



The Creative Class Struggles

According to the American economist Richard Florida, the future economic success of cities depends on a new social class, the Creative Class. Based on fieldwork in five European cities it is demonstrated that Florida's theory of growth and the vital foundation for it, namely the Creative Class, are somewhat dubious constructs

By Troels Jeppesen

To create economic growth in a city one must create an environment conducive to gays, artists and immigrants, the American economist Richard Florida argues in his 2004 bestseller *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Not because these people create growth, but because they can be used as indicators of an environment preferred by the Creative Class. This class works within the creative and innovative sectors of society, and is the raw material that every city needs to generate economic growth. Florida's unconventional theory on economic growth has won much acclaim in both Europe and America. City planners and policy makers in many places are inspired by Florida's ideas and it is clear that *The Rise of the Creative Class* has had a considerable impact on city planning and policymaking. But the theory has also spurred numerous critiques and is written off by some economists as the leftovers from before the internet bubble burst.

Based on fieldwork made in the spring of 2004 for the project *What makes a City Tick* - which set out to test Florida's programme for economic growth - and an investigation into Florida's concept of class based on Marx and Bourdieu, I am going to demonstrate that Florida's theory of growth and the vital foundation for it, namely The Creative Class, is a somewhat dubious construction.

Attracting the Creative Class

Florida claims that cities or regions that have a high concentration of the Creative Class and therefore correspondingly high rate of economic growth all show some common features. These are the presence of the three Ts: Tolerance, Technology, and Talent and the Creative Ecosystem. His theory is based primarily on quantitative research carried out in the USA. Through the comparison of a range of statistical material he created numerous indexes in order to compare metropolitan areas and regions in the areas of Tolerance, Technology and Talent. The indexes of the three Ts are composed of several factors that, along with an unknown number of focus group interviews, constitute the backdrop for the arguments presented in *The Rise of The Creative Class*. To spur innovation and economic growth, a region must offer all three 'Ts' and the success of a region is essentially based on an understanding of the interdependence of Tolerance, Talent and Technology. It is precisely in this that Florida believes he improves on previous theories on generating economic growth. In the following sections we will have

closer look into the three Ts, the Creative Ecosystem and Florida's definitions of creativity and class.

The three Ts – Tolerance, Technology and Talent

Tolerance is of vital importance for a region's growth as members of the Creative Class are attracted to places with a diverse population. Diversity is considered an indicator of 'low entry barriers', meaning that "new-comers are accepted quickly into all sorts of social and economic arrangements" (Florida, 2004: 250). The level of tolerance is assessed according to the number of gays, artists and people of foreign origin (other than American) in a region. A large and vibrant gay community is especially significant in this respect because "...homosexuality represents the last frontier of diversity in our society, and thus a place that welcomes the gay community welcomes all kinds of people" (Florida 2004: 256). According to the research conducted by Florida, the presence of gays strongly predicts a city's high-tech industry concentration. However, it is important to remember that it is NOT because gay people themselves are considered more creative and therefore drivers of the creative economy. It is rather that creative people consider a strong gay presence as a sign that a city is open to diversity and allows people to 'be themselves'. Florida claims that immigrants, whom he calls 'innovative outsiders', due to obstacles in traditional organizations, are more likely to start their own enterprises. The innovative outsiders are therefore significant contributors to economic development in a region. Despite the appraisal of immigrants as cogs vital to the economic powerhouse of a region, Florida's measure of diversity does not include African-Americans and other non-whites.

The presence of technology in a given region is "[A measurement]... of both the size and concentration of a region's economy in growth sectors such as software, electronics, biomedical products and engineering services" (Florida, 2004: 252).

