

2017 CAN Summer Book Study

The New Urban Crisis

By Richard Florida

Session #3 Study Guide – Chapters 6, 7 & 8

Chapter 6 – The Bigger Sort

Chapter 6 builds on the concept introduced in Chapter 5 that the advantaged and disadvantaged are more and more occupying separate spaces in metro areas. A few salient points:

- 14 million Americans live in area of concentrated urban poverty. (pg. 98)
- From 2005-2014, 43 of the largest 100 metro areas experienced increased concentrated poverty. (pg. 98)
- Blacks are 5 times more likely than Whites to live in extremely poor neighborhoods. (pg. 98)
- Income segregation of rich and poor grew in 27 of largest 30 metros from 1980-2010. (pg. 98)
- We saw a decline in the middle class and in sturdy middle-class neighborhoods from 65% in 1970 to 40% in 2012. (pg. 99)

Several indices of economic, educational and occupational segregation are shared from pages 100 to 110. Austin is in the Top 10 in following classes: Overall Educational Segregation (#1), Creative Class Segregation (#7), Service Class Segregation (#9), Working Class Segregation (#2), Overall Occupational Segregation (#4), Overall Economic Segregation Index (#1). On page 113, Austin ranks #9 on the list that compares metro based on a Segregation Inequality Index.

Economic segregation is closely tied to: metro size; density; people who use public transit; amount of wealth; wages and economic output; knowledge based metros.

Economic inequality is inequality in terms of resources AND opportunity. (pg. 114)

Differences compound across generations. Rich neighborhoods stay rich and poor neighborhoods stay poor. (pg. 115)

Discussion topic: Do you feel the challenge of economic and educational segregation is more/less important than gentrification? Is there a relationship between the two? Is one easier to address than the other? Should one take precedent over the other?

Chapter 7 – Patchwork Metropolis

The return of knowledge workers, the affluent and young people to the urban core constitutes “the great inversion.” No longer do we see the dynamic of “rich suburbs” and “poor cities.” (pg 122)

2017 CAN Summer Book Study – Session #3, Page 2

A “patchwork metropolis” framework is advanced. The four types are:

1. Creative class in urban center. The less advantaged move to leftover spaces. Maps of metros exhibiting this pattern: NYC (pg 129), London (pg 130), Chicago (pg 131), Toronto (pg 132), San Francisco (pg 133), Boston (pg 135), DC (pg. 136)
2. Creative Class in suburbs with limited movement back to city. Maps of metros exhibiting this pattern: Atlanta (pg 138), DFW (pg 139), Houston (pg 140), Detroit (pg 141), Pittsburgh (pg 142)
3. Cleaved metropolis. The creative class and disadvantaged service class occupy entirely different spaces. Maps of metros exhibiting this pattern: Vancouver (pg 143), **Austin (pg 144)**, Philadelphia (pg 145)
4. Creative class in smaller self-contained clusters surrounded by less advantaged classes. Maps of metros exhibiting this pattern: L.A. (pg 147), Miami (pg 148)

Discussion topic: What stands out when you compare Austin’s type of “patchwork metropolis” and the types assigned to: other Texas cities; and other metro areas to which Austin is usually compared?

Chapter 8 – The Suburban Crisis

The suburban dimension of the New Urban Crisis may well turn out to be bigger than the urban crisis for no other reason than the fact that more Americans live in the suburbs. (pg 153)

Suburban areas remain the largest source of employment - 54%. (pg. 154)

More than 1 in 4 suburbanites are poor or nearly poor. Poverty is growing at a faster rate in the suburbs. (pg. 155)

Because of lack of access to economic opportunity, social services, public transit, etc., suburbia actually hinders upward economic mobility. (pp 158-160).

The solution is “better urbanism” in the suburbs (pg 166):

- Denser
- Greener
- More mixed-use
- Connected to urban center via public transit

Discussion topic: Are suburbs of the Austin MSA being affected in this way? Why or why not? Of the four characteristics of “better urbanism” for the suburbs, do the first three make a difference if no improvements in public transit occur for the region?