

Prophetic City **Houston on the Cusp of a Changing America**

Houston, Texas – long thought of as a traditionally blue-collar, black/white Southern city – has transformed into one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse metro areas in the nation, surpassing even New York City by some measures. Gone are the days when Houston was primarily an oil-slick boomtown; today the city offers large numbers of both highly skilled jobs in engineering and health care and low-skilled jobs in construction and personal services, making Houston a magnet for the divergent streams of immigration that have been transforming America.

Over the course of these dramatic changes, local researchers have been tracking residents' evolving opinions and beliefs. The result is a compelling, data-driven map of the challenges and opportunities facing Houston – and the rest of the country. For almost four decades, Houston households have been polled annually on a wide range of questions, such as: How have you been doing financially over the past few years? How would you rate the relations among other racial or ethnic groups in Houston? Do you agree or disagree that if you work hard in this city, eventually you will succeed?

No metro area in the nation has been tracked in this way over such a long period of time – and no other city better exemplifies the trends that are rapidly refashioning the social and political landscape across America. From the last of the boom years, when Houston was flourishing while the rest of the country floundered in the “stagflating seventies,” to the collapse of oil prices in 1982 that drove the city almost overnight into America’s worst regional recession since World War II, Houston’s dramatic swings in fortune created a rare opportunity for social researchers to systematically measure the way the general public is responding to the striking economic and demographic transformations.

This timely and groundbreaking book tracks the progress of an American city like never before. Houston today is at the forefront of the major changes that are redefining the country itself in the twenty-first century – the growing inequalities in a knowledge-based economy, the epic demographic transition, and the new importance of quality of place. Here is where, for better or worse, we can see the American future emerging.

(Klineberg & Hertz, 2020)

<https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Prophetic-City/Stephen-L-Klineberg/9781501177934>