Florida measures technology using two indexes: The Innovation Index and the High-tech Index. The Innovation Index is a measure of patented innovations granted per capita in the individual cities. The High-tech Index consists of two measures; high-tech industrial output as a percentage of regional industrial output and the percentage of a region's own total output that comes from high-tech industries compared to the nationwide percentage. "The key element of global competition is no longer the trade of goods and services, or flows of capital, but the competition for people" (Florida, 2004: 12). The talent of a given region is measured by the number



of people with a bachelor's degree or more. Florida finds his point of departure in the so-called 'human capital theory'. The proponents of this theory argue that the key to regional growth doesn't lie in reducing the costs of doing business, but in endowments of highly educated and productive people. Florida therefore claims that investment in higher education is of paramount importance. The presence of talent will generate growth far more effectively than introducing tax incentives or investing in physical infrastructures like railroads or highways.

The Creative Ecosystem

The creative ecosystem can include arts and culture, nightlife, the music scene, restaurants, artists and designers, innovators, entrepreneurs, affordable spaces, lively neighbourhoods, spirituality, education, density, public spaces and third places (Florida, 2004: 381).

The main elements of the Creative Ecosystem are a vibrant local music scene, the presence of street-level culture and lots of out-door amenities. Music is treated as a vital ingredient in creating the kind of creative, cutting edge atmosphere that Florida sees as a necessary precondition for economic innovation. The high-tech/innovative areas of San Francisco, Austin and Seattle were all associated with thriving *local* sounds *before* they achieved success in the high-tech economy (Florida, 2004: 206). Concert halls are fine, but according to Florida the Creative Class craves more, they want small-scale sites with a multitude of offers – street level culture.

The culture is "street level" because it tends to cluster along certain streets with a multitude of small venues. These may include coffee shops, restaurants and bars, some of which offer performance or exhibits along with the food and drink; art galleries; book stores and other stores; small to mid sized theatres for film or live performance or both; and various hybrid spaces... (Florida, 2004: 183).

Creative workers are active people who seek places that offer opportunities to engage in a wide variety of recreational activities. We are not talking about football stadiums or theme parks here, the members of the creative class enjoy individual-based activities such as riding bikes, jogging or working out. In short they want participation, not passive entertainment. This is a recurring theme in Florida's descriptions of the places that attract the Creative Class. They look for a place that's not quite 'done', but still has a certain degree of authenticity. Also, it is important to underline that the Creative Class is not fond of partaking in team sports, the emphasis is put on individual-based activities, suited to the busy, varied and dynamic life style of creative workers.

A Creative Class Structure

We are entering a new class structure, argues Florida, and the new class divisions will be between the Creative Class, the Service Class, the Working Class and the Agricultural Class. The latter three are self evident and will not be commented on any further, but the definition of the Creative Class is a bit more ambiguous.

Florida defines class as "a cluster of people who have common interests and tend to think, feel and behave similarly" (Florida, 2004: 8). The similarities are, according to Florida, determined by economic function. The members of the Creative Class obviously do 'creative work', or, in Florida's own words "add economic value through their creativity, creativity being the ability to create meaningful new forms", a definition of creativity Florida picked up from Webster's dictionary (Florida, 2004: 68). The people that create these new meaningful forms are divided into two subgroups; the Super-Creative Core and the Creative Professionals. The Super-Creative Core of this new class includes scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers and architects, as well as the thought leadership of society: non-fiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts and other opinion-makers (Florida, 2004: 69). Besides this people in sports occupations, life, physical and social science occupations also belong to the core of the Creative Class. The Creative Professionals are to be found in management, legal, business and financial occupations and among healthcare practitioners and people in high-end sales and management. The Creative Class is a motley group of people, from nurses and footballers to political leaders and professors of quantum physics. But as diverse as their occupations might be, they, according to Florida, belong to a class with shared ideas and views on the world: the Creative Ethos as Florida labels it. The Creative Ethos is a synthesis of bohemian values and a Protestant work ethic.

They [the Creative Class] work hard, and they play hard... They see themselves as simply as "creative people" with creative values, working in increasingly creative workplace, living essentially creative lifestyles (Florida, 2004: 199, 211).

