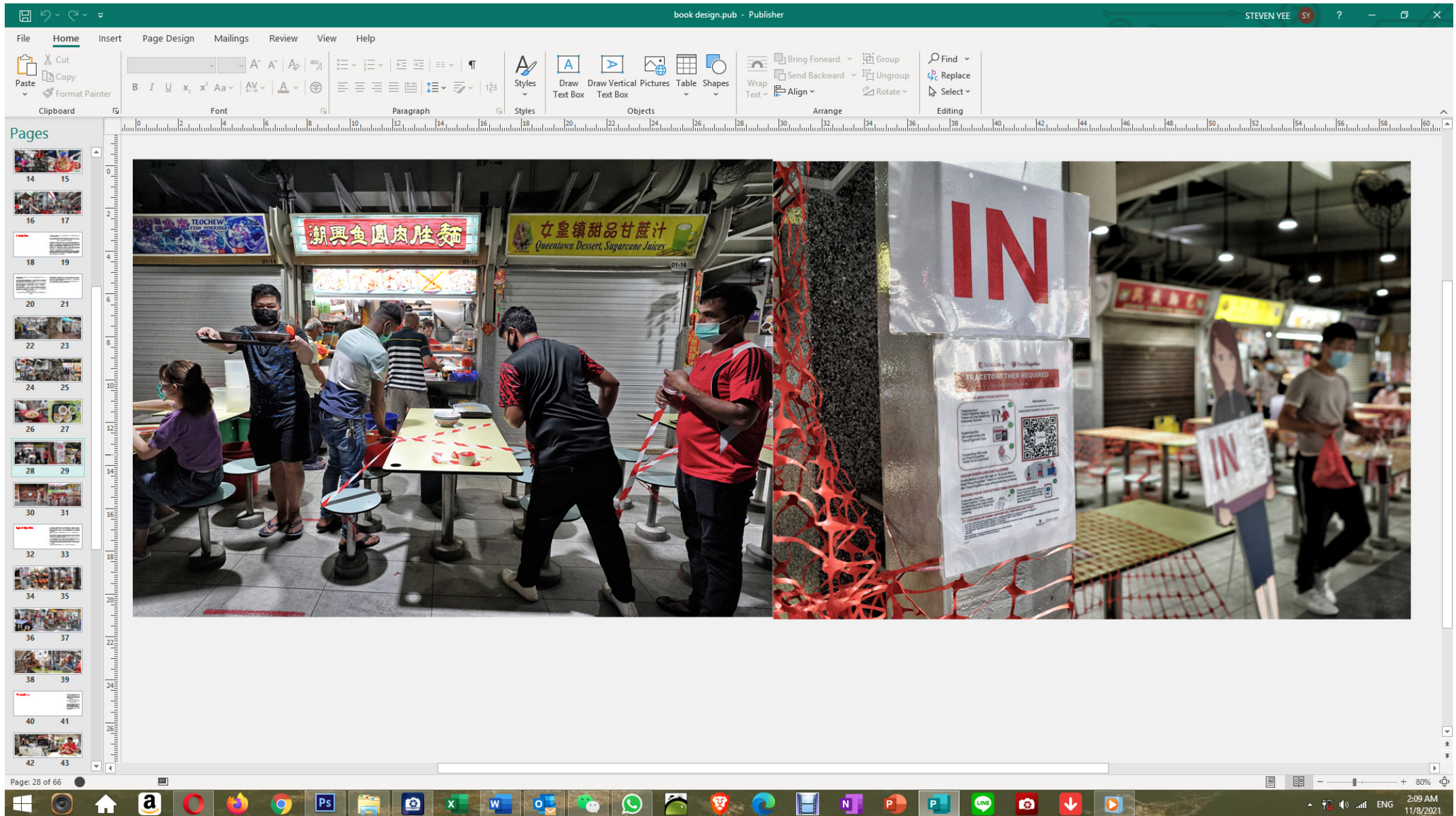
The street, though, bred unsanitary conditions. In post-Independence Singapore, hawker centres were built from 1971 to house street food vendors in a clean environment under one roof. As married couples moved out of the kitchen and joined the workforce in droves in the latter half of the 20th century, it became official policy to build hawker centres in every town and residential district. This gave Singaporeans easy access to scores of vendors selling all types of inexpensive food. As a consequence, it entrenched in their psyche the culture of dining out for every meal.

