



Richard Florida on Post-Recession America

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Urban studies theorist [Richard Florida](#) came by the Big Think offices recently to talk about what he's coined "The Great Reset"—the effects of the economic crisis on our country, and how it is reshaping the way we live. For starters, Florida points out that a [crisis is a terrible thing to waste](#), and he says if we don't move quickly, ours might pass us by.

So what are those cornerstones of America that are poised to change as a result of our new landscape? [Home ownership](#), for one. Florida thinks we need a new system for the 21st century that fits our mobile and flexible economy. For instance, he envisions a system of renting that allows for frequent relocations "where you could sign up with Acme Rental Company, or XYZ Rental Company, and if your job changes in New York, or San Francisco, Toronto, where I live, and you want to be closer to where you work, you can switch apartments."

Florida also talks about the [future of Detroit](#), and the current proposals to revitalize that city by clearing wide swaths and turning them into farmland. The notion that the city can be rebuilt around an urban farm is disastrous, he says. "Why turn a great city into a cornfield?" Another mistake is treating Detroit to a "quick fix." Instead, he says, Detroit needs to "focus on research, technology, build our clusters, but also help to strengthen the neighborhoods, adaptive reuse, historic preservation, all these small things, arts and culture." Building a stadium isn't going to change anything, says Florida: that's just burning money.

On the other hand, Florida is less worried about [New York](#). As the late writer and activist Jane Jacobs once said: "When a place gets boring, even the rich people leave." As such, New York needn't worry: "There's a lot of space in New York that can still be rebuilt and rebuilt, so I think it still has a lot of life in it," says Florida.