Figure 1: A book about place and cities would be incomplete without showing a place where it was created. As you can see, it is a city. Old-fashioned, red-brick, Rust Belt style built environment with some asphalt covering road and parking lot at the bottom, and power lines at the top. Now, let's try to find happiness in this picture. Views like that are arguably one reason for urban malaise.

Figure 2: Natural happiness.

(a) Jan Thomas van Ieperen: Pastoral Idyll

(b) Georges Philibert Charles Maroniez: Rural Landscape
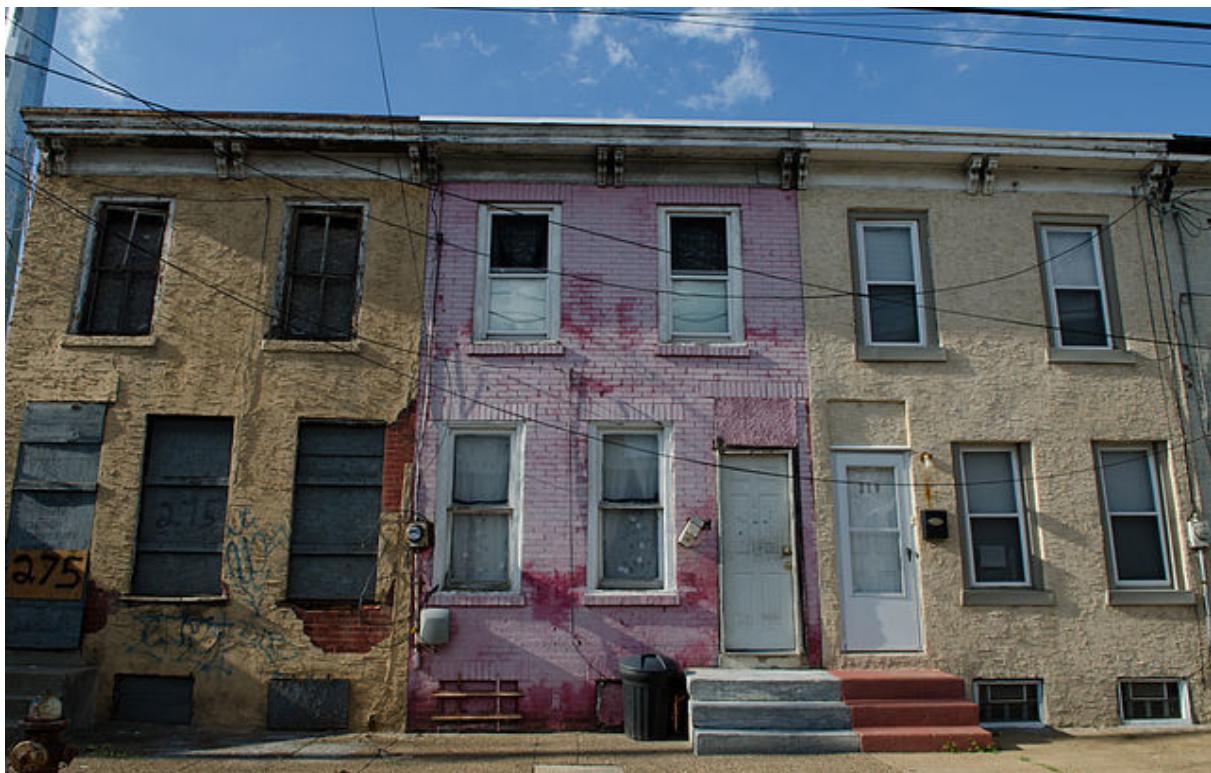
Figure 3: Cleveland, 1960.

Figure 4: Rowhouses in Camden, New Jersey.

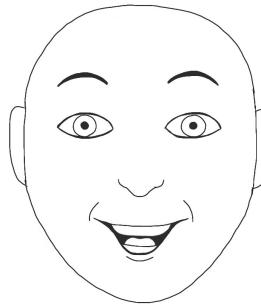Figure 5: Urban sprawl, Las Vegas, Clark County NV.

Figure 6: Burj Khalifa–the tallest building in the world as of 2014.

