

**Mobility, Creativity and Security**  
**The Economics and Politics of Global Creative Cities**

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My task today is to make the connection between my interests as an interdisciplinary scholar of migration and mobility, and the variety of architectural themes that you are discussing at the conference on “Mobile Anxieties” this weekend. I have only a layman’s knowledge and appreciation of architecture and, although I come today from a city that might be rightfully thought of a great source of examples of “mobile anxieties” – Los Angeles – there is also not much I can say authoritatively on that theme either. For what its worth, in the great debate about Los Angeles that has raged amongst urban planning scholars for decades, as a guide to that city I would side more with Reyner Banham’s *Architecture of Four Ecologies* – the utopian vision of LA as a flat expanse of mobility, freedom, play and creativity – more than Mike Davis’s *Ecology of Fear* – of LA as the carceral nightmare of social segregation and paranoid control – although there is truth in both. Which of these visions applies better to the USA as a whole today is a question I will return to. But urban planning is not my topic today. Rather, I wish to focus on a subject I do know something about – international mobility on a global and regional scale, that is, spatial mobility as an index of global and regional integration, a.k.a. globalization, and particularly the mobility of creative professionals as an ideal type of such mobility.

Let's think about the mobility of architects, art and design professionals, IT innovators: I am presuming that there are few of you out there today in the audience, and that this theme might speak to you in some way. I think it is quite likely that professional mobility at both a regional and international level is likely to be a big part of your future careers and lifestyles.

Here I am thinking about mobility as both a *spatial* and *social mobility* phenomenon – that people migrate both to *move out* (of the frustrating, local, provincial places they come from) and to *move up* (to build a career, be successful, climb the social and economic ladder). In the free moving, global economy that we inhabit, it is fairly universally presumed that such mobility dynamics are a prerequisite and necessary component of a dynamic economy: the more people move and the more flexible they are, the more dynamic the economy will be. In economists' terms, freeing up persons as one of the factors of production – making them more mobile and more flexible – is but one of the ways in which you can make an economy more efficient. Economies of scale dictate that this mobility should be achieved over the largest space possible: hence dynamic economies are now presumed also necessarily to lead to regional and perhaps global integration in labor markets, enabling the supply of workers to fill demand as freely as possible across all internal borders within a regional scale space. Formalized as a political economy based set of market institutions, regional integration is thus driven by the legal breaking down of local and national barriers to freedom of movement in all its forms – of capital, goods, service and persons, to borrow the mantra of the core legislation of the most evolved example of this in the world today – the European Union – itself a latterday reflection of the historical federal building processes that created the USA as we know it in the progressive era of the early twentieth century.

Another way of thinking about all this is in terms of the relation of mobility to creativity in the so-called new economy. The assumed inter-connection of these classic stimuli to innovation and growth has taken an even more explicit turn in the recent debates of urban studies scholars on the positive, increasing self-selection of mobile talent, as exemplified for example in the famous thesis about the creative class, that has been promoted so very

lucratively by Richard Florida as a “how to succeed” guide for wannabe global creative cities. If the global world is thought of as an open lattice of interconnected urban hubs rather than as a patchwork of closed nation-state economies, cities in the global hierarchy that want to be part of this service driven, post-industrial information and knowledge economy need to create the conditions that will best attract the most mobile and dynamic creative types to live, work and innovate in these places. The thesis is that the most creative are the most sought after, and hence the most mobile, and that they will always be willing to move to the hippest, most happening cities, that are *ipso facto* demonstratably the most successful economically. In the “creative city” thesis, old favorites such as London or San Francisco still rate highly, alongside smaller boom towns of the new economy such as Seattle or Austin, and city officials around the world have bought into this appealing logic. (It is all the rage in Japan, for example, where I have been living the past year). These cities, it is argued, are driving national growth, with the presumption that the non-creative, immobile masses are contributing much less to that same economy. This is an argument essentially about the high end mobility of the skilled and talented, but we should not forget too that the effects of free movement of course are also apparent in the classic reliance in the US – and increasingly all of the West – on low end service sector immigration, with the upward socially mobile dynamics of spatially mobile immigrants and their families, another crucial dimension of the national economy.

