

THE GREAT CREATIVE CLASS DEBATE: Revenge of the Squelchers

by Richard Florida

The Next American City

Issue 5 - Disposable Cities - July 2004

INTRODUCTION

By Adam Gordon

Along the Amtrak ride north of Baltimore, a 875,000 square foot Rite Aid distribution warehouse has sprouted from cornfields. Some might point to this as a sign of healthy market growth. But considering that \$7.1 million in taxpayer money went to help build the warehouse—and hundreds of millions more may come in the future in the form of new roads and subsidies to transport workers from distant Baltimore neighborhoods—it sounds a lot more like state-sponsored socialism than the free market.

Many of Richard Florida's critics try to marginalize his theory of the creative class as being just about a few kooky artists in Austin. They are wrong. Florida promotes a vision of economic development that returns government to its core functions—building the civic infrastructure necessary to attract and retain people and businesses. As governments take a serious look at his ideas, billions of dollars spent on subsidies of politically-connected industries hang in the balance.

Readers of TNAC know that Florida's ideas have encountered serious criticism in these pages, too. But our writers engage in the debate with an understanding that the issues that Florida raises matter. Where those billions go make a big difference for the future of cities.

This issue kicks off a three-issue series on “The Great Creative Class Debate.” Here, we present a response by Richard Florida to his critics. In coming issues, we will feature Mayors Michael Bloomberg and Martin O'Malley discussing the role of arts institutions in cities and take a look at how cities throughout the country are reacting to the Creative Class Debate. I hope you enjoy reading these pieces. As always, let me know if you have any thoughts to add.

REVENGE OF THE SQUELCHERS

By Richard Florida

It would be an understatement to say that my book *The Rise of the Creative Class* has generated heated debate. With the national culture wars escalating on all fronts, it's not surprising that most of the controversy revolves around the idea that cities with thriving arts and cultural climates and openness to diversity of all sorts also enjoy higher rates of innovation and high-wage economic growth.

From the right, consider what Steven Malanga of the neo-conservative Manhattan Institute has to say: “to a generation of liberal urban policymakers and politicians who favor big government, Florida's ideas offer a way to talk economic-development talk while walking the familiar big-spending walk... Yes, you can create needed revenue-generating jobs without having to take the unpalatable measures—shrinking government and cutting taxes—that appeal to old-economy businessmen... You can draw in Florida's creative-class capitalists—ponytails, jeans, rock music, and all—by liberal, big-government means: diversity celebrations, ‘progressive’ social legislation, and government spending on cultural amenities.”

From the left, Joel Kotkin and Fred Siegel write the following in *Blueprint*, a magazine associated with the Democratic Leadership Council: “One hundred of them—they called themselves the “Creative 100” —met

in Memphis last spring... Their mission... is to ‘remove barriers to creativity, such as mediocrity, intolerance, disconnectedness, sprawl, poverty, bad schools, exclusivity, and social and environmental degradation.’ The 1934 Soviet constitution couldn’t have said it better.” That’s not all. In the period since my book was published, I have been accused of undermining traditional family values (I don’t), of promoting a gay agenda (I’m straight), and of undermining the very tenets of Judeo-Christian civilization (I’m at a loss).

Such heated rhetoric puzzles me; I harbor no hidden agendas. I am a political independent, fiscal conservative, social liberal, and believer in vigorous international competition and free trade. Over the course of a twenty-year academic career, I have voted for and served under Democrats and Republicans. Today, I work closely with mayors, governors, business, political, and civic leaders from both sides of the aisle on economic development issues, and a good deal of the time, I cannot even tell who is Republican and who is Democrat—a welcome contrast to our horribly polarized national politics. My core team of colleagues and collaborators includes liberals and conservatives, marrieds and singles, recent college graduates to well into middle-age, straights and gays. What binds us together is not a political agenda, but our common determination to identify the key factors that drive technological innovation, spur growth, and ultimately bring about improved living standards.