Figure 7: Imagine a person from a city, say, Chicago or London, meets a person from a town, say, Beeville TX or Vineland, NJ. Some likely face expressions (exaggerated; people hide emotions) of a city dweller are on the left, and of person from a town are on the right.
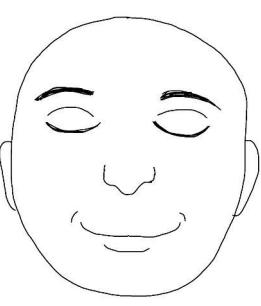
(a) city: snazzy, awesome, cool, amazing, sexy, fantastic, spiffy, hot, great, pretty, sharp, stylish, jazzy, nifty, hip, snappy

(b) town: boring, ugly, ordinary, dull, average, normal, lame, plain, bland, stupid, common, dumb, unattractive
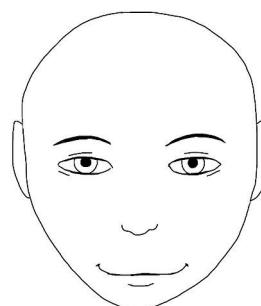

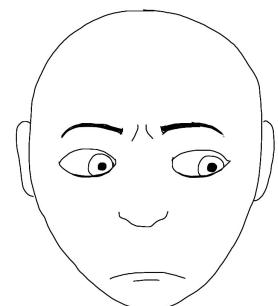
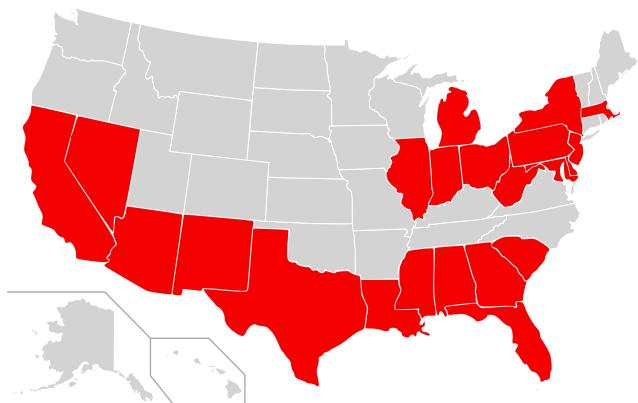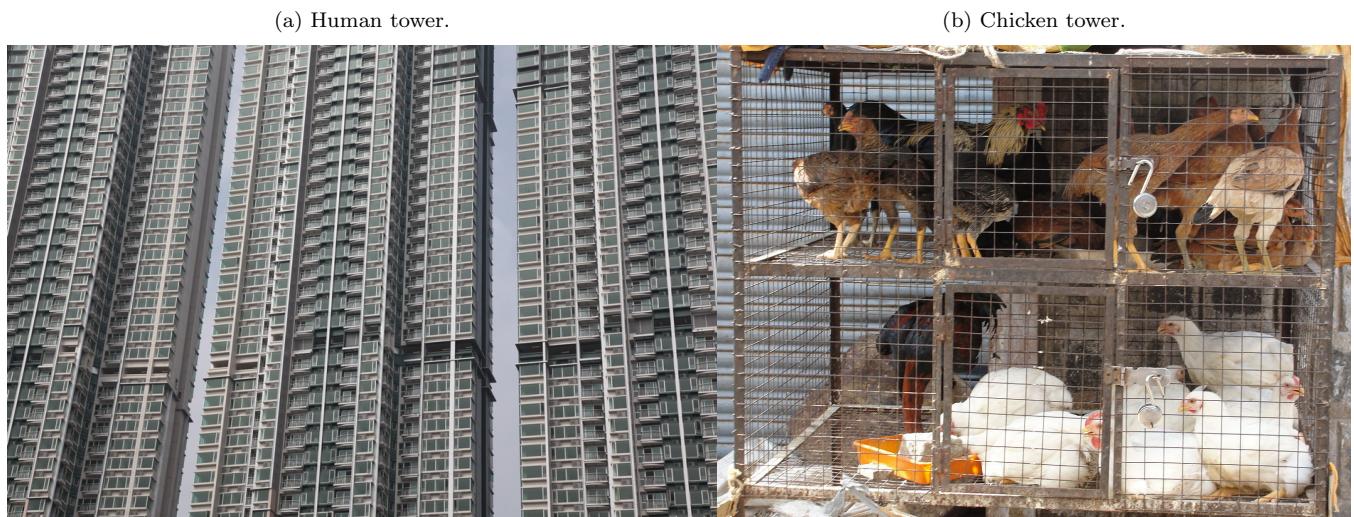(c) ecstatic   (d) adored   (e) adoring   (f) embarrassed

Figure 8: American Rust Belt (North East and Midwest) and Sun Belt (South). Note: this is a rough approximation without within-state differentiation.

