One of the most enduring tropes in the field of urban studies is the claim, principally associated with David Harvey, that North American and Western European cities have since the 1980s embraced “entrepreneurial” modes of governance, spurred by deindustrialization, heightened capital mobility, competitive insecurity, the rollback of fiscal transfers, and so forth. What began as an entrepreneurial “turn,” conspicuously represented by turnaround cities like Baltimore and Manchester and Barcelona, has since become something like an interurban truism, a banal condition of existence both experienced and reproduced by the majority of cities, even as their own positions and prospects continue to vary. Tracing this zigzagging process of normalization through various subsequent moments, such as the embrace of creativity, the imposition of austerity, and the rise of new economisms, the lecture reflects on the causes and consequences of this remaking of urban hegemony over the past three decades.

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