They are not aware of belonging to a class, and Florida states that the purpose of *The Rise of the Creative Class* is to invoke the class awareness of the members of the Creative Class. Florida makes a number of references in his book to focus groups and interviews with the members of the Creative Class. If we are to understand that these people typify the new class, then its members are unmarried, in their twenties and childless. This is of course not very precise, but Florida does not actually reveal who the members are, so we have to make a "guesstimate" based on the recreational activities they participate in, and the values of the people Florida makes references to.

In the end we are left with a very vague definition of the Creative Class; they can be anything from financiers working on Wall Street to sitcom actors on daytime TV. In other words, the economic functions, that Florida states is the foundation for the common values and beliefs for the Creative Class, are so diverse that it is hard to envisage the awakening of the Creative Class that Florida seeks. A contrasting paradox is that the values of this diverse group are so narrow that they seem to represent only young, single people without



children. One has to ask one self, does the creative fountain run dry once you have children, or perhaps it is when you pass 30 years of age?

What Makes a City Tick?

The project *What Makes a City Tick?* was carried out by 13 students of European Studies at Aarhus University and explored the correlation between growth and creativity in five European cities: Basel, Berlin, Galway, Skopje and Strasbourg. The cities represented a number of different regions of Europe with a variety of economic, political and social conditions. The wide variety improved the validity of the patterns that arose, and because they stemmed from such different research localities, these patterns were bound to represent trends that were substantial. Universities were present in all the cities investigated, and furthermore we had access to gatekeepers in the chosen cities, and at least one member of each travel team was fluent in the language spoken on the location. This gave us easy and quick access to the field, which was paramount since we only had a limited amount of time to do our fieldwork.

The methodology was based mainly on qualitative research which enabled us to see beyond the limitations of statistics. Our research methods included participant observation, the collection of statistics, photography, mental maps, questionnaires and qualitative interviews. This approach was deemed a suitable basis on which to test Florida's theory which is mainly based on statistics. Furthermore we were inspired by Florida, who in *The Rise of the Creative Class* writes: "In retrospect, I probably could have written this book using no statistics at all. The main story that I've tried to convey here is an intensely human one that transcends numbers" (Florida, 2004: 327). With this as our point of departure, we set out for 119 days of fieldwork and 116 interviews which led to the production of a creativity index on the cities visited. In *What Makes a City Tick?*, 'tick' is to be perceived as synonymous with economic growth and, as such, is an expression of a city's success. We recognised the fact that this is just one of many ways to measure the success of a city in providing for its citizens. We qualitatively assessed the Creative Ecosystem, Talent and Tolerance. Using a ranking system our research was related to quantitative findings on economic performance and technology. Here an interesting pattern emerged as the elements that made a city tick did not necessarily correlate with the presence of Florida's ideas of the three Ts and the Creative Ecosystem. This became evident as Berlin, the city with the greatest presence of continuous activity and vibrancy, turned out to have the poorest economic performance of all the cities, whereas Galway, a far less vibrant city, enjoyed a thriving economy.

The ranking system

To compare the economic growth of the five cities against Florida's criteria, a creativity index was developed. Each of the cities was ranked from one to five according to the points they scored within each cate-

gory. The city with the lowest score in the category 'total Creativity Score' being the most creative city.

Creativity Index

City	Talent	Tolerance	Technology	Local Music Scene	Street Level Culture	Active Life	Total creativity score
Basel	1	2	3	5	4	4	19
Berlin	3	1	1	1	1	1	8
Galway	5	4	4	2	3	5	23
Skopje	3	5	5	4	2	3	22
Strasbourg	2	3	2	3	5	2	17