In the forward to the Australian edition of *The Rise of the Creative Class*, entrepreneur Terry Cutler recounts presenting our findings to a meeting of distinguished intellectuals and civic leaders. “Summoning up my courage,” he writes, “I described...the correlation between bohemianism and diversity in the location of high tech firms. The palpable recoil around the room at such a radical and distasteful recipe for success left me in no doubt that these civic leaders would clearly prefer to drift into a genteel poverty.”

The great urbanist Jane Jacobs has a word for this kind of person. What distinguishes thriving cities from those that stagnate and decline is a group of people she calls the “squelchers.” Squelchers, she explains, are those political, business, and civic leaders that divert human creative energy by posing roadblocks and saying “no” to new ideas. What worries me is that, even when they are wrong on the facts, my critics continue to provide ample ammunition for squelchers.

In the following pages, I’ll do my best to engage my critics from across the ideological spectrum. In doing so, I’ll outline what I believe is at stake in the ongoing debate over economic development. I’ll conclude by highlighting several critical challenges that society as a whole must address if we are to realize more robust economic growth and a better quality of life.

What Kind of Growth?

One line of criticism of *The Rise of the Creative Class* has focused on the question of what types of cities create the most jobs. “Jobs data going back 20 years, to 1983,” writes Malanga in *City Journal*, “show that Florida’s top ten cities as a group actually do worse, lagging behind the national economy by several percentage points, while his so-called least creative cities continue to look like economic powerhouses, expanding 60 percent faster than his most creative cities during that same period.”

To get a handle on this issue, my colleague Kevin Stolarick of Carnegie Mellon ran a slew of key economic performance indicators for two groups of regions: the 11 top-performers on my updated (2004) Creativity Index versus the 11 regions with the lowest Creativity Index scores. He chose 11 regions in each group (instead of the more common “top 10” designation), because there was a tie between two of the ten lowest ranked regions. To keep things comparable, Stolarick based his calculations on the 49 regions with more than 1 million people. The two groups thus represent roughly the top 20 percent of each group. Take a close look at what he found. (See following page)

Employment and Population Growth

Between 1990 and 2000, the creativity leaders actually generated three times as many jobs as the lowest-ranked regions, 2.32 million versus 850,000 jobs. Controlling for the fact that the leading regions employ more people, the leaders still generated jobs at more than twice the rate of the others, 22 percent versus 11 percent. According to Stolarick's analysis, the leading creative regions continued to perform better in recent years, contradicting Malanga's claim that their earlier performance was an unsustainable by-product of the tech boom. The leading Creativity Index regions generated more than 35,000 jobs between 1999 and 2002, while the lowest-ranked regions lost nearly 400,000 jobs. The top-ranked regions added more than 225,000 high-paying creative sector jobs while the lowest-ranked regions lost more than 30,000 of these jobs. The leading regions on my Creativity Index added nearly 500,000 people between 1990 and 2000, compared to 125,000 for the lowest-ranked regions, a growth rate of 23 percent versus 9.27 percent.

Wage and Salary Growth

But looking at job creation alone can be misleading. A region may well create lots of jobs, but what really matters is the quality of those jobs—the wealth they generate and the salaries they pay. Stolarick's analysis found that the leading regions on my Creativity Index added more than \$100 billion in total wages between 1999 and 2002, more than five times the \$20 billion added by the lowest ranked regions. Workers in the leading creative regions averaged more than \$5000 more in wages and salaries than those in the lowest-ranked regions, \$40,091 versus \$34,383. Wages in the top-performing regions grew at almost double the rate (5.1 percent) of the laggards (2.8 percent). This translates into a far better “raise” for workers in creative cities, who took home 37 percent more than their counterparts in lower-scoring regions, \$5125 versus \$3129.

