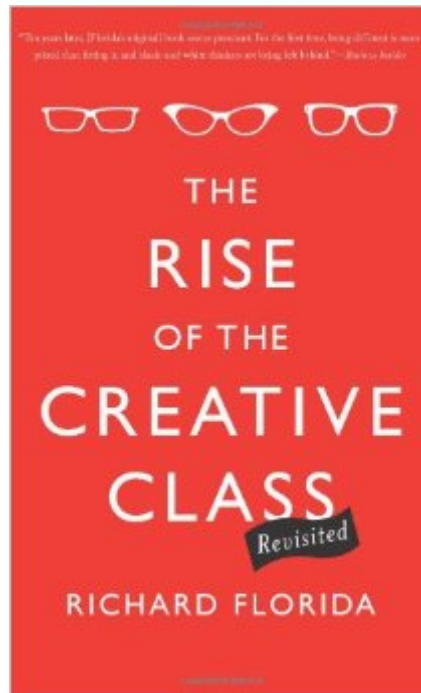


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The Rise Of The Creative Class--Revisited: Revised And Expanded



Synopsis

Initially published in 2002, *The Rise of the Creative Class* quickly achieved classic status for its identification of forces then only beginning to reshape our economy, geography, and workplace. Weaving story-telling with original research, Richard Florida identified a fundamental shift linking a host of seemingly unrelated changes in American society: the growing importance of creativity in people's work lives and the emergence of a class of people unified by their engagement in creative work. Millions of us were beginning to work and live much as creative types like artists and scientists always had, Florida observed, and this Creative Class was determining how the workplace was organized, what companies would prosper or go bankrupt, and even which cities would thrive. In *The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited*, Florida further refines his occupational, demographic, psychological, and economic profile of the Creative Class, incorporates a decade of research, and adds five new chapters covering the global effects of the Creative Class and exploring the factors that shape the quality of place in our changing cities and suburbs.

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Customer Reviews

Richard Florida's study began with a rather straightforward premise: what characterizes the cities and regions that are economically successful today? His conclusions are rather controversial, but, based on the statistical evidence he presents (as well as my own experience), I found them highly convincing. The liveliest economies, he finds, are in regions characterized by the 3 T's -- talent, technology, and tolerance. The implications are profound, to wit: 1. Conventional wisdom holds that,

to boost an area's economy, it's necessary to attract large companies and thus create jobs. In fact, companies locate where the talent is; all the tax breaks in the world won't bring a large company to your area if they can't find the quality of employees they want there. Often, too, the talent itself will generate new companies and create jobs that way.² Urban planners assume that, to attract talent/jobs, what's important is to provide infrastructure: sports stadiums, freeways, shopping centers, etc. In fact, creative people prefer authenticity -- so making your city just like everywhere else is a sure way to kill its attractiveness.³ The often-misunderstood "gay index" doesn't mean that gay people are more creative, or that attracting gays to a community will ipso facto boost its economy. Creative people tend to prefer gay-friendly communities because they're perceived as tolerant of anyone who isn't "mainstream"; a city that's run by a conservative good-ole-boys network isn't a good place to try to start a business unless you're one of the good ole boys. The book is primarily descriptive and analytical, rather than prescriptive.

I read every single page. This revised edition of the book has been thoroughly revised with five new chapters. It departs from the original version of the 2002 book that the term Creative class has evolved. Florida explains that the term "used to mean artists and writers. Today, it means job stability" (p. viii), and contends that for prosperity and jobs to happen, there is a need to convert every job into a 'creative job.' 'Every human being is creative' is the key thesis of "The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited," as in the original version of the 2002 book. With a clear and engaging message, Florida addresses his critics throughout the book and presents updated data from various scholars in the field to support his position. The aim to capitalize 'creativity' is powerfully argued in this book. Florida demonstrates that the Creative Class now comprises more than thirty percent of the entire workforce. But to his surprise, metros with the highest rank in Creativity Index, tended to have the highest level of inequality. He addresses these perplexities later in the book. However, one thing is for sure, Working and Service Classes thrive in regions with high concentration of the Creative Class. Furthermore, the author stresses that the Creative Economy is not about capitalistic discourse; instead, it is about innovation, business and culture. He ascertains the recognition of the Creative Economy where creativity is the key driver of today's economy, as creativity needs to be commoditized in lieu of being wasted; insisting that the key task of the future must be to fully engage the creative talents of ALL. The author speaks to the issues of inequality as well.

I highly recommend this book. As a professional who cares deeply about the survival of his own urban area, I found this book an indispensable and provocative read. I do have some reservations

(below), but, nonetheless, recommend this book to anyone who cares about the future of cities. More detailed review follows. Richard Florida's *Rise of the Creative Class* tells two stories. First, Florida tells the story of an emergent social class comprised of people engaged creatively in the workplace. Because creativity qua capital is the most critical resource in the new economy - as opposed to more traditional sources of capital such as land and natural resources - the "creative class" wields considerable influence in transforming societal norms. The societal transformations ushered in by the creative class are, in fact, means to further nurture and support creativity. Everything from a looser dress code to the postponement of marriage and family can be viewed as reflections of the needs and wants of people actively engaged in creative pursuits. After detailing this emergent class - and identifying this class as the vanguard of economic growth in the 21st century - Florida instructs regions on how best to attract and maintain the creative class. Cities and regions would do well, Florida insists, on accommodating the needs and wants of the creative class. Places that offer a diverse array of authentic experiences and a tolerant attitude toward different lifestyles will excel in attracting creative workers. Inherent in this argument is that place - more than ever - is the key determinant in fomenting creativity, and, by association, economic growth.

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