

Oxford Handbooks Online

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Daniel Silver and Terry Nichols Clark

The Oxford Handbook of Consumption

Edited by Frederick F. Wherry and Ian Woodward

Subject: Sociology, Economic Sociology Online Publication Date: Feb 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190695583.013.31

Abstract and Keywords

This chapter builds on past work to examine the distinctive ways in which ethnic restaurants help to define the contemporary scenscape in US cities. It uses the example of restaurants to illustrate how to apply and extend a scenes approach. Restaurants in general and ethnically themed restaurants are crucial components of many cities and communities' consumer offerings. They often make the scene. After briefly reviewing some general principles of the scenes perspective, the authors discuss ethnic neighborhoods and the role of consumption venues such as restaurants in defining their identity. The authors stress multiple ways that ethnically themed amenities and local populations may overlap in various contexts, as well as how they can join with other dimensions of local scenes. These ideas are illustrated by examining multiple types of ethnic restaurants across all US zip codes, paying particular attention to the degree to which they correspond with coethnic residential populations, and how this varies by group and city. The authors also investigate the types of scenes typical of cosmopolitan areas that offer diverse ethnic cuisines.

Keywords: scenes, place-making, urbanism, neighborhoods, ethnicity, food

Cities have become focal points of the postindustrial economy. Heavy industry employs fewer workers, while the service sector has grown. A host of personal services and consumer amenities has increasingly come to define the urban landscape: coffee shops, restaurants, art galleries, yoga studios, gyms, bars, nightclubs, and the like. Such services and amenities tend to require interpersonal interaction and physical co-presence; they are difficult to outsource. Former production spaces such as warehouses and factories become repurposed as event spaces, and they may themselves be appreciated as amenities contributing to a distinctive urban aesthetic.

No longer a generic residual to production, "consumption" becomes an active process with multiple dimensions. What and how to consume become more salient, not only whether and how much. As consumption opportunities expand and concentrate, cities and

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

neighborhoods increasingly come to be defined by the overall set of amenities they offer rather than by any single amenity. Not only this swanky restaurant or that designer clothing store, this tattoo parlor or that punk music venue, this locally sourced butcher shop or that microbrewery est. 1972, but the holistic ambiance they combine to produce: a sense of glamorousness, or local authenticity, or transgressiveness. They become *scenes*.

“The scenes project” (<https://scenescapes.weebly.com>) is a loose collection of international collaborators who have been studying the nature, sources, and implications of scenes. Researchers from the United States, Canada, France, Poland, Korea, China, Japan, Spain, and beyond have sought to articulate a “scenes perspective” for studying cities and communities, document varieties of scenes, and examine how they intertwine with local economic development, residential patterns, and politics. *Scenescapes: How Qualities of Place Social Life* (Silver and Clark 2016) brought together much of this research, highlighting the United States and Canada while pointing toward related significant work elsewhere.

This chapter builds on this past work to examine the distinctive ways in which ethnic restaurants help to define the contemporary scenescape in US cities. It uses the example of restaurants to illustrate how to apply and extend a scenes approach. Restaurants in general and ethnically themed restaurants are crucial components of many cities’ and communities’ consumer offerings. They often make the scene.

After briefly reviewing some general principles of the scenes perspective, we (again briefly) discuss ethnic neighborhoods and the role of consumption venues such as restaurants in defining their identity. We stress multiple ways that ethnically themed amenities and local populations may overlap in various contexts, as well as how they can join with other dimensions of local scenes. We illustrate these ideas by examining multiple types of ethnic restaurants across all US zip codes, paying particular attention to the degree to which they correspond with coethnic residential populations, and how this varies by group and city. We also investigate the types of scenes typical of cosmopolitan areas that offer diverse ethnic cuisines.

Overall, we find a wide variety of patterns, and we note in particular that some cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles stand out in sustaining strong linkages between ethnic amenities and ethnic populations in general, while other cities specialize in particular groups, and still other areas have ethnically themed scenes without a correspondingly concentrated ethnic residential population. Neighborhoods with cosmopolitan restaurant scenes tend to be young and racially diverse, and they seem to some degree to defy standard gentrification narratives. There is no one true model of ethnic scenes, but a plurality of options that emerge in different forms in different contexts.

A Brief Introduction to the Scenes Perspective

As cities and neighborhoods become increasingly defined by the opportunities for consumption that they offer, it becomes correspondingly important to examine them from the point of view of a consumer. It is from this standpoint that a place appears as a scene. This is not the only way to encounter an area, and contrasting multiple other orientations can provide a useful point of comparison, as in Table 1.

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Table 1. Contrasting Cultural Scenes, Residential Neighborhoods, Political Arenas, and Industrial Clusters

Orientation to Place	Cultural Scene	Residential Neighborhood	Industrial Cluster	Political Arena
Activities	Expressing and communicating feelings, experiences, moods	Securing necessities, basic services, housing, schools, safety, sanitation, community development	Work, production	Collective action
Agents	Consumers	Residents	Producer	Citizen/ leader/ officials/ activist
Physical Units	Amenities	Homes/ apartments	Firms	Power centers
Basis of Social Bond	Lifestyles/ sensibilities	Being born and raised nearby, long local residence, heritage	Work/ production relations	Ideology, party, issues, citizenship

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Table 1 lays out several ways of encountering a place. As a producer, it is a place to work, and one treats the environment as a set of firms. As a resident, it is a place to live, and homes are the relevant units. As a political actor, it is a place for collective action, and the goal is to generate and mobilize power. As a consumer, it is a place to take in and experience, and the space appears as a collection of amenities. It is a scene.

All of these modes of encounter coexist and overlap, enabling the same object to appear in different modes. For example, an office tower, bar, or factory can be—even for the same individuals—places to work and amenities to be appreciated or rejected, whether as symbols of power, neighborly warmth, or ruthless efficiency. When we adopt a scenes perspective, we take this consumer point of view as a starting point and treat cities and communities in terms of how they may be appreciated.

