

# Richard Florida's 'The New Urban Crisis' looks at where cities went wrong

*The influential author tackles the urban inequality he may have helped create*

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When Richard Florida coined the term “creative class” in 2002, he painted a very clear picture for urban revitalization. His book *The Rise Of The Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community And Everyday Life*, almost reads like a textbook for mayors. All cities had to do was lure a few artists into live-work lofts in an old warehouse district, maybe convince a startup—they weren't even called startups then, were they?—to set up shop in a post-industrial neighborhood. Voila! Florida's prescription for city success.

A decade and a half later, as the cities that creatives embraced became inaccessible havens for the superrich, Florida's new book *The New Urban Crisis: How Our Cities Are Increasing Inequality, Deepening Segregation, and Failing the Middle Class—and What*

*We Can Do About It* looks at how the decisions of that creative class ended up affecting everyone else—especially the Americans who were forced out of those cities.

In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida used dizzying mathematical equations to slot cities into maps and megalists that allowed readers to compare one metropolitan region to another in ways that feel unbelievably accurate but also reassuringly tidy. If anything, Florida's books, and the consulting empire he built around them, have emphasized the importance of specific success metrics—the "Creativity Index"—for cities.

These metrics also gave us an easy way to pick the "good" cities. City leaders leveraged their standing on Florida's Creativity Index to promote themselves to potential residents, and potential residents could learn if a city excelled at the ability to lure talent or quality of life. I remember as a newbie Angeleno that Los Angeles's generally positive rankings in *The Rise of the Creative Class* always gave me a bizarre sense of pride. (The new book has plenty of these rankings as well, but now they're focused on economic segregation and housing affordability.)