Given these trends, which city would you put your money on to be an economic powerhouse fifty years from now: Las Vegas, a region typically held up as a model of recent growth by my critics, which could easily go the way of Atlantic City after the 1920s, or San Francisco, which boasts Stanford, Berkeley, and a long legacy of technological and cultural innovation? It's true that between 1990 and 2000, Las Vegas ranked first in population growth and third in job growth, but in per capita income growth, it ranked a lowly 294th out of some 315 U.S. regions.

Malanga also challenges my work on the grounds that it does not deal adequately with the issue of entrepreneurship and new firm formation. My research with Zoltan Acs and Sam Youl Lee, supported by the Ewing and Marion Kaufmann Foundation, shows that rates of new firm formation are considerably higher in creative regions, and that entrepreneurship is closely correlated with the Creativity Index.

But Malanga is really not all that interested in numbers; he has a much bigger political axe to grind. “Liberal policymakers and politicians,” Malanga writes, “have latched on to [Florida's] theories so enthusiastically” because “to them, an expanding government is always more interesting than an expanding economy.” Now we have it: Malanga's real goal is to denigrate all forms of public policy, while promoting the traditional right-wing notion that tax cuts, privatization, and unfettered free markets will not only generate economic growth, but also solve virtually every urban ill. This is utter nonsense. The broad consensus among serious urban economists is that tax rates have at best a minor effect and that real growth stems from the improved productivity and higher rates of innovation produced by concentrations of skilled human capital.

My book is no paean for more government spending. It unequivocally states that large, top-down government development projects, like stadium-building efforts and massive downtown revitalization plans, are a major part of the problem. Like Jane Jacobs, I argue that real economic development is people-

oriented, organic, and community-based. In the preface to the paperback edition of *The Rise of the Creative Class*, I write, “While certain initiatives may help to encourage [creativity’s] emergence and others will certainly squelch it, the development of environments cannot be planned from above.” Chickens-or-Eggs

A second line of criticism says that my theory falls victim to a classic “chicken-and-egg” problem by confusing the underlying cause of economic growth. What typically come first, these critics argue, are the jobs. Once a region has those, then the people—as well as the amenities, lifestyle, and tolerance—follow. One conventional economic developer recently put it this way: “Create the jobs and diversity will follow.”

This kind of thinking does not square with reality. My research and other recent studies have shown that many people choose location first and then look for jobs in those locations. A 2002 survey of four thousand recent college graduates reported in the *Wall Street Journal* found that three-quarters of them identified location as more important than the availability of a job when selecting a place to live.

It’s also obvious that arts, culture, and demographic diversity can help spur job creation and economic revitalization. Take the classic case of gentrification of inner city neighborhoods like New York’s SoHo or San Francisco’s SoMa: these neighborhoods initially lost blue-collar jobs as factories and warehouses moved out of outmoded facilities. Artists and culturally creative people then moved into the facilities, often reclaiming the properties from ruin by way of illegal conversions and their own sweat equity revitalization. Gays and singles came next. Only much later, once these initial, pioneering groups had increased real estate values, did families, professionals, yuppies, technology-based businesses, and retail shops follow.

The jobs-versus-people question is a false dichotomy. The two come together at the nexus of place. Real places provide the thick labor markets that help match people to jobs, mating markets that enable people to find life-partners, the amenities that allow people to pursue the lifestyles they wish, and the ability to construct and validate their identities. Successful places are built upon complex, multifaceted ecosystems that, like those occurring in the natural world, defy simple linear thinking.

All in the Family?

A related line of criticism argues that I have my eye on the wrong kinds of places. These critics suggest that growth does not occur in diverse, urban places that welcome what Kotkin calls “singles, young people, homosexuals, sophistos, and trendoids,” but rather in sprawling, sunny suburbs with a penchant for “family values.”

This line of criticism implies that a place must either be family-friendly or gay-and-bohemian-friendly, but can’t be both. This is divisive thinking; it’s also inaccurate.

