



# PricedOut

Recommended Reading

*@PricedOutUK*

*www.pricedout.org.uk*

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**PricedOut is the national campaign for affordable housing.** We are a volunteer-run organisation fighting for policies that make the housing system work better. We call for action from government at every level to build more homes and reduce the cost of decent housing. We fight for everyone who wants to be a homeowner but can't afford to, and everyone who wants to move closer to work or amenities but can't afford to.

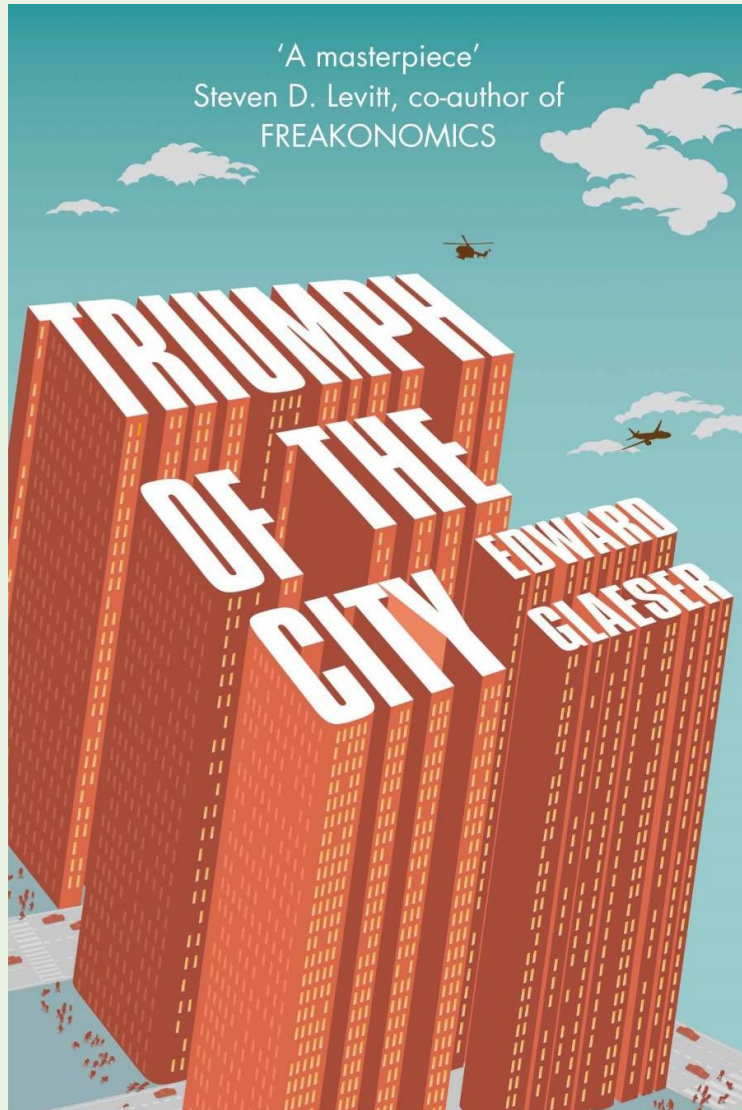
Housing is too expensive. Prices and rents have risen beyond what any reasonable person would think of as a fair amount to spend on one of the most basic of human needs. The way for them to get more affordable is for the costs to stop rising, so that wage rises have time to catch up. To do this we need to **build more homes**, it's that simple.

In this list we've collected some of our favourite books, articles and papers on the housing crisis and urbanism. There's something for everyone here—from lengthy tomes to short reads. If you find yourself inspired by any of these works and want to help us make the housing market work for everyone, join us at [pricedout.org.uk/take-action](https://pricedout.org.uk/take-action).

**BOOK**

*Edward Glaeser*

# TRIUMPH OF THE CITY



Understanding the modern city and the powerful forces within it is the life's work of Harvard urban economist Edward Glaeser, who at forty is hailed as one of the world's most exciting urban thinkers. Travelling from city to city, speaking to planners and politicians across the world, he uncovers questions large and small whose answers are both counter-intuitive and deeply significant. Should New Orleans be rebuilt? Why can't my nephew afford an apartment in New York? Is London the new financial capital of the world? Is my job headed to Bangalore? In *Triumph of the City*, Glaeser takes us around the world and into the mind of the modern city – from Mumbai to Paris to Rio to Detroit to Shanghai, and to any number of points in between – to reveal how cities think, why they behave in the manners that they do, and what wisdom they share with the people who inhabit them.

**Recommended By Anya Martin**

“*Triumph of the City* explains the history of cities and why they are so important for opportunity, equality, fairness and growth.”