One major theoretical contribution of scenes researchers has been to articulate a range of standards of taste according to which they may be judged. Drawing on diverse sources such as social theory, literature, journalism, philosophy, poetry, and beyond, we often work with a set of fifteen dimensions of meaning that are useful for describing scenes, grouped into three broad classes. These dimensions highlight how scenes offer forms of (1) *theatricality*, or ways of seeing and being scene, for instance glamorously, transgressively, or in a neighborly or formal way; (2) *authenticity*, or notions of what is genuine or fake, such as locality, ethnicity, or corporateness; (3) *legitimacy*, or notions of what is a valid authority, such as tradition, charisma, utility, or personal self-expression. Tables 2 and 3 lay out these dimensions, which we often describe as a kind of conceptual bricolage—a way of joining conceptual bits from the history of social and cultural thought into a bundle of tools available for the scenes researcher to use and adapt as needed.

Table 2. Analytical Components of Scenes I: Theatricality, Authenticity, and Legitimacy

<i>Theatricality</i>	<i>Authenticity</i>	<i>Legitimacy</i>
<i>Mutual self-display</i>	Discovering the real thing	Acting on moral bases
<i>Seeing and being seen</i>	Touching ground	Listening to duty
<i>Appropriate vs. inappropriate</i>	Genuine vs. phony	Right vs. wrong
<i>Appearance</i>	Identity	Intentions to act
<i>Performing</i>	Rooting	Evaluating

Table 3. Analytical Dimensions of Scenes II: Dimensions of Theatricality, Legitimacy, and Authenticity

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Theatricality	
Exhibitionistic	Reserved
Glamorous	Ordinary
Neighborly	Distant
Transgressive	Conformist
Formal	Informal
Legitimacy	
Traditional	Novel
Charismatic	Routine
Utilitarian	Unproductive
Egalitarian	Particularist
Self-expressive	Scripted
Authenticity	
Local	Global
State	Anti-state
Ethnic	Nonethnic
Corporate	Independent
Natural	Artificial
Rational	Irrational

Scenes, ch. 2 elaborates these dimensions in more detail. Together, they provide a matrix for identifying the qualitative character of a scene as a combination of these dimensions. One area may join self-expression, transgression, exhibition, and anti-corporateness, and it could in this way approach a bohemian scene. Another could join self-expression, neighborliness, and local authenticity, as in a quaint arts-oriented community such as Carmel, California, or Asheville, North Carolina. In this way, the

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

scenes perspective features combinatorial and holistic thinking: a holistic scene such as Bohemia may be articulated as a combination of dimensions, which may be found in different levels and configurations elsewhere, making it possible to identify and compare subtle variations in scenes amid broader commonalities. Wagner's approach to opera provides a major inspiration for this approach to social analysis, as a weaving together of Leitmotifs, as Levi-Strauss pursued in *Mythologiques*.

The aspects of place distinguished in Table 1 are not distinct; they may feed into one another. This mutual influence provides a key analytic lever that organizes much scenes research. For example, in *Scenescapes*, we develop general and specific propositions about how scenes feed into (a) economic development, (b) residential patterns, and (c) politics. Drawing on multiple data sources, we show how the impact of technology clusters on economic growth is enhanced when they are located in scenes that evince the value of personal self-expression; how different demographic groups gravitate to scenes that feature different dimensions (young people to more transgressive scenes, baby boomers to scenes that combine local authenticity and self-expression); and how national presidential voting patterns increasingly divide between more "urbane" scenes (strong in self-expression, glamor, transgression, and rationalism) and more "communitarian scenes (strong in tradition, neighborliness, and formality). Other researchers have pursued similar lines of analysis in other contexts (Buin et al. 2011; Navarro 2012; Navarro, Mateos, and Rodriguez 2012; Sawyer 2011).

Ethnic Neighborhoods, Multicultural Cities, and Amenities

While the main thrust of scenes analysis is to feature holistic combinations of many—often hundreds—of various indicators, it is often also important to drill down and examine specific types of amenities that resonate with ongoing critical discussions. Thus, for example in *Scenescapes* (ch. 5), to examine questions about America's cultural divisions and potential bridges across them, we investigate location patterns of "new conservative" churches (e.g., Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist, etc.), "new age" amenities (e.g., yoga studios, meditation centers, and the like), and martial arts studios, along with "pop culture" amenities (e.g., fast food, music, movies). We find that while American communities are rather sharply divided between the first two, the latter two are more broadly shared, and martial arts in particular stand at a particularly intriguing nexus within the various crosscutting cleavages of the American cultural matrix (see also Yi and Silver 2015).

In a similar way, here we examine ethnically themed amenities, in particular restaurants. There are a number of reasons for doing so. Racially marginalized persons have been featured as key components of some scenes at least since the Parisian bohemians of the nineteenth century. They sought scenes defined by outsiders and outcasts, and took the presence of marginalized groups as signs of this kind of scene. Similar attitudes persisted among the "neo-bohemians" featured in Richard Lloyd's (2010) studies of Chicago's

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Wicker Park in the 1990s, in which nonwhite residents and ethnic amenities (shops, restaurants, and the like) fed into images of a gritty authenticity that stood outside of the whitewashed conformism and standardization of the (stereotypical) suburban office park or global corporate workplace.

In these versions, the starting point is a putative “nonethnic” observer for whom the “ethnic character” of a scene is somehow attractive (or repulsive, as the case may be). While this point of view persists in some quarters, it is partial. A somewhat more complex picture arises, however, if we (briefly) consider the role of the “ethnic neighborhood” in American cities historically, and also in the context of contemporary “multicultural” cities.

