THE POST-SOVIET CITY:
IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

J. Robinson

Department of Human and Organizational Development (PhD Student in Community Research and Action), Vanderbilt University; Peabody College Box 90, 230 Appleton Place, Nashville, TN 37203; jill.robinson@vanderbilt.edu

Abstract:
The objective of this paper is to track both physical and social urbanization patterns of the post-Soviet city, and how a city's identity and type can shape community development needs and potential. Because the legacy of the Soviet period is a specter that continues to shape urbanity, I begin this paper with an exploration of the Soviet city in order to establish a historical context for the post-Soviet city. While I have tried to imagine a more comprehensive process that is shaping the post-Soviet city, I focus on urban growth and planning, housing, urban social life and the uses of space. Finally I discuss community development needs by considering the post-Soviet city's identity and type.
Keywords: Soviet City; Post-Soviet City; Moscow; Community Development

> "Urban biographies are shaped by such unexpected, extraordinary, and catastrophic events as war, *popular rebellion*, famine, disease, and natural disaster that leaves a residue of physical wounds and psychic scars in their wake" (Murray, 2008, p. 39, emphasis added).

As the above quote indicates, urban biographies are influenced by traumatic events. Cities of the former Soviet Union (FSU) were hurled headlong into a socialist project and ripped away from it some 70 years later, and as with any trauma, scars remain. The objective of this paper is to explore the scars of post-Soviet urbanity, with a focus on Moscow. I begin this paper with an exploration of the Soviet city in order to establish some historical context and identify what legacies persist. I will then move on to describe the post-Soviet city. Following this review of the literature, I move on to discuss the city's identity and type. Is the post-Soviet city a garden, revanchist or global city? The post-Soviet city's identity and type have important implications for community development needs and potential.

The Soviet City

Szelenyi (1996) suggests that socialist cities were under-urbanized as opposed to the over-urbanization that was occurring in Third World countries. Under-urbanization meant the growth of jobs outstripped the growth of population. He argues that the experience of urbanity was qualitatively different in socialist cities than capitalist cities: less diversity (especially services), less inner-city density (liberal use of space in planning), and less marginality (social extremes less common). The following section overviews the construction of the Soviet city and how it operated during various periods of the Soviet era.

Urban growth and planning. Soviet era city planning was intentionally modernist. Mixed use space was not encouraged. The outcome was that zones with mono-functions were vibrant when they were used fully and only at specific times. For example, squares and boulevards built for parades where empty at all other times. Industrial areas became "ghost towns" when industries shut down during transition (Engel, 2007). However, Smith (1996) argues against the idea that there ever really was a distinctly *socialist* city, although he agrees that there certainly were sections of the city that were distinctly socialist. The socialist city was adapting to and therefore confined by the built environment of the pre-socialist city, just as the post-socialist city is influenced by the built environment of the city that emerged under socialism. But there were completely new cities (often built up around a particular industry) that developed under socialism and might be considered distinctly socialist, while older cities established during the Imperial era, like Moscow, were only partially changed using the existing infrastructure and built environment (Gentile and Sjoberg, 2006; Smith, 1996).

The features of socialism were not always the intended outcomes of planners, but they were all outcomes of the standard reality of socialism: central planning, state monopoly over the means of production, and the absence of private property (Szelenyi, 1996). Of course we know that these realities were bent as there was private ownership of housing in the Soviet Union; there was some local control of planning, and informal entrepreneurship existed. Ideologically, urban planning was intended to promote social equality, but what really took precedence was industrialization and urbanization was just a consequence of this because so many people migrated to the cities to seek resources and services, and population growth outstripped housing and service provision. A couple of strategies used to control the growth of the city was the introduction of communal housing (this constitutes only 2.2% of Moscow's housing stock today (Medvedkov and Medvedkov, 2007)) and the implementation of the *propiska* system, which was established in 1932 (Molodikova and Makhrova, 2007). Essentially, the *propiska* was a stamp in one's internal passport which indicated in which city or town one

could get housing and find employment. Even though the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees freedom of movement, the *propiska* system is still enforced in some cities, including Moscow (Ruble, 1998).

The organizational logic of the Soviet city by the 1950s was the *mikroraion* (micro-district or subdivision). This included housing for approx. 5000-15000 people. The *mikroraion* was internally linked by pedestrian walkways that gave access to services such as libraries, sports facilities, nurseries, health services, cultural amenities, etc., with the intent that its residents could readily and conveniently access the majority of their daily needs. A collection of *mikroraions* formed a larger district that had additional services, such as a polyclinic. However, there was inequality. Some *mikroraions* provided better services than others, and like in most cities, services were concentrated in the center, so those living in the center had better access to more services (Smith, 1996).

