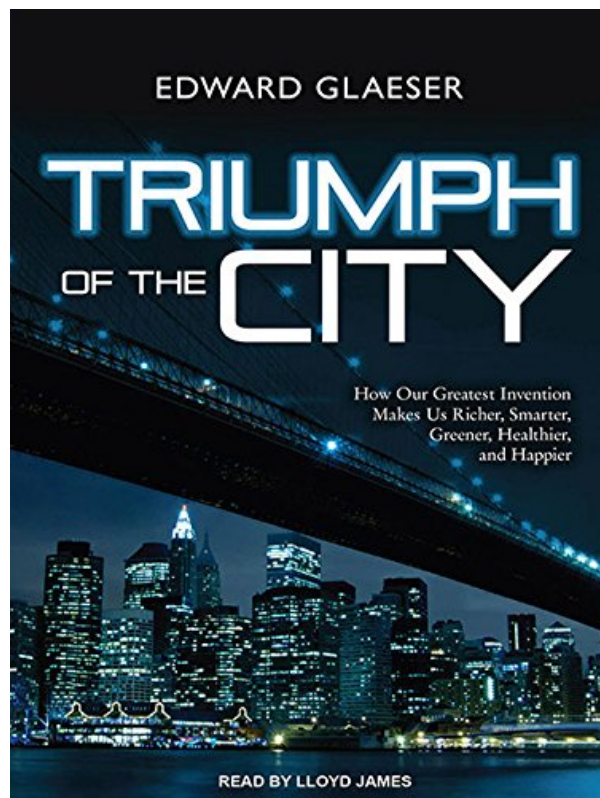
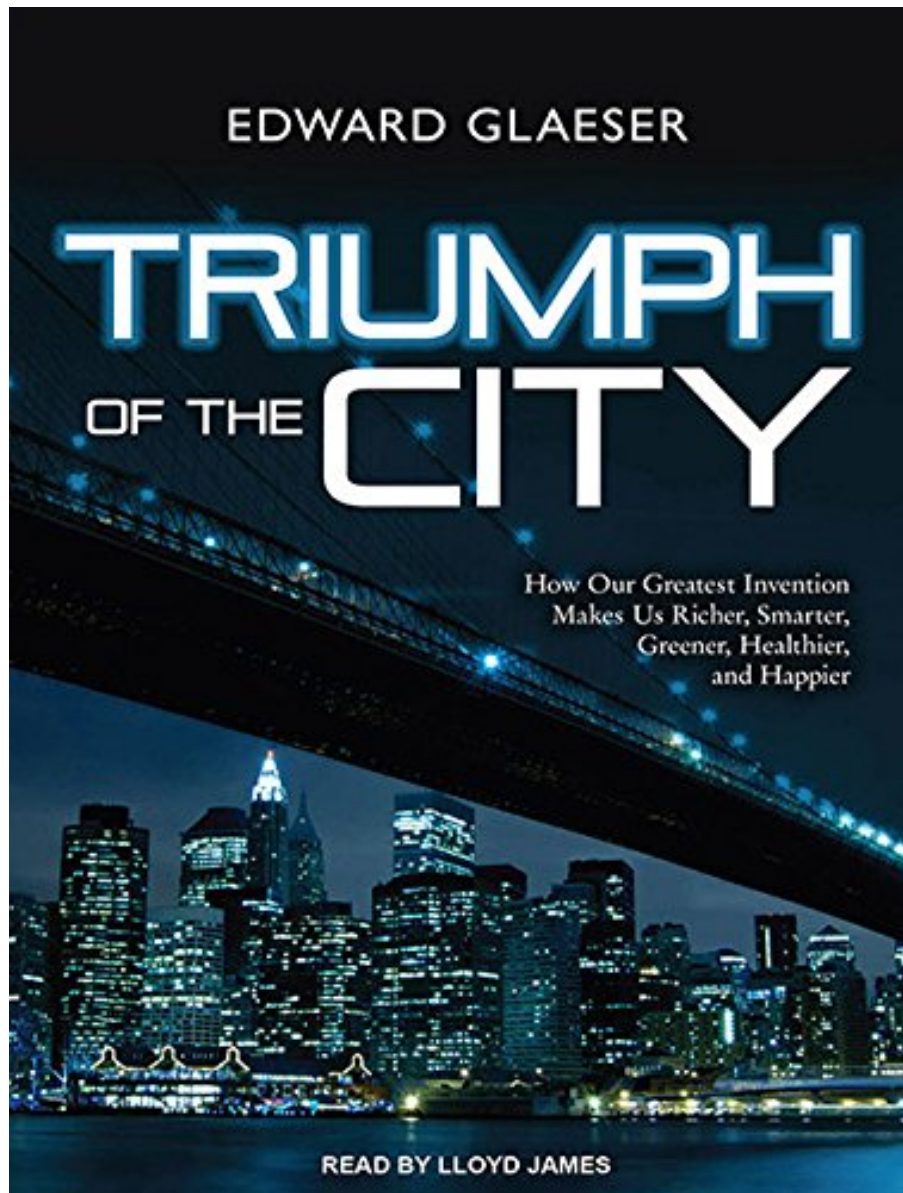