Figure 9: Happiness in High Density? Towers as economically efficient housing for mammals (humans) and birds (chickens). Human tower: new construction in Sha Tin, Hong Kong SAR, February 2010.

(a) Human tower.

(b) Chicken tower.

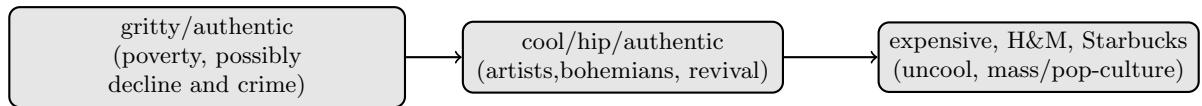| gritty/authentic (poverty, possibly decline and crime) | → | cool/hip/authentic (artists,bohemians, revival) | → | expensive, H&M, Starbucks (uncool, mass/pop-culture) |

Figure 10: City is unnatural. City is contradictory. Success kills affordability and authenticity. Gritty is most authentic, but at first it is accompanied by poverty, possibly decline and crime. Then people flock in to this authenticity, and it becomes more cool and hip and less poor and as opposed to declining, it is now growing and revitalizing. But then it grows so much, there is so much demand, that it attracts H&M and Starbucks and luxury apartments and these in turn drive out the original authenticity so that place starts to become uncool and unauthentic.

Figure 11: Coalbrookdale by Night; Madeley Wood (or Bedlam) Furnaces, which belonged to the Coalbrookdale Company.