Sprawl was not an issue during the early years of the Soviet era as planners were influenced by Frederich Engels's rhetoric, which was against large cities, and the British garden city movement (Alden and Crow, 1998). However, that changed quickly as the official solution to housing shortages became to build up and outward rather than develop the central city (Makhrova and Molodikova, 2007). In most Soviet cities, building density took place on the edge of the city. For example, Moscow followed this path and continued to push its boundary outward. Moscow went from a size of 56 km^2 in 1860 to 994 km^2 by 1984 with the largest growth spurt from 1959 to 1961(390 km^2) (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1998). It expanded so much during the Soviet era that today it has almost reached its administrative region's physical boundaries (Makhrova and Molodikova, 2007).

Housing. After the 1917 Revolution, houses were confiscated and divided up into apartments, but other than that, the new government emphasized industrial development before turning back to other aspects of urban development in 1935 (Smith, 1996). Rapid industrialization led to overcrowding and housing shortages during Stalin's era. Because of housing shortages, some people rented rooms in areas of the city that were removed from urban amenities, or the worker simply commuted into work each day from rural areas which also lacked adequate services (Gentile and Sjoberg, 2006). It was not until after WWII that the housing problem was more of a focus by urban planners (Smith, 1996). The quantity of housing improved after Stalin died, but not the quality. By the late 1950s, Khrushchev emphasized the need to address the problem of overcrowding and housing shortages by ordering the mass production of apartment buildings using standardized, factory produced materials. They were typically five stories high and rectangular-block buildings. During the last couple of decades of Soviet era,

"system buildings" which were apartment blocks which were bigger and taller became the apartment building norm (Alden and Crow, 1998; Smith, 1996).

For Soviet citizens, housing was a right. Rent costs were fixed at 1928 levels throughout the Soviet era, even up to the collapse of the empire. But housing was also low quality and there were long waiting periods (Alden and Crow, 1998; Gentile and Sjoberg, 2006). Living space was fixed per person and the standard used throughout the Soviet period was the standard set in 1922 which was 9 sq meters per person (that is almost 100 sq feet per person), but that was not equally enforced (Smith, 1996). Also, there were inequalities in access to and quality of housing (Gentile and Sjoberg, 2006). Basically, the labor that was most valued by the state got the most space and the nicest housing (Smith, 1996).

The Experiences of Soviet Urban Life. The reality of life for urban residents in the Soviet city is probably best described as frustrating and inconvenient. They had to contend with constant shortages of everything from housing to consumer goods, rude treatment in stores (which, based on my personal experience, has persisted), crowds and lines (Argenbright, 1999). People hoarded goods (Argenbright, 1999) when they were available because of selective and unpredictable, but ever present product shortages. However, the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras were much better at consumer goods production and availability (Gentile and Sjoberg, 2006). A demand and supply of luxury items emerged during the Soviet era. In *The Sociology of Taste,* Gronow (1997) writes, "In the Soviet Union a historically specific culture of consumption was born." (p. 49). These luxury items for consumption included: champagne, caviar, chocolate and fruit cakes, assorted chocolates, perfume, amber jewelry, crystal, and fur. Luxury goods were determined by two interesting comparison groups: middle-class Western contemporaries *and* the bourgeoisie of 19th century Europe. Soviet middle-class morality defended the consumption of such goods rationalizing that inequality and the acquisition of what might be considered a bourgeoisie lifestyle are justifiable as long as they are achieved with hard work.

The Soviet Union was not a classless society. Gerber and Hout (2004) found that social origin played a role in opportunity and status during the Soviet period. The two main characteristics that shaped class standing during the Soviet era were Communist Party membership/position of authority (10% of the adult population was Communist Party members (Gerber, 2000)), and expertise /skill/ability. That then determined one's class standing, access to material possessions and wealth. That social standing was then passed on to children. While Soviet planning tried to effect class mobility using free education and expanding industries to provide jobs to different regions, inequalities persisted. The government did work to provide more opportunities for people from working-class and peasant origins (Khrushchev

is one of the most famous examples as he was the son of peasants and the grandson of a serf). While the central government could intervene and help create opportunity to some extent, those controls were gone after the collapse (Gerber and Hout, 2004).