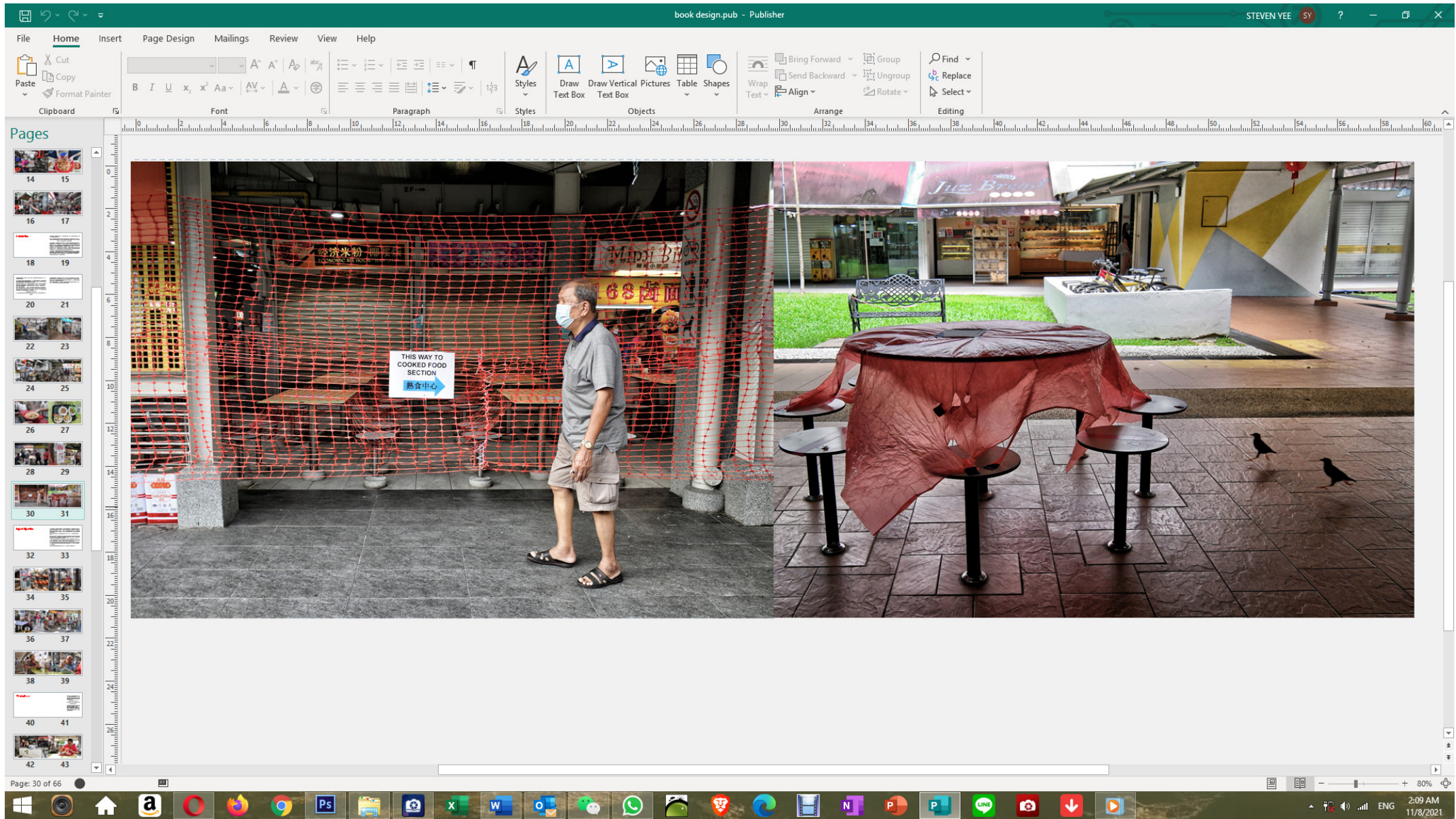


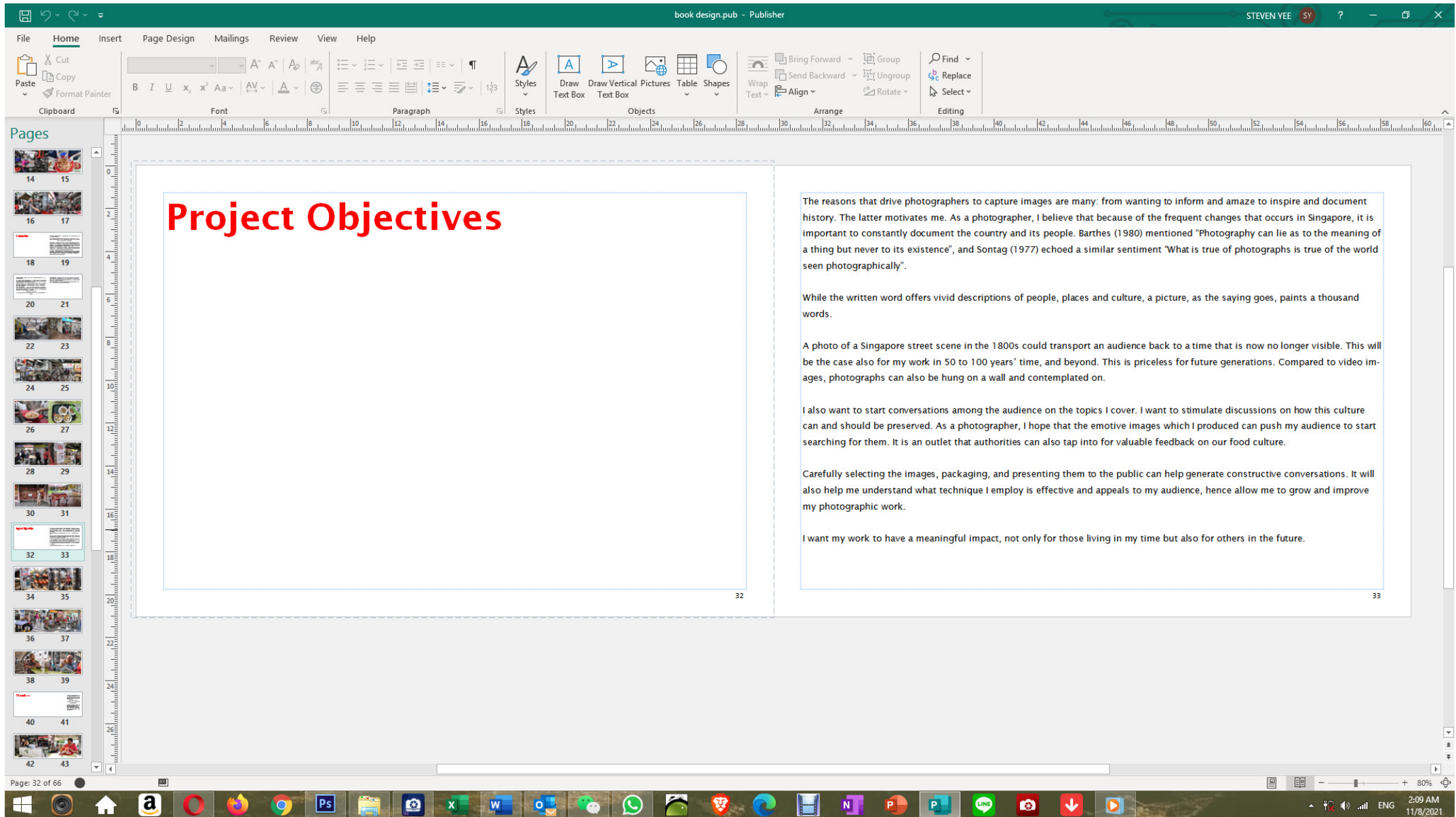












Project Objectives

The reasons that drive photographers to capture images are many: from wanting to inform and amaze to inspire and document history. The latter motivates me. As a photographer, I believe that because of the frequent changes that occurs in Singapore, it is important to constantly document the country and its people. Barthes (1980) mentioned "Photography can lie as to the meaning of a thing but never to its existence", and Sontag (1977) echoed a similar sentiment "What is true of photographs is true of the world seen photographically".

