Authors Meet Critics

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Author: JAMIE PECK
Articles: a) Struggling with the Creative Class (2005, IJURR, 29.4, 740–70)
               b) Recreative City: Amsterdam, Vehicular Ideas, and the Adaptive Spaces of Creativity Policy (2011, IJURR, forthcoming)

Participants

Anirban, Adhya	Lewis, Nathaniel
Balakrishnan, Sai	Libertun de Duren, Nora
BouAkar, Hiba	Lombard, Melanie
Cage, Carolina	Manella, Gabriele
Chatzi, Venetia	Nwachi, Christy
Colini, Laura	Qian, Junxi
Herring, Christopher	Schrader, Stuart
Teotia, Manoj K.	Stefanovska, Jasna
Karaliotas, Lazaros	Uffer, Sabina
Kose, Burak	Van Gent, Wouter
Labbé, Danielle	Wang, Jun

Moderator: Giovanni Torrisi
IJURR Web editor: Yuri Kazepov

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Good day, good afternoon, good morning, good night to all GMTs. We are about to begin our first online meeting. This online meeting will give all of us the possibility of interacting with Professor Jamie Peck, who is the author of one of the most read articles in the social sciences. Professor Yuri Kazepov, as IJURR's web editor is the main organizer of these events. Thus, I will give the floor to him for a brief introduction.

<Kazepov, Yuri> Dear all, let me first congratulate you for being selected to participate in the first edition of 'Authors Meet Critics', a new way for IJURR to get closer to its readership. The 'Authors Meet Critics' initiative is a joint initiative of the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (IJURR) and the *Studies in Urban and Social Change* book series published by Wiley-Blackwell, which aims to support scholarly debate at an international level with new technologies. In particular, we want to provide younger scholars with an opportunity to engage in debate with IJURR and SUSC authors. As you can see from our names, we are from all continents and — despite the fact that it may cause quite a few time-zone-gaps according to the scheduling of the individual events — this will provide us with a great resource. What I would like to underline — among the many advantages of these kinds of events — before giving the floor to Professor Peck (who we thank very much for being our first guest!), is the multidisciplinary perspectives you represent. We selected participants from sociology,

geography political science, architecture, etc. — all interested in the city, and how it changes and develops. From past experiences this has a specific value added — i.e. to challenge our disciplinary 'taken for granted'. We'll review this altogether at the end of the series of lectures/seminars/chats. So . . . enjoy the chat and keep in touch. Giovanni, the floor is yours to moderate the debate.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Very well. Thanks to Professor Kazepov for introducing the initiative. Most of you have already tested the platform. It would be best (taking into account the number participants), using the 'question' system for posing questions, to quickly test the system. I would like you all to post in this way a (very brief) introduction about yourself.

   While we all do that, may I ask Professor Peck to introduce today's discussion?

<Peck, Jamie> Hello everyone. I'm glad to be here and participating in this exciting (ad)venture. This technology is new to me (at least), so I'm learning as I go and sorry it's early in the morning for some of you. While I'm in Singapore now, I'm also on West coast US time, having just returned here. I look forward to your questions and to our conversation. I suppose this is an occasion where 'a critic meets other critics', if you see what I mean, so let's see what happens!

   Let me hand over now to Giovanni, if he is ready with the first question.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Very good. Thank you. Before discussing 'Struggling with the Creative Class', I would like to circulate the introductions of all our participants so we will have a better understanding of the people sitting around our virtual table.

<Lewis, Nathaniel> Hi all — Nathaniel Lewis, PhD Candidate in Geography, Queen's U. in Canada.

<Van Gent, Wouter> My name is Wouter van Gent, a researcher in Urban Geography at the University of Amsterdam. (For Jamie: I was the chap who took you to see the Bijlmermeer last year.)

<Anirban, Adhya> Hello, from Detroit, USA. I teach Architecture and Urban Design at Lawrence Technological University, Southfield, Michigan. I am involved with the Detroit Studio, our university's community-based studio. I have completed my PhD from the University of Michigan and an M.Arch degree from the University at Buffalo. My research interests include urban analysis, theories of placemaking, interdisciplinary approaches to the public realm and mixed-methods.

<Balakrishnan, Sai> Hello everyone, I am a PhD candidate in urban planning at Harvard university. I am currently in India for a year of doctoral fieldwork on the land contestations in peri-urban areas around Bangalore and Pune.

<Labbé, Danielle> Hello everybody. Glad to be here. I am a PhD student in urban planning at the University of British-Columbia in Vancouver. My background is in architecture and urban design. My dissertation looks at urban changes on the edge of Hanoi (Vietnam).