The Uses of Space. A common tactic by officials after revolutions in Russia (both 1917 and 1991) was to rename streets and alter monuments showing that "the control over symbolic space is especially important in Russian politics" (Forest and Johnson, 2002, p. 528). All urban space was owned by the State, and it was used, in part, to valorize Soviet power and the Communist Party (Argenbright, 1999; Engels, 2007). At first, to show the progress of socialism, Soviet era planners borrowed from European architecture, but that ended when Stalin came to power. His regime began building everything on a much grander scale and incorporated neoclassical design into the aesthetics of apartment buildings, roads, and institutional buildings. The aesthetics of the center city were made ornate and interesting in comparison to the drab apartment buildings that were outside of the city center. (Alden and Crow, 1998). Officially, private space did not exist during the Soviet era (Engels, 2007). In short, technically all citizens had legitimate claims to all spaces because they were considered public space. But it was the "unofficial" private space where social life really happened for Soviet citizens. Argenbright (1999) writes,

> But people needed real places. They needed places that they themselves would imbue with meaning and over which they could exercise some control, places where they could breathe more easily and related to one another. The foremost place of this sort was the home, especially its kitchen. Only there did people feel most comfortable (p. 7).

The Post-Soviet City

The revolution that ended the Soviet Union was much less violent than the one that began it, although the effect of transition has had a brutal toll on the eastern side of the now-defunct iron curtain. *Perestroika* (reform) and *glasnost* (openness) (begun in the mid-1980s) were the incubi for the progressive revolution, which culminated in a failed coup attempt by hard-line Communists in August 1991 and the Soviet Union's official dissolution on December 26, 1991. Although perestroika was blamed for many of the economic and social ills that Russia faced during transition (Engel, 2007), the system of shock therapy shifted that blame to the West. Some economists, including Jefferey Sachs (one of the key advisors of shock therapy) dispute that the system was ever really implemented at all (Marangos, 2003). Even if it was not technically implemented, many former Soviet citizens I have spoken to attribute the economic crisis of the 1990s to the system of shock therapy which then gets attributed to the West and powerful

international organizations, which are also influenced by the West. Despite some growing hostility to the West since the fall of the Soviet Union, many former Soviet citizens are embracing Western patterns of life and consumption as will be discussed below.

Urban Growth and Planning. Stanilov (2007) equates the collapse of socialism with the collapse of the modernist project. He refers to the communist meta-narrative as suppressing multiple voices which are now being heard in the spaces and patterns of post-Soviet cities. Western development patterns get haphazardly applied which makes the post-socialist society a society of fragments but one that is also awakening from what Stanilov refers to as a "comatose existence." A vivid example of this fragmentation and awakening can be seen by the artwork painted on the sides of apartment buildings in Moscow's suburbs (see http://englishrussia.com/?p=537).

Post-Soviet urban areas are moving from being monocentrically organized to sprawling and multimodal (from a Chicago School idea of urbanization to the Los Angeles School), but these two patterns are coexisting to some extent. Both the concentric zone and wedge model are the legacies of the socialist city. In Moscow, for example, Smith (1996) reports that several researchers have attempted but failed to determine which model is more predominant. My explanation for that is that when a city has a very short history of being predominantly planned and then being predominantly determined by market forces, it creates a hard-to-define city that has a cacophonous mix of spatial and growth patterns. Although market forces have much more of an influence now on the construction of the city, government planning still has a considerable influence.

The 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation set the boundaries for Moscow so that urban planners would have to look at development inward rather than continuing to expand outward as was the strategy during the Soviet era (Alden and Crow, 1998). As previously indicated, Moscow had reached its regional limits for growth so development had to turn inward driving up the cost of land within the city's official boundary (Makhrova and Molodikova, 2007). But "New Russians" (i.e. the *nouveau riche*) continue to expand outwards taking over areas that used to hold dachas (simple recreational, detached housing) and turn them into gated communities (Alden and Crow, 1998).

Poverty is increasingly becoming a rural phenomenon in Russia with urban poverty declining at a much faster rate than rural poverty (Ioffe and Nefedova, 1998). There has been impressive economic growth in Russia since the 1998 financial crisis as well as growth in the wealth gap. Gerry, Nivorozhkin, and Rigg (2008) claim that there has been an "urban bias" to Russia's economic development. Rural populations have not benefited from Russia's natural

resources, have been left in isolation with decaying infrastructure, and have suffered from the out-migration of human capital. Since 2000, the percentage of poor people living in rural areas has increased every year while urban poverty percentages have steadily decreased. Only 5% of Russia's poor are currently living in Moscow and St. Petersburg (ibid).

