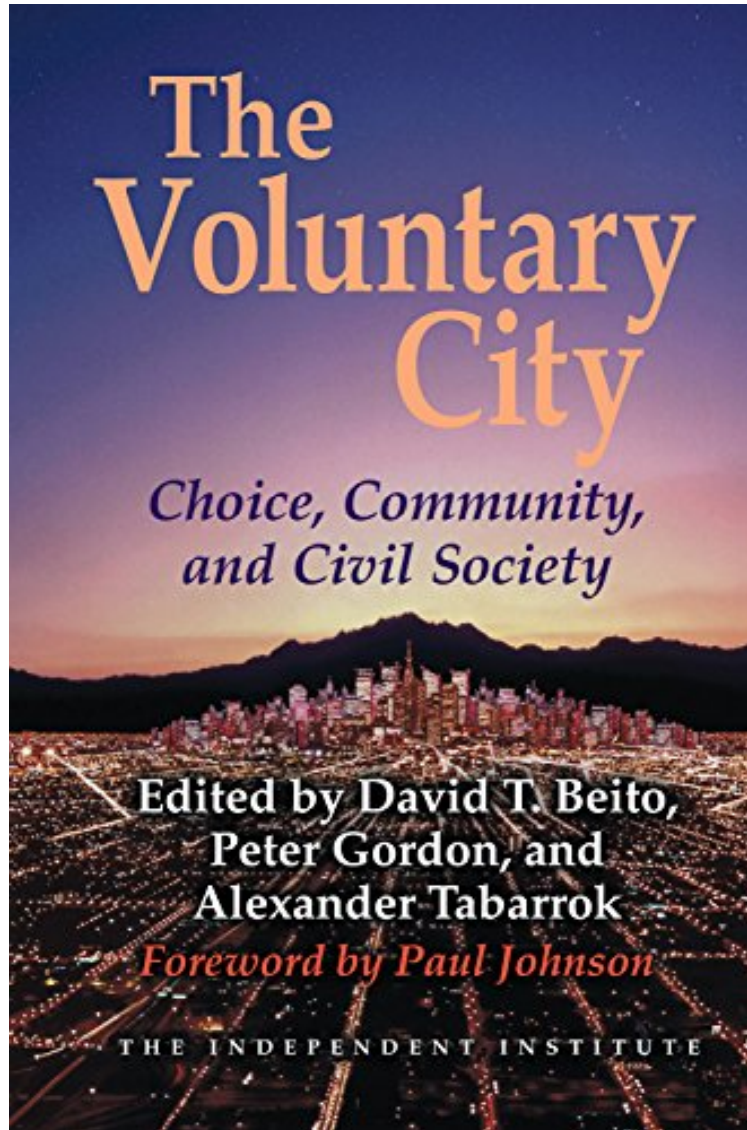


## The Voluntary City: Choice, Community, and Civil Society

*From Independent Institute*

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**From Independent Institute :** **The Voluntary City: Choice, Community, and Civil Society** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Voluntary City: Choice, Community, and Civil Society:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The world without government interference.By Mr. D. H. LipschitzThis is an incredible book, showing how the world once worked and how it can work again, without too much government interference.Governments are necessary, but IMHO, they don't need to do everything. Lots of things, for example, heath, security, education, zoning, etc, can be for better (cheaper, more effective) looked after

