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Global Metropolis: The Role of Cities and Metropolitan Areas in the Global Economy

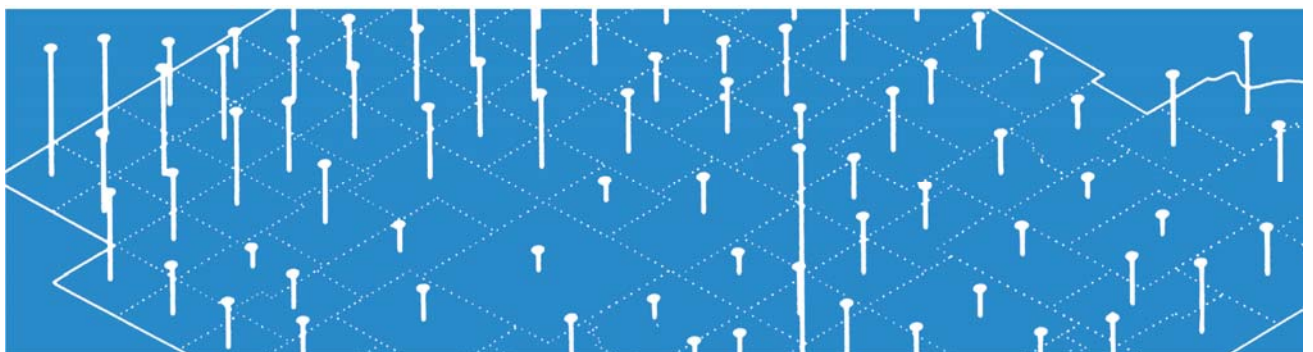
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Global Metropolis:

The Role of Cities and Metropolitan Areas in the Global Economy

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Introduction

The past year marked a turning point in world history. It was the year the world became urban. The share of the world's population living in urban areas increased from just 3 percent in 1800 to 14 percent in 1900. By 1950, it had reached 30 percent. Today, this number stands at more than half. In the advanced countries, three-quarters of people live in urban areas (UNFPA, 2007). Noting this momentous shift, *The Economist* put it this way: "Whether you think the human story begins in a garden in Mesopotamia known as Eden, or more prosaically on the savannahs of present-day east Africa, it is clear that *Homo sapiens* did not start life as an urban creature. Man's habitat at the outset was dominated by the need to find food, and hunting and foraging were rural pursuits." But today the story concludes, "Wisely or not, *Homo sapiens* has become *Homo urbanus*". According to the United Nations, more than two-thirds of the world's population (4.4 billion people) will be urbanites by the year 2030 (UNFPA, 2007).

While this general process and pattern of urbanization is well known, we know a great deal less about the global level of economic activity produced by cities and metropolitan areas. The simple reason for this is that we lack the required statistical information. While we have a plethora of data and information on economic output by country, there is a noticeable absence of systematic and comparable data on cities and metropolitan areas. There is one group or agency that collects the necessary data.

The past several years have seen numerous, very useful and important attempts, to develop data and to better understand the economic role of cities and metropolitan areas in the global economy. Researchers like Saskia Sassen, Peter Taylor, Robert Lang and others have developed new and innovative ways to track and benchmark global cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas (Sassen, 1991, 2006, 2008; Taylor, 2003, 2005; Lang and Dhavale, 2005). Mercer Consulting publishes annual reports on the cost and quality of life in a sample of global cities (Mercer Consulting, 2007). MasterCard recently

produced a major report, drawing from the work of leading scholars on economic activity in global cities (Worldwide Centers of Commerce Index). A landmark study by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, (Pengfei and Kresl, 2008 compiled data from a wide range of sources to produce detailed rankings of urban competitiveness for 500 cities worldwide.

Our research seeks to provide new insight in to the economic role of cities and metropolitan areas in the world economy. It summarizes new data, derived from satellite images of the world at night, to provide systematic estimates of the economic activity generated by cities and metropolitan areas worldwide.

We begin with a short summary of our methodology for using the satellite images to develop economic estimates. We provide a detailed accounting of the role of metropolitan areas in the global economy overall, before turning to a more detailed look at their role in the world's major economic areas – North American, Europe, Asia, the newly industrializing countries and the developing world. The last section summarizes the overall, very significant contribution of cities and metropolitan areas to the global economy.