There are eight well-established business districts around Moscow. Four of them emerged during the pre-Soviet era, the other four during the Soviet era. There are five new districts currently emerging with the potential for seven more. However, these are more on the periphery of the city and are challenged by the quality of buildings that were built during the 1960s to 1980s. Also scattered throughout the city are military and administrative districts which are "excluded from the city's vital space" (Kolossov, 2002, p. 190).

The producer services sector is growing and with deindustrialization of urban areas, service sector jobs have been increasing. Approximately 77% of the employment share in Moscow is service sector jobs (Molodikova and Makhrova, 2007). Moscow has become one of the most expensive places to conduct business, 2nd after Paris (Kolossov, 2002). And the center is the most expensive space to conduct business. For example, land within the Garden Ring (central core of the city) is leased for about 10 times the price elsewhere in the city and periphery (Makhrova and Molodikova, 2007). However, Moscow has been rated as one of the least desirable cities for business executives based on amenities, crime, etc. Only Mumbai beat it as the worst of the large cities on quality of life (Kolossov, 2002).

Ruble (1998) attributes the accomplishments of growth of the city center in Moscow not to neoliberal market principles but to what he refers to as "imperial urban corporatism" headed up by Luzhkov, who has been mayor since 1992. Luzhkov was able to convince Yeltsin in 1995 that local authorities in Moscow should control privatization efforts (especially real estate development), unlike in the rest of Russia which is controlled by the central government. Moscow then "became the senior partner in all local economic activity," (ibid, p. 84). Most of the city's income has come from taxes (corporate, personal, and value-added). So the boom in the development of office and retail space (Stanilov, 2007b) is encouraged and facilitated by city coffers. Luzhkov has obviously encouraged city building using the public-private partnership strategy (see Fainstein, 2001; Kolossov, 2002). Moskva-City (a combination of English and Russian) might be considered the symbolic representation of the public-private partnership. Moskva-City, when built, is to be the center for business and leisure for the city. It will be dominated by glass and steel buildings and located right next to the Kremlin (the

Presidential residence) and Red Square (the most famous public square in Russia) (Golz, 2006).

In sum, the pattern of urban growth and development can be imagined as being a ripple, with the central city wealthy, then decreasing in prestige outwardly until the suburbs, which are also wealthy, gated and elite. Stanilov (2007) claims that for most cities, under socialism, most of the focus by planners was placed on the periphery of the city where residential high rises were concentrated. But in the post-socialist era, the focus is more on suburban areas where shopping malls, single family residents and office spaces are located *and* within the urban core where planners and developers are using underutilized space.

Housing. After the fall, the housing stock was inadequate to meet the demands of the growing middle and upper classes. Most apartments have become privately owned and increasingly expensive to buy or rent. A mortgage system has been established in Russia so that more and more residents can buy housing. Expats (Westerners living in Russia), who are employed by foreign companies, are driving up rents as it is not unusual for apartments to go for $10,000 per month. Much of the housing stock that was available in the city was pre-fabricated, mass produced, drab high-rise buildings and was not meeting the standards of the elite. Therefore, new buildings were simply constructed from the ground up. While the city center is the most attractive for the elite, luxury housing is also built in the suburbs, but public transportation is not as efficient in this area and road construction has not kept pace with outward expansion (Medvedkov and Medvedkov, 2007).

It is important to note the draw of the central city for the elite. The historic city center, especially, is amassing a concentration of luxury housing (Kolossov, 2002), so the poor are increasingly being pushed out of the city. However, there has been some organizing to stymie gentrification processes in some cases. Neighborhood self-management committees were neighborhood organizations started during *perestroika* and at the time were an extension of the Communist Party. The CP sanctioned such committees as an attempt to extend their control over local neighborhoods at a time when the CP was being weakened. Moscow had about 250 of these committees by 1993. Interestingly, they have become political activist groups and often resist government action. An example of their activism has been to help tenants resist displacement. After the fall of the USSR, the transfer of ownership was made from the state to the tenant free of charge. However, low-income people in central locations who lived in deteriorated housing were often moved so that the buildings could be renovated and sold to higher income tenants. This was an interesting shift in activism as during the Soviet era,

the focus of activism was the environment and it did not involve housing until the time of transition (Pickvance, 1996).