<Karaliotas, Lazaros> I am Lazaros Karaliotas doing PhD research at the University of Manchester in Human Geography and more specifically dealing with questions of urban political economy, public space and democracy.

<Teotia, Manoj K.> I am a Senior Research Fellow working at the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID), Chandigarh, India and I have been working on urban issues.

<Lombard, Melanie> Hello, I am Melanie Lombard, and I am a researcher at the Global Urban Research Centre, University of Manchester.

<Uffer, Sabina> Hi — Sabina, PhD candidate in Geography, London School of Economics.

<Libertun de Duren, Nora> Hello, I am Nora Libertun. My interest is on learning the causal links between institutions and the urban built environment. I hold a PhD from MIT, and a Master in Design from Harvard, and in Architecture from Buenos Aires U.

<Manella, Gabriele> Hi everyone, my name is Gabriele, I am a research fellow at the Department of Sociology at Bologna University. I have a PhD in Sociology and I am interested in urban studies, with particular attention to the Anglo-American debate.

<Chatzi, Venetia> Hello, my name is Venetia. I am a PhD student in the Department of Geography, of Harokopio University of Athens. I am dealing with human geography issues focusing on urban governance, public space and social control. Hope that we will enjoy the e-seminars!

<Herring, Christopher> Christopher Herring — PhD Candidate of Sociology at University of California Berkeley (MA Anthropology, BA Economics). Research includes urban restructuring after Katrina and large-scale homeless encampments in the West Coast. Greetings from the Capital of the Creative Class @ 4am.

<Colini, Laura> Hello everyone, my name is Laura I hold a PhD in urban studies and I work both as researcher at the Bauhaus University and as a consultant for an EU project. Now on maternity leave.

<Schrader, Stuart> Hello, I am a PhD student in the Program in American Studies, Department of Social & Cultural Analysis, New York University.

<Cage, Carolina> My name is Caroline Cage. I am a PhD Candidate in Development Studies at London South Bank University. My research is about examining the role of urban poor umbrella organizations in slum areas of Kisumu, Kenya in building Social and Political Capital.

<Kose, Burak> Hi all, I am a PhD student in sociology at York University. I am currently working in CITY Institute's Global Suburbanisms research project as a research assistant and my part is on the emerging forms of urban and suburban governance.

<Qian, Junxi> Hi, I am Junxi Qian, PhD student at the University of Edinburgh, Human Geography Research Group.

<BouAkar, Hiba> I am a PhD candidate at the Department of City and Regional Planning, UC Berkeley.

<Nwachi, Christy> I am Nwachi Christy, PhD.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> I will finish the list. I am Giovanni Torrisi, PhD in Legal Sociology and LL.M. in European Law and MA in Legal Sociology. I am most interested in urban democracy and participation policies.

As we can see we have people from many disciplines and many different countries and backgrounds. This will allow us also to construct the possibility of developing some comparative research together.

\<Peck, Jamie\> A little difficult to keep up with that, though you're clearly an interesting and diverse group!

\<Torrisi, Giovanni\> Very good. Our discussion will last two hours. This means that we'll finish at 21.00 GMT +8. I will go directly to the first question by Jun Wang and let Professor Peck answer that.

\<Wang, Jun\> Professor Peck: This is Jun at NUS, I'm a research fellow and my area is mainly housing issues like gentrification and gated communities. I am also looking at neoliberalization in developmental states now, using the case of Singapore.

When you say the creativity thesis is designed for neoliberalized terrain; I certainly see how the creativity thesis frames the discourse of self and is used to justify the gutting of social welfare. I wonder how the policy of 'creative cities' plays out in response to other perspectives of neoliberalism, like the assertion of class power, privatization and circuits of capital? All these point to economic elites, the bourgeois (the capitalist class). What do they benefit from this process? When you say 'the creativity thesis is modest, without offending entrenched constituencies, constituencies of the business community', how about the local bourgeoisie in not-so-creative industries? Does it mean the creativity thesis travels better in late-capitalist cities? That said, would Florida's plan meet barriers in places where traditional manufacturing is still strong?

\<Peck, Jamie\> Lots of questions there. I would say that it's neoliberal not so much in intent but in reception. Actually, in terms of material transformations (e.g. major realignments of spending priorities of government or capital flows), I would say that it makes precious little difference, other than at the margin. The creativity thesis effectively 'travels with' other neoliberal policies and political orientations, only modestly disturbing that terrain in terms of the kinds of cities that it travels to. I have found very few places, however, that have remained impervious! It is found in struggling manufacturing cities like Detroit, as well as places like London and Amsterdam, that on the face of it are already succeeding in the 'creativity race'.