There is perhaps no better image of a mobile profession than architecture: a rarefied elite career, effortlessly international in its aesthetic *and* business power, with architects themselves the creators of the very physical icons that most symbolize the global world economy we live in. It is an ideal type of global mobility that may allow us to judge the limitations faced by other professions or social groups less well endowed in social and spatial terms, as well as giving us an insight into the intrinsic experience of global mobility. Who I’m thinking of here are the Rem Koolhaases of the present day and future: the global superstar architects who will be erecting shopping malls, opera houses and corporate monuments in global cities the world over; from Singapore to Beijing, Berlin to London, Cape Town to Dubai. We might be suspicious that the world is really as flat as globalization guru Thomas Friedman says it is. *But it is surely flat for these guys.*

Architects and architecture thus appear to be one of best examples of a career and field that can illustrate what it really means to operate in an almost flat, frictionless, spatially collapsed world economy. A supermobile career in a flat world of universal aesthetic standards, infinitely convertible human capital, and unconstrained global finance; a world in which individual talent reigns supreme, and we can see the cream rising and the economy booming. A world, in other words, in which the theory of the invisible hand is perfectly true.

It is a cliché, albeit an axiomatic one, that mobility of this kind in the new, post-industrial economy is the clearest index we have now of social stratification. Sociologists tend to think there is something dubious, even immoral about focusing too much attention on elites: in this old school discipline, we are supposed to be studying – if not glorifying – the socially disadvantaged, of course. But there is in fact much to be gained sociologically from the study of this putative global creative transnational capitalist class, these idealized folks who represent perhaps our most “evolved” global social forms. And we especially learn a lot from understanding where and how friction, road bumps, and diversity come back into the superflat picture. If this is how the global economy is supposed to work, then it is instructive to learn when these mechanisms go wrong for even the brightest and the best.

This is my justification for my longstanding fascination with international high skilled migration and mobility, as well as the kinds of representations of this world that fill glossy magazines and corporate brochures. For a while my favorite weekend reading was the “fast lane” column on the back of the *Financial Times*, when it was being written by the Canadian smart-alec entrepreneur and diarist Tyler Brûlé. Brûlé’s weekly adventures in first class globetrotting, flashing from business in Copenhagen to Montreal to Tokyo, laughing at the disasters of Heathrow airport, picking out the best high end *ryokan* for a jet-lagged overnight in Osaka, advising on the best way to pack everything you need in a single carry-on case, and berating the stupidities of American homeland security, offered a queasy, self-consciously ironic, anarchist portrait of the dreamlife of a global superman. Symptomatically, the magazine that Brûlé founded – the global yuppie magazine

*Wallpaper* – is a magazine fairly obsessed with architecture, design and high end contemporary art and fashion, projecting an airless, in-flight world of boundless cool consumerism, populated by perfect airbrushed mannequins. Indeed, its pages look something like the computer visualized 3-D representations that architects produce in their portfolios of projects for a better, more designed world.

Such figures and their representations of the global life rose to prominence in the 1990s— that now long lost era of cheerful Clintonite American hegemony, spreading its global brand around the world in the name of a liberal future. Globalization was on everyone’s lips, as academics speculated about a brave new world of cosmopolitanism, that would transcend the nation-state and all its attendant chauvinisms and ideologies. That particular dream died a death in the mouth of Monica Lewinsky, and then crashed to the floor when two planes were flown into twin towers in the emblematic global city of choice—New York City. We live in a very different world now – in which the unreal image of the global – which is still there, after all, we are still flying around, still trying to be free like Tyler Brûlé – has been tempered and checked by a very different modernizing dynamic. Yes: mobility’s big bad brother, security. At the same time, we have also come to question the sustainability of the global dream, particularly as it is imitated, reproduced and proliferated amongst less mobile, up-and-coming middle classes around the developing world. I shan’t discuss this latter form of anxiety about global mobility – which clearly needs to be taken seriously – but even leaving this aside, the demand for security has transformed many of the conditions of mobility and creativity that we were beginning to take for granted until that day in September. This is, if you like, what I think of first when I hear the phrase “mobile anxieties”: that the mobility of the global 1990s, and the creativity and economic dynamism it is supposed to have engendered, has had its wings clipped by an anxiety – bordering frequently on state-sponsored paranoia – that has sought to re-secure and control the very forces that made the US-led vision of the global 1990s so successful.