The aesthetic transition in housing went from neoclassical grandiosity to mass produced bleakness to postmodern overstatement over the past 70 years. For Soviet era housing, "as a general rule, the later the construction the better the quality of state housing" (Smith, 1996, p. 78). The reason for this was that as the Soviet Union experienced a housing crisis so housing was increasingly mass produced and less attention was paid to quality. Quantity was the most important element to housing. To exemplify the postmodern overstatement of today, a rotating skyscraper is supposedly being built in Moscow. Each floor rotates independently of others to give residents a 360 degree of the city, but externally it creates a continually changing, non-uniform aesthetic. This apartment building was supposed to start construction to start in 2008 in Dubai and Moscow and be completed in both cities around 2010 (McKeough, 2008, see also www.dynamicarchitecture.com).

The Experiences of Post-Soviet Urban Life. As demonstrated above, gentrification is an important process shaping the post-Soviet urban fabric exemplifying the growing urban wealth gap. The juxtaposition of wealth and poverty, or what Park (1925) describes as urban marginality, becomes a visual reminder of the triumph of the principals of capitalism over the principals of socialism. And for the first time in almost a century, urban residents can experience the over-stimulation Simmel (1971) described as the signature effect of metropolitan life. One stimulation that stands out in popular discourse is the injection of color into gray street life through consumer goods advertising (the Coca-Cola billboard above Red Square is one of the most recognized images).

The minimum subsistence level income in 1996 for a Moscow resident was $128/month while the average wage in Russia was about $147/month (Lemon, 1996). By 2007, that figure had gone up to $550/month (http://www.kommersant.com/p847117/Statistics_2007_Salary/). There were fewer chances for upward mobility during transition and a wage hierarchy emerged. Using responses from six different national surveys, some from pre-transition and some from the transition period, Gerber and Hout (2004) found that not only did the economic crises of the 1990s lead to higher rates of unemployment, but when Russians eventually did find jobs, they had to work in occupations that were more in line with their "social origin" than when it was the Soviet period. Gerber and Hout speculate that it is social capital, human capital and cultural capital which explain why social origin makes such a difference in access to opportunity in the post-Soviet period.

Even so, it is important to note the perverted hierarchy of salaries that have emerged. Academics and doctors are some of the lowest salaried people in Russia. They are often forced to find other sources of income to survive, including bribery. My recent research has taken me to Chisinau, Moldova, another post-Soviet city, and I can attest (anecdotally) to the perverted hierarchy of salaries mentioned above. My host family in Moldova's capital has two daughters (ages 19 and 20) who work as manicurists. My good friend, who also worked as my translator, was a doctor at the state hospital before she turned to linguistics. While she made about $30 per month as a doctor, the young girls charge that much per hour for manicures. They do not get to keep all of it, a large percentage goes to the salon where they work, but I think the point is obvious. One of the daughters told me that for a full day of beauty, people pay about $200 and she said her salon is always busy. Although I failed to ask the most obvious question, who patronizes these salons? During my last trip, I also met a professor of political science at Moldova State University who makes around $50 per month. The director of the orphanage where I was working, who was about to retire, did not tell me how much she made but said she never has enough money each month to pay all of her utilities, which are subsidized.

The Uses of Space. The Soviet era implemented rigid controls over who was a legitimate citizen or not. However, once legitimacy as a citizen was established, everyone had "equal" access to public space. There are positive and negative outcomes to the State's increasing retreat from public space. On the one hand, people feel freer about self-expression in public (Argenbright, 1999). On the other hand, legitimate claims to space get contested with the "haves" usually winning any battle with the "have-nots." For example, although public space cannot be officially privatized, some property owners get special permissions for use of public space that is close to their private property. Finally, some negative outcomes of rapid urban development threaten the quality of what true public space still exists, such as increasing air pollution created by car traffic (Engel, 2007).

Even though Luzhkov is trying to erase it because he considers it "urban blight," a "kiosk" economy emerged during the early transition years (Kolossov, 2002). This small business strategy included people selling goods in the informal economy sometimes by just standing along the street with their products in their hands. In other words, post-Soviet space is increasingly being used not just to connect to the formal economy, but the informal economy (survival entrepreneurialism). I associate the smell of lilac with Moscow in the summertime. Babushkas (old women) would set up stands to sell freshly cut lilac near the entrances and exits of subway stations. They sold a dizzying array of

goods, even cigarettes individually. I saw many heartbreaking realities in the city, and one of them was a babushka who had set up a small wooden stool on my street to sell some of her possessions. Laid out for sale was a shriveled up cucumber, a doorknob, some old rusty screws and a collection of a few other random objects I cannot remember. I bought the cucumber.