Figure 12: Camden, NJ is one of the poorest cities in the US. Camden suffers from high unemployment, poverty, and many other issues. Much of the city looks like what you see in the above picture. Although, it appears, there is little improvement recently.
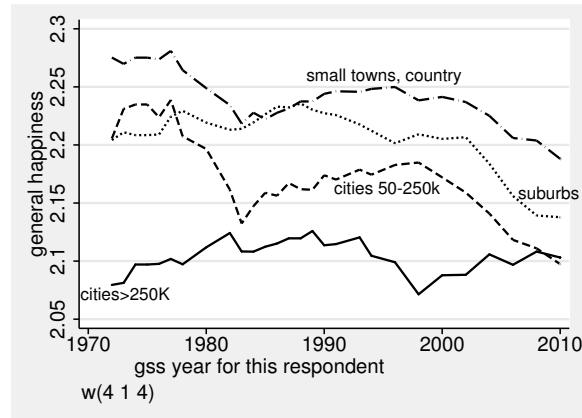
Figure 13: Happiness over time in the US. Data from American General Social Survey smoothened with 10-yr moving average.
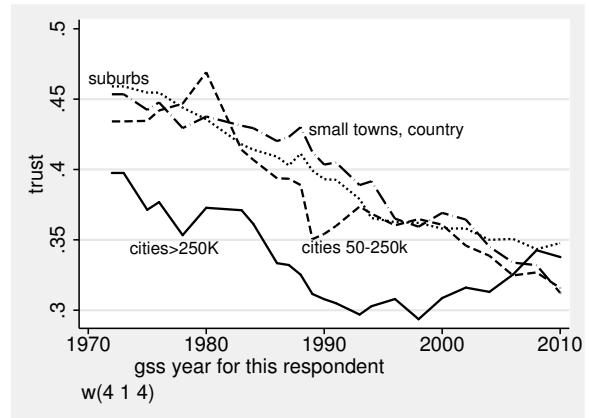
Figure 14: Trust over time in the US. Data from American General Social Survey smoothened with 10-yr moving average.
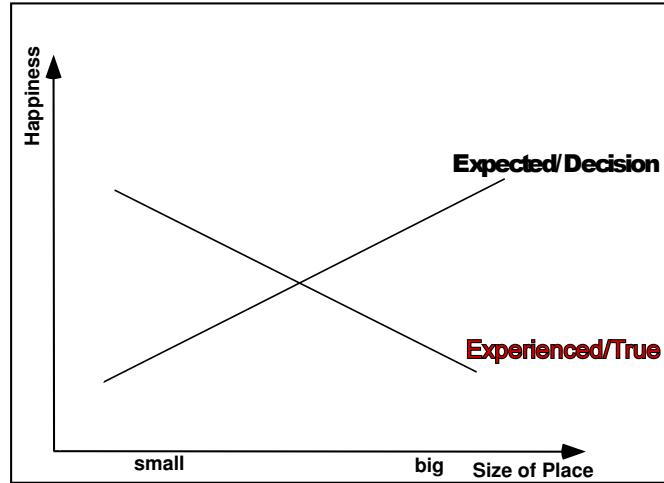
Figure 15: Expected vs. experienced happiness. We make decision about moving to a city based on expected or decision happiness–but the experienced or true happiness is lower among urbanites.
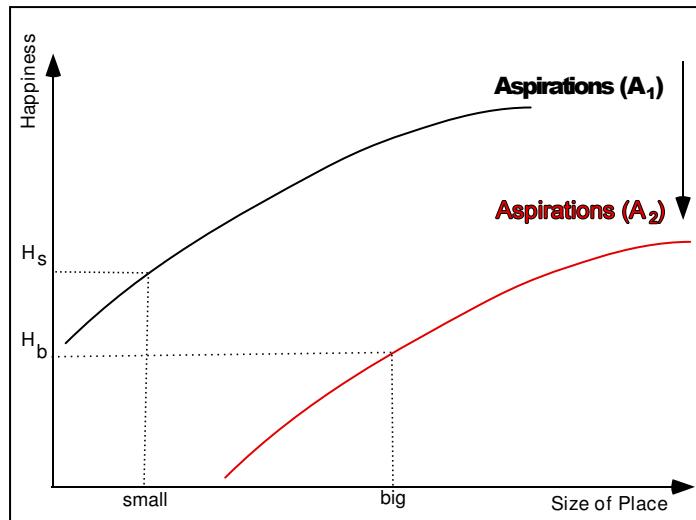
Figure 16: Happiness given aspirations. Maybe cities should increase happiness given some aspirations, but as we increase size of a place, aspirations curve shifts from A_1 to A_2, that is aspirations increase as well (note: aspirations level is higher for lower curve as indicated by reversed scale). Hence, the resulting happiness is lower than expected because the aspirations shifted (increased).
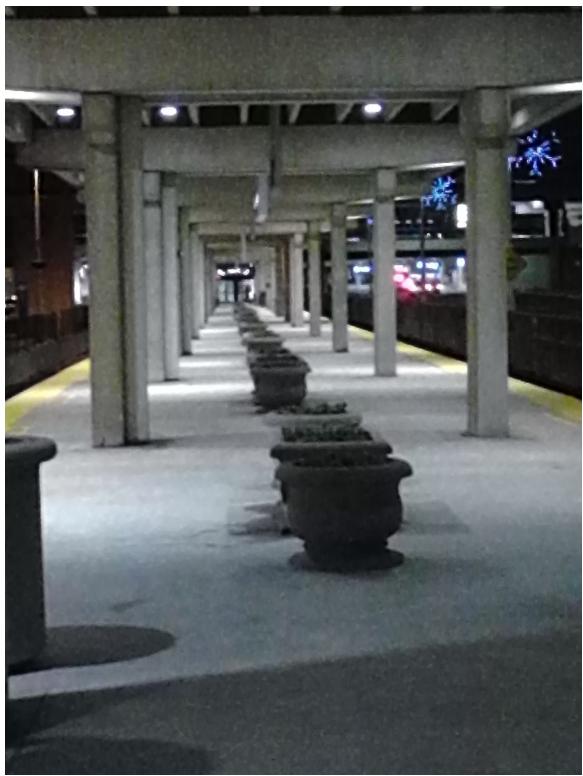
Figure 17: Fake nature: Some small flowers in large concrete round flowerpots in the middle. Philadelphia airport, Terminal A, SEPTA train platform.

Figure 18: UT Dallas Student Service Building.

Figure 19: Colorado Springs, Colorado. Suburbia by David Shankbone.

Figure 20: Concrete-blanketed Woodlands with added nature v Natural Medford Lakes with added houses. Google satellite images.