\<Manella, Gabriele\> You wrote that 'Creatives want edgy cities, not edge cities'. So what about the relation between the creative class and urban sprawl? If I understand correctly, the creative class is interested in the inner city and its attractions. So what is happening in the most creative cities? Are they more and more sprawling or are they compacting? Do you agree with Glaeser's comment on the three S's: skills, sun and sprawl?

\<Peck, Jamie\> Of course, fine-grained analysis reveals that its forms and effects are somewhat 'contextual' in these various settings/sites, but there is also a strong generic theme, which in a sense connects these places.

Responding to the sprawl question now. Yes, the favored sites for creatives — in Florida's depictions and in cities' responses to this — are typically downtown neighborhoods. This said, Florida tends to throw a very large net over his metro areas, so San Francisco includes Silicon Valley as well as the city itself. In the times that I have visited Silicon Valley, it has never struck me as a hipster place!

The Glaeser counter-argument is interesting, but may actually speak to the broader point: that it's quite easy to draw divergent conclusions from mere correlations. Simply by tinkering with variables, Glaeser and the Manhattan Institute, among others, come up with very different rankings.

\<Torrisi, Giovanni\> Thank you. You responded to many questions at once. Nevertheless, there are even more questions waiting for you. I will continue with a background question by Wouter Van Gent in order to further center the discussion.

<Van Gent, Wouter> First, let me also say that I (still) find this a strong and entertaining article. I like it a lot. I have a background question, I have come to understand that when studying policy and politics it is often better for analysis to use the concept of neoliberalization rather than neoliberalism. The latter term often refers to the ideology, while the first relates to the incremental institutional change which shares common tropes (but may be in conflict with the ideology). When reading the paper I was wondering whether creative city policies (or fast urban policies in general), should be seen and analysed as an outcome or characteristic of neoliberalization or perhaps as part of a transformative process? (Or is neoliberalism a better term?)

<Peck, Jamie> I would always opt for the term neoliberalization, as that's more dynamic and processual. . . . and in the creativity case, it would not really be credible to claim that the thesis springs, fully formed, from neoliberal ideology à la Chicago school, or its many variants. . . .

On the other hand, as a fast moving technique and as a means of repackaging (superficially renewing) a rather tired set of competitive urban policies, the creativity approach has (clearly) been very successful . . . I would characterize it as a way of 'softening' these policies, and enabling them to reach into new spaces and constituencies — hence their appeal to centrist political administrations . . . Social conservatives don't really approve of the more libertarian elements, and recoil at the implied critique of suburban lifestyles.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> We do not have enough time for replies. If you would like to reply to the answer by Professor Peck, please send me a private message and I will find the space for that. Now, a question from Lazaros Keraliotas.

<Karaliotas, Lazaros> Thank you Professor Peck. As you write: 'The creative cities discourse is both saturated in, and superficially oblivious to, the prevailing market ideology . . . As such, creativity strategies subtly canalize and constrain urban-political agency, even as their material payoffs remain extraordinarily elusive. The cult of urban creativity is therefore revealed in its true colors, as a form of soft law/lore for a hypercompetitive age' (pp. 767–68). A discourse and policy-orientation that can be seen as Realpolitik neoliberal-style. In such a vein of argument, can the 'creative class/creative city rhetoric' as a mobilizing hegemonic discourse, as a meta-policy, be seen as a variant of a zeitgeist of post-political/de-politicized urban politics of neoliberalization? — especially in the European context, which, while constructing a dichotomy between liberal multiculturalists and conservatives (broadly defined), remains within the overarching framework of variegated neoliberalism?

<Peck, Jamie> A short answer would be yes! But there is more to say.

In Europe, creativity debates often take a strange political course. They have been favored by UK conservatives (who have recruited R. Florida as an economic advisor — ahem!), but also German greens, Spanish socialists.

I have been involved in many discussions with these various groups since my article came out. What European advocates of these policies often say to me is that the critique of Florida only really applies in the US context because in Europe there are countervailing forces, welfare state policies, etc., which will remove the harder edge from the creativity approach, and allow them to be more 'civilized', less elitist.

I have heard this argument in Germany and the Netherlands, for example, but I think it's entirely wrong. Rather, creativity policies — in these contexts — effectively serve as Trojan Horses, realigning policy priorities around competitiveness principles and strategies that lionize individual achievement, 'fit' with gentrifying neighborhoods, etc.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Carolina Cage presents another question about ideology and politics, introducing the concepts of global center and periphery.

