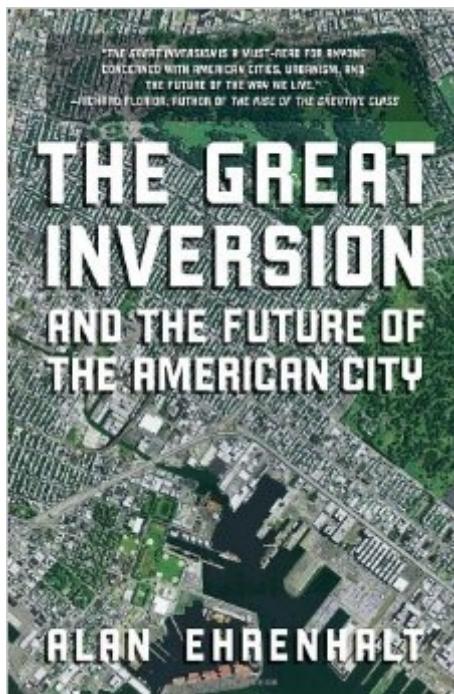


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The Great Inversion And The Future Of The American City



Synopsis

Eye-opening and thoroughly engaging, this is an indispensable look at American urban/suburban society and its future. In *The Great Inversion*, Alan Ehrenhalt, one of our leading urbanologists, reveals how the roles of America's cities and suburbs are changing places—“young adults and affluent retirees moving in, while immigrants and the less affluent are moving out”—and addresses the implications of these shifts for the future of our society. Ehrenhalt shows us how the commercial canyons of lower Manhattan are becoming residential neighborhoods, and how mass transit has revitalized inner-city communities in Chicago and Brooklyn. He explains why car-dominated cities like Phoenix and Charlotte have sought to build twenty-first-century downtowns from scratch, while sprawling postwar suburbs are seeking to attract young people with their own form of urbanized experience.

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Vintage (January 22, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0307474372

ISBN-13: 978-0307474377

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (38 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #85,994 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #35 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > Public Affairs & Administration #50 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Public Affairs & Policy > City Planning & Urban Development #51 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Urban Planning & Development

Customer Reviews

Alan Ehrenhalt has written a fascinating account what he calls a recent "demographic inversion" - not, thank you, "gentrification" - in which immigrants now tend to enter American society via the suburbs rather than the core city, the poor abandon or are driven from the core city into the suburbs via loss of livelihood, taxes, and buyouts, and those who can afford it take up residence in the urban core for entertainment, social amenities, and quicker commutes. Ehrenhalt provides a variety of different takes on the ways in which this process is unfolding, to varying degrees of success, in

exemplary urban neighborhoods - Chicago's Sheffield, Brooklyn's Bushwick, Cleveland Heights, Gwinnett County northeast of Atlanta, and many more, all related in clear, felicitous prose. Among my favorite chapters were those in which Ehrenhalt chronicled and assessed the fall and rise of the Clarendon section of Arlington, brought about by the arrival of Vietnamese shop and restaurant owners to properties emptied out by the disorder and loss of business due to Metro construction, and the continuing death spiral of the urban shipwreck that is Philadelphia, or, as some locals call it, "Bostroit," for its unique 18th-century core in close proximity to areas of utter blight, drug dens, and boarded up row houses, all a result of the rapid post-industrial loss of manufacturing and port services. And yes, sports fans, Ehrenhalt lingers for a while on an aspect of Philly most of you will recognize, as "the only large American city in which no one is surprised when parade watchers boo Santa Claus, where fans boo their sports teams for failing to win a second consecutive championship, or where grandmothers at the stadium insult spectators who happen to be wearing the wrong jersey.

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