The literature on ethnic neighborhoods is, of course, massive, and we make no claim to anything approaching a comprehensive review. For present purposes, a few key points suffice. Ethnic neighborhoods are often associated with immigrant settlement processes. They provide familiarity, social support, key information, job prospects, cultural identity, and more (Hou and Picot 2004; Massey and Denton 1985; Qadeer, Agrawal, and Lovell 2010; Wilson and Portes 1980). Key amenities solidify the neighborhood in this role, such as churches, festivals, parades, shops, and restaurants. In this way, the familiar American pattern emerges—with early twentieth-century Chicago as a classic case in point—in which the city forms a patchwork of ethnic communities, with their own distinct customs and style of life. Here, distinctive ethnic groups—Irish, Polish, Lithuanian, Italian, and so on—lived not near factories but instead built and lived near their own parishes; they often worked far away from their homes, and their identities were correspondingly shaped less by the workplace and more by ethno-cultural factors. If Chicago was an extreme case, many other cities have collections of Greektowns, Chinatowns, Little Koreas, and other ethnic neighborhoods, perhaps increasingly so (Logan, Zhang, and Alba 2002).

Insiders and outsiders alike readily observe these differences. They provide key bases for a broader sense of the importance of pluralism and context in understanding social processes. For example, the strong linkages in Chicago between neighborhood, ethnicity, religion, and culture made the typical Chicagoan into something of a cultural anthropologist. Different people have their own ways of life, their own ways of making sense of the world, which are manifested in their daily rituals, how far they stand apart, dinner table manners, home décor, leisure pursuits, and more. Chicagoans did not need to travel to the Amazon to learn this; they just walked across the park. This contrasted to the typical Marxian approach, which was to envision old ways of living together being swept into the dustbin of history as economic affiliation overwhelmed other sources of identity. The Chicago approach is more pluralistic and pragmatist: the strength of different types of social bonds varies in different local situations.

Some observers, academic or otherwise, expected ethnically distinctive areas to fade as immigrants assimilated into the WASP majority culture (Brubaker [2001] reviews these debates about “assimilation”). In some cases this did occur; for instance, many German Americans actively sought to downplay their German heritage in the wake of World War I (Conzen 1979), including rebranding local businesses. Yet for many groups—including

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians—“spatial assimilation” has been a very uneven process (Qadeer 2016:132). It varies by country (see Walks and Bourne 2006 on US/Canada differences), but cities also play a role.

The history of cities like Chicago or Boston again provides a major case in point. Here and elsewhere, many immigrant groups proudly retained overt markers of their ethnic identities even as in other ways they integrated into major institutions of American life, such as city politics and corporations. The neighborhood again proved crucial, often as a symbolic focus (Conzen 1979; Gans 1982; Kantowicz 1975; see Waters 1990 on symbolic ethnicity in general). Even as many individuals moved to the suburbs or mixed urban neighborhoods, the concentration of amenities provides meeting points at nights or on weekends, and festivals and parades offer opportunities for periodic renewal and affirmation. The “ethnic” dimension of the urban scene becomes less (or not only) an exotic sign of transgression but a regular component of urbanity. As cities create opportunities for a critical mass of “unconventional” subcultures to coalesce (Fischer 1995), more individuals become more comfortable experimenting with unusual (to them) cuisines or styles of dress.

These and other processes pluralize the traditional close correlation between a particular residential population with a common ancestry and a corresponding set of local amenities. Ethnicity itself can become a target in efforts to brand or shape the public perception of a neighborhood, yielding multiple possible configurations. For example, Hackworth and Rekers (2005) show four just in Toronto: in the Corso Italia neighborhood there remains a strong overlap of Italian ancestry and Italian amenities frequented by Italian Canadians, whereas Little Italy has few Italian residents and many Italian restaurants that cater to non-Italian diners, tourists or otherwise; Greektown has seen its Greek Canadian population decline, but remains a focal point for Toronto’s Greek community, primarily through the efforts of an active local business association; Little India too remains strongly identified with Indian cultural identity and a center for shopping and dining, even though from its inception there were few local residents of Indian ancestry. Wherry (2011) identifies the subtle Puerto Rican art, culture, and cuisine, for example decorating children’s faces for a parade, and featuring guitar songs on a bus, showing how these can be both a source of internal ethnic pride and a proud cultural artifact to display to tourists. Acknowledging yet not fearing the tourist’s gaze in this respect is a step toward cosmopolitanism—it can enhance the theatricality of urban life, while retaining a sense of ethnic authenticity. In these and many cases elsewhere, the retail, amenity, and general consumer landscape can become a point of contestation, as various groups struggle to retain or acquire control of the neighborhood’s public reputation (Light 2002; Martinez, 2017). Thus, we should expect correlations between ethnic residential populations and ethnically themed amenities (such as restaurants) to vary, in multiple ways, for instance by the particular group in general, by various groups’ historical relationships to particular cities, and by particular cities which foster ethnic neighborhoods as an organizing principle. Yet beyond variation in these correspondences between specific groups and “their” amenities, it is also worth considering the

phenomenon of the “multicultural” neighborhood as well. Here again the ethnic restaurant plays a key role.

“Multicultural cities,” according to Mohammad Qadeer (2016), join both particularity and commonality. They are dotted with ethno-culturally distinct neighborhoods but also have a “common ground” that permits mutual interaction, shared rules of the game, and reasonable accommodation. An important feature of this (complex) common ground is cosmopolitan areas, in which the consumption of variety itself predominates. “This form of everyday multiculturalism widens the range of common norms and behaviors”(Qadeer 2016:157; see also Elijah Anderson’s (2011) notion of the cosmopolitan canopy (2011). Restaurants are central to the multicultural consumption of variety: “a multicultural city is distinguished by the choice of cuisines it offers” (Qadeer 2016:157). This is heightened in food courts and commercial streets in which not one but many different cuisines are simultaneously on offer and contribute to dynamic, offbeat scenes often attractive to more educated and cosmopolitan young people. Such neighborhoods are not restricted to North America, as for instance Kim (2016) shows in a study of Seoul’s Itaewon neighborhood. Thus, we would expect areas with a diverse variety of cuisines to be located in multiethnic, young, dense, urbane neighborhoods with more funky scenes and numerous college graduates.