<Cage, Carolina> Thank you Professor Peck. It seems to me that in a rapidly globalizing world the rich are becoming increasingly mobile, while the poor are becoming increasingly trapped and pushed out to the periphery. Do you think the creative cities policies are a symptom of this? Providing an excuse to push forward policies that will favour global elitism?

<Peck, Jamie> Absolutely. In effect, they naturalize this world, present it as an inevitable side-effect of globalization, etc. . . . and they create the political space for developing social and cultural policies that are completely detached from principles of social redistribution, or indeed cultural value. So policies become 'economized' through the creativity discourse, even as that discourse superficially values other things (like street art and so on).

<Torrisi, Giovanni> To change perspective, a methodological question about indices of urban interactions and development from Christy Nwachi.

<Nwachi, Christy> You seem to be one of Florida's harshest critics. Could this be due to the fact that Florida seems to have oversimplified the complex indices of urban interactions and development?

<Peck, Jamie> Yes, that's probably true, but I think the least of his problems is oversimplification. All theories simplify in some way, of course, in that they present accounts of the world that prioritize some conditions and drivers and downplay others; so I have nothing against simplification per se. Florida's self-defense is that others have simplified his ideas, but the 3Ts and urban rankings were pretty simple in the first place!

The broader issue is that the causality that's imputed in the argument — that economic development is now following people, and that creativity/innovation is an individual rather than a social or institutional phenomenon — those can be considered to be 'between the lines' of Florida's argument, though at times he is very explicit on them. My own sense is that the causal arrows and drivers are often pointing in the other direction. If creative people were sure-fire attractors of high-quality economic growth, Berlin and Montreal would be boom towns! In fact, both have large numbers of 'creatives' in them because rent is cheap, and in that sense the correlation may be with a relatively weak economy. So I think the problems run much deeper than (over) simplification.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Writing about R. Florida . . . a short question from Wouter Van Gent.

<Van Gent, Wouter> Simple question: Did you ever get some sort of reply from R. Florida?

<Peck, Jamie> Ha-ha! No, not really . . . I sent him the paper before it came out and he replied saying that he was on the road and looked forward to reading it, and then I never heard from him again!

We have had a sort of ongoing conversation, though, in the media. Journalists often contact me, as I've become known as one of the leading skeptics and so I sometimes — cheekily — get them to pose questions to him, when they next talk to him. In developing their story, one of those questions is: Which places have followed the policy advice and shown some demonstrable results, i.e. where has the policy medicine had an effect?

The journalists sometimes call me back, amused to find that there is not really an answer!

Except for the 'academic' excuse that things are always complicated on the ground, we had little exchanges in the *Wall Street Journal* and *Fast Company* magazine on this. The conclusion of the journalists was skeptical here too, in the end, but the *Wall Street*

Journal demanded that I come up with an alternative plan of my own! And this is where I end up saying it's a bit more complicated than that!! But I said that the first thing I would do would be to raise the minimum wage. Needless to say, the *Wall Street Journal* would not be interested in that! But it's perhaps an interesting reflection on those policy positions that are easily 'mainstreamed' in this neoliberalized environment, and those that are considered ideologically out of bounds (even if they are relatively modest, like minimum wage regulations).

One final point on this. What has surprised me a bit is that there has been very little push back to my critique in the academic literature. Why not?. . . . The 'true believers' in the Florida thesis seem to have tried to carry on regardless, measuring this or that kind of creativity, and the critique is formally acknowledged. That's why the paper gets cited a lot, I suspect, because there has been a mountain of Floridaesque research in the past few years! But to my mind there has not been a robust response, other than to say that the policies are not quite so harshly neoliberal in, say Canada or Germany, but I don't think that really deals with the challenge to the thesis that I tried to lay out.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Maybe next year we could organize an 'Authors Meet Critics' initiative with you both: Professor Peck and Professor Florida.

<Peck, Jamie> That would be fun, though I'm not sure you can afford him!!!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> OK. Now a question about creative cities as a symptom of globalization by Melanie Lombard. Maybe Professor Peck could add something.

<Lombard, Melanie> Hi Professor Peck, I'm Melanie at Manchester and my research interests lie with informal urbanization. I found your papers very stimulating and I was interested in the implicit links between globalization and creative cities. Is globalization fundamental to creative cities, in terms of enabling increased flows of ideas, commodities and people? Or are creative cities a symptom of globalization? And is it this link (between globalization and creative cities) that underpins the relationship between inequality and creativity that you mention briefly?