To measure the level of talent in the cities 56 interviews with university students were carried out. The talent index is a measure of the cities' potential to retain talent. The overall results showed that Basel had the greatest potential, followed by Strasbourg, after which Berlin and Skopje seemed to have equal potential. Galway had the least. The cities were ranked according to their level of tolerance towards both ethnic minorities and gays, based on participant observation, interviews and investigations into policy measures taken in each city to integrate newcomers. Berlin appeared to be the most tolerant city of the five, followed closely by Basel. The most intolerant place seemed to be Skopje, due to the city's ethnic tensions and the lack of acceptance of the gay scene. The performance of the cities in the field of technology was originally measured using statistical material on the number of patents and high-tech companies. However, due to problems with comparing the numbers from six different national systems, the Technology Index ended up consisting of the national levels of patents per capita and qualitative assessments of the high-tech developments in the different regions during the past ten years; the 'high-tech story' of each city. The local music scene was measured according to whether or not a city had a vibrant music scene, an authentic sound, a so-called 'sonic identity'. The level of support offered by the local authorities was also taken into account. Street-level culture was measured according to the number and quality of unique shops, cafés and galleries, the number of multi-use centres, the number of street performers and the quality of the renovated buildings and their use. The active life ranking was based upon the emphasis placed in each city upon either individual sports or team sports. Cities such as Berlin and Strasbourg scored well on individual sports, whereas Galway and Basel were cities clearly orientated towards team sports.



The Creative City Index

Overall the comparison between our creativity index and economic growth in the cities, produced results which would seem to put Florida's theories into question. The results from Galway and Berlin were particularly significant in this respect.

The Creative City Index

City	Creativity Ranking	Economic growth Ranking
Berlin	1	4
Strasbourg	2	3
Basel	3	4
Skopje	4	2
Galway	5	1

The rankings are ordered one to five, one being the top scorer in the category. In order to determine the levels of economic growth and the level of technology within each of the cities, various statistics were examined. Each city was ranked according to relative changes in population, unemployment and Gross Domestic Product. Galway was clearly the fastest growing economy of the five; it topped all three categories. Berlin scored particularly badly, especially in the level of unemployment and Basel's population was in decline, which made it one of the weaker performers. Galway ranked lowest in the creativity index and yet clearly had the most dynamic economic growth of the five cities. Factors such as tax incentives or foreign investments would appear to give a more valid explanation for economic growth than Florida's theory. Similarly, Skopje came second to last on the Creative Index; it ranked particularly badly in terms of tolerance and technology, yet had the second fastest growing economy. Two factors must however be taken into account, when examining those two cities. Firstly, the economies of Ireland and Macedonia have only started to expand relatively recently. Both started from a position of relative economic weakness, and this could certainly explain their sudden and rapid growth. Indeed, Macedonia has only recently started to show signs of economic recovery after a period of war. Secondly, a national perspective must be considered. For example, both Galway and Skopje are considered to be the most tolerant cities within their respective countries, but they still ranked very poorly in the Tolerance Index when compared to other European cities. Berlin, in contrast to Skopje and Galway, came first in the creative index and yet came equal last in terms of economic growth. A possible explanation for that low economic growth is the reunification of Germany and the former poor economic status of East-Berlin.

Our findings also indicated that Florida's theories are more relevant to more advanced economies, and those which have not experienced any great economic upheavals in recent times. It is logical that Florida's theories would be more relevant to wealthier economies, as the existence of a good basic infrastructure would place them in a better position to develop creativity within their economy. The presence of the three Ts and the

Creative Ecosystem is important, but our fieldwork suggested that his theory can not be the sole focal point of city planning. The presence of traditional factors such as tax incentives, a good business environment, good schools etc. still proved to be of vital importance in order to create a thriving economy. It is not only on a practical level that there appears to be problems with Florida's theory, it seems that he also misses some rather important points on a theoretical level. These become evident when you look on both the internal and external relations of the Creative Class from a more theoretical perspective.

Class Struggle

"This book describes the emergence of a new social class... As with any other classes, the defining basis of this class is economic" (Florida, 2004: xxvii) Florida writes in the preface of *The Rise of the Creative Class*. The understanding of economy that is put forward in the book is in its nature very closely related to a classical Marxist perception of economy and historic materialism.

Florida believes that the creative economy will change our society in a very profound way and "new kinds of social institutions and policies will be needed" (Florida, 2004: xiv). In Marx's words "with the change in the economic foundation the whole immense superstructure is more slowly or rapidly transformed" (Karl Marx in John Storey (ed), 1998(1994): 193). Florida's theory is analogous to the Marxian perception of society, where social relations and material production determine historic development. Florida agrees with Marx that changes in the superstructure stem from changes in the basic economic structure, and they share the view that society consists of these two layers. The basic economic structure determines the superstructure, so for society to change the economic structures, the ways of production have to change.