Data and Methods

We use a novel method to develop systematic data on global cities and metropolitan areas. We calculate economic activity for these locations based on satellite images of the entire globe. We define a metropolitan area as a core city and its surrounding hinterland as contiguously (or very nearly contiguously) lighted areas, as seen from space at night. Lang and Dhavale (2005) and the Regional Planning Association (2006) have used much more complex methods, including measures of commuting patterns, etc. We find that while these factors are critically important for understanding the functioning of a metropolitan area, contiguous development is a good enough proxy for economic

integration that it can meaningfully be used in this context. While our method does not account for many of the cultural and political factors as well as network connectivity that inform and shape metropolitan regions, its strength lies in the application of a systematic criteria for identifying the economic activity of cities and regions across the globe.

We begin with light emission data for the year 2000 (Doll, Muller, & Elvidge, 2000). The base data are from the Earth Observation Program of NOAA's National Geophysical Data Center. This data provides a measure of light intensity for each 30 arc second cell between -65° and 65° latitude. These cells cover approximately 1km^2 at the equator and become somewhat smaller at higher and lower latitudes.¹

We then set a light threshold that captures the essence of the U.S. metro areas. After we determine the threshold that gives the best approximation of the established U.S. metropolitan areas, we apply this same threshold to the nighttime lights dataset for the rest of the world. We close small gaps, merging light areas that are separated by less than 2 kilometers.

We calibrate the model by using detailed published data for Gross Regional Product (GRP) for 363 U.S. metropolitan areas prepared for the US Conference of Mayors (USCOM) (Global Insight, 2006). This calibration also yields an objective measure of the precision of this process – we are able to reproduce the GRP estimates

¹ While the data capture low light levels that are consistent with low-density suburban and electrified semi-rural areas, the measured emission level saturates far from the most economically intense center of a major city due to the design of the sensors and the processing algorithms used by NGDC. The fall-off in brightness gradient as this threshold is approached is quite steep and occurs in the inner suburbs of large American cities. While this presents a challenge in producing estimates, it is not insurmountable. This data limitation is in some ways liberating because we suspect that the relationship between light emissions and economic activity breaks down as higher levels of urbanization expand vertically rather than horizontally. We would thus be forced to estimate central cities differently from their surroundings in any case. To deal with the problem of saturation of urban cores, we break the process of estimating economic activity from light emissions into two stages: we estimate activity levels for low light areas, including urban peripheries, as a direct function of light level. We separately estimate urban cores as a function of both area and shape.

with a standard error of 34 percent. In evaluating this number, it should be noted that the USCOM estimate also contains measurement error.

We deal with the problem of translating physical economic activity into standard units by renormalizing the total for each nation to agree with that nation's 2000 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2000 U.S. dollars at current market exchange rates (World Bank, 2006). We thus use the light-derived estimates to establish the relative importance of pixels within nations while maintaining consistency with published estimates at the national level.

In cases where we have high quality metropolitan region estimates for areas with well-defined borders, we renormalize those areas in line with the published estimates for GRP as per above. When such sub-regional adjustments are made, we again renormalize the national total to coincide with World Development Indicators national estimates (GDP).

The result of this process is an estimate of economic activity for every 30 arc second grid cell (less than one square kilometer) in the world. We refer to this indicator as Light-based Regional Product or LRP. While it is expressed in the same nominal dollars as GDP and GRP and designed to aggregate up to published estimates of GDP, it is different enough in terms of both its derivation and its conceptual design that is best identified with its own name.

Key Findings

We now turn to key findings of the research. Table 1 shows the top 20 regions worldwide in economic activity (or LRP). Appendix 1 provides a more detailed listing of the top 100 economic regions worldwide.

The world's largest metropolitan area in terms of economic activity is Greater Tokyo which produces nearly \$2 trillion dollars in economic output (see Table 2). It is followed by Greater New York, Osaka-Kyoto-Kobe, Los Angeles, Nagoya, Chicago, London, Greater Antwerp, Greater Bonn and Washington DC.

