**Markets, urban planning and local democracy**

**Abstract:**
Since the middle of the twentieth century urban planning has been subject to “mission creep”. Planners, instead of limiting their activities to provide transport corridors and to prevent negative externalities, have attempted to substitute regulatory design for allocating land between users. These attempts, recently made in the name of smart growth or sustainability, have resulted in constricting the supply of land for expanding cities and therefore greatly increased land prices. The result reflects a deep crisis of local democracy and may require, first, a redefinition of property rights, and second, a change in the way a local government defines the boundaries of local participation in the decision process.

**About Alain Bertaud:**
Alain Bertaud is a senior research scholar at the NYU Stern Urbanization Project. His main area of research is the impact of markets, transportation, and regulations on urban form. Bertaud previously held the position of principal urban planner at the World Bank, where he worked on urban policy and urban infrastructure development mainly in South Asia, in transition economies such as China, Russia, and countries of Eastern Europe. Previously, he worked as a resident urban planner in a number of cities around the world: Bangkok, San Salvador (El Salvador), Port au Prince (Haiti), Sana’a (Yemen), New York, Paris, Tlemcen (Algeria), and Chandigarh (India).