Data and Methods

These sorts of issues about the interplay of consumption and local populations are often pursued in close case studies of one or a few neighborhoods, which more synthetic work then sometimes reviews and seeks to join. There is great value in this approach, and we sometimes pursue it ourselves. It is nevertheless useful to also take a more synoptic point of view, and seek to consider these bigger conceptual mappings with broad-based empirical claims that simultaneously compare many groups and local areas to one another by a common set of metrics. This sort of thin description may not yield the same depth of understanding of the intricacies of local dynamics as its thicker cousin. But it may still help to determine the extent to which local observations hold generally, identify outliers and typical forms for further investigation, and establish commonalities and differences across groups and cities. To converse with ethnographic, single-city thick descriptions, we start with key empirical findings and then return to bigger conceptual themes.

To pursue this sort of broad synoptic overview, we utilize two main data sources. One is the US Census, which asks respondents about their “ancestry.” For this analysis, we used data from the 2000 Census, but it would be interesting to examine other years to investigate changes. The other is our database of local amenities, downloaded from online business directories (e.g., yellow pages), and described in more detail in *Scenescapes* (ch. 8 and appendix). It includes dozens of restaurant categories, often explicitly labeled in ethnic terms, such as “Greek restaurant” or “Chinese restaurant,” and covers all US zip codes. Our analysis matches eleven ancestries and cuisines: African American (soul food),

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Chinese, Cuban, French, German, Greek, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, and Mexican. We use these two sources to construct a national measure of zip code restaurant variety based on fifty-three types of cuisines, and to examine its association with a host of census variables (e.g., rent, population density, racial diversity, college education, young people) and our measures of more holistic scenes (e.g., those that prize urbanity, glamorousness and self-expression, locality, and so on). More details about specific variables and methods appear later, in the text and in notes to tables and figures.

Our analysis proceeds in three main steps. First, for each group separately we identify counties in which the (zip code) correspondence between ancestry and restaurant is strongest and weakest. Second, we compare groups to one another, determining (a) groups for which the ancestry/restaurant correspondence is strongest or weakest in general; (b) selected counties in which specific ancestry/restaurant correlations are especially striking; and (c) counties in which ancestry and restaurant tend to strongly overlap *in general*, regardless of the specific group. Third, we examine zip codes with diverse restaurant offerings and determine the types of scenes of which they are typically a part.

The analysis illustrates how to apply and extend general principles of scenes thinking. For instance, we stress how core sociological concepts like ethnic or multicultural neighborhoods may be decomposed into configurations of multiple overlapping variables, whose combinations we can systematically examine. We also stress context, showing how the “same” variables operate differently in different situations. Similarly, we connect particular amenities such as restaurants to broader meanings embedded in the localities of which they are part, such as glamour or urbanity. This interplay of the particular and the general is a hallmark of scenes analysis, as is the effort to examine localities in terms of the meanings they evoke. Researchers may follow the model of the analysis to develop similar analysis in other arenas.

Analysis

We first examine each group separately, identifying where the relationship between restaurants and ancestry is strongest for each. To do so, we fit a series of multilevel models, one for each group. In each model, the dependent variable is the proportion of the zip code population that reports a given background (e.g., proportion of the total zip code population that is African American, Chinese, Cuban, etc.). The independent variable is the number of each restaurant type per total amenities of all types (some 375 in our yellow pages database) in the zip code, which we refer to simply as “restaurants.”

At this stage of the analysis, the restaurant “random slopes” are our main interest. They indicate counties in which the relationship between restaurant and ancestry is stronger or weaker than the US average. Table 4 summarizes some key findings. The numbers in parentheses show the approximate total number of counties for which the restaurant-ancestry relationship is statistically significant, and the columns list the top five counties

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

for each group. Counties in bold have a substantial break between them and other counties, potentially indicating cities with qualitatively distinct ethnic neighborhoods.

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Table 4. Counties with Strong Ethnicity/Restaurant Overlaps for Various Groups

African American		Chinese		Cuban	
Positive (9)	Negative (20)	Positive (23)	Negative (0)	Positive (4)	Negative (0)
Genesee, MI	Philadelphia, PA	San Francisco, CA		Hudson, NJ	
Cook, IL	Polk, FL	Alameda, CA		Dade, FL	
New Castle, DE	Mercer, NJ	San Mateo, CA		Palm Beach, FL	
Westchester, NY	St. John the Baptist, LA	Santa Clara, CA		Monroe, FL	
Wayne, MI	Fort Bend, TX	Honolulu, HI			
French		German		Greek	
Positive (0)	Negative (85)	Positive (0)	Negative (0)	Positive (6)	Negative (0)
	Essex, VT			Queens, NY	
	Aroostook, ME			Pinellas, FL	
	Coos, NH			Fairfield, CT	
	Franklin, NY			Hampden, MA	
	Orleans, VT			Cook, IL	

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Irish		Italian		Japanese	
Positive (2)	Negative (0)	Positive (39)	Negative (5)	Positive (11)	Negative (1)
Suffolk, MA		Essex, NJ	Atlantic, NJ	Honolulu, HI	New York, NY
Nassau, NY		Philadelphia, PA	Barnstable, MA	Hawaii, HI	
		Richmond, NY	Northampton, PA	Kauai, HI	
		Bronx, NY	Salem, NJ	Maui, HI	
		New Haven, CT	Dare, NC	Los Angeles, CA	
Korean		Mexican			
Positive (17)	Negative (0)	Positive (75)	Negative (12)		
Queens, NY		Los Angeles, CA	Marin, CA		
Bergen, NJ		Cook, IL	Colusa, CA		
Los Angeles, CA		Kane, IL	Sonoma, CA		
Orange, CA		Santa Cruz, CA	Brazoria, TX		
Anchorage, AK		Maverick, TX	Mesa, CO		

Note. While we use multilevel statistical analysis and refer to independent and dependent variables, we generally do not seek to impute atomistic causal interpretations. Rather, a core focus of scenes analysis is how variables join into

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

gestalts, which we explore with many methods, including case studies and participant observation. This table summarizes eleven separate multilevel models, one for each group. In each model, ancestry is the dependent variable and the corresponding restaurant type is the independent variable. The table highlights counties in which the relationship between restaurant and ancestry is particularly strong or weak. Numbers in parentheses indicate the approximate number of counties in which the restaurant-ancestry relationship is statistically different than average. For readability, the table only lists the top five counties for each group. Bold indicates counties in which the relationship appears to be substantially stronger or weaker than elsewhere. We include restaurants as a level 1 fixed effect and as a varying slope within counties, which are a level 2 grouping variable.