Officials also contest space. One of the projects Luzhkov is engaged in with city revenue is rebuilding old buildings and cultural icons, such as the Cathedral of Christ the Savior which was destroyed by Stalin in 1931 (Ruble, 1998). Briefly, Stalin razed the Cathedral of Christ the Savior and in its place he wanted to erect the world's tallest monument to Lenin. However, the ground proved to be too soft, so instead he filled in the space with a public swimming pool.

Conversely, once Putin came to power in 2000, Soviet-era symbols, such as Lenin and Stalin monuments received more protection. There is a "graveyard" to where many Soviet era monuments have been banished. Putin used quotes from Stalin in his Victory Day celebration speech in 2000 and also had commemorative coins printed with Stalin's portrait. Putin's strategy has been to use space to glorify both the political-order and military power connected to Stalin and the Soviet-period (Forest and Johnson, 2002). Medvedev continues this emphasis on the Soviet Union's strength and important role in history and Russia's tie to that legacy. For example, he supported legislation that would criminalize any belittlement of the Soviet Union's role in defeating Nazi Germany during WWII (Nowak, 2009).

The Post-Soviet City's Identity and Type

When I refer to the city's identity, I am not just focusing on the unique identity of the city, such as Nashville is the "Music City," or Moscow has been known as the "White Stone City." While these identities can help us discuss community needs and community development potential (as they tell us something about the city and how it has been constructed), discovering the city type is also necessary. I refer to Moscow as a postmodern city. There are elements of the Garden City, the Revanchist City, the Global City, etc. all rolled into Moscow. Because of this "both/and" rather than "either/or" constitution of the city, Moscow is an interesting example of postmodernism.

As previously indicated, at first early Soviet planners resisted the garden city model. But that was abandoned as the planners had to deal with housing shortages. The city spread outwards with the central city no longer being the priority for development. While more emphasis has been put on core development, that has privileged luxury residential and business development. So Moscow, like other post-Soviet cities, continue to push outwards. However, one might call Moscow a revanchist city (Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008) as evidenced by increasing

social segregation, xenophobia, hostility towards non-Russians, especially non-Europeans, and the physical landscape with its increase in mirrored glass skyscrapers. The poor are inconvenient and pushed to the fringes of the city. Additionally, Moscow may be on a path towards becoming a "Global City" (Sassen, 2001). Because of the growth of producer services as an important industry in the post-Soviet city, a segmented labor market is emerging leading to larger gaps between the rich and the poor. This is what Sassen refers to as "high-income gentrification." She refers to this as a growing gap between high-paid and low-paid employees in the city.

Really, the post-Soviet city is "both/and." The post-Soviet identity like the postmodern identity is fragmented by a legacy of communism and the brutality of transition. Urban space is a reflection of that nation-state being consumed by globalization forces and increasing economic integration with the global economy and the global neoliberal project. Harvey (1990) indicates that postmodernity began around 1973 when capitalism experiences one of its many crises during the first global recession of the post-war period. As capitalism experiences crisis, there is a search for solution: deregulation and a shift to flexible accumulation. There is flexibility in "labor processes, labor markets, products and patterns of consumption." (p. 147). Essentially, the post-Soviet city has become a flexible space for capitalistic possibilities.

The postmodern shift which occurred in the West was put into hyperspeed in the Former Soviet Union with disintegration of the iron curtain. Busygina (1998) compares the modernist discourse to Soviet discourse and postmodernist discourse to Post-Soviet discourse. She equates Soviet/modernism with homogeneity, hierarchy, uniformity, construction, paranoia, while post-Soviet/postmodernism is equated with heterogeneity, anarchy, fragmentation, deconstruction, schizophrenia. The post-Soviet city has experienced crisis since the collapse of the USSR. But according to Shevchenko (2009) we should not look at "crisis" and "normal" as being in a dichotomous relationship. Crisis is the everyday. For crisis to be the everyday is just another example of being in a postmodern state.

Community Development Needs and Potential

I spent the majority of this paper tracking the development of the post-Soviet city, with a focus on Moscow, because I believe it is important to establish the characteristics and development of the city before exploring any potential for action. As a community psychologist, I am always trying to tie scholarship and discussion back to potential action. Therefore, in this section, I would like to explore community development potential in the context of the post-Soviet city.