Kotkin cites McAllen, Texas, and the California cities of Fresno and Riverside as fast-growing, family-friendly cities. Among the 331 metro areas in the United States, McAllen ranks first in the percentage of households with children headed by gay parents, while Fresno and Riverside rank 8th and 21st, according to Gary Gates of the Urban Institute. Apparently in these places, “family” means more than Ward, June, Wally, and the Beaver.

The most successful regions welcome all kinds of people. They offer a range of living choices, from nice suburbs with single-family housing to hip urban districts for the “unattached.” Why do they offer all of the above? Simple: because they have to. Like it or not, only 23.5 percent of Americans now live in a standard nuclear family with two parents and children at home. Appealing only to traditional families and bashing everyone else may make good propaganda for the culture wars, but as a development strategy, it’s a pretty narrow approach: any region or politician that does so stands to alienate a lot of talented people.

Gays and Growth: What's Really at Stake

Much of the criticism of my work has revolved around the Gay Index, which takes up just several pages of a 400-page book. I'm tempted to believe this is the key issue from which all the other critiques flow: a visceral abhorrence of the idea that gay populations could possibly have a positive impact. Never do my co-researcher Gary Gates or I imply that gays literally cause high-tech growth. Rather, we see a strong and vibrant gay community as an indicator of a place that is open to many different kinds of people.

Several critics have brought up the example of Silicon Valley: isn't it a staid, boring place that appeals mainly to conventional engineering types who want to avoid artists, bohemians, and gays? My book argues that Silicon Valley can only be understood in relation to the adventurous culture and great research universities of the entire Bay Area, a place where early hippie-entrepreneurs were not merely tolerated, but actually financed by venture capitalists. (Imagine the long-haired, bearded, sandal-wearing Jobs and Wozniak showing up in 1972 at the Mellon bank in Pittsburgh with their new invention, the personal computer, in tow: would they have gotten past the security guards at the front door?) Our findings have an eerie resonance in today's heated debate over gay marriage. Massachusetts, the first state to attempt to legalize gay marriage, ranks first both on my Creativity Index and on the Milken Institute's most recent ranking of high-tech states; San Francisco and Seattle, perennial leaders on virtually every listing of high-tech hot spots, boast the same distinction. The states and cities that have already or are currently trying to restrict gay rights tend to rank at the very bottom of such lists.

Whatever pundits might say about our findings, business and civic leadership in city after city has taken them to heart. In Cincinnati, for example, Procter & Gamble has joined with civic activists and gays to try and overturn "Article 12," which forbids the city from passing anti-discrimination legislation that would apply to gays and lesbians, because they have found it is discouraging both talented people and companies from relocating there.

The Great Suburban Utopia?

Lately, some urban analysts have argued that the combined effects of the dot-com bust and September 11th have shifted the engine of regional innovation and growth away from urban centers and back toward the suburbs. David Brooks, the conservative cultural critic, recently wrote in *The New York Times Magazine*: "Suburban America is a bourgeois place, but unlike some other bourgeois places, it is also a transcendent place infused with everyday utopianism. That's why you meet so many boring-looking people who see themselves on some technological frontier, dreaming of this innovation or that management technique that will elevate the world."

A recent *Boston Globe* article reported that the respected Harvard University urban economist, Edward Glaeser believes that "people want to live in sunny, dry climates and—to the horror of smart-growth advocates everywhere—they actually like car-centered cities. In place of Florida's 'Technology, Talent and Tolerance,' Glaeser proposes a different recipe, 'Skills, Sun and Sprawl.'"

Let me start by agreeing that the suburbs are the source of much growth. No one would suggest that Silicon Valley or the Route 128 area around Boston do not exist. But, as *The Rise of the Creative Class* says, these innovative peripheries must be understood in relation to the thriving urban centers and the open and tolerant cultures in which they are embedded. Again, the most successful regions offer many options, including thriving suburbs with affordable housing, safe streets, and good schools.