The economic structure is defined by the means of production, and each historical period is defined by its organisation of material production. The means of production consists of two main elements, the productive forces and the conditions of production. This means that the total capacity of opportunities available to extract and produce necessities from nature, and the social and economic relations between people and classes in the material production in society determine the basic structure. This is the foundation for the superstructure. Proponents of historic materialism argue that social revolutions occur, when productive forces and the conditions of production are in conflict. In the 19th century, feudal conditions of production stood in the way of the development of the productive forces and as a result we had the bourgeois and industrial revolutions. Florida shares with Marx the understanding of these mechanisms and describes the changes we are witnessing today as analogous to the shift from the feudal to the capitalist way of production.



The shift from an agricultural to a capitalist economy generated incredible disruption and social turmoil... We are going through a similar period today. Our workplaces are changing. Stress is rising as creativity and mental labour have become the force of production (Florida, 2004: xiv).

According to Florida, we are currently witnessing a shift in the structure of the economic basis, because of changes in the conditions and forces of production. It is similar to earlier revolutions, but yet different Florida argues.

The New Revolution?

Marx believed that the proletariat would take over the means of production and the revolution would come. Florida has produced a variation on this theme. At this point Florida makes a leap in theory and logic and leaves Marx behind.

To some degree, Karl Marx had it partly right when he foresaw that workers would some day control the means of production. This is now beginning to happen, although not as Marx thought it would, with the proletariat taking over the factories. Rather, more workers than ever control the means of production because it is inside their head; they are the means of production (Florida, 2004: 37).

In his understanding the means of production are becoming the ideas in peoples' minds. The means of production is now the creativity of the individual. Florida recognises that in a strict Marxian sense we are still in the capitalist mode of production, where the capitalists own and control the means of production and the workers under their employ, but argues that "little analytical utility remains in these broad categories of bourgeoisie and proletariat, capitalist and worker" (Florida, 2004: 67).

On the one hand, Florida uses Marx and historic materialism to describe social evolution and states that (creative) workers are taking over the means of production. On the other, Florida rejects the Marxian understanding of class and its definition of the means of production. As he puts it in the preface of his book, the defining basis of the creative class is economic and he argues that common identities are based on economic functions. Florida now changes his mind and states "I am not talking here about economic class in terms of the ownership of property, capital and the means of production" (Florida, 2004: 67). In effect this means that the Creative Class' struggle cannot be understood on the basis that defines it, namely an economic basis. And since Florida agrees that changes in the economic foundation are pivotal to institutional, ideological and legal changes to occur, the contradictions embedded in his arguments become evident.

Alienation or Revolution

In the capitalist mode of production the means of production are the property of a certain class, namely the bourgeoisie. Production, or work, is done by wage-workers (the proletariat), who sell their labour to survive. "These labourers, who must sell themselves

piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce" (Karl Marx, 1999: 238). According to Florida, the dominant mode of production today is capitalism, in which the means of production are the property of a certain class, namely the Creative Class. Even if we accept the Creative Class as a new class, formed through the merging of the bourgeoisie and the bohemians, they are still wageworkers selling their labour to survive, and the paradox becomes evident: The Creative Class is exploited by... the Creative Class. The subject has to sell himself as a commodity on the market and experiences alienation in the process. In earlier days, he sold his physical labour and hence became a physical commodity; today the creative workers not only sell labour, they also have to sell their ideas to survive. Members of the creative class do not stand to emancipate themselves and take over the means of production, as Florida himself writes; they have become the means of production. Even though they can claim ownership to the 'new means of production' they still have to sell their ideas (mental labour) to survive. Instead of emancipating themselves, they have become commodified to an extent never seen before. The Creative Class is experiencing alienation; they are not transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life.