The economic activity produced by these regions is substantially greater than their population size. The top ten, which house just 2.6 percent of the world's population, account for more than 20 (21.2%) percent of global economic activity. The twenty largest in economic terms, home to 4.4 percent of the world's people, produce nearly 30 percent (28%) of global economic activity. And the world's fifty largest economic regions, home to 7 percent of global population, account for almost 40 percent (38.5%) of global economic activity.

Table 1: World's Largest Metropolitan Regions by LRP (billions)

	Region	LRP (billions)
1	Tokyo-Kawasaki-Yokohama	\$1,997.5
2	New York-Philadelphia-Newark	1,181.9
3	Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe	617.9
4	Los Angeles	561.7
5	Nagoya	558.4
6	Chicago-Milwaukee	405.7
7	London	378.1
8	Antwerpen-Gent-Bruxelles-Lille-Liege	336.2
9	Bonn-Dortmund-Duisburg-Koln	315.2
10	Washington D.C.-Baltimore	297.3
11	Paris	280.9
12	Boston	275.2
13	Seoul-Inch`on	238.9
14	San Jose	235.1
15	Leeds-Sheffield-Birmingham	222.2
16	Dallas	212.7
17	Guangzhou-Hong Kong-Kowloon	200.5
18	Amsterdam-Rotterdam-The Hague	187.5
19	Milano	181.9
20	Houston	170.3

We now turn to the leading economic regions by major continent – North America, Europe and Asia.

North America

Table 2 lists the ten largest economic regions in North America. New York tops the list followed by Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington DC, Boston, San Jose, Dallas, Houston, Detroit and Atlanta – all U.S. regions. These regions generate 11.7 percent of global economic activity while housing 1.3 percent of world population. Toronto-Buffalo ranks 11th in North America with \$ 161.8 billion in LRP and Mexico City ranks 14th in North America with nearly \$140 billion in economic activity. It is interesting to note that Mexico City generates nearly a quarter (24 percent) of Mexico's total economic activity.

Table 2: North America's Largest Economic Regions

	Region	LRP (billions)
1	New York-Philadelphia-Newark	\$1,181.9
2	Los Angeles	561.7
3	Chicago-Milwaukee	405.7
4	Washington D.C.-Baltimore	297.3
5	Boston	275.2
6	San Jose	235.1
7	Dallas	212.7
8	Houston	170.3
9	Detroit	168.3
10	Atlanta	164.5

Europe

Table 3 lists the ten largest economic regions in Europe. London is the largest economic region, followed by Greater Antwerp, Greater Bon, Paris, Leeds-Sheffield-Birmingham, Amsterdam-Rotterdam, Milan, Manchester-Liverpool, Berlin and Frankfurt. The regions which host 1.3 percent of world population produce approximately 7.1 percent of world economic activity.

Table 3: Europe's Largest Economic Regions

	Region	LRP (billions)
1	London	\$378.1
2	Antwerpen-Gent-Bruxelles-Lille-Liege	336.2
3	Bonn-Dortmund-Duisburg-Koln	315.2
4	Paris	280.9
5	Leeds-Sheffield-Birmingham	222.2
6	Amsterdam-Rotterdam-The Hague	187.5
7	Milano	181.9
8	Manchester-Liverpool	134.3
9	Berlin	96.0
10	Frankfurt am Main	93.0

Asia

Table 4 lists Asia's ten largest economic regions. Tokyo is Asia – and the world's – largest with nearly \$2 trillion in LRP. Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe, Nagoya, Seoul, Fukuoka, Singapore, Sapporo, Bangkok and Fukuyama complete the top ten. The regions account for 12.8 percent of world economic activity, while housing 2.3 percent of world population.

Table 4: Asia's Ten Largest Economic Regions

	Region	LRP (billions)
1	Tokyo-Kawasaki-Yokohama	\$1,997.5
2	Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe	617.9
3	Nagoya	558.4
4	Seoul	238.9
5	Guangzhou-Hong Kong-Kowloon	200.5
6	Fukuoka-Kita Kyushu	105.8
7	Singapore	91.9
8	Sapporo	79.4
9	Bangkok	75.4
10	Fukuyama	53.1

The BRICS

A Goldman Sachs [2005] report identified the so-called BRICS nations – that is Brazil, Russia, India and China as large, rapidly growing and increasingly significant global economic actors. Table 5 shows the top 10 metro areas in the BRICS nations. The

largest is Hong Kong followed by Sao Paulo., Beijing, Shanghai, Rio de Janeiro, New Delhi, Tianjin, Belo Hroizonte, Calcutta and Porto Alegre.