But the new suburban boosters go far overboard on their claims. Consider the effects of sprawl. Virtually the entire literature on urban economics emphasizes that cities are based on urbanization economies. A thorough analysis of some 300 regions by Carnegie Mellon University doctoral student Brian Knudsen found that patenting and high-tech industry are strongly correlated with high population density—especially the concentration of creative people like scientists, engineers, artists, and musicians.

While many people think of the sun—and the Sunbelt—as synonymous with economic growth, the fact of the matter is that most studies have found that neither sunnier weather nor warmer climates are systematically linked to regional growth. University of Chicago sociologist Terry Clark found that “natural amenities,” including sun and temperature, are not associated with the location decisions of high-human capital individuals. Such people are much more likely to be drawn to cities that offer what Clark calls “constructed amenities,” from arts and culture to high-quality restaurants. The equally detailed research by the economists Dora Costa and Matthew Hahn finds that high-skill, high-earning “power couples” are disproportionately concentrated in larger urban areas which offer more amenities. Cities from Minneapolis and Chicago to Boston, Seattle, and Toronto have enjoyed long-run economic success despite cold, rainy weather.

Beyond the Hype

My work has also been criticized from the left. Writing in *The Baffler*, a journal devoted mainly to post-modern culture studies, Paul Maliszewski paints me as a vapid elitist and a starry-eyed New Economy huckster who fails to see how new industries exploit the masses.

That strikes me as strange, to say the least. *The Rise of the Creative Class* is no homage to the so-called New Economy and the Internet age. Indeed, I wrote the book in part to point out the weaknesses of the “technology will save us” mentality that dominated the 1990s. I tried to focus on the larger, long-running (and still evolving) changes in our economy and society. In my travels around the country, I do not find people strapping on suits and ties and going back to “organization -man” -style work in big corporations. People are still striving to be themselves, to find meaningful work, and to live in communities that let them validate their identities and live as complete people.

Nonetheless, some critics dismiss the advantage of places like San Francisco, Boston, Seattle, and Austin as mere flash-in-the-pan products of the 1990s dot-com bubble. But these places have been experiencing quality growth for decades, building solid new industries that have helped to strengthen our economy and change the world. Much has been made of the fact that such 1990s growth centers are losing population. But the simple fact that people are leaving misses a much bigger point.

Using IRS data to compare who’s moving out to who’s moving in, the statistician Robert Cushing has found that these regions are losing low-income people but gaining high-income people. He found, for example, that families moving from Austin, a high-tech boomtown, to slower-growth Kansas City in the 1990s earned an average of \$25,912 a year. Those going in the other direction, from Kansas City to Austin, earned over \$65,000. It makes sense that these regions would gain higher-skill, higher-income people as their economies develop, their occupational structures shift toward high-value-added employment, and their housing prices rise. As this cycle occurs, higher-skill, higher-wage people move in and lower-skill, lower-wage people move out. While it may not be fair or even good, these regions continue to gain competitive advantage as a result.

The Rise of the Creative Class has little to do with making cities yuppie-friendly, though leftist critics have tried to frame it (and belittle its message) in that way. Rather, my core message is that human creativity is the ultimate source of economic growth. Every single person is creative in some way. And to fully tap and harness that creativity we must be tolerant, diverse, and inclusive.

I know the creativity of blue-collar workers well. I learned about it firsthand from my father, who worked for more than four decades in an eyeglass factory in Newark. *The Rise of the Creative Class* contains many references to the incredible talents of both factory and service workers and argues that harnessing the creative energy of people currently ignored and misused is crucial to our long-run economic prosperity. As I acknowledge in the book, “the real losers, in terms of overwork, are those holding two full-time minimum-wage jobs to support a family ... [They] are a modern-day equivalent of the nineteenth century’s burned-out factory laborers.” But if social conservatives can’t turn back the moral clock to a time when every family resembled the Cleavers, neither can the left magically restore a time when forty or fifty percent of the work force toiled in blue-collar factory jobs. The creative economy is not going away. My advice to my colleagues on the left is simple: Deal with it.