The debate here will be about the kind of balance that might be needed between mobility and security. But one thing is for sure: security is, in many ways, the polar opposite of

creativity. I mean this from the eye of the creative individual: the kind of entrepreneurial, freelance, laptop blogging, hipster, *Wired*-reading, new economy kind-of-being that has become the exact model of the free thinking, free moving individual that our societies are meant to be producing today. Creativity for the new economy creative is by definition about “thinking outside the box”, “leaving the harbor”, “taking risks”, “flying without a safety net”, “doing your own thing”. Yes, you’ve got to brandish a 9-iron in the rough like Tiger Woods at Accenture—as all the airport posters keep telling us. No artist ever made breakthrough artwork by not taking chances; no entrepreneur ever made any money by following the herd. Security is not part of the creative vocabulary. This leaves us with a difficult trade off to call. Many artists suffer when they try and fail. Too much creativity can also lead to tailspin, to panic, to self-destruction... There is, in short, a complex relationship here. So it is this three way relationship between mobility, creativity and security that I would propose as the way to think of the conference’s concept of “mobile anxieties” as a key to the understanding the global world we live in today. All three may well be necessary in some way to the successful functioning of a global economy and society, but all three can easily spill over into excess.

Now, I am an empirical social scientist, not (only) a social theorist. So for me these themes need locating and embodying: we need to think about mobility, creativity and security somewhere, and through the eyes of someone. They need in short “a human face”, a theme I have pursued for several years in my work under different forms. A longstanding working group at UCLA that I directed, *The Human Face of Global Mobility*, indeed took this as its central goal: challenging the dominant macro-discourses of political economists and global theorists to start looking seriously for a micro-level dimension to their sweeping claims. The resultant volume, co-edited with urban theorist Michael Peter Smith, was a rare interdisciplinary mix of demography and policy analysis combined with true-to-life ethnographies of some of the archetypal movers who best embody the global world theorized by others. Global mobility, in fact, is a far from easy proposition, even with those most endowed with forms of mobility capital. Not that many people are truly global. The global is still a world of numerically exceptional rarefied elites, rather than something that might be fairly thought of as a defining, everyday

feature of the world we live in. These mobility opportunities have, however, been massified downwards and distributed more widely in recent years. There are now considerably more “non-white” high skilled technical workers from developing countries in the US (i.e., H1-B workers); among immigrants here, the numbers of skilled and talented from low income countries who take a nose dive in social and class status when they move into the US economy still exceeds those who arrive with no such capital; and this is not to mention the increasing numbers of more middling global middle classes in developing countries, who are increasingly get access to the kind of affordable, regular international travel, tourism and consumption long familiar to those in the West.