<Peck, Jamie> Yes, I think the thesis (and creative subjects) travel in that globalized world, which is part imagined, part real. Globalization and creativity are both 'strong discourses' that are consonant with this social reality in that they (mis)describe the world, but at the same time contribute to making their own reality. Creativity is really a post- or late-globalization keyword, though, and it deals with the challenges of (urban) political management etc. in an environment in which there really IS more mobility in people, ideas, capital, even if that mobility is far from infinite. Specifically, I would say that the successful policy 'afterlife' of the creativity thesis is completely predicated on the presence, and sophisticated functioning, of 'fast-policy' circuits that connect policymakers in one place with those in another. In this sense, it's a fast-traveling fad but one that reveals a lot about how the global policy circuitry works, especially with respect to the power of gurus. In this sense, creativity policies are creatures of a globalized context.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Maybe next year we could invite to our initiative Porter or Glaeser (can we afford them?); Stuart Schrader:

<Schrader, Stuart> I am interested in the degree to which the creative cities model/ ethos/ideology can and should be considered part and parcel of the overall boom in real estate prices in the past decade in the US, and the increasingly disparate efforts to be competitive of those city leaders/growth coalitions in cities that felt they were bypassed by the boom. Is there a specificity to Florida's work in this regard or is he more or less interchangeable with Porter and now Glaeser, except that Florida comports best with the 'irrational exuberance' of that frothy moment? The reason I ask is two-fold: first, Porter's

more job-centric and perhaps worker-directed but highly neoliberal prescriptions never really disappeared from the arena, particularly in Brooklyn where I have done research, but also, in light of some of Florida's mea culpas (e.g. *The American Prospect* article on Florida from 1/2010) and his apparent declining popularity, and Glaeser's rising popularity and more staid approach.

<Peck, Jamie> I agree that all these approaches are in the mix together. Now, the 'demand side' conditions for their existence, the market for them, if you will, is fundamentally connected to anxieties about capital/people flight. There is a very wide market for quick fixes that can be implemented at the urban scale which are consistent with the limited financial resources and institutional capacities that most cities have. Ironically, they are constantly being 'devolved' responsibilities, but have little scope to realize meaningful strategies. Responsibility without power at the urban scale mirrors power without responsibility at the global scale; meanwhile, the terrain of 'real' innovation at the local scale — at least with respect to economic development — looks very sparse at the moment. So the Porter, Glaeser, Florida 'solutions' circulate extremely fast, in large part because there is such a vacuum, and there is a vacuum not due to some lack of imagination at the urban scale or lack of will amongst many social actors at that scale, but because the scope for developing sustainable responses has been so eroded by neoliberal scale politics, competitive pressures, federal withdrawal, etc.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Now three related questions about the relationship between creative cities and developing countries (Global South) by Sai Balakrishnan, Danielle Labbé and Melanie Lombard. All at once.

<Balakrishnan, Sai> Professor Peck, how is this creative city script being written and played out in developing countries? Are Mumbai, Manila and Rio still following the old formula of subsidizing industrial parks, tax breaks, etc., or is the creativity contagion taking a different form in these cities?

<Labbé, Danielle> You say that few places have remained impervious to the creative class recipe-thesis. Does this apply to both the Global North and the Global South? I'm thinking, for instance, of cities in East Asian developing countries (other than 'early dragons' like Singapore, South Korea and Japan) that still put much emphasis on industrialization and seek to attract FDI in that sector (Chinese cities to give only one example). Do you think that Florida's argument resonates in those contexts?

<Lombard Melanie> Following on from Sai and Danielle's questions, I would like to ask about how you see the creative cities thesis as playing out in the context of cities of the Global South, where acute inequality and socio-spatial segregation mean competition for investment and resources is even more intense. In particular, how does the idea interact with the diverse forms of neoliberalism found in these contexts — where it is sometimes associated with processes of democratization and decentralization (e.g. Mexico)?

<Peck, Jamie> Great questions! I would say that it's playing out in much more attenuated form across the Global South, but invariably it's present in many of the contexts that you mention. I am no longer surprised when I come across a cultural quarter when I visit such cities! Generally, though, I would say that it's most relevant, has the most bite, and wins most political support in those cities where gentrification and other forms of middle-class urban consumption play a strong role in urban development. Obviously, this can be the case in some cities that are also deeply polarized. The role of the state, of course, is important here, especially since many nation states are moving away from explicit industrial policies based on long-term investment, etc. Here, the creativity argument can gain some traction, as a faux industrial policy. — I see that it pops up in China's new 5 year plan, for example!