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Much could be said about Table 4, but here we restrict the discussion to some major themes. The table demonstrates that this simple technique can identify ethnic neighborhoods in which a local population and a corresponding set of amenities create a strong and recognizable community identity: San Francisco's Chinatown, "Havana on the Hudson," Koreatown and (Greek) Astoria in Queens,¹ distinctive Mexican enclaves in Los Angeles and Chicago, Japanese communities in Hawaii, or Chicago's centers of African American culture such as Bronzeville. It shows that European ethnic groups continue to maintain a spatial relationship to "their" amenities in some places, such as Italians in New Jersey or Irish in Boston (Suffolk County), even as others, especially French and German, have largely become more spatially dissociated.

We also find evidence of how widespread or narrow the ancestry-restaurant relationships are for different groups. For example, over seventy counties have especially strong overlaps between Mexican populations and Mexican restaurants, around forty for Italian, and twenty for Chinese and Korean. Counties in which Greek or Irish overlaps relatively strongly with corresponding restaurants are rarer. Thus, one has more opportunities to find "authentic" restaurants embedded in corresponding residential populations in more parts of the country for the former group than the latter.²

At the same time, this technique identifies where the relationship between restaurant and a corresponding local population is relatively weak. For example, the negative relationship between Japanese restaurants and ancestry in Manhattan indicates Manhattan's position at the leading edge of the diffusion of sushi as a staple part of a local restaurant scene, regardless of the local population's background. The negative coefficients for Mexican restaurants in several California counties (generally with relatively large Mexican populations) may reflect a similar process, in which Mexican restaurants now routinely exist in neighborhoods with relatively low (for that county) proportions of Mexican residents. The large number of counties with negative relationships for French restaurants may also be worthy of note. These are all counties with relatively large French American populations in which their relative dearth of French restaurants stands out all the more. A county like Atlantic, New Jersey, may be more likely to have tourist-oriented neighborhoods with many Italian restaurants but few Italian residents.

These results illustrate the diversity of ways in which ethnicity and amenities such as restaurants may be integrated or separated, and they lay the ground for empirical generalizations about the likelihood of various combinations occurring and further examining their origins and impacts. However, the results for different groups are not directly comparable. In the second phase of analysis, we therefore join the various groups into a single model. We do this by treating each group as a repeated measure of the same zip code. Thus, we have eleven measures of ancestry and restaurant proportions for each zip code, which we can in turn probe further in a multilevel modeling context.

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Figure 1 shows a first step in this direction, comparing the strength of ancestry-restaurant associations across groups. The figure compares interactions between group and restaurant concentrations. French ancestry is the reference category.

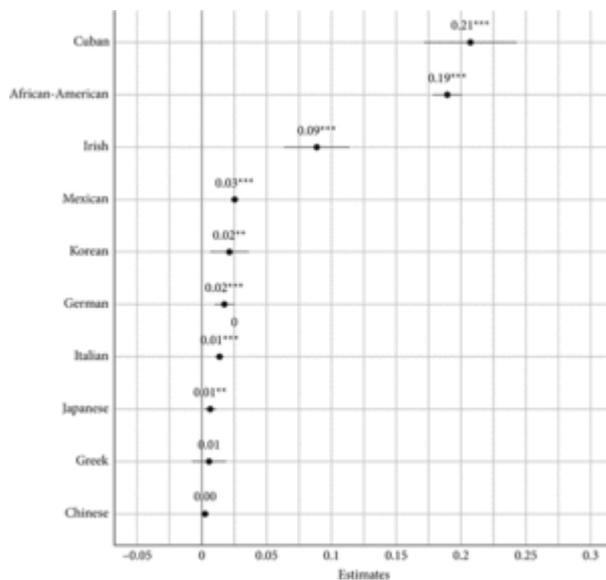


Figure 1. The interaction of ancestry and restaurants

Note: This figure summarizes key results from a multi-level regression model, covering all US zip codes. For each zip code there are eleven repeated measures of a) ancestry and b) restaurants, corresponding to the eleven ethnic groups summarized in Table 4. Ancestry is the dependent variable. The model includes as fixed effect independent variables restaurants, ethnic groups, and their interaction term. Zip code is the level 2 variable. The figure shows only results for the interaction term. Larger coefficients mean that the association between restaurant and ancestry is stronger for that group, relative to the reference category (French).

As Figure 1 shows, the association between ethnic restaurants and a corresponding local population is strongest for Cubans and African Americans, followed by Irish. People from these groups are the most likely to live near “their” restaurants, accounting for the relative size and concentrations. Chinese, French (the reference group), and Greek Americans are the least likely to live near “their” restaurants. And while Mexican, Italian, German, and Korean Americans are more likely than French to live near “their” restaurants, they are substantially less likely to do so than Cubans, African Americans, and Irish Americans. In many cases this may indicate a broad

diffusion of a cuisine into American popular culture. For instance, one may find Chinese restaurants where very few people of Chinese descent live, whereas to eat Cuban or soul food (or Irish cuisine) one needs to go where Cuban and African American (and Irish) people live (on Chinese restaurants in Canadian small towns, see Cho 2010). Mexican is probably in between—diffusing more broadly, but nevertheless relatively strongly linked with Mexican neighborhoods.