This free moving global world exists for some in different parts of the planet, but it exists in a much sharper, and precise legally defined *regional* form in the European Union. The EU, now past its fiftieth birthday, is in fact a unique experiment in regional integration that has created an extraordinary transnational territorial space, in which all citizens of its members states (with only a few exceptions now) are able to move completely freely across its borders – to live, work, study, shop, retire, in short move, without the need for visa, a job, a personal connection, or even in many cases a passport. The EU is the nearest international form we have on the planet to the internal construction of the US federal state, which for all its remarkable internal mobility and liberal principles, remains stolidly at its borders the acme of the sovereign nation-state-container, exercising exclusive monopoly over the right of free movement of citizens and non-citizens across them. The USA as container nation-state is merely the norm in a world of such nation-states: the official OECD, World Bank, or UN version of the world, in which countries compete against each other as nations at the Olympic Games for gold economic medals. Yet since its completion in the Maastricht Treaty of 1993, and with the enlargements of 2004 and 2007, the EU has created something else: a potentially post-national and certainly de-nationalized economic space, in which the sovereign (national) control of its own internal borders has, on many key economic dimensions, been given back to the citizens themselves.

This makes the EU a unique social and spatial experiment in the construction of a transnational free economy, one remarkably still marked in fact by a reluctance of Europeans in general to use their precious, globally unique right of free movement. While 54% are in fact willing to call it the single most important right of EU membership, only 2% actually live in a foreign European country, and only 22% live outside the region they were born in (compared to the 33% of Americans who live in a different state to where they were born). This is a remarkable testimony to the immobility of Europeans today despite the features of the global creative economy we are supposed to live in. Making Europe more mobile and flexible remains a core goal of the EU, as spelt out in the 2000 Lisbon Agenda that sought to make the European economy the most dynamic and competitive in the world by 2010. An example of this, are the nearly one and a half million Erasmus students who have been enabled to study abroad for up to one year, and I am myself a product of this—as someone educated at a European grad school, and further trained with postdoctoral Marie Curie mobility grants. I am a bad example then of another problematic dimension of the fluid mobility of talent – brain drain – when I chose to abandon Europe for California. Mobility was certainly good for me – in both spatial and social terms – but the fact that, despite the opportunities, I remain an exception in the new Europe without frontiers, is a theoretical question begging to be asked.

This in fact was the key puzzle at the heart of my recently published book, *Eurostars and Eurocities*, a book that offers the first systematic ethnographic study of free movement and mobility in the integrating Europe. I can't pick up on much of this book today, except to say that its conclusions would lead us to question whether the secret of strong economy, functioning society, and high quality of life, embodied in the most international cosmopolitan cities of Europe such as Amsterdam or Copenhagen, is at all compatible with the flat world myths of global theorists. Locality and diversity matters a lot in Europe, and the most successful, creative professionals in these very global and very creative cities, are just as likely to be immobile when their effortless career mobility is cross-referenced to their desire to carve out a committed quality of life in a particular city location.

The book is based on sixty stories – of individuals and couples living as foreign European residents in one of the three emblematic *Eurocities* I identify as core hubs of the new regional mobility in Europe: Amsterdam, Brussels and London. Among them, there are in fact two architect's tales, which are themselves perfect examples of so many of themes of mobility in the new Europe. To give a flavor of what I mean by putting a human face on global and regional macro trends, it might be worth introducing these two particular stories from the book.

DARIO, for example, is such a good example of European free movement, that EU brochures could have been written about him. An Italian of Jewish origin, he has made a remarkable career in Belgium, illustrating the pan-national transferability of the architect profession, as well as embodying the ideals of the EU Lisbon agenda. We see a strong self-selection process at work in his story. Relative to his peer group back home struggling to make a life in the highly competitive field of architecture, Dario chose to take risks, leaving behind the security of his home town Rome, for an uncertain move to an unfamiliar city, Brussels. In a free moving Europe willing to enable such mobility with grants and open borders, he found surprising opportunities in Brussels as a writer, teacher, and freelance architect redesigning apartments – mainly because he was so unusual. He sees himself as very much part of the new economy, as well as a kind of ambassador for his adoptive Belgium. While his “more talented” friends are still floundering working as interns, he is a self-supporting freelancer with an international network. There have been costs. In his late 30s, he hasn't settled down, and his married friends back home now think of him as some kind of “spaceman”. But mobility remains the bottom line. He is thinking about Argentina as a future move, and he is committed to being mobile at the drop of a hat.

