

Open University - Social Housing and Working Class Heritage

Social Housing: Winners and Losers - Social Housing and Working Class Heritage

Edward Glaeser - Triumph Of The City

Triumph of the City: how our greatest invention makes us richer, smarter, greener, healthier and happier

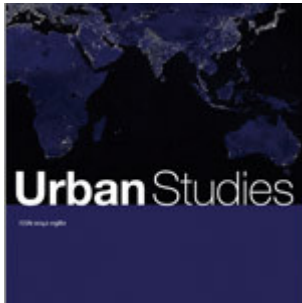
Speaker: Professor Edward Glaeser

Chair: Professor Henry Overman

This event was recorded on 14 March 2011 in Sheikh Zayed Theatre, New Academic Building

Building and maintaining cities is difficult and density has costs, but in this presentation Professor Edward Glaeser will argue that these costs are worth bearing, because whether in London's ornate arcades or Rio's fractious favelas, whether in the high rises of Hong Kong or the dusty workplaces of Dharavi, our culture, our prosperity, and our freedom are all ultimately gifts of people living, working, and thinking together — the ultimate triumph of the city.

Jonathan Rutherford - Urban Energy Transitions



As we all go busily about our daily lives, only very rarely do most of us consciously think about or visualize the flows, networks, uses and implications of energy underpinning our very existence and the functioning of the cities in which most of us live and work. This backgrounding or taken-for-grantedness is reflected in the urban studies literature where a sustained focus on energy has been, with a few notable exceptions, conspicuous by its near absence.

A recent Special Issue of *Urban Studies* on 'Urban energy transitions: places, processes and politics of socio-technical change' contributes to thinking through the complex, diverse, always emerging and situated relations between energy and cities at a time when these are (re)appearing on political and policy agendas for a host of reasons. Security of energy resources and supply lines, climate change, affordability and accessibility, and governance and management of utilities are some of the 'big' stakes and issues through which energy systems are being rethought and reconfigured across North and South, implicitly or explicitly in relation to built environments and urban lives and lifestyles. But, in contrast to much of the normative policy agenda, taken as a whole, the Special Issue does not reduce the urban to a specific location, context, administrative level or actor, and nor does it view the urban as a readily available instrument or tool through which transitions of energy systems (on 'other' scales) can be easily deployed. Instead, we study an urban which is a constitutive and inseparable component (or set of intersecting components) of very diverse processes and practices of energy transition across North and South. By reflecting on the urban materialities, imaginaries, controversies and politics through which energy systems do and can change, and thus on what is, but also what might be, a specifically *urban* socio-technical transition, from Cape Town to London and Amman to Freiburg, we open up theory and practice to actualities and possibilities of urban energy relations which are other than black-boxed, bounded, pre-set and confiscated by governmental actors or transnational utility companies.

Read more: <http://urbanstudiesjnl.blogspot.nl/>

Janet Viveiros - Mapping Housing Affordability, A Grim Picture For Renters

nhcopenhouse.org. April 2014. As the housing affordability challenges facing renters in the aftermath of the Great Recession have gained attention recently, I found myself wondering just what the differences in housing affordability for owners and renters actually looks like nationwide. I decided to map the data from Housing Landscape 2014 to see where low- and moderate-income owners and renters are struggling to afford their housing the most.

The map below shows that large shares of low- and moderate-income working homeowners struggle to afford their homes in high-cost housing markets. New Jersey leads the way with about three in 10 households spending at least half their income on housing, making them severely housing cost-burdened.

Read

more: <http://www.nhcopenhouse.org/mapping-housing-affordability-grim.html>

Rustum Mahmoud - Slums And The Syrian Revolution

souriahouria.com. April 2014. The Syrian socio-economic history can be divided into three phases. The first phase was that of the bourgeoisie. This stage extends from the beginning of independence from the French colonial rule to the end of the 1950s, at the time of unity with Egypt.

During this phase, the urban wealthy elite controlled Syria, and its power was derived from its wide network of properties in the vast countryside of Syria, which covered more than a quarter of the total population of the country.

The targeted economy was the second stage in the history of modern Syria. It extended throughout the three decades that followed the beginning of the era of unity with Egypt. State institutions expanded during this stage, and through these institutions the bureaucratic elite dominated economic public life. Many Syrians moved to rural towns and villages in this stage. Cities housed nearly a third of the country's population, as many of the young men with higher levels of education and those in need of a higher degree of services moved to the cities.

Read more: <http://souriahouria.com/slumsthe-syrian-observer/>

London School of Economics and Political Science - Five Minutes With Danny Dorling



Photo: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/>

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/>. April 2014.

What is the housing crisis in the UK?

The housing crisis is a crisis of affordability. The biggest part of the cost of living crisis isn't gas bills or food bills, it's your rent or your mortgage. Rents have increased, and prices have increased in the South-East. Elsewhere prices have fallen and people are in negative equity. It's issues with housing that are probably going to keep people awake at night in worry more than anything else. Beyond the cost, it is also the unpredictability, the fear and lack of any certainty about what's going to happen to you depending on how you're housed. Many people are not particularly well housed. Many don't have much of an idea of how they're going to be housed in three or four or five years time.

What are the roots of the problem?

Housing was the one of the big three issues - the others being education and health - that the UK didn't sort out in terms of having a decent state support; a control on the quality of what happened and a control on people profiteering. For instance we don't allow people to make massive profits, or largely we haven't, out of education. Private schools are non-profit making. Housing, on the other hand, is a massive source of profit-making.

The rise in income and wealth inequality that began from the 1970s onwards has become a housing problem in the end. If you have one part of society becoming wealthier and wealthier, and everybody else sees their average income drop and their wealth levels fall to a lower proportion of national, it gets expressed in housing.

Read more: <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/five-minutes-with-danny-dorling>