Next we examine how these associations shift across counties. This model includes the fixed effect interaction from Figure 1, but it adds restaurant random effects for various ethnicities nested in counties. Random effects thus take account of, for instance, the fact that in general the African American-soul food association is relatively strong and highlights counties in which the association is especially striking, taking also into

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

consideration the concentration of a particular group in that city (which the county intercept identifies).

Results are difficult to summarize succinctly. Table 5 illustrates by showing the top fifteen associations, though we discuss others in the text. All those listed in the table are statistically significant. While these results largely confirm the ones summarized in Table 4, their added value comes in allowing for direct comparisons, accounting for relative size and local concentrations of groups, and their typical association with corresponding restaurants. For example, the African American association with soul food restaurants in Chicago is particularly dramatic. The Cuban ethnicity–restaurant association in Dade, Florida, is similar to that of Mexicans in Santa Cruz, California, or Italians in Essex (Newark), New Jersey, among others—again relative to their typical associations and what would be expected based on local population concentration alone. Interestingly, the Irish ancestry–restaurant association, while strong on average, does not seem to stand out especially strongly in a given locale (Boston is the sharpest), whereas for Mexican Americans it is weaker (than Irish) overall but stronger in many particular areas (such as Kane, Illinois, in suburban Chicago or Adams, Washington, which by 2010 was nearly 60 percent Hispanic).

Table 5. Comparing the Restaurant/Ethnicity Overlap across Groups and Places

Ethnicity	County	County Intercept	Restaurant Random Effect on Ancestry
African American	Cook, IL	0.15	0.21
African American	Los Angeles, CA	0.01	0.12
Mexican	Kane, IL	0.04	0.10
Cuban	Dade, FL	0.24	0.10
Mexican	Santa Cruz, CA	0.04	0.10
Mexican	Adams, WA	0.07	0.09
Mexican	Los Angeles, CA	0.14	0.09
Italian	Essex, NJ	0.09	0.09

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

African American	Erie, NY	0.03	0.09
Mexican	Collier, FL	0.03	0.09
Mexican	Maverick, TX	0.41	0.08
Italian	Philadelphia, PA	0.04	0.08
Mexican	Elko, NV	0.09	0.08
Mexican	Cook, IL	0.02	0.08

Note. This table shows the top fifteen counties where the association between restaurants and local ethnic populations is strongest. These are random effects from a multilevel model in which the ancestry–restaurant interaction is included as fixed effect level 1 variables (as described in the note to Figure 1). Restaurants are also included as random effects varying within ancestries nested in counties. Higher coefficients mean that in that county the association between restaurants and ethnicity is particularly strong, taking into account the typical relationship and local population concentration.

The multilevel approach allows an additional analysis (not shown) of counties in which the restaurant–ancestry association is relatively strong *as such*. These are counties where independent of the particular group, ethnic restaurants and corresponding populations tend to co-locate. Here, two counties stand out in particular: Cook, Illinois, and Los Angeles, California. These are the *only* counties in which the relationship is statistically significant.

Our third and final analysis examines characteristics of zip codes with cosmopolitan, diverse arrays of restaurants. We measure restaurant diversity by computing a Rao–Stirling index across fifty-three different types of restaurants. The Rao–Stirling index combines three dimensions of diversity (Stirling 2007): *variety*, or the number of different types of restaurants in a zip code; *balance*, or the evenness of the distribution of restaurant types; and *disparity*, or how unusual the combination of restaurant types is. High scoring zip codes include downtown Portland, the Boston Common area of Boston, New Orleans’ Treme, Queens Village in New York, The Castro in San Francisco, and Chicago’s Devon Avenue area. The index has strong face validity.

To investigate the character of these cosmopolitan restaurant scenes, our model includes a range of standard urban variables, as well as four composite measures of scenes (see *Scenescapes* ch. 5 for more detail), which capture key aspects of American scenes: (1) *urbanity*, which joins corporateness, rationalism, and utilitarianism along with

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

transgression, glamorousness, and self-expression, and has relatively high concentrations of fast food, delis, lawyers, cafes, health clubs, commercial artists, and jewelers, and relatively few churches; (2) *LA LA Land*, strong in glamour, exhibition, self-expression, and transgression, with concentrations of night clubs, health clubs, and body piercing, and relatively few campgrounds and truck stops; (3) *Rossini's Tour*, which combines self-expression with local authenticity in concentrations of items such as fishing lakes, antique dealers, art galleries, book shops, and marinas, with few fast-food restaurants; (4) *City on a Hill*, especially strong in egalitarianism but also tradition and neighborliness, with relatively large concentrations of public libraries, churches, hospitals, and recycling centers, and few yacht clubs, equestrian centers, and ski resorts.

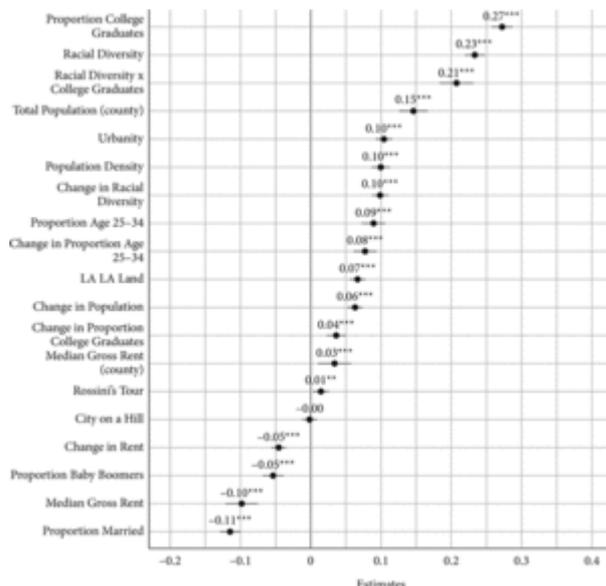


Figure 2. Characteristics of zip codes with cosmopolitan restaurant scenes

Note: This figure shows neighborhood characteristics associated with zip code restaurant diversity, based on a multi-level regression model to examine the Rao-Stirling cosmopolitanism restaurant index with zip code as level 1 and county as level 2, covering all US zip codes. These are fixed effect results. Racial diversity is measured as an entropy index of 14 racial categories, and change in racial diversity as the difference between 2010 and 2000. Change in rent and population is measured as the ratio of 2010 to 2000; levels of census variables are from 2000. Unless otherwise indicated, all variables are at the zip code level. All VIFs are approximately 3 or lower.