# POLICY PAPERS

## Housing That Works for All: The Political Economy of Housing in England

*Institute for Government*

This paper presents new empirical evidence which suggests the risk of distortions in favour of homeowners is real and economically significant. It reports that, between 2001 and 2011, the housing stock grew significantly less in local authorities with higher proportions of owner-occupiers among local households (controlling for a range of other factors that could influence the growth of the local housing stock). Here there are a variety of difficulties in reforming the yet there are some signs that problems are becoming so severe that they are triggering a shift in public perceptions and/or a re-balancing of the political influence of groups (e.g. homeowners vs renters and prospective homeowners) that may open opportunity for reform.

Get it from  
[instituteforgovernment.org.uk/](http://instituteforgovernment.org.uk/)

## Brick By Brick: Building Better Housing Policies

*OECD*

The report brings together evidence, international experience and policy insights for the design of housing policies. Emphasis is placed on three broad aspects: inclusiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Inclusive access to housing has become increasingly challenging in many OECD countries due to a large extent to rising housing costs, which reflects the failure of housing supply to meet demand, particularly in jobs-rich urban areas. Geographical constraints play a role, but in many cities regulations, including on land-use and zoning provisions, also constrain supply. At the same time, some regulations on tenant-landlord relations can discourage the development of rental markets, pushing up rents.

Get it from [oecd.org](http://oecd.org)

## Strong Suburbs

*Policy Exchange*

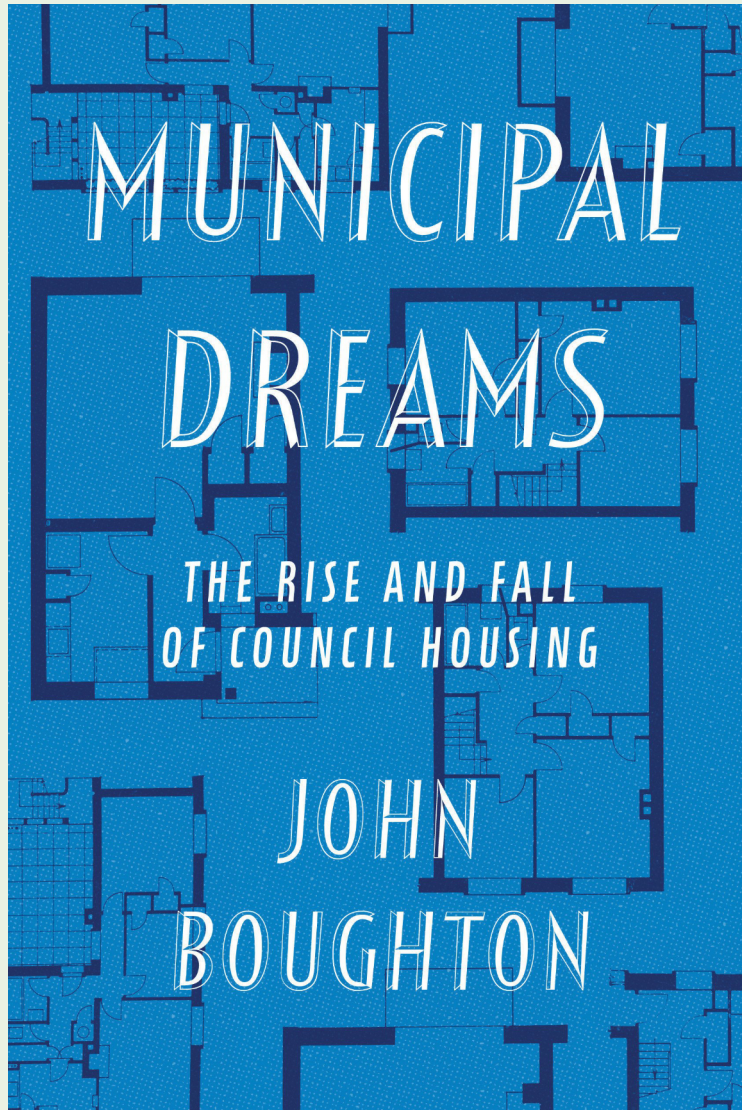
Britain needs more housing. But, so often, local residents justifiably believe that new housing in their area means a loss of public goods and amenities for them. This has led to a zero sum struggle where the debate is over who ought to be a winner and who ought to be a loser. Policy Exchange's new paper Strong Suburbs cuts through that false dichotomy, providing a mechanism for local residents to benefit from, and control, new development. By giving local residents control over the development they see, including its architecture and design, and by giving them a share in the wealth created, the paper shows how we can create more beautiful, walkable, and sustainable neighbourhoods, delivering millions of houses in the areas they are most needed.