\<Torrisi, Giovanni\> Thanks a lot for this very interesting discussion . . . Junxi Qian:

\<Qian, Junxi\> Do you think the discourse of urban creativity can be mobilized to justify other forms of urban transformation, if its effect per se is only marginal?

\<Peck, Jamie\> What other forms are you thinking of here? One thing that I would say is that it's incredibly 'promiscuous' in terms of the objectives and policies with which it can coexist.

\<Torrisi, Giovanni\> While we wait for Qian to answer, we go to the next question by Nathaniel Lewis.

\<Lewis, Nathaniel\> This might be a question better suited for later, but I'll put myself in the queue now to be sure it gets in: As one of the other student's question mentions (and as scholars like Ward and MacLeod observe), we're in an age of fast urban policy transfer — some of my own research looks at the uptake of business improvement districts as a form of governance, for example. Do you see any new ready-made policy trends on the horizon; i.e. what will be the 'next' creative class thesis?

\<Peck, Jamie\> If I knew that — as they say — I probably would not be sitting here!! I have been surprised, and a little depressed, by how long the creativity stuff has stuck around, even as policymakers themselves have long seen through it. They realize, however, that it's incredibly expedient. That's what I found in my work on Amsterdam (I gather some of you may have seen that paper).

My feeling is that creativity will stick around until it's displaced by another 'vehicular idea' or 'model' in urban policy, but the conditions for existence for these ideas — if I am at least partly correct in my diagnosis for why creativity has traveled so far/fast — are such that there is a very narrow ideological 'bandwidth' (or tolerance) within fast policy circuits, so that successors to creativity will have to be (likewise) cheap to implement, have a high hype ratio, and allow business as usual to continue in that they don't disrupt too many powerful interests.

The fact that it's difficult to see what might come next speaks to the brilliance of the creativity thesis as a fast policy phenomenon. I think it really was very well crafted for the neoliberalized terrain. If I were to put my money on what will come next, it would be something 'green', but green in a superficial way, like my own city of Vancouver pledging to be the greenest city in the world, a nice mixture of green aspirations and entrepreneurial approaches!

\<Qian, Junxi\> Sorry, I have been thinking a bit. For example, I see large-scale demolition schemes in China's cities, in the name of creating pictures more suitable for the globalized imagination of trendy cultures, and whenever the discourse of culture is mobilized, people see little reason to oppose it . . . it seems that there has even been a moral dimension involved.

\<Peck, Jamie\> Yes, in that sense, the 'culture card' can be disarming. It's difficult to be against culture. Rather like it's difficult to be against motherhood and apple pie, so creativity arguments can effectively co-opt culture for many ends, as your example here illustrates I would say.

\<Torrisi, Giovanni\> Burak Kose brings back in the question of city governance in the Global South, followed by Manoj K. Teotia.

\<Kose, Burak\> Thank you very much Professor Peck. My question is related to your thoughts regarding the transurban terrain in which fast urban policy travels. Based on my research on the literature on urban governance in India, I can say that the discourse of

'good governance' travels alongside urban entrepreneurialism, while, to my knowledge so far, the discourse of creativity is not much on the agenda in governance circles. I think one can say the same for Turkey. Based on these observations my question is what are the limits to travel of fast urban policy in general and creativity strategies in particular? Do the discourse and strategies of the 'creative class' have a potential to change the terrain of governance in the Global South?

<K. Teotia, Manoj> Dear Professor Peck . . . It has been a treat to read your article . . . now I wish to clarify a few points. Let me quote Professor Yuri. While working on *Cities of Europe* he highlights that 'Context Matters'. Isn't this true in this case? The way the case of the 'creative class' has been discussed seems to be more and more US focused. I see the features of the creative class described by Florida in the Indian context differently. Now, along with the caste inequalities (age old), very critical class inequality is emerging. With the LPG set in full motion in India from the early 1990s, the new/exclusive 'creative class' has emerged at the cost of the majority of the excluded classes. The lifestyle adopted by this new 'creative class' is totally different from mainstream urban society. There is already discontent among the poor youth (or the non-creative or unimaginative) who look at 'creatives' as their exploiters.

Another issue is in the context of the North–South divide and push and pull factors. Since this 'creative class' is very mobile and imaginative it seems to be pulled from the South or pushed by the South. Hence, as in the past, the South may have very negligible people in this category in future too.

