

NEW YORK POST

URBAN LEGENDS

By STEPHEN LYNCH

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Remember the brave new world of work? Sure you do - all of us sitting around in our bunny slippers, accomplishing great feats at the tap of a key. Project managers in Colorado would direct employees in Charlotte, teleconferences would unite suburbanites with exurbanauts. No more urban overcrowding; tech professionals could reside on farms.

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Which leads Richard Florida, professor of business at the University of Toronto, to argue that where you live isn't less important in the modern world - it's more important. In his new book, "Who's Your City?" he says that a choice of residence "is arguably the most important decision we make, as important as choosing a spouse or a career. In fact, place exerts powerful influence over the jobs and careers we have access to."

"City" aims to be a guidebook to a "spiky" world, where certain cities are better for singles, older people, even cartographers. It's packed with demographic maps, some obvious (more neurotics live in New York City than anywhere else) and some surprising (who knew mid-career professionals should go to Minneapolis?).

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We asked Florida to explain the trends behind three of the maps inside.

THE SINGLES MAP

It will come as no surprise to single New York women (or fans of "Sex and the City") that single ladies far outnumber single men here. But why the radical disparity in terms of geography? According to "Who's Your City," the balance between available men and women flips almost exactly between East and West.

Florida explains: "In the West, many of the regions have grown substantially over the past two or three decades, offering jobs in everything from high tech to construction and services.

"As numerous studies of migration show, men - especially those in regions with declining economies - are initially more likely to move long distances for economic opportunity, while women are more likely to stay closer to home and family."

A reader on Florida's blog agreed: "A young single male who wants to totally throw off his familial and social bonds for more comic pursuits would probably like the West better." But if they're looking for that special someone, they should look East instead.

EXTROVERTED PEOPLE

Most of the book's "personality maps" reinforce common stereotypes (polite people are more highly concentrated in the South, for instance), but what's with all the extroverts in Chicago? "If you overlay the

occupation map over the personality one, you may find some clues. Chicago's occupational data reflects the Midwest's extrovert personality," Florida says. "Chicago has a significant concentration of sales representatives - 26% higher than the national average. Those working in sales tend to be outgoing individuals - extroverts who enjoy the engaging with others."

GEOGRAPHY OF WORK

Again, most of these career centers make sense. Las Vegas is the center of the gaming industry; New York, fashion. But cartographers in Fargo? Jewelers in Providence?

"Maps started in Fargo because it was the frontier trading town," Florida answers. "Jewelry started in Providence because it was a hub-and-port town on the East Coast seaboard between NYC and Boston. And somehow over time a cluster of skilled jewelers developed there, like fashion designers around the garment industry and high-end shops of NY, actors and directors in LA, techies in Silicon Valley and musicians in Nashville. Once these clusters or spikes develop for whatever reason they take on a life of their own, because in order to succeed, in Frank Sinatra's words, you have to 'make it there' - that's where the really talented people in a field need to go to make their mark among similarly talented people."

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