Get it from [policyexchange.org.uk](http://policyexchange.org.uk)

**BOOK**

*John Boughton*

# MUNICIPAL DREAMS



Municipal Dreams presents an alternative history of the United Kingdom. This history begins in the slum clearances of the late nineteenth century and the aspirations of those who would build anew. John Boughton looks at how and why the state's duty to house its people decently became central to our politics. Traversing the nation, Boughton offers an architectural tour of some of the best and most remarkable of our housing estates, as well as many accounted ordinary; he asks us to understand better their complex story and to rethink our prejudices. His accounts include extraordinary planners and architects who wished to elevate working men and women through design and the politicians, high and low, who shaped their work, the competing ideologies which have promoted state housing and condemned it, the economics which has always constrained our housing ideals, the crisis wrought by Right to Buy, and the evolving controversies around regeneration. He shows how the loss of the dream of good housing for all is a danger for the whole of society—as was seen in the fire in Grenfell Tower.

**Recommended By Neil Goodrich**

“Municipal Dreams is essential reading on the evolution of social housing in England. It is part history, part love letter. John Boughton covers 100 years of the social housing provision detailing the rise and fall(ish) of one of the core tenures of housing in this country.”

**ARTICLE**

*Bowman, Myers & Southwood*

# THE HOUSING THEORY OF EVERYTHING



Try listing every problem the Western world has at the moment. Along with COVID, you might include slow growth, climate change, poor health, financial instability, economic inequality, and falling fertility. These longer-term trends contribute to a sense of malaise that many of us feel about our societies. They may seem loosely related, but there is one big thing that makes them all worse. That thing is a shortage of housing: too few homes being built where people want to live. And if we fix those shortages, we will help to solve many of the other, seemingly unrelated problems that we face as well.

[www.worksinprogress.co](http://www.worksinprogress.co)

**Recommended By Freddie Poser**

“The Housing Theory of everything explains clearly why solving the housing crisis is crucial to the development and well-being of countries across the developed world”

# ACADEMIC ARTICLES

## Why have house prices risen so much more than rents in superstar cities?

*C. Hilber & A. Mense*

In most countries - particularly in supply constrained superstar cities - house prices have risen much more strongly than rents over the last two decades. We provide an explanation that does not rely on falling interest rates, changing credit conditions, unrealistic expectations, rising inequality, or global investor demand. Our model distinguishes between short- and long-run supply constraints and assumes housing demand shocks exhibit serial correlation. Employing panel data for England, our instrumental variable-fixed effect estimates suggest that in Greater London labor demand shocks in conjunction with supply constraints explain two-thirds of the 153% increase in the price-to-rent ratio between 1997 and 2018.

Get it from [ideas.repec.org](https://ideas.repec.org)

## The Economics of Homelessness: Evidence from North America

*J. Quigley & S. Raphael*

This paper reports on the hypothesis that variations in homelessness arise from changed circumstances in the housing market and in the income distribution. We utilize essentially all the systematic information available on homelessness in US urban areas. We use these data to estimate the effects of housing prices, vacancies, and rent-to-income ratios upon the incidence of homelessness. Our results suggest that simple economic principles governing the availability and pricing of housing and the growth in demand for the lowest quality housing explain a large portion of the variation in homelessness among US metropolitan housing markets.

Get it from  
[urbanpolicy.berkeley.edu](https://urbanpolicy.berkeley.edu)