Figure 2 shows aspects of typical areas with highly diverse restaurant scenes. They tend to overlap with urbane scenes and those that feature glamorousness, personal expression, and transgressiveness. Such areas are simultaneously highly educated and have many young residents. But they do not fit the standard model of gentrification: rather, the scene is one of not only greater racial diversity but also of increasing racial diversity and rising education, plus the joint effect of race times education (captured in separate rows of the figure). These cosmopolitan areas are also generally in dense parts of large, relatively

expensive cities, with many singles, relatively few baby boomers, and relatively high and increasing concentrations of young people. These neighborhoods also show generally strong population growth. In contrast to claims that globalization leads to culturally bland homogeneity, what this more micro- and mixed-level scenes analysis shows is more neighborhood diversity, across many dimensions. Moreover, relative to other dense, highly educated areas, cosmopolitan restaurant scenes have relatively low median rent,

which is in turn growing at a relatively slow pace. They can thus appeal to creative but underfunded chef/restaurant entrepreneurs, among other creative aspirants. In sum, these diverse restaurant scenes are parts of dynamic and diverse neighborhoods, filled with talented young people, which, even as they grow rapidly and become even more diverse, manage to remain relatively affordable.

We thus end with a scene that is at the other end of the spectrum from the classic closed ethnic neighborhood. Contrasting the latter with the openness and interpenetration of multiple scenes dynamics in different neighborhoods of the same cities clarifies some of their multiple yet interpenetrating dynamics.

Discussion and Conclusion

Taken together, the analyses herein provide interesting material to inform social research into the interplay of ethnicity and consumer amenities. They confirm the proposition that ethnically themed amenities and ethnic populations overlap in many ways, and that it is possible to more systematically analyze the conditions in which various configurations occur.

A number of more specific insights also emerge. For instance, our results confirm some older propositions, for instance that Chicago remains distinctive in supporting strong ethnic neighborhoods and that, even after centuries of “assimilation,” Irish Americans retain a relatively strong attachment to their particular local institutions—whether this is associated with a continuing “Irish Ethic and the Spirit of Patronage” (Clark 1975) is a question worth pursuing further. By contrast, the fact that Los Angeles emerges as a strong center of distinctive ethnic neighborhoods is especially intriguing. While consistent with recent discussions of multicultural cities, it directly contradicts the “placeless” image of Los Angeles promulgated by the Los Angeles School of Urbanism, which for example tends to discuss Los Angeles and Orange counties as generically “fragmented,” rarely invoking any specific ethnic group names (cf. Judd and Simpson 2011). Similarly, our comparative results add context to Portes’s insights about ethnic enclaves, derived initially from Cuban neighborhoods in Miami, or ideas derived from Boston (Gans 1982; Small 2004) and Philadelphia’s (Wherry 2011) classic ethnic neighborhood patterns. These are extreme cases that may help to formulate an especially clear theory that for the same reason might not generalize elsewhere, without some modification (Yoon 2013).

Our analyses reveal particularly strong linkages between African Americans and distinctive consumption spaces. This is another indication of the legacy of segregation. The finding takes on added importance in the context of debates about residential mobility. Decisions to move are not simply economic, about jobs, but also involve potentially abandoning a set of local amenities that give a neighborhood meaning and familiarity (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Small and McDermott 2006). That African American neighborhoods are especially strongly linked with soul food restaurants is only a small part of this dynamic—churches, among other amenities, are crucial too—but they

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

indicate the broader range of concerns that must be taken into account in considering what makes “moving to opportunity” more or less attractive (Sampson 2012).

Finally, our analysis of areas with ethnically diverse restaurants showed the distinctive potential of these neighborhoods. Key meeting points in contemporary “multicultural” cities, they are the consumption side of Logan and Zhang’s (2010) “global neighborhoods.” Not defined by one single group, they are rapidly growing cosmopolitan sites of mixing and mingling, in which racially diverse and highly educated young people are increasingly concentrated in funky and exciting scenes. And yet even as they do so, they remain, all things considered, relatively affordable. In this way, they provide a sharp counterpoint to typical gentrification narratives and illustrate the diversity of possible trajectories for neighborhood development.

Combing the thick with the thin “descriptive” accounts can generate conceptual ferment and bring comparative insights. The challenge of “big data” is not that it is big but that it is different and comparative. We can use it to drill down to smaller units as well as to locate them comparatively, thus potentially generating more conceptual insight, more potential to join other kinds of information about distinct topics and locations—more than if methods or city names or specific ethnic groups or types of leisure activity (from sports to social media or cuisine) are the sole organizing focus. A richer consumption analysis needs all of these—not by arguing or ignoring, but by selecting central specific ideas from alternative studies and reassessing them systematically in new contexts with new neighbors. We can thus codify as well as qualify past work.

The major thrust of this chapter is to elaborate the scenes perspective to join with related consumption-oriented research and to extend scenes work to empirically contrast ethnic with cosmopolitan restaurant scenes. Having shown the great potential of this approach by starting with a largely descriptive analysis of the interplay of restaurants and local populations, we start to elaborate the broader scenes of which they are apart. This analysis calls for extension. For instance, one could zoom in on particular cities and neighborhoods identified by this analysis for qualitative research, featuring both outliers and typical cases. One could also dig deeper into both historical processes that give rise to particular amenity/population configurations and their consequences for other key urban processes, such as economic development, migration patterns, and local politics. We thus invite others to challenge and explore the richer and more subtle meanings of urban and consumption dynamics that can substantially enhance the level of much social science and especially broader public discussion of these issues.