The 3 T’s Revisited

Many of my critics seemingly change their ideas and opinions in tune with the fluctuations of the business cycle. Witness, for example, Kotkin’s 2000 book, *The New Geography* (with its new economy-hyping subtitle: *How the Digital Revolution is Reshaping the American Landscape*), in which he claims that “aging boomers, childless couples, gays, ‘empty nesters,’ and singles ... constitute the critical fuel for the postindustrial urban economy.”

The Rise of the Creative Class, in contrast, charts the creative economy’s evolution over the course of more than a century. It notes that the change we are going through today is similar in scale and scope to the shift from an agricultural to an industrial society, with sweeping implications for the way we work and live, the way we organize our time, the structure of family and community, and the function of cities. A hundred years ago, fewer than 10 percent of the workforce was employed by the creative sector of the economy; even in 1950, still fewer than 15 percent were. Over the past two decades, though, creativity has become the driving force of our economy, and the creative sector has exploded, adding 20 million plus jobs.

Today, nearly 40 million workers—some 30 percent of the workforce—are part of the creative class, engaged in science and engineering, research and development, technology-based industries; in the arts, music, culture, aesthetic, and design; or in the knowledge-based professions of health care, finance, and law. The trends are similar across much of the advanced industrial world (see Florida and Irene Tinagli, *Europe in the Creative Age*, January 2004). What’s more, the creative sector accounts for nearly half of all wage and salary income in the United States—as much as the manufacturing and service sectors combined.

Much of the debate over *The Rise of the Creative Class* stems from my arguments concerning the broad relationship between culture and economic growth. Social and economic theorists from Max Weber—who coined the term “Protestant work ethic”—to Edward Banfield and Daniel Bell have argued that culture affects economic growth by producing incentives which promote effort, thrift, and hard work. Culture, according to this view, motivates economic growth by focusing human energy and effort on work and away from the pull of non-work activities such as leisure, sexuality, or other forms of enjoyment.

I argue that culture operates not by constraining the range of human creative possibilities, but by enabling and mobilizing them. An expansive, open culture which does not discriminate, does not force people into “boxes,” allows them to be themselves and to validate their varied identities; it unleashes human creative potential, and in doing so, spurs innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic development.

My view of creativity and cities thus revolves around a simple formula, which I refer to as the 3 T’s of economic growth—technology, talent, and tolerance. Economists like Robert Solow and Paul Romer have

long argued that technology is the key to economic growth. I agree wholeheartedly, but other factors come into play as well.

Talent is the second variable in my model. Leading economists, including Nobel Prize winner Robert Lucas, have argued that growth is a consequence of human capital, a view shared by Glaeser. In this view, the role of cities is to bring together and augment human capital, and since places with more human capital grow more rapidly than those with less, urbanization is a key element of innovation and productivity growth. Lucas refers to the human-capital augmenting functions of cities as “Jane Jacobs’s externalities,” and has suggested that she deserves a Nobel Prize for that idea.

I capture the role of talent by substituting a measure of creative occupations for the typical education-based measure of human capital, thus emphasizing current work over past educational achievements. Robert Cushing of the University of Texas at Austin independently found that our “creative capital” measure actually performs somewhat better than the less specific, education-driven “human capital” measure at predicting innovation and growth.

Which brings me to the third T—tolerance. Tolerance is a key factor in enabling places to mobilize technology and talent. While economists have long recognized technology and talent as key drivers of economic growth, they think of them in the same way they think of more conventional factors of production, like raw materials. According to this view, places are endowed with certain stocks of technology or talent, and these stocks account for their different rates of innovation and growth. But resources like technology and human capital differ in a fundamental way from more traditional factors of production like land or raw materials: they are not fixed stocks, but highly mobile elements that flow into and out of places.

