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**Privatizing residential life in "the neo-liberal city"**

**Abstract:**

Gentrification of the Moscow's center follows the logic of neoliberalism because, on the one hand, the state off-loaded its responsibilities regarding regulating real estate market, while on the other, sociospatial structure of the center has been ordered by the market. How do the residents see community's potential in both sustaining their sense of belonging to an exceptional neighborhood and defending its interests in a case of conflict with developers? I attempt to answer this question drawing upon qualitative data gathered from a set of centrally-based neighborhoods in Moscow as part of a project dealing with post-Soviet urban cultures. Interviews of residents in these neighborhoods show that understanding of community is affected, firstly, by the confusion of the uses of the word "public" during Soviet times (especially the slippage of "public-owned" and "state-owned"), secondly, by a mixed attitude many people still have towards privatization and its outcomes, and thirdly, by the fact that public consensus-building seems to be in jeopardy almost everywhere. The islands of social cohesion, the territorial communities, appear here and there in central Moscow when the residents, while facing the prospect of being forcefully displaced, try to fight the developers' growing appetite. However important those communities and organizations are for empowering citizens, however promising they seem in terms of reproducing civic culture, their strength and influence usually extends only to particular buildings.