

*Global Cities, Local Streets: Everyday Diversity from New York to Shanghai*, by **Sharon Zukin, Philip Kasinitz, and Xiangming Chen**. New York: Routledge, 2016. 230 pp. \$39.95 paper. ISBN: 9781138023932.

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The powerfully evocative chapters in *Global Cities, Local Streets* got me walking the avenues in distant cities, ducking into stores, and lingering at street corners. Sometimes they had me as a tourist, a flâneur, eyeing the merchandise hungrily, but mostly as a familiar neighbor neither intimate nor anonymous, appropriating the public streetscape into my private wanderings, sometimes even as a stranger eavesdropping on the conversation between the ethnographer and the owner, ethnic and white. Varied interviewing and representational skills allowed me uneven access, closer and more racially fraught in Amsterdam's Utrechtsesstraat and Javastraat, but at an arm's length in Shanghai's Tianzifang and Mixinglu; yet both stories were tied together by narratives of upscale and downscale locales and processes of migration, marginality, and gentrification. The chapters on Amsterdam and Tokyo are the most engaging, because they are risky, opinionated, neither purely pedantic nor conceptually repetitive. In contrast, the Toronto and the New York chapters are ideologically pure; pro-poor, pro-working class, pro-immigrant, and always juxtaposed to white, gentrifying, touristy (another spectral figure) spaces.

*Global Cities Local Streets* is a comparative study of twelve streets, one usually upscale and the other downscale, in six cities: New York, Shanghai, Amsterdam, Berlin, Toronto and Tokyo. We do not get very good reasons why these particular cities are studied, although we do get a sense that some of it has to do with their global reach. Yet, Shanghai's addition to that collation, which is quite radical and recent, is left untheorized. Those kinds of higher order connections are less successfully made. For instance, although the chapter on Tokyo is gorgeously described, the question is never raised about

the everyday pleasures of such a city as a function, at least partially, of relative income equality and racial homogeneity of the populace due to restrictive immigration laws (which is mentioned in passing in the concluding chapter). Here a comparison with New York or Toronto would have been productive.

*Global Cities, Local Streets* shows us why such a mundane thing as a street corner deserves closer scrutiny and, in doing so, illuminates the sociological tradition of theoretically informed qualitative research. In the process it elucidates the communing and the contradictions between individual bodies, social worlds, built environment, and cultural life. Authors Sharon Zukin, Philip Kasinitz, and Xiangming Chen successfully convey how auditory, gustatory, haptic, and olfactory senses thicken or thin the experiential connections and conflicts between people and place. That concrete coexistence between resident, visitor, migrant, tourist, ethnographer, and commuter is offered as a field of exploration with a view to engaging with the great unknown of everyday life. In pursuing the sensorial turn in the soft social sciences these sociologists successfully draw on the lessons of previous turns towards consumption, materiality, and embodiment.

The authors say that they like urban markets as socially diverse and sensorially stimulating places, so they juggle to recommend the right policy mix to preserve such shopping streets with planning, zoning, rent regulation, recruitment, and sanction. Although primarily organized around commerce, they recognize the contribution of local shopping streets for their extra-economic function of cultivating community, by creating a sense of place, urban sociability, and everyday diversity where global flows of peoples are brought together to proffer the possibilities of at least a potentially generous corner-shop cosmopolitanism. Nevertheless the authors recognize that the argument for small and varied artisanal stores with local character will privilege consumers for whom price is not the most important factor in a purchase and exclude those seeking the benefits of economies of scale provided by discount stores and chains. So they recommend a balance between low-price chain

stores and high-price boutiques that can provide some room for claims of local ownership without pricing out people with modest incomes.

The problem is that renewal will inevitably lead to rising rents that will put pressure on longtime residents who are priced out by what the authors repeatedly characterize as “the ABC of gentrification—art galleries, boutiques, and cafes” (p. 197). Yet commercial gentrification brings new life to declining neighborhoods. The authors develop a concept of “moral ownership” as the bridge between longtime residents and new arrivals to negotiate issues of rights to a neighborhood and how such questions can be settled, even if temporarily. Further specification and attention to law and policy, within an explicitly comparative urban frame, highlight the structural limitations of local action, successfully vector in the forces of urban planning, markets, and everyday politics, and explain the different reach of planners, say in Amsterdam and Berlin, compared to New York and Toronto.

In the concluding chapter the authors specify one of the ways that the challenges of catastrophic rent increases for small businesses are met more successfully in Amsterdam (and not in New York or Shanghai). In Amsterdam, by law commercial spaces have five-year leases with an automatic five-year extension with the annual increase pegged to the cost of living increase. The tradition of compromise with relatively small increases by building owners then works on the spine of the legal frame of a decade to create a sustainable economic model for retailers over generations, for instance, on *Utrechtsstraat* (p. 204). In contrast where no such law or customary practice is in operation massive increases in rent threaten small businesses in New York and Shanghai. The broader theoretical frame within which such comparative

prescriptions are specified is that such local markets are theorized as a public good, sustained by generations of city dwellers, which demand the attention of lawmakers because they are “too small to fail” (p. 205). That is a brilliant rhetorical prod on which to close the volume. If the evocative chapters kept me reading, it was the sharp policy recommendation that was politically satisfying. And the research note at the end provided good advice on how to replicate such a project in transnational grounded theory.

Let me end with two concluding goads to further development. Hipsters haunt this book without being fully conceptualized. Embedded in analogous social and cultural capital networks, hipsters are professorial specters, peddling in similar ratios of money and culture, although younger and more stylish. It is time I think to develop a theory of the hipster, as has been done to the *flâneur* and the stranger in sociology. Second, the right temporal duration to study the built environment, with economic and social cycles of boom and bust, gentrification and white flight, expansion and contraction, is left conceptually unaddressed by the authors. The chapters are mostly historical, but the duration is sometimes short—usually lasting a boom and a bust—which cannot fully account for the built, commercial, and community history of an urban place. As a result some of the chapters feel like a synchronic slice of an unreachable diachronic logic of the spatialization of capital and labor. At the end, after all the pleasures of traveling and tasting distant cities, I was left a little hungry for a longer temporal analysis that could extend consistently from a business cycle to a Kondratiev (of half a century or more). The chapters that stretch the temporal horizon with detail and specificity are the most successful in the book.