privately.46 of 49 people found the following review helpful. You aren't the only one who wonders...By Christopher Jones  
You're not the only one that wonders whether the government that is supposed to guarantee your private property rights seems more interested in making sure your vinyl siding runs the same way as your neighbor's. This is the way of things in America today, where municipal governments segregate business from housing, then wonder why everyone thinks he has to own a car.  
Enter the Voluntary City, a cogent and realistic analysis of how we got here, and whether we have actually improved things in doing it. There used to be sufficient housing (try to find the word "homeless" before the Carter presidency), and police that actually had to catch the bad guys (read about one police force that had a catch rate of over 90%), and the reasonable expectation that if you wanted to alter your property you could do so without groveling to the city fathers. We gave these things up in the hope that what we would get back would be better. But is it? Really?  
You aren't the only one that wonders. This excellent book provides some answers to the question, and the impetus to take those answers out into the political world. We're doing it where I am.  
28 of 31 people found the following review helpful. Private Alternatives to Government Services  
By Mike Renzulli  
Back in the mid to late 90's I had the pleasure of reading a new version of a book written by David Friedman called "The Machinery of Freedom" which was originally published in the 1970's. Prior to this review I had the opportunity to read the libertarian classic "The Market for Freedom" written by Morris and Linda Tannehill was one of the first books to introduce the concepts of a voluntary society in print.  
While I am not sold on anarcho-capitalism, Friedman's book introduced me to anarcho-capitalist ideas and now, years later, thanks to David T. Beito and the Independent Institute, "The Voluntary City" is published that confirms many of the thoughts and ideas Friedman and the Tanehills wrote about in their treatises.  
This book is a collection of policy pieces done by different authors that detail specific, present and past real-life examples of free market alternatives to things like court systems and litigation, education, police, housing and welfare. Most of whom were provided by insurance plans people purchased or services provided by private, charitable organizations people belonged to while governments, by and large, stayed out of the way.  
One aspect of the book that was not pointed out was private fire departments. Despite them being provided by municipalities, to this day most fire departments in the U.S. are staffed almost entirely by volunteers. Prior to being run by governments, many fire departments were privately provided in which their funding came from insurance plans they participated in that provided fire protection for their customers. It wasn't until after the civil war that municipalities started acquiring, starting and operating them.  
Even today, governments are beginning to privatize many essential services since they have become too costly to run.  
For example Arizona-based Rural Metro Corporation has contracts with cities and counties across the country to provide fire and ambulatory services for municipalities that will not or cannot afford to provide them.  
Despite this one subject left out, I felt this book was very well done and I heartily recommend it to people who have doubts about private alternatives to government services or to those who are looking for new, radical ideas to replace the monopolies governments have on services they presently provide.

Assembling a rich history and analysis of large-scale, private and voluntary, community-based provision of social services, urban infrastructure, and community governance, this book provides suggestions on how to restore the vitality of city life. Historically, the city was considered a center of commerce, knowledge, and culture, a haven for safety and a place of opportunity. Today, however, cities are widely viewed as centers for crime, homelessness, drug wars, business failure, impoverishment, transit gridlock, illiteracy, pollution, unemployment, and other social ills. In many cities, government increasingly dominates life, consuming vast resources to cater to special-interest groups. This book reveals how the process of providing local public goods through the dynamism of freely competitive, market-based entrepreneurship is unmatched in renewing communities and strengthening the bonds of civil society.

About the Author  
David T. Beito is associate professor of history at the University of Alabama. He is the author of *Black Maverick: T.R.M. Howard's Fight for Civil Rights and Economic Power, From Mutual Aid to the Welfare State: Fraternal Societies and Social Services, 1890-1967*, and *Taxpayers in Revolt: Tax Resistance during the Great Depression*. He is the author of several scholarly articles and his popular articles have appeared in the *Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, *National Perspectives*, and *Reason*. He lives in Northport, Alabama.  
Peter Gordon is a professor in the University of California's School of Policy, Planning and Development. He and his colleagues have developed various economic impact models which they apply to the study of the effects of infrastructure investments or disruptions from natural events or terrorist attacks. Recent work involves the modeling and study of economic impacts. He has been published in most of the major urban planning, urban transportation, and urban economics journals. He lives in Los Angeles.  
Alexander Tabarrok is research director for the Independent Institute, assistant editor of the *Independent*, and associate professor of economics at George Mason University. He is the editor of *Changing the Guard: Private Prisons and the Control of Crime and Entrepreneurial Economics: Bright Ideas from the Dismal Science*. His papers have appeared in the *American Law and Economics*, the *Journal of Law and Economics*, the *Journal of Health Economics*, and the *Journal of Theoretical Politics*. He lives in Centreville, Virginia.