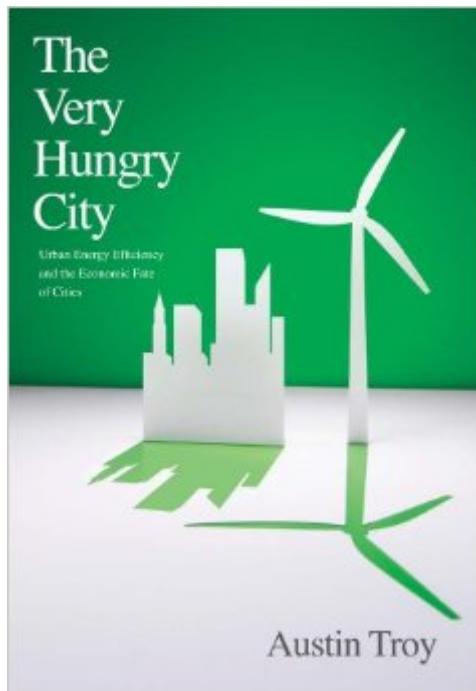


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The Very Hungry City: Urban Energy Efficiency And The Economic Fate Of Cities



Synopsis

As global demand for energy grows and prices rise, a city's energy consumption becomes increasingly tied to its economic viability, warns the author of *The Very Hungry City*. Austin Troy, a seasoned expert in urban environmental management, explains for general readers how a city with a high "urban energy metabolism"—that is, a city that needs large amounts of energy in order to function—will be at a competitive disadvantage in the future. He explores why cities have different energy metabolisms and discusses an array of innovative approaches to the problems of expensive energy consumption. Troy looks at dozens of cities and suburbs in Europe and the United States—from Los Angeles to Copenhagen, Denver to the Swedish urban redevelopment project Hammarby Sjöstad—to understand the diverse factors that affect their energy use: behavior, climate, water supply, building quality, transportation, and others. He then assesses some of the most imaginative solutions that cities have proposed, among them green building, energy-efficient neighborhoods, symbiotic infrastructure, congestion pricing, transit-oriented development, and water conservation. To conclude, the author addresses planning and policy approaches that can bring about change and transform the best ideas into real solutions.

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Customer Reviews

Austin Troy explores the economic competitiveness of cities in the light of what he calls their urban energy metabolism, i.e., the different rates at which cities consume energy. The drivers of this urban energy metabolism are for example climate, access to water, the quality of buildings, industrial use,

and transportation/urban development. Too many American cities are car-dependent, sprawling agglomerations. Think for example about Atlanta, Dallas, and Los Angeles. In European and Asian cities, ownership of a car is far more a liability than an asset. Mr. Troy rightly warns his audience against complacency. Energy prices are not guaranteed to remain low forever. The author calls for both improving energy efficiency and developing new clean energy generation capacity. Mr. Troy usually explores the pros and cons of the different energy sources with objectivity in what he calls "interlude." However, the author is clearly too pessimistic about nuclear power, by far the leading U.S. electricity source which does not emit greenhouse gases. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission recently approved the Westinghouse Advanced Passive 1000 nuclear power plant design and the construction and operating license for the two-reactor Plant Vogtle expansion in Georgia. Nonetheless, Mr. Troy rightly lambastes the incoherent U.S. policy for the management, reprocessing, and/or disposal of spent fuel from commercial nuclear reactors. Mr. Troy looks at a wide variety of cities such as Bangkok, Copenhagen, Denver, Houston, London, New York, São Paulo, and Stockholm, to identify the best practices for improving a city's energy metabolism. The author comes to the conclusion that regionalism is at the heart of a coherent urban policy in the U.S.

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