

Milwaukee take note: Gay-friendly cities benefit from more economic prosperity

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Richard Florida, a professor from George Mason University and author of the book *The Rise of the Creative Class* argued that the more "gay-friendly" a city is, the more economically prosperous it will be.

In his March 2007 paper "There Goes the Neighborhood," Florida uses something he calls the "Bohemian-Gay Index" to demonstrate that "artistic, bohemian, and gay populations" have a "substantial effects on housing values across all permutations of the model and across all region sizes." He also found that more open and "gay-friendly" areas generally support higher income levels.

Florida argued that educated kids are generally moving to the most "gay-friendly" cities after graduating from college because those cities tend to have the best job markets.

After realizing that the top 5 "gay-friendly" cities in the US -- San Francisco, Seattle, Boston, Portland (Oregon), and Tampa -- are also prosperous centers of technological innovation, Florida decided to do a more thorough study. The results, he said, held up for other cities as well.

"Places that were open to gay and lesbian people were also the kind of places that could attract not only smart young people, but also Indian and Chinese immigrants who come here and start a lot of high tech companies," he said. "They were attracting people across the board, building up a talent base, and then innovating and starting these new enterprises."

Florida said he thinks it is the open mindedness of these cities that has allowed economically successful communities to emerge, rather than prior economic success attracting open minded people.

"Places that a large gay and lesbian community gravitated to, a large group of musicians and other open minded people gravitated to. When these kind of geeky entrepreneurs became important economic growth, those were the places that accepted them, too," he told CNN in 2007.

To see Florida discuss his thoughts further, check out this [video](#).

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