References

Anderson, E. 2011. *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Brubaker, R. 2001. “The Return of Assimilation? Changing Perspectives on Immigration and Its Sequels in France, Germany, and the United States.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24(4): 531–548.

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Buin, M., W. Jang, T. Clark, and J. Y. Lee. 2011. *"Seoul Scenes" and Its Use for Space Characterization*. Seoul: Seoul Development Institute.

Cho, L. 2010. *Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Clark, T. N. 1975. "Irish Ethic and Spirit of Patronage." *Ethnicity* 2(4): 305-359.

Conzen, K. N. 1979. "Immigrants, Immigrant Neighborhoods, and Ethnic Identity: Historical Issues." *The Journal of American History* 66(3): 603-615.

Fischer, C. S. 1995. "The Subcultural Theory of Urbanism: A Twentieth-Year Assessment." *American Journal of Sociology* 101(3): 543-577.

Gans, H. J. 1982. *Urban Villagers*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Hackworth, J. and J. Rekers, J. 2005. "Ethnic Packaging and Gentrification: The Case of Four Neighborhoods in Toronto." *Urban Affairs Review* 41(2): 211-236.

Hou, F. and G. Picot. 2004. "Visible Minority Neighbourhoods in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver." *Canadian Social Trends* 72: 8-13.

Judd, Dennis R., & Simpson, Dick W. (Eds.). 2011. *The City, Revisited: Urban Theory from Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Kantowicz, E. R. 1975. *Polish-American Politics in Chicago, 1880-1940*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kim, J. Y. 2016. Cultural entrepreneurs and urban regeneration in Itaewon, Seoul. *Cities* 56: 132-140

Light, I. 2002. "Immigrant Place Entrepreneurs in Los Angeles, 1970-99." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26(2): 215-228.

Lloyd, R. 2010. *Neo-bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. New York: Routledge.

Logan, J. R. and C. Zhang, C. 2010. "Global Neighborhoods: New Pathways to Diversity and Separation." *American Journal of Sociology* 115(4): 1069-1109.

Logan, J. R., W. Zhang, and R. D. Alba. 2002. "Immigrant Enclaves and Ethnic Communities in New York and Los Angeles." *American Sociological Review* 67: 299-322.

Martinez, J. R. 2017. "'This Is an Italian Church with a Large Hispanic Population': Factors and Strategies in White Ethno-Religious Place Making." *City & Community* 16(4): 399-420.

Massey, D. S. and N. A. Denton. 1985. "Spatial Assimilation as a Socioeconomic Outcome." *American Sociological Review* 50: 94-106.

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Navarro, Clemente. 2012. *Las Dimensiones Culturales de la Ciudad: Creatividad, entretenimiento y política de difusión cultural en las ciudades españolas*. Madrid: Catarata.

Navarro, Clemente J., Cristina Mateos, and Maria J. Rodriguez. 2012. "Cultural Scenes, the Creative Class and Development in Spanish Municipalities." *European Urban and Regional Studies* 21(3): 301–317.

Portes, A. and R. G. Rumbaut. 2006. *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Qadeer, M., S. K. Agrawal, and A. Lovell. 2010. "Evolution of Ethnic Enclaves in the Toronto Metropolitan Area, 2001–2006." *Journal of International Migration and Integration/Revue de l'integration et de la migration internationale* 11(3): 315–339.

Qadeer, M. A. 2016. *Multicultural Cities: Toronto, New York, and Los Angeles*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Sampson, R. J. 2012. *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sawyer, Stephen (ed.). 2011. *Une cartographie culturelle de Paris: Les Ambiances du Paris-Métropole*. Report submitted to the City of Paris.

Silver, D. A. and T. N. Clark. 2016. *Scenescapes: How Qualities of Place Shape Social Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Small, M. L. 2004. *Villa Victoria: The Transformation of Social Capital in a Boston Barrio*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Small, M. L. and M. McDermott. 2006. "The Presence of Organizational Resources in Poor Urban Neighborhoods: An Analysis of Average and Contextual Effects." *Social Forces* 84(3): 1697–1724.

Stirling, A. 2007. "A General Framework for Analysing Diversity in Science, Technology and Society." *Journal of the Royal Society Interface* 4(15): 707–719.

Walks, R. and L. S. Bourne. 2006. "Ghettos in Canada's Cities? Racial Segregation, Ethnic Enclaves and Poverty Concentration in Canadian Urban Areas." *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien* 50(3): 273–297.

Waters, M. C. 1990. *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America*. Xxx, CA: University of California Press.

Wherry, F. F. 2011. *The Philadelphia Barrio: The Arts, Branding, and Neighborhood Transformation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, K. L. and A. Portes. 1980. "Immigrant Enclaves: An Analysis of the Labor Market Experiences of Cubans in Miami." *American Journal of Sociology* 86(2): 295–319.

Consumer Cities, Scenes, and Ethnic Restaurants

Yi, J. and D. Silver. 2015. "God, Yoga, and Karate." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 54(3): 596-615.

Yoon, S. J. 2013. "Mobilizing Ethnic Resources in the Transnational Enclave: Ethnic Solidarity as a Mechanism for Mobility in the Korean Church in Beijing." *International Journal of Sociology* 43(3): 29-54.

Notes:

(1.) "You can't imagine what it is to walk in the streets of Astoria and hear nothing but Greek; it's like being in Athens" (<http://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/15/arts/astoriaa-greek-isle-in-the-new-york-city-sea.html?pagewanted=all>)

(2.) Extending the analysis to additional items such as Irish saloons would be an intriguing future direction, especially in light of Depuis (1999).

Daniel Silver

Daniel Silver, University of Toronto

Terry Nichols Clark

Terry Nichols Clark, University of Chicago