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Glaeser's academic specialty, urban economics, informs his survey of how cities around the world thrive and wither. Using a range of expository forms—history, biography, economic research, and personal story—he defines what makes a city successful. That changes through time, and a flourishing Industrial Age model may not work in the service-age economy, as rust-belt towns like Detroit have learned. One thing constantly attracts people to one city rather than another—how much housing construction is permitted. Restrictive places, such as New York City, coastal California, and Paris, have a tight housing supply with prices only the wealthy can afford. Hence, middle-class people move to the suburbs or cities like Houston. Other features of metropolises—their incidences of poverty and crime, traffic congestion, quality of schools, and cultural amenities—also figure in Glaeser's analysis. Whatever the city under discussion, Mumbai or Woodlands, Texas, Glaeser is discerning and independent; for example, he believes that historic preservation isn't an unalloyed good and that bigger, denser cities militate against global warming. Thought-provoking material for urban-affairs students. --Gilbert Taylor

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## About the Author

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America is an urban nation. More than two thirds of us live on the three percent of land that contains our cities. Yet cities get a bad rap: they're dirty, poor, unhealthy, crime ridden, expensive, environmentally unfriendly. Or are they? As Edward Glaeser proves in this myth-shattering book, cities are actually the healthiest, greenest, and richest (in cultural and economic terms) places to live. New Yorkers, for instance, live longer than other Americans; heart disease and cancer rates are lower in Gotham than in the nation as a whole. More than half of America's income is earned in twenty-two metropolitan areas. And city dwellers use, on average, 40 percent less energy than suburbanites. Glaeser travels through history and around the globe to reveal the hidden workings of cities and how they bring out the best in humankind. Even the worst cities-Kinshasa, Kolkata, Lagos-confer surprising benefits on the people who flock to them, including better health and more jobs than the rural areas that surround them. Glaeser visits Bangalore and Silicon Valley, whose strangely similar histories prove how essential education is to urban success and how new technology actually encourages people to gather together physically. He discovers why Detroit is dying while other old industrial cities-Chicago, Boston, New York-thrive. He investigates why a new house costs 350 percent more in Los Angeles than in Houston, even though building costs are only 25 percent higher in Los Angeles. He pinpoints the single factor that most influences urban growth-January temperatures-and explains how certain chilly cities manage to defy that link. He explains how West Coast environmentalists have harmed the environment, and how struggling cities from Youngstown to New Orleans can "shrink to greatness." And he exposes the dangerous anti-urban political bias that is harming both cities and the entire country. Using intrepid reportage, keen analysis, and eloquent argument, Glaeser makes an impassioned case for the city's import and splendor. He reminds us forcefully why we should nurture our cities or suffer consequences that will hurt us all, no matter where we live.

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