The Inner Logics of the Creative Class

As we have seen, the concept of the Creative Class suffers from internal contradictions, and Florida seems undecided on how to utilize the concept of class. He accepts its economic foundation, but refuses to define the impact of the class in economic terms. Even if we accept Florida's point of view that we are not dealing with a social class based on economic relations, the ends of his theory still have a hard time meeting as we shall see.

Florida's concept of the Creative Class is based on an understanding of social classes as objective realities. Based on empirical investigations, statistical data and indexes he argues that it is possible to prove the existence of a class defined by a number of objective indicators of economic positions and social preferences. However, he does not reflect on his own role in this, he fails to recognise the pivotal role he has in the construction of the Creative Class, even though he seems to have a vague idea of the problem.

Creativity in the world of work is not limited to the members of the Creative Class. Factory workers and even the lowest-end service workers always have been creative in certain valuable ways (Florida, 2004: 10).

This leads us to the question: if non-members of the Creative Class possess features of those who do belong, why are they not counted as a part of the creative class? The answer is: Florida drew a fairly arbitrary line somewhere in order to try to construct a meaningful concept. It is like drawing a line between being young or old, it is impossible to set a fixed line, it is relative and a construct.



The Social Room of the Creative Class

Florida looks upon the creative class as one homogeneous group, without any internal conflicts and furthermore, he does not consider the implications of his own role in terms of defining and describing the Creative Class. By applying Bourdieu's theory of classes as constructs it is possible to examine the soundness of the construct of the Creative Class. It will allow us to investigate whether the construct is helpful as an analytical tool, or if the agents of the field are too diverse to pack into one category of class.

Bourdieu argues that from a scientific point of view 'social classes' do not exist, instead he introduces the concept of 'social room', or field. The basic feature of this field is the commonly recognized outer boundaries of the objects within it (Bourdieu, 1987: 2).

The task of research is then to construct the room, which allows us to explain and predict the largest possible number of differences, which are observed between individuals, or, which is the same, to determine the main principles of differentiation, which is necessary or sufficient to explain or predict the totality of the characteristics observed in given group of individuals (Bourdieu, 1987: 2).

Every given field is multi dimensional and is characterised by a number of internal struggles for power. The field is a micro cosmos, in which human activity, or practice, take place. This could be politics, law or literature, but let us assume in this case that it is creativity.

Our lives and society have begun to resonate with a creative ethos... the creative ethos pervades everything from our workplace culture to our values and communities, reshaping the way we see ourselves as social and economic actors – our very identities (Florida, 2004: 22).

The Creative Ethos that Florida here vividly depicts is the common denominator within which the agents of the creative field operate. The logic of the creative field is autonomous and thereby not dependent on other fields of activity, it is a system of classification and as such it reproduces its own logic. Within the field there is a local class struggle between the agents and this is what creates the dynamics of the field.

The doxa "Is that which is beyond question and which each agent tacitly accords by the mere fact of acting in accord with social convention" (Bourdieu, 1977: 165). Doxa is the naturalisation of the arbitrary, or that which is taken for granted and it is within the commonly recognised boundaries of the doxa that a struggle takes place. The dominating classes try to defend the integrity of the doxa. In short of this, they create the imperfect substitute for this: orthodoxy. The dominated classes in a field have an interest in exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; challenging the doxa, but the dominating classes will incessantly try to resist this and will label this as heresy or heterodoxy.

To explain the practices of the individuals (agents) in the field Bourdieu introduces the concept of habitus. Habitus is a systems of dispositions through which the

agents see, judge and act. It is in other words: Society written into the body, or "a feel for the game which leads people to choose the best match possible given the game at their disposal" (Bourdieu, 1990: 64). It is the connecting link between the mental structures and the social structures, the relation between the positions of the agents in the social space and their positionings (choices). Within the creative field one must assume that the individuals that belong to 'the super creative core' must be the defenders of the orthodoxy of the field. However, Florida does not investigate the possible power struggle between them and 'creative professionals'. The creative professionals are in this context the carriers of the ideas that the hegemonic super creative core try to discard as heterodoxy.