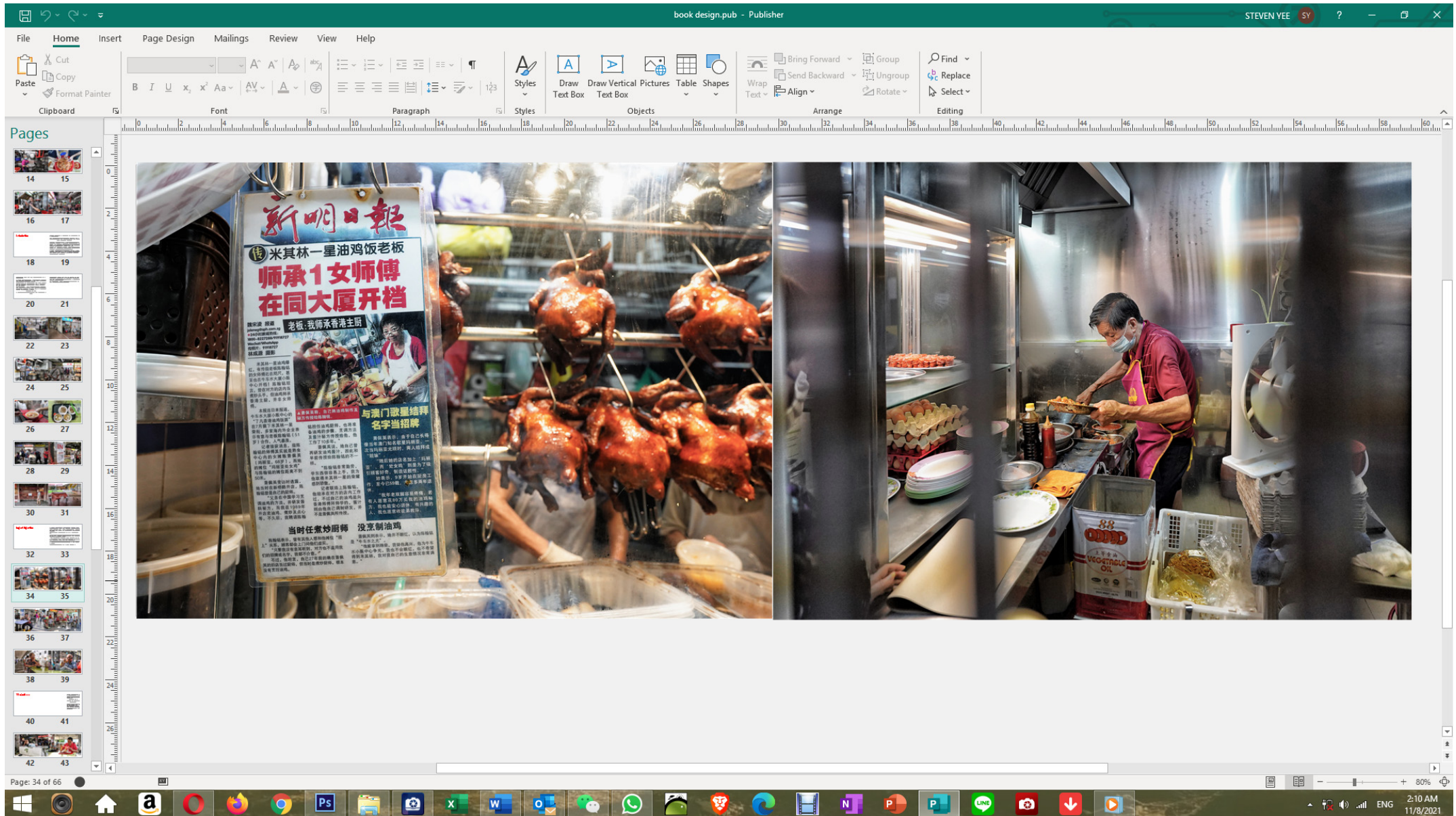
While the written word offers vivid descriptions of people, places and culture, a picture, as the saying goes, paints a thousand words.

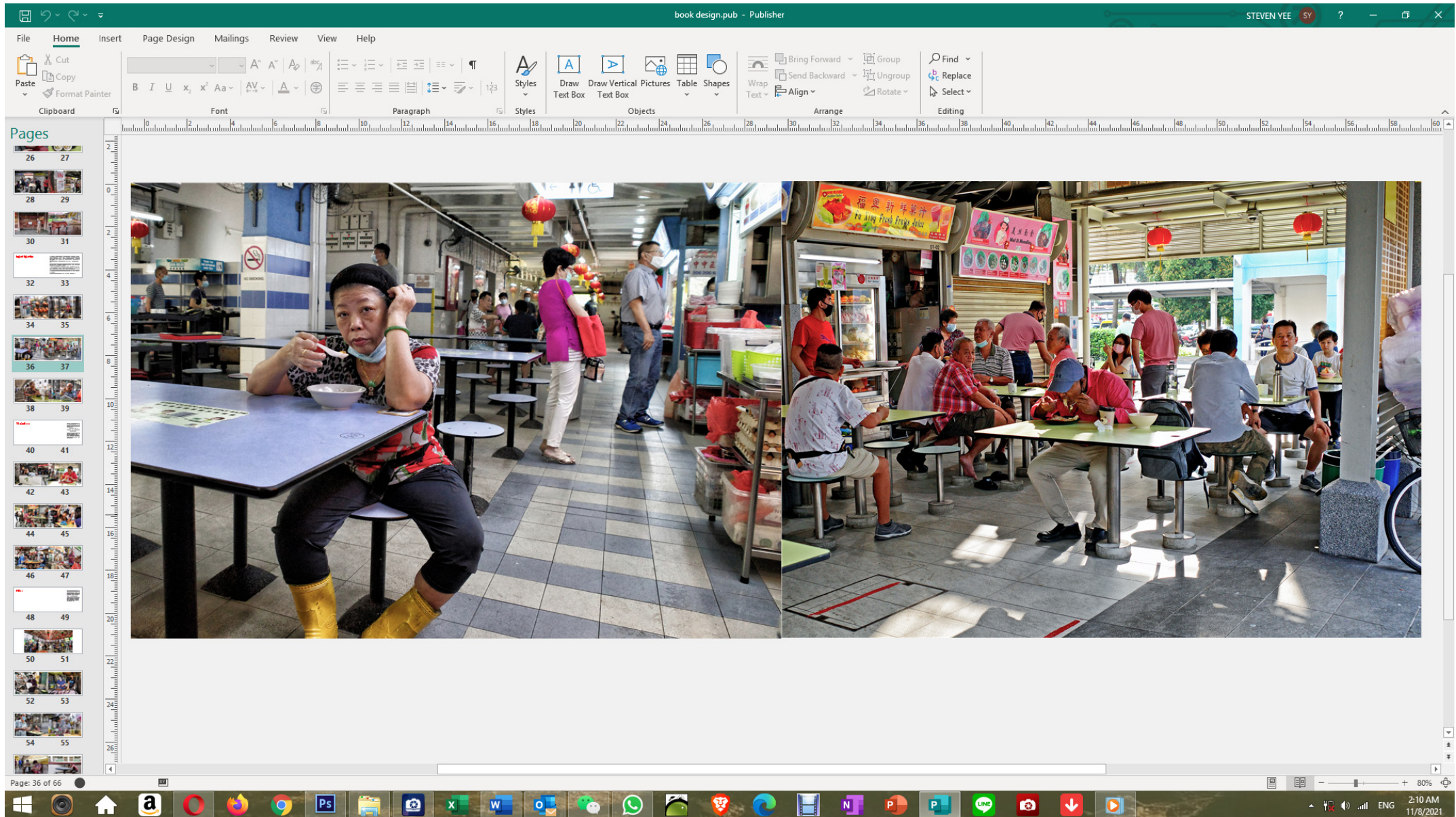
A photo of a Singapore street scene in the 1800s could transport an audience back to a time that is now no longer visible. This will be the case also for my work in 50 to 100 years' time, and beyond. This is priceless for future generations. Compared to video images, photographs can also be hung on a wall and contemplated on.

I also want to start conversations among the audience on the topics I cover. I want to stimulate discussions on how this culture can and should be preserved. As a photographer, I hope that the emotive images which I produced can push my audience to start searching for them. It is an outlet that authorities can also tap into for valuable feedback on our food culture.

Carefully selecting the images, packaging, and presenting them to the public can help generate constructive conversations. It will also help me understand what technique I employ is effective and appeals to my audience, hence allow me to grow and improve my photographic work.