STEFAN meanwhile is an exceptionally successful German architect living and working in Amsterdam, who is also one of the rare cases of Europeans able to settle there and get a full taste of the cosmopolitan promise of the city. Despite its avowed progressivism and openness to diversity, Amsterdam is in fact a European city that makes life very difficult for the most mobile. It remains at its core a highly nationalized city, thoroughly Dutch in

its ways, a dimension most often visible in its dismissive if not hostile treatment of resident Germans (above all, Europeans can never forget the War). Stefan, though, swiftly identified Amsterdam as the place in Europe where he and his Australian wife might realize their dreams of a multicultural life in a dynamic city, where they might also “build something” while also enjoying the kind of quality welfare structures, childcare and working conditions, that would be impossibly difficult in tougher more neo-liberal cities. Like many free moving Europeans, they had looked to America and the American dream as part of their mobile European dream, spending time in the global capital New York and reveling in its dynamism, inspiration and creativity as students and interns, But its alien low quality of life, poor working conditions, and lack of child care, has drawn them back to a Europe where these preserves remain accessible for even the most mobile and flexible. So they had bought a house and sought local integration. Stefan is well read and one of the few to know some of my academic references. Like me, he thinks of his story in terms parallel to those identified by social theorist Richard Sennett in *The Corrosion of Character*. Saskia Sassen’s global city theses are all very well, but Sennett’s cautionary tale about the soul destroying effects of being a “flexible man”, capture better some of the realities of the superlife of even the most mobile. There are limitations to the global life of supermen; just as there are profound constraints on mobility as a universal career strategy. It takes settling down, ageing a little, maybe having a child to realize this, and it remains one of the points on which urbane Europeans see their urban life and the trade offs it imposes differently to Americans.

These points are important because the global competition for talent, driven by the business school, Thomas Friedman style logic of flatness, essentially seeks to impose American career and lifestyle norms and expectations on all corporate personnel organization. This is still effective because in the main the US has in the past been far more successful in the global competition for talent. In research by economist Giovanni Peri, he directly demonstrates still how much the US economy has benefited from this in comparison to the EU in recent years. While both attract workers at the high and low end of skilled work, the US is much better at attracting the exceptionally talented. While 13% of the US workforce is foreign born, 20% of all post-grad level workers in science,

engineering or corporate management are foreigners, and 27% of all US based holders of Nobel laureates were born abroad. In Europe, 5% of workers are foreign born, but foreign non-Europeans make up a miserable 4% of post-graduate qualified high skilled workers, and there are virtually no foreign born Nobel laureates. High end mobile talent in the US, drives its superior rates in patent creation, innovation, even growth. And despite the accusation that immigrants take American's jobs, there is also a premium for the US economy when all foreign born workers are taken into consideration. They are overall paid less than US born workers, despite their greater human capital levels and their greater appetite for success. The impact on the US economy during the period 1990-2002 was enormous. 54% of growth in jobs was accountable to foreign born workers during this period.

Policy makers in the EU are desperately aware of this and have for years been formulating and funding policies to try to address the brain drain of talent that still affects European countries spectacularly. This is the case, whether it is Britain, Italy or Romania we are talking about. In the competition for the far bigger human resources of talent in India and China, the EU is nowhere. When Germany created a "green card" scheme to compete for some of the 50,000+ a year Indian high skilled H1-B workers going to the US, it couldn't even fill the quotas, and had to turn to East Europeans.