## The Greenness of Cities: Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Urban Development

*E. Glaeser & M. Kahn*

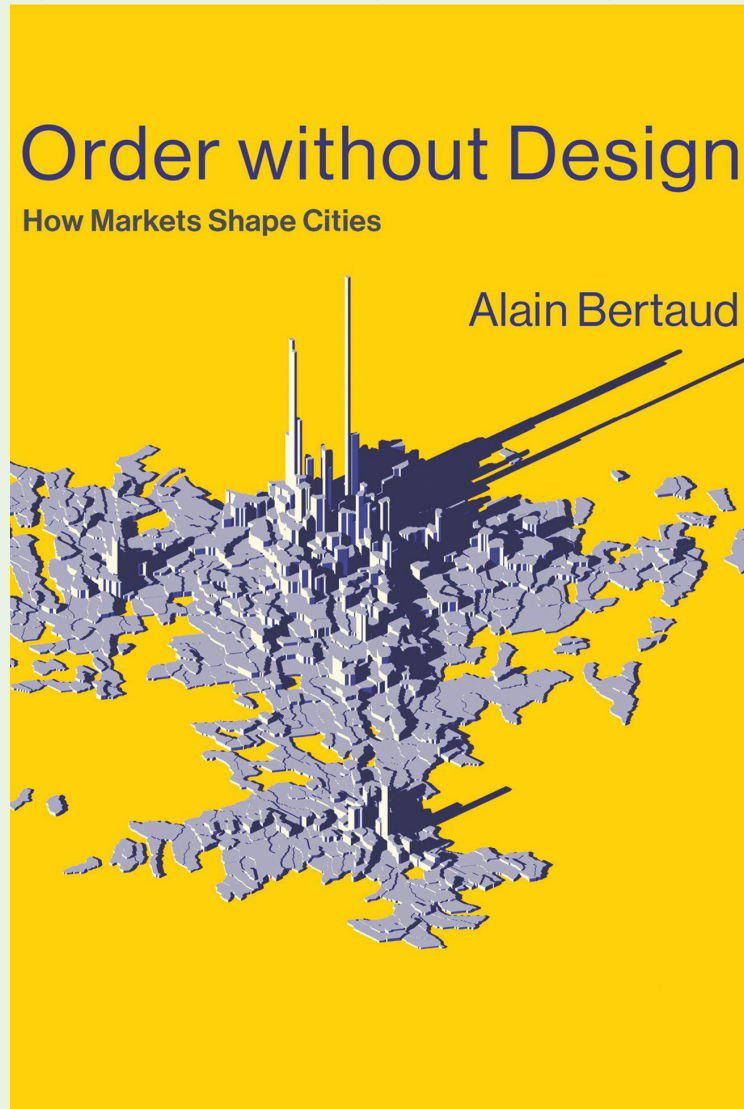
In this paper, we attempt to quantify the carbon dioxide emissions associated with new construction in different locations across the country. We look at emissions from driving, public transit, home heating, and household electricity usage. We find that the lowest emissions areas are generally in California and that the highest emissions areas are in Texas and Oklahoma. There is a strong negative association between emissions and land use regulations. By restricting new development, the cleanest areas of the country would seem to be pushing new development towards places with higher emissions. Cities generally have significantly lower emissions than suburban areas, and the city-suburb gap is particularly large in older areas, like New York.

Get it from [www.nber.org](https://www.nber.org)

**BOOK**

# ORDER WITHOUT DESIGN: HOW MARKETS SHAPE CITIES

*Alain Bertaud*



Urban planning is a craft learned through practice. Planners make rapid decisions that have an immediate impact on the ground—the width of streets, the minimum size of land parcels, the heights of buildings. The language they use to describe their objectives is qualitative—“sustainable,” “livable,” “resilient”—often with no link to measurable outcomes. Urban economics, on the other hand, is a quantitative science, based on theories, models, and empirical evidence largely developed in academic settings. In this book, the eminent urban planner Alain Bertaud argues that applying the theories of urban economics to the practice of urban planning would greatly improve both the productivity of cities and the welfare of urban citizens. Bertaud explains that markets provide the indispensable mechanism for cities' development. He cites the experience of cities without markets for land or labor in pre-reform China and Russia; this “urban planners' dream” created inefficiencies and waste.

**Recommended By Chris Worrall**

“This is the ultimate explainer on urbanism from the former Principal Urban Planner at the World Bank, who has observed and advised on land markets around the globe – where they have worked, and where they have not.”

# ARTICLES

## Turning Houses into Gold: The Failure of British Planning

*Paul Cheshire*

Professor Emeritus of Economic Geography Paul Cheshire explains how policies designed deliberately to limit the supply of land for housing have caused a decades-long failure to build enough homes. This pushes up the price of housing, causes it to become a desirable investment asset, and has led to the housing crisis we face today. He dispels some of the myths about housing affordability in a clear and accessible way.

## A Place in the Sun

*Anya Martin*

Rents and house prices have soared across much of the world for decades, leading some to suggest it's an inevitable feature of contemporary societies. But some cities have bucked the trend. This article explores the experience of Sydney, Australia, which passed planning reforms to increase the supply of housing, and saw a substantial drop in rents even as they grew elsewhere. It also identifies what this means for planning reforms in England and elsewhere, and some of the political challenges with learning from Sydney.

## California Dream: Exploring The Promise - And Unintended Consequences - of Rent Control

*Chris Nichols*

Campaigns for rent control can have a strong allure to those facing issues of housing affordability. While it is great for those who get it, rent control comes at great expense for future renters by creating further shortages of housing. At least this is what is explored and reviewed using empirical evidence in this article referring to the Stanford University study released in 2017 of evidence on rent control from San Francisco, as well as some interesting counter arguments.