I want my work to have a meaningful impact, not only for those living in my time but also for others in the future.





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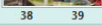
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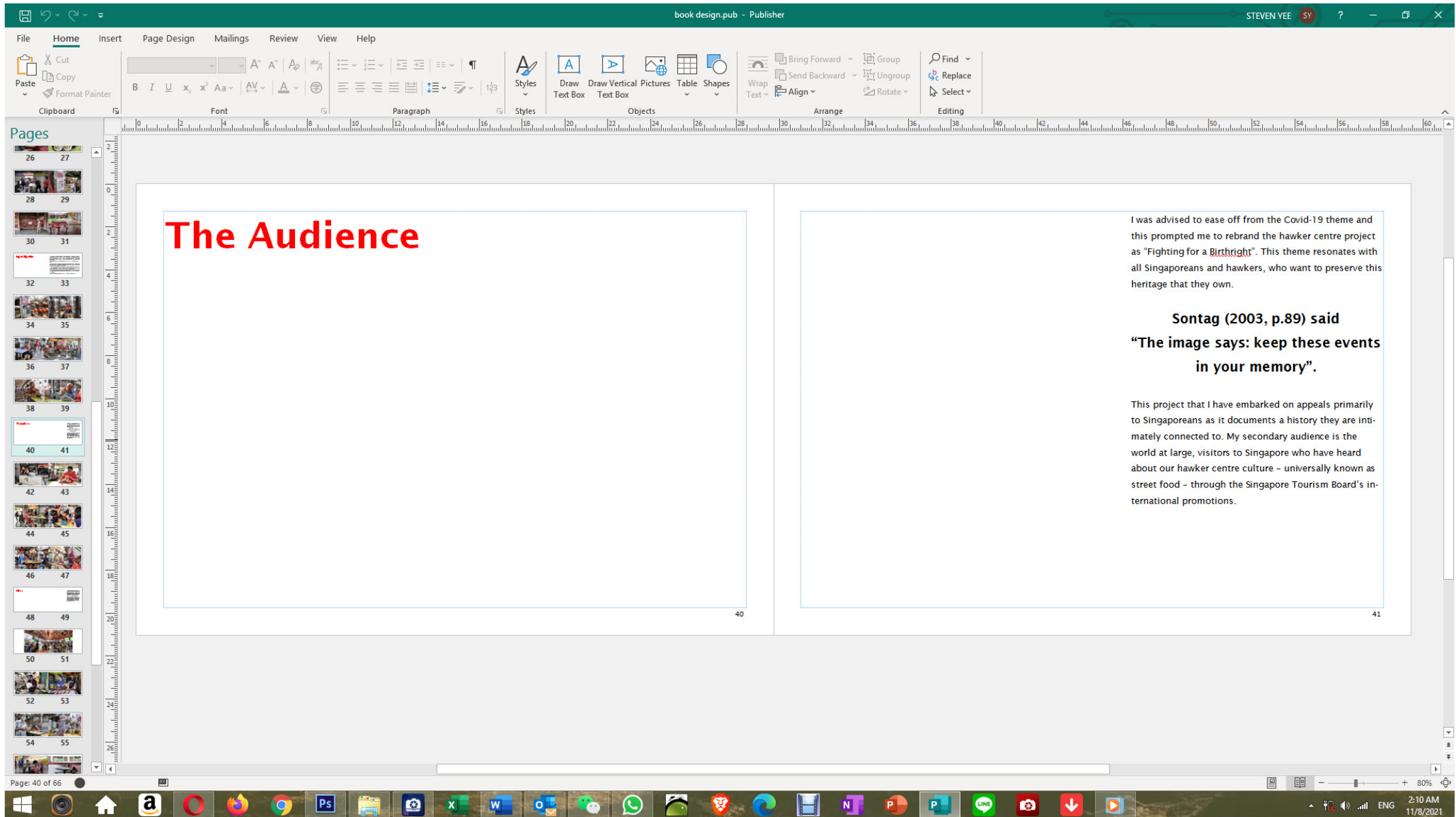


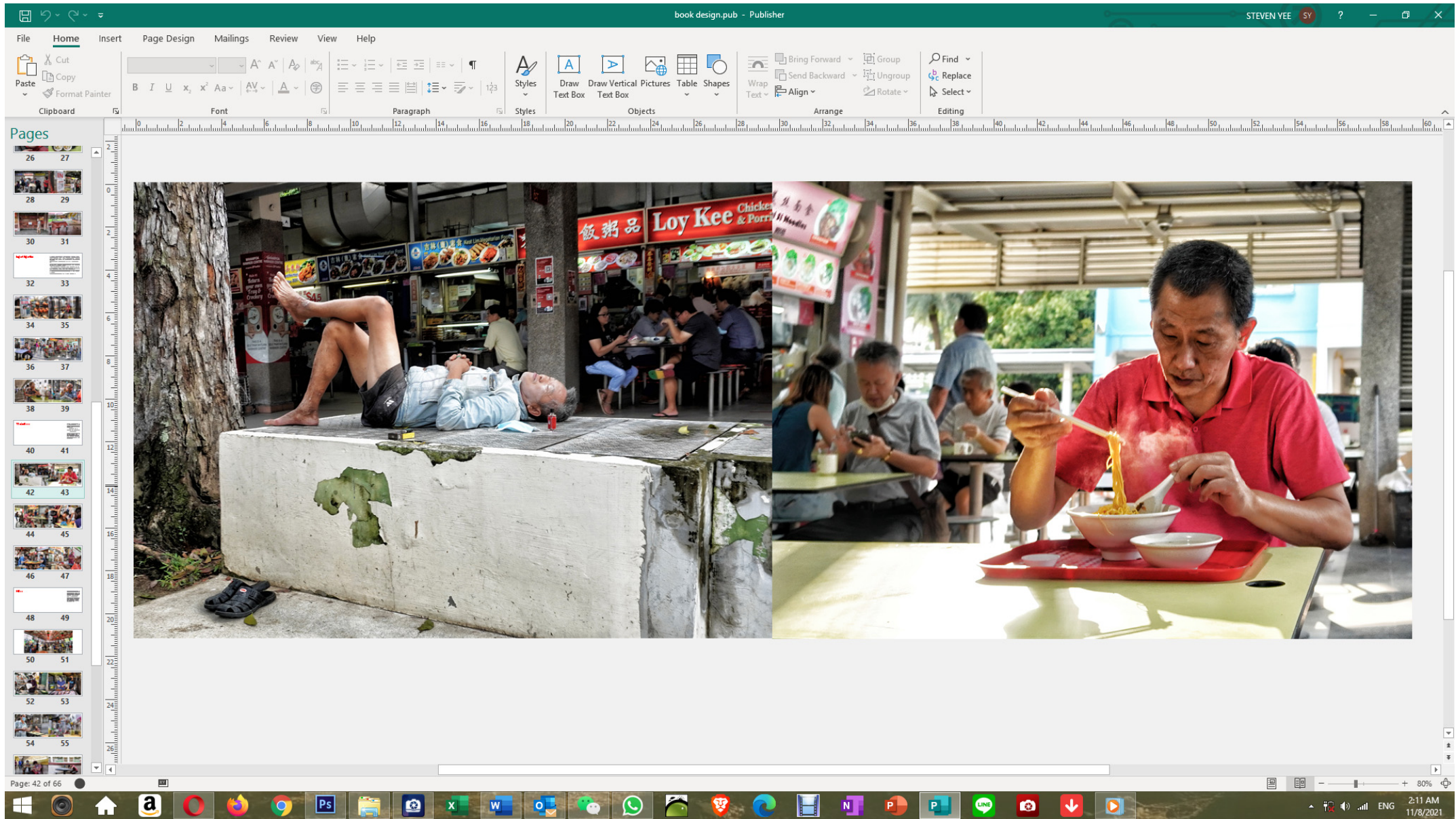


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