Table 5: BRICS - Ten Largest Economic Regions

	Region	LRP (billions)
1	Guangzhou-Hong Kong-Kowloon	\$200.5
2	Sao Paulo	114.3
3	Beijing	46.9
4	Shanghai	45.8
5	Rio de Janeiro	42.1
6	New Delhi-Delhi	31.6
7	Tianjin	17.3
8	Belo Horizonte	16.5
9	Calcutta	14.9
10	Porto Alegre	14.5

Emerging Economies

Table 6 lists the ten largest metros for the emerging economies - Argentina, Egypt, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey. The largest is Buenos Aires, followed by Mexico City, San Diego, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv, Bangkok, Pretoria-Johannesburg, Jakarta, Cairo, Kuala Lumpur, and El Paso.

Table 6: Ten Largest Economic Regions in the Emerging Economies

	Region	LRP (billions)
1	Buenos Aires	\$143.2
2	Mexico City	139.4
3	San Diego	110.3
4	Jerusalem-Tel Aviv-Yafo	104.6
5	Bangkok	75.4
6	Pretoria-Johannesburg	62.9
7	Jakarta	45.9
8	Cairo-El-Giza	44.3
9	Kuala Lumpur	39.5
10	El Paso	27.5

Global Economic Role of Metropolitan Regions

Table 7 shows the share of economic activity generated by metropolitan areas of various sizes.

Table 7: Economic Activity by Major Region

Region	Population cutoff (millions)			
	10.0	5.0	1.0	0.5
North America	\$2,288.7 (20.69%)	\$3,451.5 (31.21%)	\$5,972.0 (54.00%)	\$6,704.9 (60.62%)
Europe	\$1,310.4 (15.01%)	\$2,118.1 (24.26%)	\$3,609.3 (41.49%)	\$4,183.8 (47.93%)
BRICs	\$322.3 (13.43%)	\$369.1 (15.38%)	\$785.4 (32.73%)	\$954.9 (39.80%)
Asia*	\$3,613.1 (65.44%)	\$3,658.0 (66.26%)	\$4,154.5 (75.25%)	\$4,421.0 (80.07%)
Emerging Economies **	\$417.0 24.94%	\$609.8 (36.47%)	\$1,023.2 (61.20%)	\$1,602.9 (95.87%)
All Nations	\$7,962.8 (25.49%)	\$10,615.1 (34.13%)	\$16,259.1 (52.27%)	\$18,205.1 (58.5%)

* Hong Kong, Japan, Macao, South Korea, Singapore

** Argentina, Egypt, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey

- The 681 metropolitan areas with more than 500,000 people, which house roughly a quarter (24 percent) of world population, account for nearly 60 percent (58.50%) of total worldwide economic activity. Such metros account for more than 80 percent of economic activity in Asia, roughly 60 percent of economic activity in North America, approximately 95 percent in the Emerging Economies, 40 percent in the BRICs and nearly half (47.93%) percent on economic activity in Europe.
- The 347 metropolitan areas worldwide with more than a million people, which house 20.38 percent of world population, account for more than half (52.27 percent) of worldwide economic activity. These metros command roughly three-quarters (75.25 percent) of economic activity in Asia, half (54 percent) in North

America, roughly 60 percent in the Emerging Economies, 40 (41.49) percent in Europe and one third (32.73 percent) in the BRICs.

- The 61 metros with more than 5 million people which house roughly 10 percent of world population account for a third of all global economic activity. These metros account for two-thirds of economic activity in Asia, roughly a third (31.21 percent) in North America, a quarter (24.26 percent in Europe), approximately 36 percent in the Emerging Economies and 15 percent in the BRICs.
- The 29 metros with more than 10 million people, which house roughly 8 percent of global population, account for a quarter of global economic activity. These metros account for two-thirds of economic activity in Asia, a fifth (20.69 percent) in North America, 15 percent in Europe, a quarter (24.94 percent) in the Emerging Economies and 13 percent in the BRICs.
- Overall, some 60 percent of worldwide activity is generated by metro areas with more than 500,000 people. Asia leads the way in global economic urbanization, followed by North America, the Emerging Economies and Europe.