Community development is a broad term. What I mean by community development is the process of identifying both strengths and needs within the

community and using an ecological approach (from the individual participating to policy change) to promote community development which can help address social problems. An empirical study to determine specific urban community needs in a post-Soviet city will be the next step of this project. But based on this paper and my experience in post-Soviet cities thus far, I provide a brief discussion below of strengths, needs and one community development project idea: community gardens.

The strengths of the post-Soviet city arise from its Soviet legacy. As Stanilov (2007b) indicated that post-socialist urban spaces are awakening from their "comatose existence," there has been an unleashing of creativity and expression. Furthermore, there is also a legacy of rich informal social capital operating. Elsewhere I have referred to this as "kitchen social capital" because of its intimate nature and because it is often expressed and produced over the preparation and consumption of meals (among men and women). While Putnam argues that formal social capital (e.g. civic engagement) is preferable to informal social capital (e.g. familism) for a strong, democratic society to emerge, I argue that in the context of the Former Soviet Union, informal social capital has a stronger legacy and easier to build on because of the continued distrust of formal institutions (banking, government, police). For needs, because of fragmentation and rising inequalities, community development efforts should address the negative outcomes of these realities, mainly a lack of social cohesion and support and unmet basic needs (such as food and housing).

Urban community gardens. One potential community development project idea is to encourage the creation of urban community gardens. I am not promoting this as a cure-all for large-scale issues presented earlier in this paper, but it is a step towards alleviating some social needs as the post-Soviet period stumbles through crisis. The main goals of urban community gardening would be improving community integration and building on existing informal social capital. Also, these gardens could help ensure that basic nutritional needs are met and could possibly provide extra income for those most in need in the community. Globally, urban community gardening has a lot of momentum behind it (e.g. Cuba, see Altieri, 1999). The state can promote the creation of these gardens by offering unused plots of land to groups for little or no money. From my own experience, a productive garden does not need a large parcel of land.

As previously reviewed, The Soviet city was developed using the logic of the *mikroraion* (micro-district) where residents within that area could get almost all of their needs met. Tapping into that logic and utilizing existing neighborhood self-management committee (also referenced above) would make the organization and promotion of community gardens more feasible. In short, the positive legacies

of the Soviet era (i.e. mikroraion logic, neighborhood committees, existence of informal social, creativity, and resourcefulness) may be utilized to create the successful implementation of community gardens. Also, there are examples of a return to small-scale and collective agriculture in various places in Russia (see Shaulina, 2009) that could serve as models for urban gardening collectives in major post-Soviet cities.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tracked urbanization trends and issues from the Soviet period to the post-Soviet period. I see the post-Soviet city as the postmodernist city. It is a flexible space where capital can look for development opportunities. However, this flexible space can also provide the community with development opportunities. Using a review of the literature and my experience in post-Soviet cities, I have identified areas of strength and needs that community development initiative can begin to address. For example, creativity, resourcefulness, and informal social capital are areas of strength that community members can draw on to address some of the needs created by the increasing fragmentation and rising inequalities that exist in post-Soviet cities. I offered one possible community development project: urban community gardening. However, the exploration of community needs and development opportunities needs empirical research before further steps are warranted.

References

Afontsev, S. (2006). Post-Soviet urban households: How many income sources are enough? *Continuity and Change, 21(1),* 131-157.

Alden, J., and Crow, S. (1998). Moscow: Planning for a world capital city towards 2000. *Cities, 15(5),* 361-374.

Altieri, M. et al. (1999). The greening of the "barrios": Urban agriculture for food security in Cuba. *Agriculture and Human Values, 16(2),* 131-140.

Argenbright, R. (1999). Remaking Moscow: New places, new selves. *Geographical Review, 89(1),* 1-22.

Busygina, I. (1998). Postmodernism in Moscow. *Russian Social Science Review, 39(3),* 69.

Engel, B. (2007). Public space in the "blue cities" of Russia. In Stanilov, K (Ed.) *The post-socialist city: Urban form and space transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism.* Dordecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Fainstein, S. (2001). *The city builders: Property development in New York, and London, 1980-2000.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Forest, B., and Johnson, J. (2002). Unraveling the threads of history: Soviet-era monuments and post-soviet national identity in Moscow. *The Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 92(3),* 524-547.

Gentile, M., and Sjoberg, O. (2006). Intra-urban landscapes of priority: The Soviet legacy. *Europe-Asia Studies, 58(5),* 701-729.

Gerber, T (2000). Membership benefits of selection effects? Why former Community Party members do better in Post-Soviet Russia. *Social Science Research, 29,* 25-50.