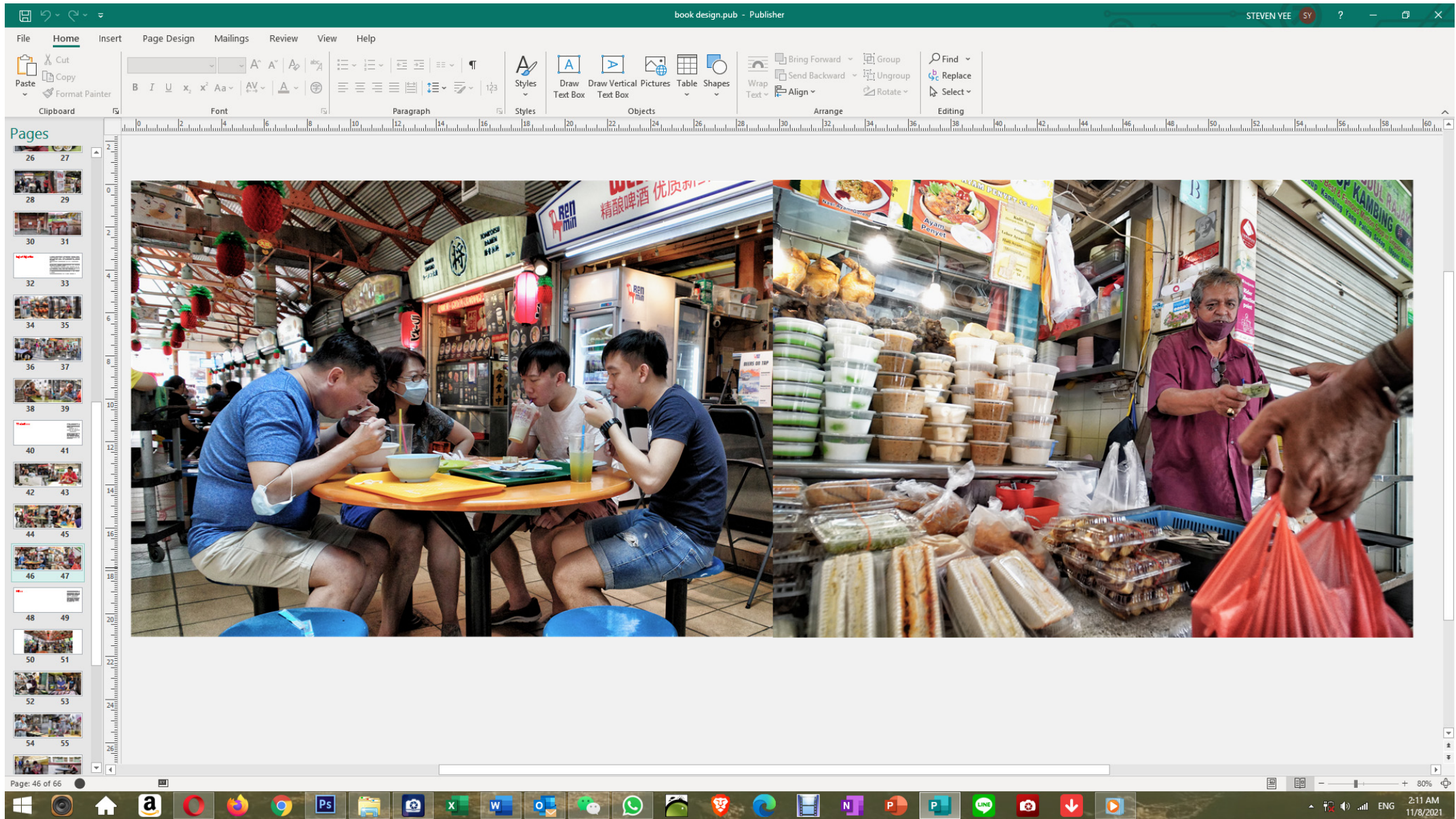
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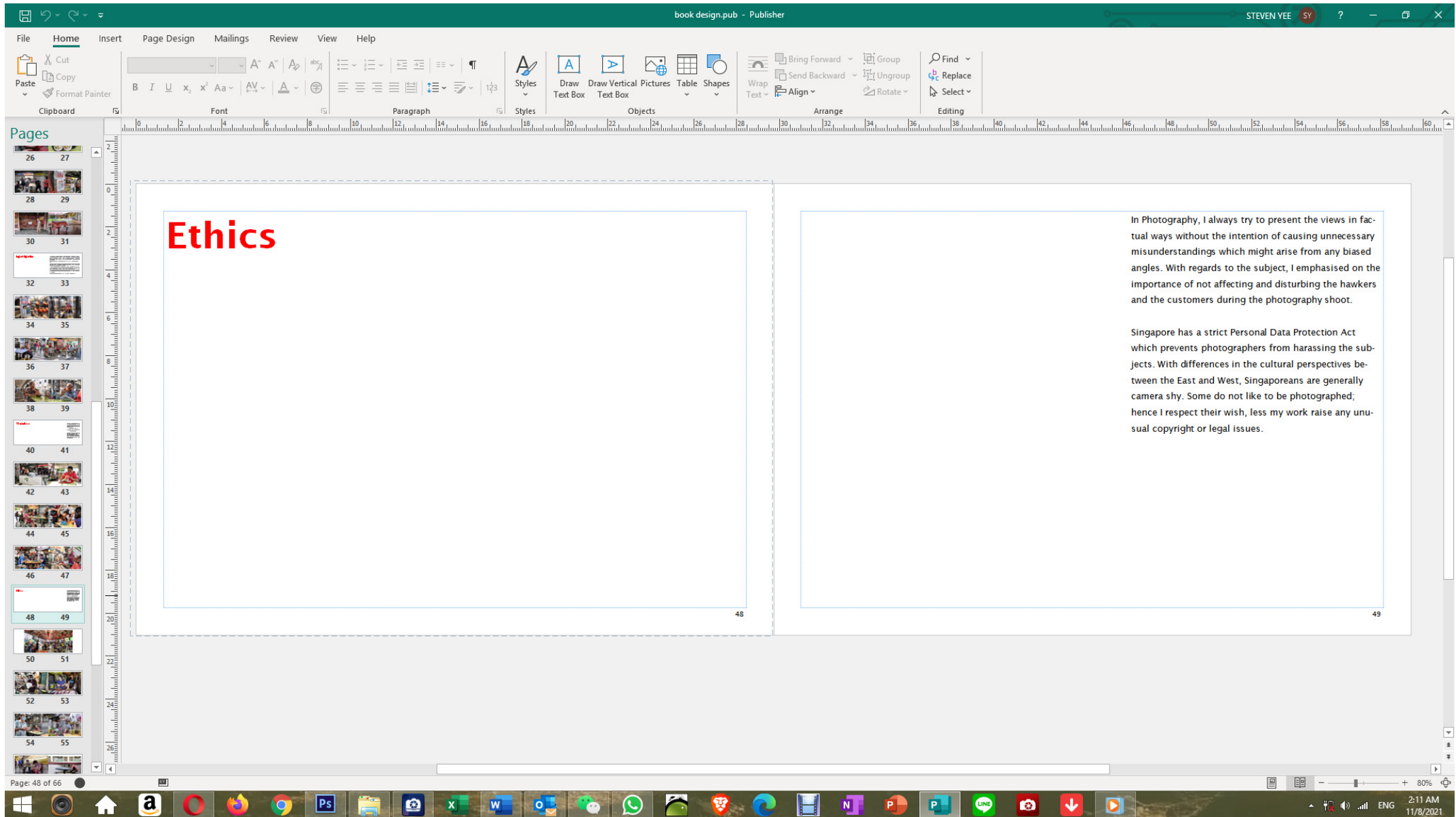
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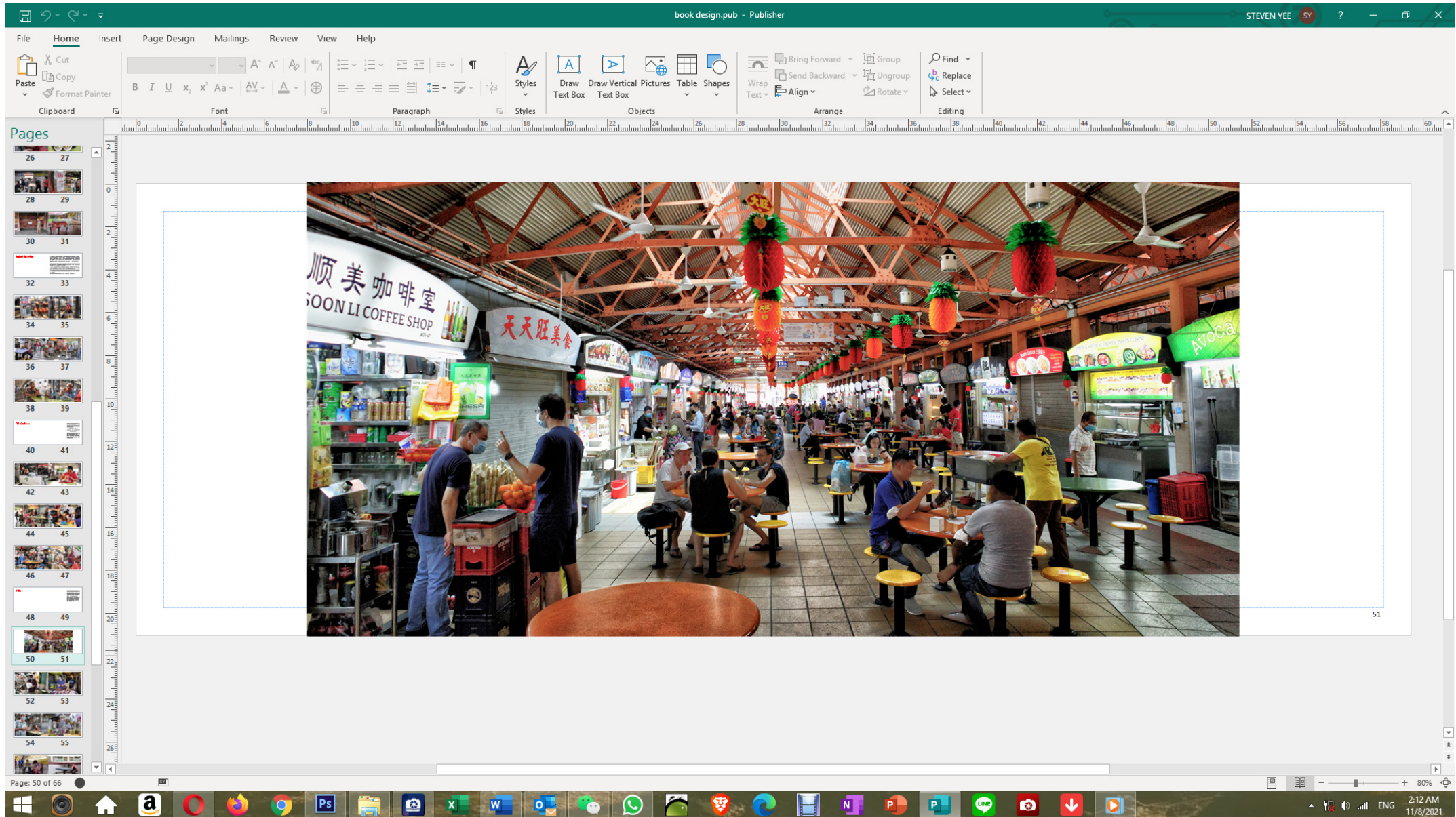