Table 8: Share of Global Economic Activity Produced by the Largest Economic Regions

Top Metro Regions	Total LRP (billions)	Economic Share
10	\$6,649.75	21.18%
20	\$8,854.81	28.02%
100	\$14,458.68	46.05%

- Finally, just the ten largest economic regions produce more than a fifth of total economic output. The top twenty produce nearly 30 percent (28%), and the top 100 economic regions produce almost half (46 percent) of global economic activity (Table 8).

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Appendix

Top 100 metros by LRP (billions)

Rank	Region	LRP (\$billions)
1	Tokyo-Kawasaki-Yokohama	1,997.5
2	New York-Philadelphia-Newark	1,181.9
3	Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe	617.9
4	Los Angeles	561.7
5	Nagoya	558.4
6	Chicago-Milwaukee	405.7
7	London	378.1
8	Antwerpen-Gent-Bruxelles-Lille-Liege	336.2
9	Bonn-Dortmund-Duisburg-Koln	315.2
10	Washington D.C.-Baltimore	297.3
11	Paris	280.9
12	Boston	275.2
13	Seoul-Inch`on	238.6
14	San Jose	235.1
15	Leeds-Sheffield-Birmingham	222.2
16	Dallas	212.7
17	Guangzhou-Hong Kong-Kowloon	200.5
18	Amsterdam-Rotterdam-The Hague	187.5
19	Milano	181.9
20	Houston	170.3
21	Detroit	168.3
22	Atlanta	164.5
23	Toronto-Buffalo	161.8
24	Tampa	146.3
25	Buenos Aires	143.2
26	Miami	142.7
27	Mexico City	139.4
28	Manchester-Liverpool	134.6
29	Seattle	123.1
30	Sao Paulo	114.4
31	San Diego	110.3
32	Minneapolis	107.4
33	Phoenix	106.7
34	Fukuoka-Kita Kyushu	105.8
35	Jerusalem-Tel Aviv-Yafo	104.6
36	Denver	99.7
37	Cleveland	99.1
38	Berlin	96.1
39	Frankfurt am Main	93.0
40	Singapore	91.9
41	Sydney	83.4
42	Cincinnati	82.8
43	Madrid	81.8
44	Sapporo	79.4
45	Venice	79.3
46	St. Louis	77.7
47	Glasgow	76.2
48	Bangkok	75.4
49	Melbourne	72.7
50	Barcelona	69.2

51	Napoli	68.9
52	Roma	67.1
53	Montreal	66.9
54	Pittsburgh	64.4
55	Pretoria-Johannesburg	62.9
56	Newcastle	62.7
57	Hamburg	60.1
58	Zurich	59.8
59	Portland	58.7
60	Charlotte	56.1
61	Kansas City	55.2
62	Stuttgart	55.1
63	Sacramento	53.4
64	Fukuyama	53.1
65	Lyon	52.1
66	Athens	50.8
67	Vienna	49.6
68	San Antonio	49.6
69	Indianapolis	48.5
70	Salt Lake City	47.9
71	Manila-Quezon City	47.1
72	Marseille	47.0
73	Beijing	46.9
74	Abu Zaby	46.4
75	Jakarta	45.9
76	Shanghai	45.8
77	Pusan	45.0
78	Las Vegas	44.8
79	Cairo-El-Giza	44.3
80	Columbus	44.2
81	Mannheim - Heidelberg	43.5
82	Rio de Janeiro	42.1
83	Munchen	40.8
84	T`ai-chung	40.8
85	Brisbane	40.6
86	Perth-Fremantle	40.5
87	Austin	40.0
88	Kuala Lumpur	39.5
89	San Juan	38.9
90	Richmond	38.9
91	Kobenhavn	38.8
92	Taipei-Chingmei	38.2
93	Raleigh-Durham	37.0
94	Santiago	37.0
95	Greensboro-Winston-Salem	36.8
96	Norfolk	36.5
97	Nashville	36.3
98	Oslo	36.3
99	Kao-Hsiung-T`ai-nan	36.0
100	Memphis	35.1