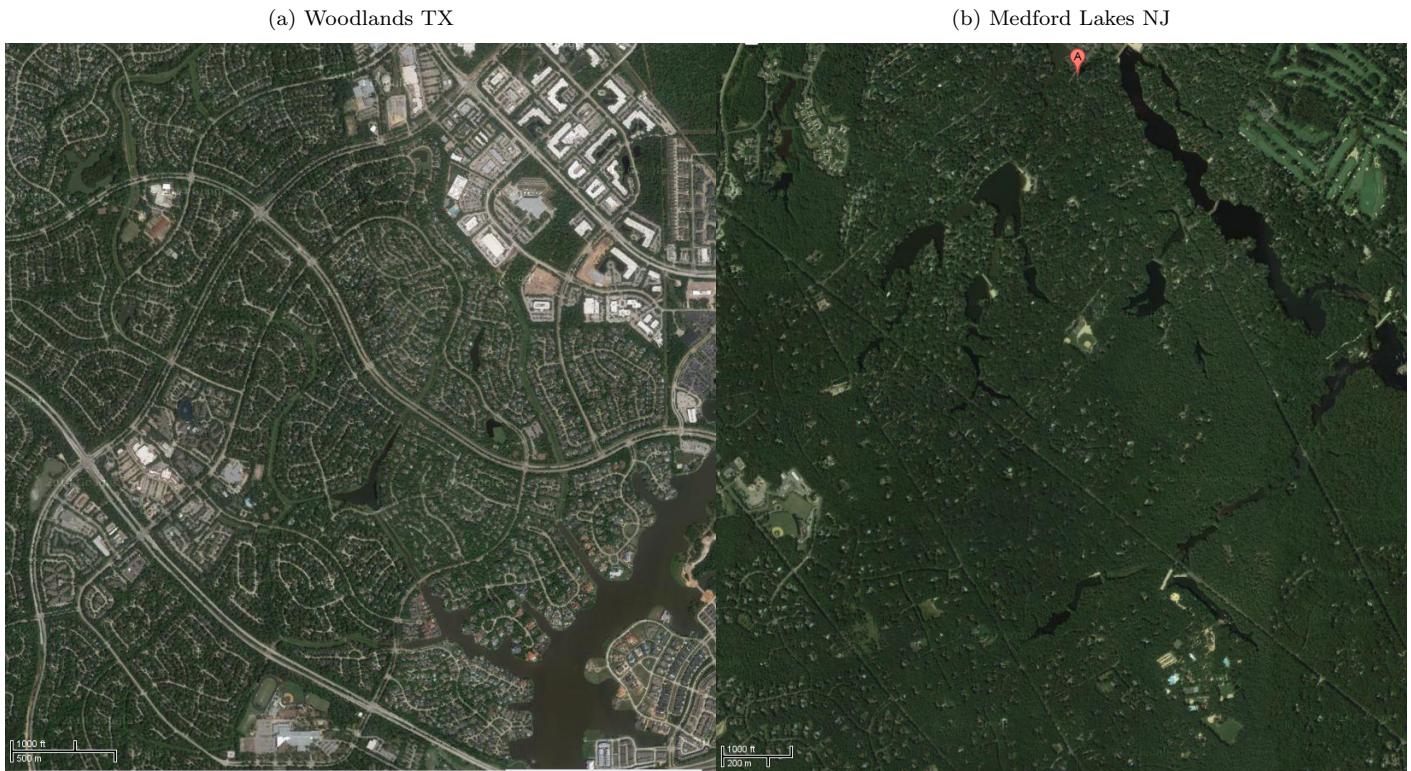(a) Woodlands TX   (b) Medford Lakes NJ

Figure 21: Living in a natural setting as opposed to living in a suburb imitating a natural setting.

(a) more fake nature (everything looks fake!): Purcell and Elmslie Purcell-Cutts house

(b) less fake nature (pathway made of low shrubs and what appears to be a hardscaped pond on the right), but background trees look natural: house amongst redwood trees, Cascade Canyon

(c) natural nature 1: Morningside Nature Center LHF cabin

(d) natural nature 2: nested in natural nature, literally (even covered with nature): Museum of Skogar, Iceland

Figure 22: Typical urban plastic-fantastic ugliness–sprinkling a city with fake nature.

(a) The skyline of downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma

(b) Glaeser's "Triumph of The City" book cover. Why is there a word "triumph"? Who wants to live there?
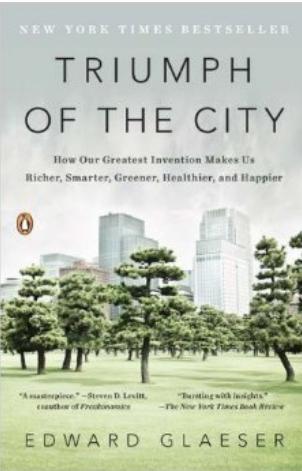
Figure 23: Replica of Thoreau's cabin near Walden Pond and his statue.

(a) city   (b) vampire

Figure 24: City as a faceless and formless vampire.