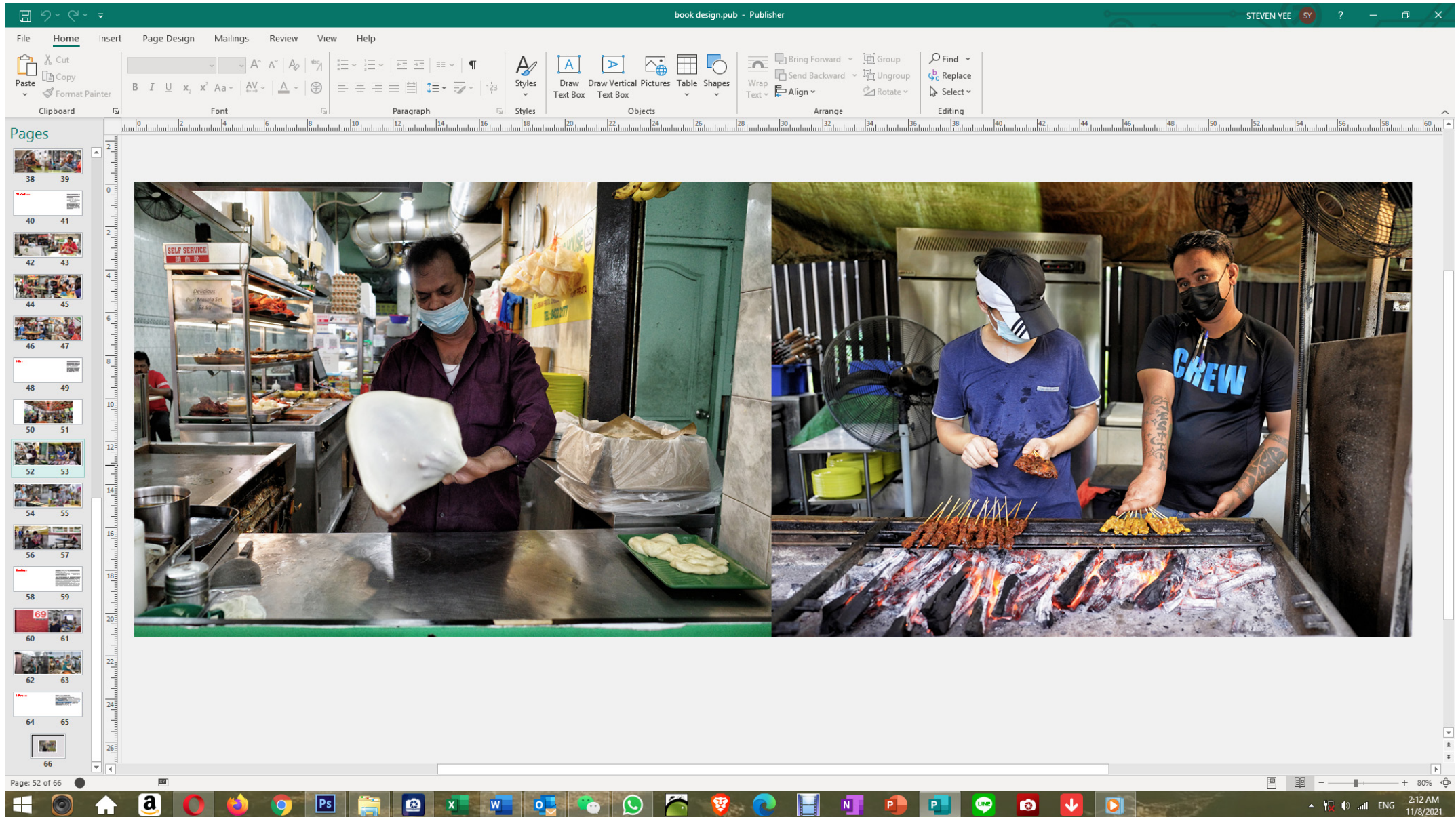
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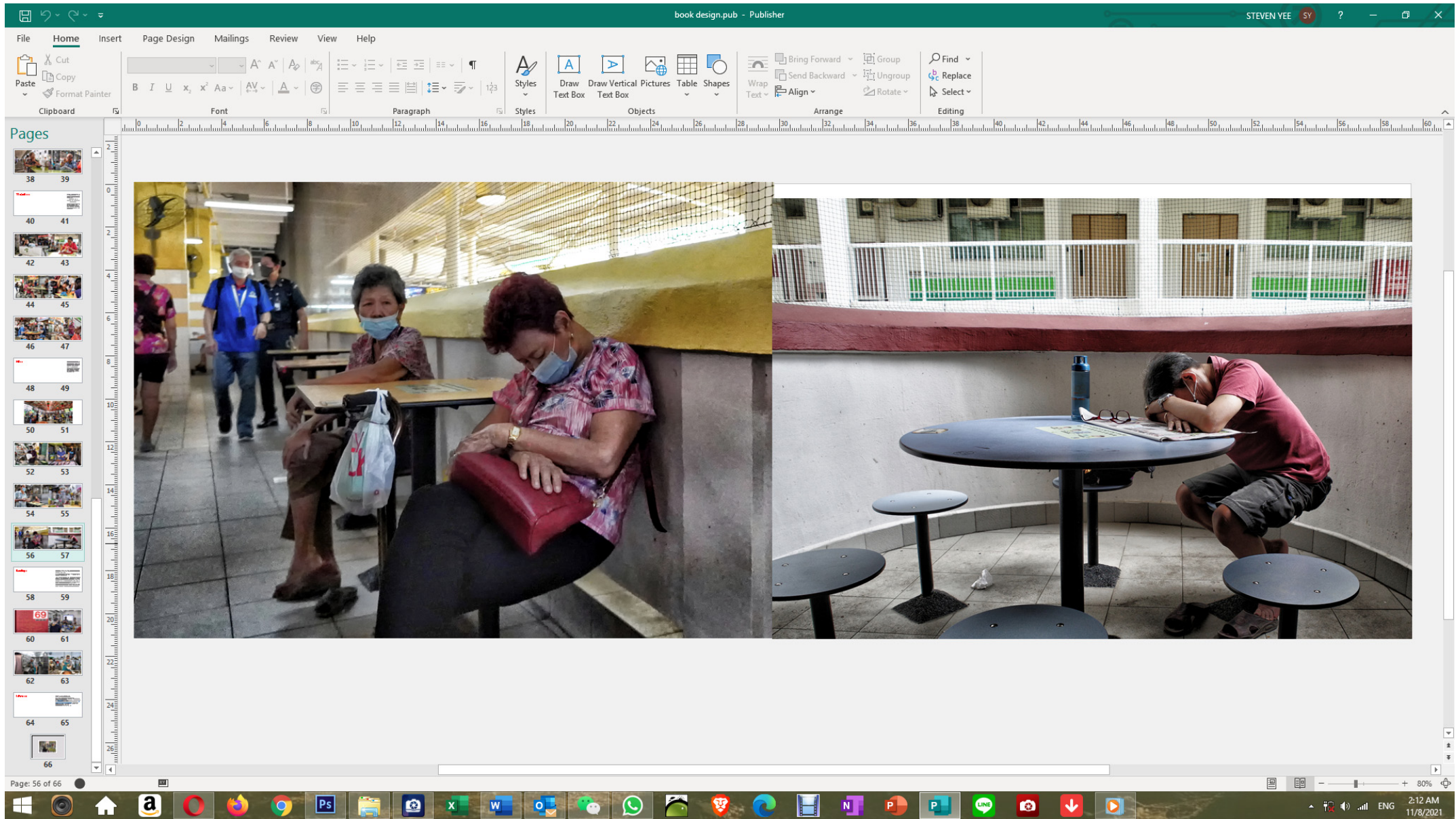
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