This begs the question of what accounts for the ability of some places to attract and capture more of these flows. Our work finds that places open to immigrants, artists, and gays, and which are less segregated, do best. These places mobilize existing creative energy in their cities and attract creative energy from outside by allowing people to be themselves and validate their identities. In doing so, such places capture a disproportionate share of the flow. Subsequent research has confirmed that these findings hold true not only in America, but also in Canada and Australia.

Open Questions

People often ask me what I have learned since *The Rise of the Creative Class* was published. The short answer is a lot. Since that book was published, I have become increasingly concerned about two large-scale issues virtually ignored in recent debates on regional and national economic growth.

The first concerns the truly global nature of creativity. The same dynamics that fueled the movement of creative people between U.S. regions now operates on a global scale, and other nations are stepping up their ability to compete (see “Creative Class War,” *Washington Monthly*, January-February 2004). While many assume that the United States to have an unbeatable edge, its position is much more tenuous than commonly thought.

The second issue regards what I have come to term the “externalities” of the creative economy. Perhaps the most salient of these externalities is rising social and economic inequality. The Inequality Index, developed by my Carnegie Mellon collaborator, Kevin Stolarick, compares the wages of creative sector workers to those in the manufacturing sectors (see “The New American Dream,” *Washington Monthly*, March 2003). It indicates that inequality is highest in the creative epicenters of the U.S. economy—places like San Francisco, the North Carolina Research Triangle, Washington, D.C., and Austin. The creative economy generates other externalities as well:

Housing affordability: As the creative economy takes root in places like San Francisco, Boston, and New York, it generates tremendous pressure on housing prices, forcing artists and low-income workers out of their communities and further increasing socioeconomic inequality.

Uneven regional development: The creative economy generates overlapping economic and demographic trends which have combined to exacerbate regionally uneven development, as pronounced as anything we've seen since the Civil War.

Mounting stress and anxiety: With the elimination of larger institutional and social support structures, the creative economy downloads stress and anxiety directly onto individuals. My preliminary research with psychiatric researchers Kenneth Thompson and Roberto Figueroa shows that stress and anxiety is markedly higher across all income and class groups in regions with high Creativity Index scores.

Political polarization: The creative economy is giving rise to a demographic sorting process that separates people by economic position, cultural outlook, and political orientation. This is worsened by the perception among many that key elements of the creative class are arrogant, hedonistic, and self-indulgent. This deep split makes it hard to generate coherent and forward-looking responses to the problems and challenges posed by the creative economy.

I'll have more to say about all of this in future work, but for now I'd simply like to point out two things. On the one hand, relegating vast numbers of people to do rote work amounts to systemic waste that is both morally negligent and economically inefficient. We must find ways to make service and manufacturing jobs more creative and thus less deadening for the people who hold them. On the other hand, creativity is the great leveler. It cannot be handed down, and it cannot be "owned" in the traditional sense. It defies gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and outward appearance. We cannot know in advance who the next Andy Warhol, Billie Holiday, or Paul Allen will be, or where they will come from. Yet our society continues to encourage the creative talents of a minority, while neglecting the creative capacities of many more. Addressing these issues goes beyond an intellectual or social agenda; it is required work if we wish to generate long-run prosperity by aligning economic growth with the fuller development of human potential.

Kevin Stolarick conducted much of the technical analysis reported here. Jesse Elliott assisted with writing and editing. Bill Frucht and Brian Knudsen provided helpful comments.

Richard Florida is the author of the best-selling book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*. He is the Heinz Professor of Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon and Visiting Scholar at the Brookings Institution. He is currently working on a new book, *The Flight of the Creative Class*, to be published in Spring 2005. A collection of his essays, *Cities and the Creative Class*, will be published this summer by Routledge. For more information, visit www.creativeclass.org.