

While the authors weave together the overarching themes of legality and responsible unionism they do so through meticulously, detailed historical research. The evidence they present in support of their arguments is extensive and impressive. There are parts in this book that I will reread because of the richness of the documented evidence. It would have been helpful if the authors had added a glossary of legal terms, so be armed with a concise legal dictionary when digging into the legal ramification of industrial conflict. It will be, however, well worth the effort.

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**Florida, Richard 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books, 404p.**

The business sections of larger bookstores are well stocked with the works of aspiring gurus who endeavour to uncover the true nature of our changing economy and working lives. Many of these works are quickly dismissed, drowning in the multiple offerings released by publishers searching for the next Daniel Bell (*The Post-Industrial Society*) or Alvin Toffler (*The Third Wave*). Every few years, however, a book comes along that captures the attention of the media, academia and a broader readership. These books, such as Robert Reich's *The Work of Nations* or Jeremy Rifkin's *The End of Work* have straightforward

central themes and are written with an accessible and entertaining prose that escapes many academic writers.

A recent addition to this collection is Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Inspired by research recognising the leading economic role of knowledge workers (such as Reich's 'symbolic analysts'), the author argues that a new 'creative class' of innovative workers producing new ideas and technologies, ranging from art to artificial intelligence, has emerged as the most important part of the post-industrial workforce. Florida estimates that creative workers (scientists, designers, university professors, etc.) now account for over 30 percent of the American workforce. Although these workers are presently unaware of their status as a 'class', their values, desires and ethos will increasingly dominate advanced capitalist economies and societies. Throughout the book, Florida develops his 'creative capital theory' as a superior alternative to human capital theory and other regional development models that explain dynamic economic growth. A spirited narrative peppered with lively anecdotes, the book has attracted significant international media attention and has received praise from academic and policy-making circles.

The book is divided into four parts. In the opening section, 'The Creative Age', Florida links the western economies' need for constant innovation and creativity to the rise of the Creative Class and its Super-Creative Core (i.e., the 12 percent of the workforce directly involved in producing innovative ideas). It is here where the author also introduces the 'other' workers still

involved in traditional manufacturing (the Working-Class) and low-wage, low-autonomy service workers (the Service-Class). These workers represent the dark-side of the creative economy as they risk being left behind those working in leading innovative sectors. Florida asserts that 'class' in the traditional Marxist sense is outdated, arguing that the creative class is defined more by its lifestyle and consumption patterns and that its power is derived from the ability to innovate rather than accumulate the means of production. He does, however, realise the growing economic gap between high-wage knowledge workers and those who serve their meals and clean their clothes.

The second part of the book, 'Work', examines the shifting expectations and human resource practices in 'creative' workplaces. The author provides a comprehensive synthesis of many established observations of creative worker demands and new management practices such as the desire for challenging work and flexible work arrangements rather than simply more compensation. Florida reaffirms these patterns with anecdotes from personal interviews and his own analysis of survey data collected by *Information Week* (the magazine to which he contributes a column). There is little in this section, however, that differs from the progressive human resource management texts on 'managing the new economy' undoubtedly found beside *The Creative Class* on bookstore shelves.

Not until parts three and four (the second half of the main text), does Florida get to the heart of his research.

The author first presents the cultural side of the creative class, the relationship between creative work and self-expression and the creative workers' 'bohemian' lifestyle preferences for authentic experiences and diverse surroundings. The core of his research explores which communities foster the most 'creative' environment for creative workers. Florida's method involves constructing a series of indices that rank urban centres in terms of the overall number creative workers, tolerance, innovation, talent, cultural attributes, and ethnic diversity. Finally, the author correlates these indices and establishes relationships between factors such as the number artists and musicians in a region and its overall share of creative workers. His 'Creativity Index', ranks 49 US urban regions using a composite of the four correlated indices (number of gays and lesbians, concentrations of high tech industry, number of patents filed, and number of creative workers). The end result, is cities such as San Francisco, Austin and Boston with high concentrations of high-tech industries, large gay populations, and creative workers rank high, while Buffalo and Memphis are near the bottom of the rankings.

Florida's analysis has generated a great deal of excitement in urban and regional planning circles. If the creative class prefers to live largely in communities where diversity and tolerance (and not just technology) thrives, then attracting high-skilled workers to specific places depends on the creation of a particular cosmopolitan aesthetic. Florida himself is in great

demand as a public speaker and many of his presentations directly address which cities will be winners and losers in the new creative economy. Unfortunately, his discussion of strategies to build 'creative cities' in the book is limited. His success stories of Austin and Dublin and the worrisome case of Pittsburgh are only detailed in a few short pages in an otherwise lengthy book. While Florida's work is an ambitious and extensive treatment of the changing nature of work and raises important issues and questions, it also fails to provide any viable strategies to address the growing social and economic polarisation that has accompanied the 'rise of the creative class'. Florida's remedy for the social divides is a final chapter call for the creative class to 'grow-up', assume their rightful leadership role in our changing society, support public investments in creativity (research and the arts), spread their creative ethos to less 'creative' classes, and encourage the development of diverse communities such as Toronto (he uses the city as an example).

It is here where the elitism of Florida's work is exposed. The author fails to recognise that the 'other' classes he identifies are also active participants in creative cities. The Working-Class renovating lofts and the Service-Class who prepare meals are integral to the consumer experiences and identities so valued by the Creative Class. It is unlikely that elite workers will act collectively to reduce the gaps between themselves and others. There may be evidence of class transformation, but class struggle still exists and any social cohesion will more likely result from the

Working and Service Classes organising against the Creative Class to demand a greater share of society's wealth. Working people have never waited for other classes (creative or bourgeois) to 'grow-up' and act responsibly.

There are several other criticisms that will undoubtedly be launched at Florida. The limitations of correlative analysis in establishing causal links and his bias toward large metropolitan centres as the only means of enhancing competitiveness are examples. But this must not take away from his impressive overall achievement of systematically addressing the broad changes in many workplaces. Work is changing and Florida has developed a comprehensive approach to classifying these shifts and anticipating the challenges. His original research is thorough and presented in detailed appendices. *The Rise of the Creative Class* will give urban planners and politicians much to muse upon. We can only hope that the race to build Florida's 'creative city' will not burden struggling municipalities with publicly funded (re)development schemes that cater only to the most 'creative' among us.

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