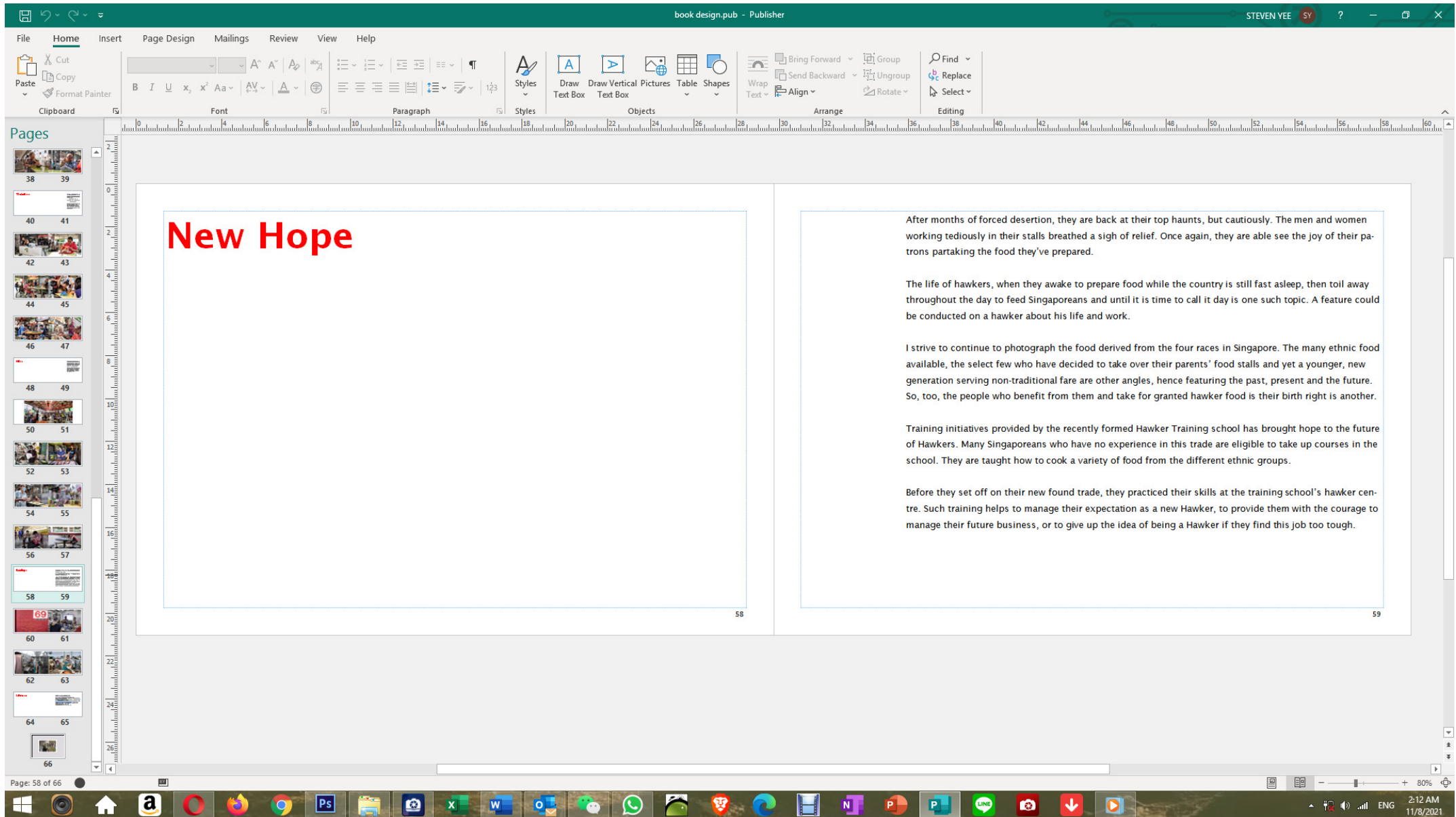
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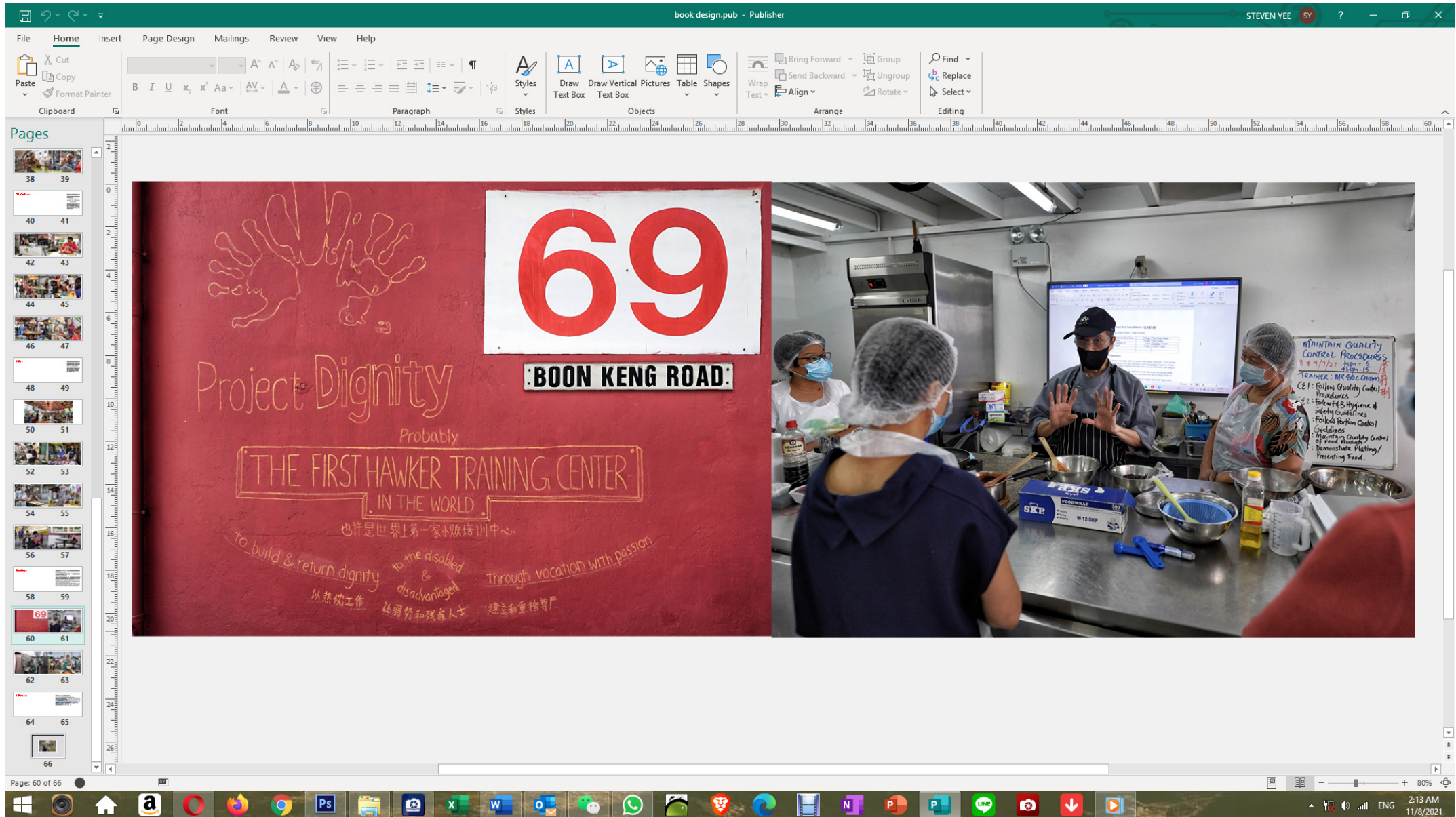
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