9/11 and all that has however changed some of this. Student migration has been appreciably affected by the new high securitized approach to student visas and travel, as well as the hostile political atmosphere. Canadian and Australian universities in particular have benefited from this. Annual numbers of H1-B visas, meanwhile, have been slashed from 200,000 to around 60,000, under pressure from anti-immigrant campaigners. There is a growing realization too that the mobility strategies of highly mobile individuals on a global scale, are not necessarily only producing results that are captured and contained by the US economy uniquely—as the classic model of immigration supposes. As brain drain morphs into brain gain and brain circulation, the real beneficiaries may be Shanghai or Bangalore, as instrumentally-minded foreign students in the US take what they can get in educational capital, before leaving the US for far more lucrative start up opportunities in

their home countries. It is striking that the rhetoric of US politics, both left and right, on both global economic integration and international migration, is so stuck in a closed nationalistic mode, evoking a militaristic wall across the south west border for example, or romanticizing the jobs of steel workers in the mid west—despite the massive benefits that accrued to the US during the 1990s, through its open borders to Mexico and Canada, and particularly in terms of the flow of US capital and investment into these raw new North American territories.

The one exception in Europe to the gloomy picture of openness there to the benefits of high skilled migration is London, a place that in many ways captures the best of both the European society and the American economy. Situated in a comfortable offshore location to continental Europe, with full membership but a different economic cycle, no city in the world has seen such a spectacular boom since the mid 1990s, on the back of international migration and mobility. For the first five years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, London matched New York step by step in its growth through immigration, with 500,000 incomers a year. In particular, it became the European hub of choice for the young citizens of Europe, looking to London as the gateway to the English speaking global world of finance, media, IT and creative professions, while escaping the inflexible and stagnant economies of their home continental countries. They put up with a dismal quality of life, and the (now) most expensive city in the world, in order to be a part of this swinging, cosmopolitan, de facto capital of Europe. London has a GDP at 300% of the regional average in Europe. Over 50% of its immigrants come from high income countries, they are 19% more likely to have a degree than natives, and nearly 92% of them are under age 35. What is more, they can come and go invisibly, pose few if any ethnic or racial issues, and incur few costs on the welfare system in Britain (few intend to stay, and nearly all keep medical and social benefits back in their home country). Moreover, they are often willing to take jobs – such as the thousands of bright college educated European workers currently making sandwiches for Prêt à Manger – that see their human capital shamelessly exploited by the British economy.

In terms of selection mechanisms, then, this is a well nigh perfect economic migration scenario in terms of the receiving economy, and wholly in line with the economist's dream of European integration at its most efficient. London – and the British economy more generally – has been the great beneficiary. Discovering an ideal type migration scenario such as this again sharpens our sense of cases that are less happy in their dynamics. I like to contrast London with Tokyo as creative global city hubs. The London of the swinging 60s was driven by the internal spatial mobility of ambitious young provincial Britons to the city. The parallel boom of “cool Britannia” in the 1990s has relied primarily rather on foreigners drawn to the city as a hub of regional and international economic integration. The creative caché of the city is now directly related to this remarkably supply of talent. Tokyo also is seen as one of the most remarkable creative cities, particularly as its popular culture has come to signify the striking originality and challenge of an alternate Asian modernity no longer taking all its cues from the USA. At the same time, Japanese politics is distinguished by the virulence of hostility to foreigners espoused by its leading politicians, and the remarkable lack of regional integration tolerated by Japanese elites. The Japanese economy needs immigrants like anywhere else, not least because of its growing demographic crisis. But it is particularly remarkable how few foreigners from other developed countries make Japan their home. While over 2 million of London's population are foreign born (with over 50% from high income countries), only 40,000 foreigners live and work in Tokyo, with perhaps 20% of these coming from other developed countries. Making Tokyo a global creative city hub is certainly a goal that is talked politically, but there is little or no action towards facilitating the kind of opportunities that might make Japan competitive for the highly skilled Asians that are currently flowing so much more easily to the US. This is particularly problematic given how Tokyo stands to benefit from regional integration as much London does its offshore position. The impending demographic crisis is compounded by the persistent brain and talent drain of disillusioned, free thinking young Japanese creatives, who opt for a “freeter” life in New York, LA, London or Sydney instead of standard life option of corporate career and rigid gendered family roles.

