

*Scenescapes: How Qualities of Place Shape Social Life*, by Daniel Aaron Silver and Terry Nichols Clark, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. 441 pp. \$37.50 (paper). ISBN:9780226356990.

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Have you ever driven by a town on the highway and crafted a narrative of that place, just based on the buildings, shops, and parks that you see as you drove by? Within *Scenescapes: How Qualities of Place Shape Social Life* the authors, Daniel Silver and Terry Clark, take that quick narrative and take a deep dive into the intricacies involved with how amenities and built environment shape human activity spaces. The book utilizes a mixed methods approach involving qualitative and multivariate analysis to examine a multitude of settings across the United States. Chicago takes center stage in multiple passages with its unique amenity structure and history. Having been to many of the places the book refers to helps one to visualize the way in which amenities shape these settings. However, the detailed description of the variables integrated into the analysis and the use of the authors' crafting various typologies of scenes help the reader to visualize and understand the complex interrelationships between these human activity spaces and a particular scene. The book builds upon previous literature around scene by Wonho Jang, Terry Clark, and Miree Byun in *Scene Dynamics in Global Cities: Seoul, Tokyo, and Chicago* as well as Silver and Clark's own article entitled *The Power of Scenes: Quantities of Amenities and Qualities of Place* in *Cultural Studies* in 2015. *Scenescapes* could be considered a contemporary blend of Yi-Yuan's foundational work *Topophilia* and Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* but for built environments.

Eight chapters that are not overtly quick reading enable the reader to allow the book to build upon each chapter in a systematic manner. Starting with an interesting "setting of the scene" in chapter 1, the book proceeds to the theoretical underpinnings of its analysis in chapter 2 and an examination of the authors' data in chapter 3, then considers how scenes drive economic development (chapter 4), residential scenes and patterns (chapter 5), elements of power within scenes (chapter 6), and policy recommendations (chapter 7). It closes with an in-depth examination of the authors' methods (chapter 8). Silver and Clark in an advanced

methodological undertaking examine the ways in which amenities and built environments shape the cultural and social identity of place. While focusing on primarily domestic analysis, the book incorporates gray boxes with direct quotes from influential figures and additional scholars that provide examples for a particular key concept the authors are addressing at that point. The literary organization is well struck with a concise opening introductory chapter that highlights exactly what and when the authors will elaborate on key topics, as well as when they will present their own cutting-edge research. This research is a multivariate analysis of 40,000 zip codes that examines aspects of localism, migration, community, and the nexus of spatial and social spaces. The examination of the microbrewery phenomena in America is an enjoyable reflection of community characteristics in shaping human activity spaces. It brings to life a rapidly expanding social, cultural, businesses, and beverage phenomenon in a way that is both innovative and seemingly intuitive once the authors describe its intricacies. They discuss Bohemian characteristics of communities; it takes aim at the political dichotomy in America through this new perspective, and examines the role of race religion in our built environment.

The authors pose six hypotheses about how scenes improve economic performance; they then go on to detail how economic impacts of scenes are influenced by their social and natural settings, further demonstrating how scenes make a social, cultural, political, and economic impact on our communities. Chapter 5, outlining how scenes influence residential patterns, is very well crafted and articulated to display the analysis. When the authors lay out the evidence for LA-LA Land Tinsel, Rossini's Tour, City on a Hill, and Nerdistan that combine scenes' dimensions to create these distinct residential settings, I was able to clearly understand how these classifications were shaped by scenes and how they, in turn, shape the scenes around them. The visual representations of these classifications, backed by sound methodology, further aided my understanding of the concepts that the book presents throughout. The authors discuss distinct factors that contribute to scenes such as "the walkability premium" and aesthetics. One of my favorite passages states:

Aesthetic experience itself, that deepest and most humane of qualities, could be a human right, and the new social movements would have to create space for all persons to develop these qualities in themselves. And insofar as this aspiration went against the types of culture and the vision of society favored by the organs

of the state and corporation, it would naturally tend to take a more transgressive, countercultural flavor. (246)

Social movements and shifting community demographics provide further context to these scene classifications and place-based social and built characteristics. The book utilizes changing demographics and migration to examine a somewhat natural experiment of Chicago's shifting neighborhoods to demonstrate the contemporary relevance and applicability of this research.

In the penultimate chapter the authors call on policymakers to "*contextualize* and *cultivate*" (293, original emphasis). Specifically, the authors assert that positive change can be cultivated if policymakers consider contexts, be flexible, measure success through empowerment, encourage goal achievement, and engage with citizens. These recommendations are arrived at after careful consideration of aspects of development in creative place making. The authors do emphasize the challenges that public and nonprofit entities face when seeking to accommodate these recommendations in a limited funding environment.

In the final chapter, the authors go into detail providing the reasoning, challenges, and successes of methods use for their analysis. I found this to be a rather dull way to end the book, but I do appreciate the transparency and reflexivity presented by the authors. It was clear in the ending that they had made rational and scientifically rigorous decisions throughout every step of crafting the book. Integrating spatial analysis and asking questions about causally prior circumstances leads the authors to conclude with well-reasoned answers to their "chicken and egg" conundrums whereby they parse out whether the scene is shaped by the amenities or the amenities are shaped by the scene. The book is intended for the inquisitive mind and may be best suited (in its technical aspects) for advanced graduate students or academic professionals. It will, however, serve as a very useful read for anyone involved in policymaking or city or park planning. Closely examining human, natural, and social environments through the lens of "scenes" has led Silver and Clark to craft an insightful and intriguing book. On the whole, I found the book to be very intellectually stimulating and I will certainly look at cities and towns differently when passing by or visiting. I have even begun to look at the types of amenities in my hometown and thought about analyzing them using some of these techniques.