Another point is related to terminology itself . . . can we also talk of creative castes (In India some castes seem to be more creative and innovative in wealth generation, occupational mobility . . . some castes in education . . . some in agriculture and so on) and creative religions (Sikhs seems to be more capitalistic and more dynamic than Jains or Hindus etc.)? In India trickle-down effects of the 'creative class' are not adequate for excluded classes. The creativeness and innovativeness have to be recognized across class lines and we should start from the basic premise that creativity permeates through the societies in the world.

<Peck, Jamie> I haven't worked in Indian cities, so I will have to defer to you on the specifics, though I would say that whether or not cities are 'receptive' to the creativity virus is context dependent. Now, these comments refer specifically to the creativity thesis which I would say has traveled further and faster than most/all of its predecessors. In this instance mostly 'from' the UK and US (the UK had a pre-Florida moment with creativity, with different roots — I have just written about this in a book that Kevin Ward and Eugene McCann have edited on urban policy mobilities). So if we are to understand the genealogies and travels of fast policies, we have to be attentive to the specifics of the key sites, actors, interests, technologies etc. involved, but to my mind fast policy is a more generic phenomenon and in many ways 'good governance' (not to mention micro-credit, climate change adaptation techniques, etc.) is also a fast policy, with its own distinctive characteristics/pathways.

I am currently working on a project, with Nik Theodore, that is comparing the global travels of two such fast policies; one is participatory budgeting (PB), a Brazilian invention and favored policy of many on the left, the other is conditional cash transfers (CCTs), a World Bank approved social policy. These are now each in dozens of countries and have traveled incredibly fast. So in this sense both are fast but their trajectories and (local) consequences are very different. What I take from this is that fast policies can lead in unpredictable directions.

There may be a systematic 'skew' in favor of neoliberal-friendly interventions, but that is never the entire story. CCTs, for example, have demonstrated some capacity to become 'more progressive' as they have traveled, while PB strategies have often degraded (into accounting techniques or political marketing measures) as they have traveled.

We are still working on these now, so I should not be conclusive, but I think it IS fair to say that there are no iron laws of fast policy and if there can be surprising turns, onto or off the mainstream neoliberal road, then at least in principle there is scope for neoliberalism to be exhausted through protracted policy evolution-cum-exhaustion. Maybe if/when neoliberalism fails, it will fail in this prosaic way rather than in some Big Bang. We just had a Big Bang in 2008 and look what is happening!

This does not mean that neoliberalism is invincible, but maybe it does mean that it is less likely to be prone to 'singular' failure.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> I would like now to change perspective. Adhya Anirban has posted a question coming from an architecture and urban designer background.

<Anirban, Adhya> As an architect and urban designer, I am interested in urban form. Recent initiatives by proponents of New Urbanism and Smart Growth argue for specific formal characteristics (compact, dense form, mixed use, public transit, certain 'cool' architecture styles) and they connect these features to Florida's argument for a creative class. Do you see this as another example of the creative class soft argument adulterating another discipline?

<Peck, Jamie> Yes and no . . . The new urbanism and smart growth pre-dated Florida, so it's more a question of the creativity approach melding with these co-evolving approaches which have their own histories and geographies and sociologies too. In this sense, I don't think the Florida thesis is the root of all evil! In some respects it's no more than the 'soft tissue' that connects together, or provides a discursive veneer, for a range of 'fellow travelling' policies . . . but as such its influence can be quite pervasive.

— If I were more of a Foucauldian, I might call this a policy assemblage, a heterogeneous bundle of policies, ideas, intentions. I think this is where creativity policies often dwell now, in the pores of the urban political system.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Professor Peck — considering the quantity and quality of the questions — is available to have a longer meeting. We will finish at 21.15 (GMT +8). I am joining the two questions from Nora Libertun de Duren:

<Libertun de Duren, Nora> Professor Jamie Peck, I see your paper as belonging to the lineage of Molotch's 'Growth Machines' and Harvey's 'Circuits of Capital'. In that sense, I was wondering how you see the new global economy that your paper targets. Is it a change of paradigm or just of scale of the classical Western mode of twentieth century capitalism?

If I understand correctly, Florida's thesis success in the public policy realm is due to his ability to present a discourse that is well aligned with existing power constituencies. Now, how could we create a successful discourse (in those terms) that is NOT well aligned with governing coalitions? How could we create a discourse that includes issues of redistribution AND appeals to elites?

<Peck, Jamie> Nora, I would be flattered to be in that company! Certainly, as an urban political economist, that's where I hang my hat. There is a lot one might say about globalization. I don't see it as an external, top-down structure, imposing logics from outside. Globalization itself is produced in particular sites and by particular class (and other) interests. Other worlds are possible, as they say, but it's incumbent on us — lest this simply be a slogan — to demonstrate how these might be realized, and realized from 'where we are at' now.

