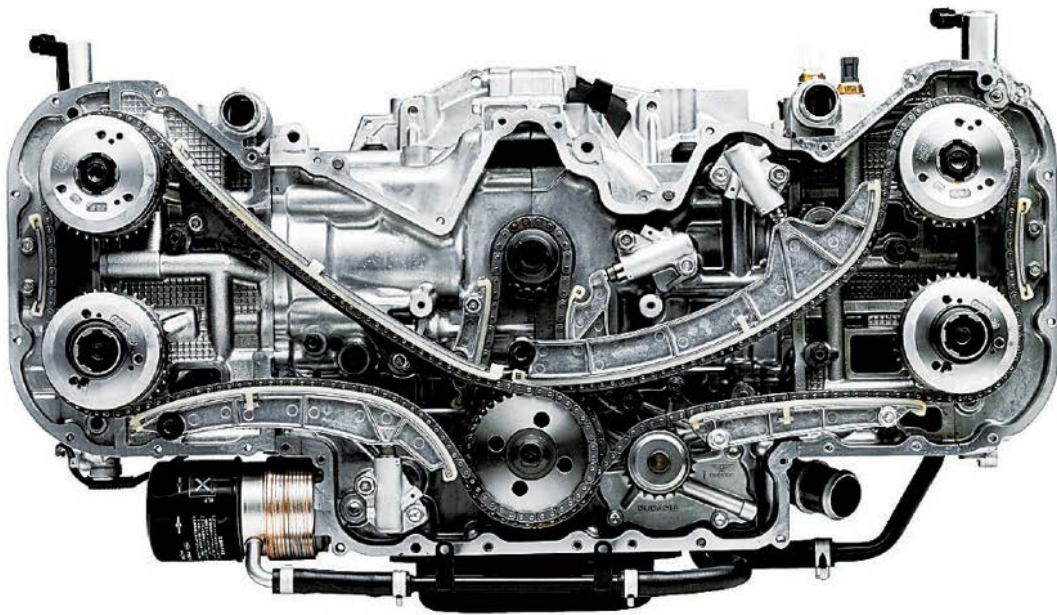


AGENTS OF CHANGE



Professor Richard Florida is devoted to raising awareness concerning cultural diversity as a stimulus for urban and economic development.

Creativity as a fundamental driving force for the economy /

Richard Florida, journalist, founder of creative group, author and global leader in urbanism, has brought a breath of fresh air to the field of urban renovation, especially after the collapse of the global housing bubble. Florida has been a prominent figure in the economic sphere since 1990, when he wrote his first book exploring the technological boom of Silicon Valley. His theories are characterised by his ability to recognise something many intellectuals had ignored: cultural diversity stimulates the economy.

Florida's research is centred on the relationship between neighbourhoods or cities that have a high "Bohemian-Gay Index" —those areas whose artistic or creative population, including the

gay sector, is significant—and a prosperous economy with continuous development; at least in the United States “gay-friendly” areas have a stronger thriving economy. Florida has written several books on the matter, among them we can find *The Rise of the Creative Class*, *Cities and the Creative Class*, and *The Flight of the Creative Class*. Florida currently works as a professor and director of the Martin Prosperity Institute, in the Rotman School of Management in the University of Toronto, and he has taught at several prestigious institutions such as MIT and the University of Columbia.

The value of Florida’s contributions is undeniable, since his theories promote the importance of freedom, whether it is sexual, intellectual or something else, by proving that people who enjoy economic prosperity are also those who actively seek to be surrounded by cultural diversity. Florida stresses that this type of openness has the potential to enrich intellectual and economically any population. Soho, in New York is an example of this, since it used to be a “decaying manufacturing neighbourhood, and then artists started moving in, and then gays started to move in”, and now it is one of the most vibrating neighbourhoods in the city. According to Florida, this is due to the fact that talented young people want to live in places that encourage intellectual freedom, ignoring the personal context of individuals.

Whether we trust Florida’s indexes or not, it is undeniable that his findings represent the reality of many people, while they defy any preconceptions that seek to retain homogeneousness to preserve, or improve an economy. We could say then, that a free intellectual flow, that which is not limited by any traditional social conception, is potentiated when we are surrounded by people that want to express themselves with absolute freedom. At a moment in history in which discrimination is still part of our daily lives, this agent of change has proven that cultural diversity enriches society, culturally and economically, inspiring us to accept that our strength lies in our differences and in our desire to embrace them.

We can watch the conference Richard Florida gave to Google Authors, [following this link](#).

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