

## Divided City Insight

Class is an inescapable presence in America, one that influences almost every aspect of our lives—from our education and employment to our income, our politics, and even our health. Class increasingly divides America’s cities and metros as well.

A new [report](#) released by the [Martin Prosperity Institute \(MPI\)](#) maps the geography of class in twelve of America’s largest cities and metros: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Miami, Dallas, Houston, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco and Detroit. These metros account for nearly 30 percent of the total U.S. population and 37 percent of U.S. economic output.

Divided City charts the residential locations of three major classes—the knowledge-based creative class that make up roughly a third of the U.S. workforce; the even larger and faster-growing service class who toil in lower-skill, lower-wage jobs in food preparation, retail sales, personal services, and clerical and administrative work and make up slightly more than 45 percent of the workforce; and the once-dominant but now dwindling blue-collar working class of factory, construction, and transportation workers who make up about roughly 20 percent of the workforce.

The study tracks the location of these three main classes by [Census tract](#), areas that are smaller than many neighborhoods, based on data from the [2010 American Community Survey](#).

The study finds a striking pattern of class division across each and every city and metro area. The affluent creative class occupies the most economically functional and desirable locations, frequently in and around the urban core but also spreading across close-in, transit-served suburbs and more affluent, less dense areas at the suburban fringe. In some metros, large creative class blocs overtake entire regions. In others, the creative class takes on a more fractal pattern forming distinct clusters, archipelagos or even tessellations.

The locations of the other two classes are structured and shaped by the locational prerogatives of the creative class. The service class either surrounds the creative class, concentrating in areas of urban disadvantage or pushed far off into the suburban fringe. There are strikingly few working class concentrations left in America’s major cities and metros.

While the report covers twelve of America’s largest metro areas and center cities, this interactive map developed in collaboration with the geographic information systems (GIS) software company [ESRI charts the class geography](#) across the entire United States.

The study identifies four key location factors that shape the class divided city and metropolis, each of which turn on the locational imperatives of the creative class:

- **Urban Centers:** The concentration of affluent creative class populations in and around central business districts and urban centers, especially in larger and more congested metro areas.
- **Transit:** The clustering of more affluent creative class populations around transit hubs, subway, cable car and rail lines.
- **Knowledge Institutions:** The clustering of the creative class around research universities and knowledge based institutions.
- **Natural Amenities:** The clustering of creative class populations around areas of natural amenity, especially coastlines and waterfront locations.

Today's class divided city and metropolis no longer conforms to the traditional urban-suburban divide. Instead, these class divisions form a patchwork of concentrated advantage and concentrated disadvantage that cuts across center city and suburb alike.

To read the full report, click the following link:

<http://martinprosperity.org/content/the-divided-city-and-the-shape-of-the-new-metropolis/>

*The Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management is the world's leading think-tank on the role of sub-national factors—location, place and city-regions—in global economic prosperity. We take an integrated view of prosperity, looking beyond economic measures to include the importance of quality of place and the development of people's creative potential.*