Gerber, T., and Hout, M. (2004). Tightening up: Declining class mobility during Russia's market transition. *American Sociological Review, 69,* 677-703.

Gerry, C., Nivorozhkin, E., and Rigg, J. (2008). The great divide: 'Ruralization' of poverty in Russia. *Cambridge Journal of Economics, 32,* 593-607.

Giovannini, J. (2005). Moscow variations: Orchestrating tradition and modernity in a city apartment. *Architectural Digest, 62(8),* 160.

Golz, S. (2006). Moscow for flaneurs: Pedestrian bridges, Europe Square, and Moskva-City. *Public Culture, 18(3),* 573.

Gronow, J. (1997). *The sociology of taste.* New York: Routledge.

Harvey, D. (1990). *The condition of postmodernity: An inquiry into the origins of social change.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Hormel, L., and Southworth, C. (2006). Eastward bound: A case study of post-Soviet labour migration from a rural Ukrainian town. *Europe-Asia Studies, 58(4),* 603-623.

Ioffe, G., and Nefedova, T. (1998). Environs of Russian cities: A case study of

Moscow. *Europe-Asia Studies, 50(8),* 1325-1356.
Kolossov, V. (2002). Moscow as an emergent world city: International links, business developments, and the entrepreneurial city. *Eurasian Geography and Economics,43(3),* 170-196.
Lees, L., Slater, T., and Wyly, E. (2008). *Gentrification.* New York: Routledge.
Lemon, A. (1996). Making ends meet in Moscow. *Transitions Online, 2(9),* 48.
Makhrova, A., and Molodikova, I. (2007). Land market, commercial real estate, and the remolding of Moscow's urban fabric. In Stanilov, K (Ed.) *The post-socialist city: Urban form and space transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism.* Dordecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
Marangos, J. (2003). Was shock therapy really a shock? *Journal of Economic Issues, 37(4),* 943.
McKeough, T. (2008). A prefab, rotating skyscraper coming to a city near you? *Architectural Record, 196(8), 36.*
Medvedkov, Y., and Medvedkov, O. (2007). Upscale housing in post-Soviet Moscow and its environs. In Stanilov, K (Ed.) *The post-socialist city: Urban form and space transformations In Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism.* Dordecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
Molodikova, I., and Makhrova, A. (2007). Urbanization patterns in Russia in the post-Soviet era. In Stanilov, K (Ed.) *The post-socialist city: Urban form and space transformations In Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism.* Dordecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
Murray, M. (2008). *Taming the disorderly city: The spatial landscape of Johannesburg after Apartheid.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Nowak, D. (2009, May 8). Medvedev urges respect for Soviet role in WWII. *The Washington Post.* Retrived May 9, 2009 from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2009/05/08/AR2009050801567.html
Park, R., Burgess, E., and McKenzie, R. (1925). *The City.* Chicago: University of Chicago
Pickvance, C. (1996). Environmental and housing movements in cities after socialism: The case of Budapest and Moscow. In Andrusz, G, Harloe, M, and Szelenyi, I. (Eds). *Cities after socialism: Urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
Ruble, B. (1998). The rise of Moscow, Inc. *The Wilson Quarterly, 22(2),* 81.
Sassen, S. (2001). *The global city.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Shaulina, L. (2009, April 21). Vpered v proshloe: Krisis perevodit rossian na samobespecheneye. (Forward to the past: Crisis transfers Russians to self-

sustenance). *Vesti (News).* Retrieved May 5, 2009, from http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=277641.

Shevchenko, O. (2009). *Crisis and the everyday in postsocialist Moscow.* Bloomington & Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.

Simmel, G. (1971). The Metropolis and Mental Life. In Levine, D. (ed.) *On Individuality and Social Forms.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, D. (1996). The socialist city. In Andrusz, G, Harloe, M, and Szelenyi, I. (Eds). *Cities after socialism: Urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.

Stanilov, K. (2007). Taking stock of post-socialist urban development: A recapitulation. In Stanilov, K (Ed.) *The post-socialist city: Urban form and space transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism.* Dordecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Stanilov, K. (2007b). The restructuring of non-residential uses in the post-socialist metropolis. In Stanilov, K (Ed.) *The post-socialist city: Urban form and space transformations in Central and Eastern Europe after Socialism.* Dordecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Szelenyi, I. (1996). Cities under socialism – and after. In Andrusz, G, Harloe, M, and Szelenyi, I. (Eds). *Cities after socialism: Urban and regional change and conflict in post-socialist societies.* Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.