

Classification of Cities by Chauncy D. Harris

Chauncy D. Harris remedied the deficiencies of the former subjective and judgement-based classifications. In his paper 'A Functional Classification of Cities in the United States (1943)', he was able to identify quantitatively dominant function out of multifunctional character of cities. He devised a scale of reference from his study of 984 towns (population more than 10,000) in United States based on the data provided by 1930 Census. He used two sets of information


- i) employment and
- ii) occupational figures

reduced to percentages to indicate cut-off points for urban activities varying in importance.

Harris based his classification on the activity of greatest importance in each city, recognizing that all cities are more or less multifunctional, he attempted to set up quantitative definitions that would enable him to assign each city to one class or category.

He identified nine principal categories of towns –

- Manufacturing (M') Subtype
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- Retailing (R),
- Diversified (D),
- Wholesaling (W),
- Transportation (T),
- Mining (S),
- Educational (E),
- Resort or Retirement (X)

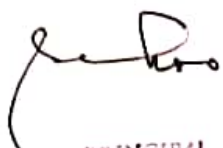

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Here is the table Harris used for classification

Criteria used by Harris in Functional Classification of Cities of USA

<i>Types</i>	<i>Principal Criterion</i>	<i>Secondary Criterion</i>
Manufacturing Cities (M' subtype)	Employment in mfg. equals at 74% of the total employment in mfg. + retailing + wholesaling	Mfg. and mechanical contain at least 45% of gainful workers (occupation figs.)
Manufacturing Cities (M subtype)	At least 60% of total employment in mfg. + retailing + wholesaling	Mfg. and mechanical contain between 30% and 45% of gainful workers.
Retail Centres (R)	In retailing at least 50% of the total employment in mfg. + wholesaling + retailing	At least 2.2 times of wholesaling alone.
Diversified Cities (D)	Employment in mfg. + wholesaling + retailing is less than 60%, 20% and 50% respectively of the total employment in these activities	Mfg. and mechanical contain between 25% and 35% of the gainful workers.
Wholesale Centres (W)	Employment in W at least 20% of the total employment in M + W + R	At least 45% as much as in retailing alone.
Transport Centres (T)	Transport and communication at least 11% of the gainful workers, and workers in transport and communication equal at least one-third the number in mfg. and mechanical	At least 2/3 the number in trade.
Mining Towns (S)	In extraction of minerals for more than 15% of the gainful workers (for cities of more than 25,000 pop.)	—
University Towns (E)	Enrolment in colleges — (university, technical institution, liberal arts colleges and teachers' colleges) at least 25% of the pop. of the city	—
Resort and Retirement Towns (X)	No satisfactory statistical criterion was found	—

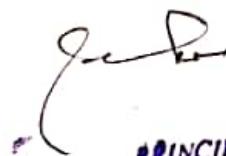
Harris's classification suffers with some defects and is not universally viable. He used metropolitan districts as functional units because the industry-group data such as those published now were not available during that time. Consequently, number of cities which were too small to have metropolitan districts were left unclassified.


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Carter (1975) labelled Harris's classification as subjective because the decisions to access or delete with a minimum number or cut-off points seem to be a personal one and were set by simple empirical means. Under the class of 'Transport and Communications', workers engaged in telephone and telegraph services were omitted, which was nothing more than a subjective decision.

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