Here too we get a sense of the damage that excessive concern with security can wreck. Already hostile to migration, Japan has recently introduced finger print scanning and bio data controls on all foreigners entering the country, including those who are permanent residents. Ostensibly introduced to fall in line with the US's own now draconian processes, the Japanese government has, in a matter of months, been able to institutionalize a practical discrimination of foreigners, that had been resisted by residents for years. Once again, the all purpose excuse of the war on terror triumphed over good liberal norms, and in a country where all previous such threats have been very much home grown. The symbolism is clear. Outsiders now speak of Japan moving into a new era of *sakoku* – the very closure to the world that came to end when the American Commander Perry parked his black ships in Shimoda harbor and forced Japan to open itself to trade and interaction with the world—the very moment too that was to launch Japan's phenomenal development arc into the modern world.

Ironically, the same nationalist government that promotes hostility to its Asian neighbors, and romanticizes the particularities of the *utsukushi kuni* – the “beautiful country” – whose troubles are always visited on it from abroad, has also been promoting the weird and wonderful outpourings of Japanese contemporary culture, as part of its “creative” and “cool” public relations marketing to the world. Architects are, incidentally, a big part of this image – think of the stellar global reputations of Tadao Ando, Toyo Ito, Shigeru Ban – and they are joined by superstars from other creative fields, such as Takashi Murakami in art, Haruki Murakami in literature, Nigo, Jun Takahashi, Rei Kawakubo or Issey Miyake in fashion, or Nobu Matsuhisa in food. None of these Japanese names would be famous without the international dynamics that made their careers, or the mobility of ideas and culture – the very dynamics of replication and reinvention of the West – that make Tokyo such a vibrant cosmopolitan city. The idea that their creative secret lies in something uniquely Japanese is plainly wrong. The national temptation to self-sufficiency, and faith in some kind of national “genius” is, as it is always, a dangerous illusion.

There are lessons to be found in the London and Tokyo cases for the US today. Lest we forget, London faced its own terror attacks, but notably these attacks were not blamed on immigrants or foreign students, but rather recognized as a product of the complicated, difficult internal dynamics of a global, multicultural society, inevitably open to the world. The threats of the world cannot be externalized or identified with far off countries, to be neutralized at arms length by bombs and clumsy neo-colonial policies. As in Japan, negative reactions to the global world, threaten to undermine the very lifeblood of American economic growth and prosperity. This is compounded in the US, by the fact that the technology of security has been one of the only growth areas in the economy of the last few years: a boon for some, that has seen the country in a few short years take spectacularly ill thought out steps towards a carceral Foucauldian nightmare of total state control – as the US government now sweeps through our emails, taps our phones, scans our every movement across borders, and holds political prisoners indefinitely in zones beyond legal review. These are, to say the least, political moves completely at odds with the spirit of freedom that this country has always embodied.

As a result, those looking for the best of modernity no longer only look to the USA, and are increasingly likely to look elsewhere for their examples. The 1990s may have been as good as it gets for the US, as it slides into an self-obsessed internal economic and political decline, to match the precipitous fall in international prestige that has been witnessed since 2001. Nothing is set in stone, of course, and Americans might still find the strength and courage to push back open the doors and minds to the world. The dynamics of mobility and creativity, in other words, might be resilient and attractive enough to curb and reverse the reflexes of security that threaten to poison them. A lot will depend on whether that open vision of the country can appeal to the young, dynamic and hopeful, winning out over the old, backward looking and fearful. America at its best is, or should be, no country for old men. Europe – which is inevitably hobbled by its longer, older traditions, offers different elements to the equation. As Stefan illustrates in his story in my book, Europe is perhaps a better place to settle down, if only because Europe has never been willing to sacrifice to the open economy other forms of security – i.e., welfare benefits, childcare guarantees, a decent environment, fair and equal chances for all – that

are maybe essential to the fully fulfilled creative life and career. In this equation, even for the most global and rarefied achievers among us, the three way relationship between mobility, creativity and security remains a necessarily complex balance to strike.