Top 100 metros by population (millions)

Rank	Region	Population (millions)
1	Guangzhou-Hong Kong-Kowloon	37.19
2	Cairo-El-Giza	37.15
3	Tokyo-Kawasaki-Yokohama	36.52
4	New York-Philadelphia-Newark	29.63
5	Seoul-Inch`on	22.01
6	Sao Paulo	21.74
7	Mexico City	19.60
8	New Delhi-Delhi	17.59
9	Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe	17.48
10	Bombay	17.33
11	Jakarta	16.27
12	Manila-Quezon City	16.01
13	Los Angeles	15.86
14	Shanghai	13.97
15	Antwerpen-Gent-Bruxelles-Lille-Liege	13.76
16	Buenos Aires	13.58
17	Druzba-Moskva	13.46
18	Calcutta	13.10
19	London	12.58
20	Karachi	11.70
21	Tehran	11.19
22	Upper Nile	11.02
23	Nagoya	10.78
24	Chicago-Milwaukee	10.67
25	Paris	10.57
26	Bonn-Dortmund-Duisburg-Koln	10.44
27	Beijing	10.33
28	Rio de Janeiro	10.08
29	Bangkok	10.02
30	Taipei-Chingmei	9.54
31	Istanbul	9.44
32	Leeds-Sheffield-Birmingham	9.39
33	Dhaka	8.63
34	Pretoria-Johannesburg	8.51
35	Lima	8.00
36	Milano	7.71
37	Jerusalem-Tel Aviv-Yafo	7.63
38	Amsterdam-Rotterdam-The Hague	7.62
39	Toronto-Buffalo	7.25
40	Bogota	7.10
41	Madras	7.04
42	Lahore	7.01
43	Brazzaville	6.99
44	Washington D.C.-Baltimore	6.84
45	Boston	6.59
46	Lagos	6.54
47	Hyderabad	6.35
48	Baghdad	6.26
49	Manchester-Liverpool	5.96
50	Bangalore	5.84
51	Santiago	5.80
52	San Jose	5.59
53	Pusan	5.32

54	Ho Chi Minh City	5.30
55	Madrid	5.29
56	Ar Riyad	5.25
57	Dallas	5.24
58	Miami	5.23
59	Tianjin	5.13
60	T`ai-chung	5.09
61	Kao-Hsiung-T`ai-nan	5.07
62	Tampa	4.93
63	Ahmadabad	4.86
64	Kuala Lumpur	4.78
65	Napoli	4.74
66	Surabaja	4.74
67	Barcelona	4.73
68	Houston	4.66
69	Fukuoka-Kita Kyushu	4.64
70	Saint Petersburg	4.60
71	Khartoum-Omdurman	4.55
72	Wuhan	4.50
73	Detroit	4.46
74	Pune	4.46
75	Chengdu	4.39
76	Shenyang	4.31
77	Atlanta	4.23
78	Singapore	4.23
79	Belo Horizonte	4.16
80	Montreal	4.13
81	Xian	4.03
82	San Diego	3.99
83	Alexandria	3.95
84	Guadalajara	3.92
85	Bandung	3.80
86	Berlin	3.71
87	Nanjing	3.63
88	Algiers	3.59
89	Phoenix	3.58
90	Sydney	3.54
91	Casablanca	3.54
92	Monterrey	3.49
93	Roma	3.46
94	Athens	3.42
95	Caracas	3.36
96	Recife	3.34
97	Ankara	3.30
98	Porto Alegre	3.25
99	Santo Domingo	3.16
100	Rangoon	3.15

Author Bios

Dr. Richard Florida is Professor of Business and Creativity at the Rotman School of Business, and the Academic Director at the Martin Prosperity Institute. Prior to joining the Rotman School, he taught for nearly two decades at Carnegie Mellon University and has been a visiting professor at MIT and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. His books include three best sellers: *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Basic Books, 2002), *The Flight of the Creative Class* (Harper Collins, 2005), and his newest book, *Who's Your City* (Basic Books).

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