Your second point develops this issue and you use a word that I consider to be absolutely key in terms of the development of alternatives: the word 'redistribution'. To my mind the biggest challenges to the status quo are those that explicitly mobilize redistributive claims and that means social redistribution and spatial redistribution. The

creativity thesis, and other approaches that favor 'winners', that are implemented locally but in the context of competitive logics, redistribute regressively, according to a market logic.

Social or progressive redistribution will invariably work against the grain of market logics. Now, how do we get elites to sign up for this? It's not exactly — indeed at all! — in their interest to do that, is it?

So redistributive policies are more likely to be pushed by non-elite social actors and are more likely to be imposed on elites, rather than (er . . .) 'welcomed'. We don't seem to be very close to this at the moment, however, except in a few cases, like Brazil perhaps. Even modestly redistributive policies — like living wages, tobin taxes, healthcare reform in the US — seem to generate a very strong backlash from powerful interests.

I would say that's the clue to why they should still be pushed by progressives, rather than make do with local settlements and concessions that don't, in the end, alter the rules of the game more generally. That's what redistribution does, and it will have to have some kind of global reach to be really meaningful. A big task.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> We have one last question by Christopher Herring. After that we will have to close. Thanks very much to Professor Peck for his commitment and sharp thinking and to you all for the very interesting questions.

<Herring, Christopher> Toward the end of your article you make the claim that pushing the creative cities agenda subordinates social-welfare concerns to economic development imperatives (first, secure economic growth, then wait for the wider social benefits to percolate through). But I would come out with an even stronger critique: that the creative cities agenda co-opts Keynesian artifacts, and directly works against concerns of broader social-welfare. In a past life I worked as a grants manager for the Washington DC Council for the Arts — created in the Kennedy era of art for the public — and received funding under the division of health and human services (clearly a left-hand state function) which moved into the division of economic development in 2002 riding the wave of Florida's thesis (explicitly referring to Florida's work!). The agency quickly received more money, but the proportion spent on education was reduced to that on capital projects subsidizing gentrification (all the while using its human services symbolic capital to justify its machinations). So the real question is: is this really trickle down, or the creative third vs. the bottom third? Is the creative cities thesis simply a platform for political populism that allows urban managers to ignore the non-creative others, justifying economic development projects with a socially liberal façade of a particular type of tolerance, or rather one that might work more explicitly against them? I'm thinking of the punitive turn towards dealing with visible poverty that is wrapped up in these entrepreneurial 'people climates' for example.

<Peck, Jamie> I completely agree here. Trickle down has been a promise never realized and if you read the Florida thesis carefully, you'll see that there are only a few cases of individual salvation, like the person that cuts his hair!

This speaks to the feeble nature of the thesis itself, and its libertarian leanings. The 'solution' is that everyone becomes creative, or at least has a shot at it. This parallels the 'employability' argument, that everyone should have a chance of employment (so we train and 'prepare' them). It is an individualistic 'solution' rather than a social one and it's also the case that the creativity thesis can 'travel with' the punitive management of the poor, etc. . . .

— Again, I would not indict it as the primary cause of the penal turn in poverty management (à la Wacquant) which has many other drivers, but it can co-exist with such policies, and does not cut across or disrupt them.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Our online meeting has gone on far more than expected. Not just in terms of time (it is 21.30 already) but also in terms of deepening the discussion.

We can consider this a great success. I need to thank Professor Peck for his great effort in keeping up with all the different questions. And to you all for posing them. I hope to see you all for the next online meeting. It is planned for the 4th of May 2011.

<Peck, Jamie> Phew! That was a lot of typing. I need to lie down now . . . I have certainly found it interesting, though of course each one of these questions warrants a longer discussion. I hope you found it useful. — Thanks to IJURR, and to Giovanni and Yuri for putting this on. I know it was a lot of work.

<Kazepov, Yuri> Dear Jamie, it was useful indeed. We really thank you a lot for all your insightful answers. I think we all appreciated your precise and clear reasoning.

<Torrisi, Giovanni> Next time we will discuss: 'Participation in Urban Contention and Deliberation'. If Professor Peck would also like to join, I will keep you posted.

<Peck, Jamie> Please do, watching will be easier than typing! Good night/afternoon/morning all!

<Torrisi, Giovanni> We will publish the revised text of the chat in the following days. Good day and night to you all.

<Peck Jamie> Thanks all, signing off . . .