Cashing in on the creative capital

According to Bourdieu, the weapon of the agents of the dominating class in the struggle to maintain their hegemonic positions in society is capital. Bourdieu operates with three major types of capital:

1. Economic capital: Money and material resources
2. Cultural capital: "Bildung" and education
3. Social capital: Resources that an agent possesses through affiliation with a specific group.

Furthermore Bourdieu operates with a fourth type of capital, symbolic capital, this is also called distinction. This is a transformation of the three other forms of capital, within a specific field where they are perceived as legitimate. Extensive knowledge of rock music of the late 1970's may be prestigious among the members of an underground rock band trying to make it big, whilst it might be considered worthless among engineers in a construction company. These two occupational groups both belong to the super creative core of the Creative Class, but it seems self-evident that they are probably not positioning themselves within the same doxa. Not only when one looks at the relations between the agents of the creative core does this issue arise. The same problem arises looking at the relations between the agents of the super-creative core and the creative professionals. In the end we can only guess, because Florida does not look into who it is that defines the symbolic capital of the creative field. He does not examine who dominates and who is being dominated. He does not identify the power struggles that inevitably will occur, or the agents in them and their positionings.

Florida fails to investigate the practices of the agents of the field, but he does reflect on the existence of different types of capital. In chapter 12 Florida talks about different forms of capital which might be considered analogous to Bourdieu's four forms of capital: physical, social, human and creative capital. He does not, however, question how they relate to each other and he does not elaborate on how symbolic capital, which looking through Florida's glasses seems to be equal to creative capital, is managed. Florida implicitly assumes that the creative class is a field, but he does not investigate its dynamics, so we have to question whether it is relevant to talk about it as one field. Maybe this is because the



people he tried to fit into the creative mould are too diverse to belong to this 'one-size fits all' class?

A Room with No Boundaries

As mentioned earlier, one of the defining features of a social room, or field, is a common understanding of outer boundaries, recognised by the agents in the room. In the creative room the boundaries are hardly visible, and the Creative Class appears to be too diverse a construct to act as a useful analytical category to predict and explain the practices of the agents supposedly in the field in question. The lack of outer boundaries commonly recognised by the members, means that it is not possible to examine the creative field's interaction or its relation to other fields. In other words, the construction of the category of the Creative Class appears to be of little use as an analytical tool, as a room with no walls hardly qualifies as a room.

The Rise and Fall of the Creative Class

Both from an empirical and a theoretical viewpoint Florida's theory on economic growth suffer from serious flaws. The research conducted in a European context found no strong correlation between economic growth and creativity, and the results furthermore implied that the traditional measures of attracting growth are prerequisites which are necessary to have in place, before it makes any sense to consider luring the Creative Class people by Florida's unorthodox means. Florida wants to rouse the class awareness of the Creative Class, which would enable them to reshape society in the creative revolution. He concludes that the design of future society is "a question that the Creative Class can no longer ignore – unaware of its considerable power or even its own existence" (Florida, 2004: 326). However, waking up the new class is going to be troublesome work for Florida. The definition of class he presents is very ambiguous, and it has some inbuilt paradoxes that seem unresolvable. The definition of the Creative Class is based on economic functions, Florida argues. These are extremely diverse, and ironically the shared set of values the Creative Class possesses are very narrow, so narrow that it seems, to say the least, odd. Florida is undecided on how to utilize the concept of class, and the end result is the fall of, rather than the rise of the Creative Class. He writes off Marxian definitions of class as being too broad, and then tries to construct an even broader concept of class. Along the way, his contradictions lead not to revolution, but to the alienation of the Creative Class.

Florida rejects the economic foundation of the Creative Class, and cannot explain the social practices of the agents of the Creative Class. It remains unknown how and why the agents of the proposed creative field act as they do, and accordingly it is not meaningful to maintain the construct of the Creative Class as an analytic tool. The revolutionary and rapid ascent of the Creative Class, anticipated by Florida, may very well continue all the way into the sky where it will vaporize into thin air.

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