

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The politics surrounding the use of urban space exposes the interaction of economic, physical, social, and political factors that shape contemporary society. This exposure is especially revealing when focused on a single community during a period of dramatic transformation. *Money Sings* explores the sweeping reorganization of Russian life during the initial post-Soviet era (August 1991–December 1993) by examining the politics of property in a Russian “Middletown,” the historic industrial city of Yaroslavl.

Located on the banks of the Volga 150 miles northeast of Moscow, post-Soviet Yaroslavl reveals what can happen to a city when money suddenly takes on meaning. Bureaucratic battles over property, plans for automobile suburbs to be built on collective farms, major court battles, discredited local officials, and environmental disasters add texture to abstract notions about transitions to a market economy and political democracy. The politics of urban space—what a city looks like and how it functions—explodes in Yaroslavl as local officials wrest power from central authorities and those who control money subvert formal planning procedures that once favored privilege and bureaucratic status. This volume, which details housing privatization, historic preservation, and urban planning, demonstrates important lessons about the bureaucratic and political dynamics of systemic change in post-Soviet Russia, the economic transition to the market, and the importance of economic factors in shaping the contemporary city.

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



South view, Church of the Archangel Michael. Photograph by William C. Brumfield.

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*WOODROW WILSON CENTER SERIES*



Money sings

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Other books in the series

- Michael J. Lacey, editor, *Religion and Twentieth-Century American Intellectual Life*
- Michael J. Lacey, editor, *The Truman Presidency*
- Joseph Kruzal and Michael H. Haltzel, editors, *Between the Blocs: Problems and Prospects for Europe's Neutral and Nonaligned States*
- William C. Brumfield, editor, *Reshaping Russian Architecture: Western Technology, Utopian Dreams*
- Mark N. Katz, editor, *The USSR and Marxist Revolutions in the Third World*
- Walter Reich, editor, *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*
- Mary O. Furner and Barry Supple, editors, *The State and Economic Knowledge: The American and British Experiences*
- Michael J. Lacey and Knud Haakonssen, editors, *A Culture of Rights: The Bill of Rights in Philosophy, Politics, and Law—1791 and 1991*
- Robert J. Donovan and Ray Scherer, *Unsilent Revolution: Television News and American Public Life, 1948–1991*
- Nelson Lichtenstein and Howell John Harris, editors, *Industrial Democracy in America: The Ambiguous Promise*
- William Craft Brumfield and Blair A. Ruble, editors, *Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History*
- Michael J. Lacey and Mary O. Furner, editors, *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*
- Hugh Ragsdale, editor, *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*
- Dermot Keogh and Michael H. Haltzel, editors, *Northern Ireland and the Politics of Reconciliation*
- Joseph Klaitz and Michael H. Haltzel, editors, *The Global Ramifications of the French Revolution*
- René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice*
- James R. Millar and Sharon L. Wolchik, editors, *The Social Legacy of Communism*
- James M. Morris, editor, *On Mozart*
- Theodore Taranovski, editor, *Reform in Modern Russian History: Progress or Cycle?*

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

# *Money sings*

*The changing politics of urban space in post-Soviet Yaroslavl*

---

Blair A. Ruble



WOODROW WILSON CENTER PRESS

AND



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521482424](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521482424)

© 1995 by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1995

This digitally printed first paperback version 2006

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library**Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Ruble, Blair A., 1949–

Money sings: the changing politics of urban space in post-Soviet Yaroslavl / Blair A. Ruble.

p. cm.—(Woodrow Wilson Center series)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-48242-9

1. City planning—Russia (Federation)—Iaroslavl' (Iaroslavskaja oblast') 2. Historic preservation—Russia (Federation)—Iaroslavl' (Iaroslavskaja oblast') 3. Housing policy—Russia (Federation)—Iaroslavl' (Iaroslavskaja oblast') 4. Iaroslavl' (Iaroslavskaja oblast', Russia)—Economic conditions. 5. Post-communism—Russia (Federation)—Iaroslavl' (Iaroslavskaja oblast') I. Title.

II. Series.

HT169.R82I167 1995

307.1'2'0947—dc20

94-40751

CIP

ISBN-13 978-0-521-48242-4 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-48242-9 hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-02601-7 paperback

ISBN-10 0-521-02601-6 paperback

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOLARS

---

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Joseph H. Flom, Chairman; Dwayne O. Andreas, Vice Chairman.

*Ex Officio Members:* Secretary of State, Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary of Education, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Librarian of Congress, Director of the United States Information Agency, Archivist of the United States.

*Private-Citizen Members:* James A. Baker III, William J. Baroody, Jr., Gertrude Himmelfarb, Carol Iannone, Eli Jacobs, S. Dillon Ripley.

*Designated Appointee of the President:* Anthony Lake.

The Center is the living memorial of the United States of America to the nation's twenty-eighth president, Woodrow Wilson. Congress established the Woodrow Wilson Center in 1968 as an international institute for advanced study, "symbolizing and strengthening the fruitful relationship between the world of learning and the world of public affairs." The Center opened in 1970 under its own presidentially appointed board of trustees. In all its activities, the Woodrow Wilson Center is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, supported financially by annual appropriations from Congress and by the contributions of foundations, corporations, and individuals.

### WOODROW WILSON CENTER PRESS

The Woodrow Wilson Center Press publishes the best work emanating from the Center's programs and from fellows and guest scholars, and assists in the publication, in-house or outside, of research works produced at the Center. Conclusions or opinions expressed in Center publications and programs are those of the authors and speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Center staff, fellows, trustees, advisory groups, or any individuals or organizations that provide financial support to the Center.

Woodrow Wilson Center Press  
Editorial Offices  
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., Suite 704  
Washington, D.C. 20024-2518  
telephone: (202) 287-3000, ext. 218

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

U nas den'gi ne govoriat, den'gi poiut!  
(Here, money does not talk, money sings!)



Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

---

<i>List of figures and tables</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Preface</i>	xi
Introduction: The politics of property in a provincial Russian city	1
1. Housing privatization	29
2. Privatization comes to Yaroslavl	51
3. Preservation battles	76
4. Replanning Yaroslavl	104
Conclusion: The post-Soviet city and Russian democracy	127
<i>Selected bibliography</i>	137
<i>Index</i>	153

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Figures and tables

---

### FIGURES

South view, Church of the Archangel Michael	frontispiece
1. Map of the Russian Federation	<i>page 3</i>
2. Map of the Yaroslavl Region and surrounding regions	4
3. Map of Yaroslavl	5
4. Meeting of the Yaroslavl People's Front	8
5. Yaroslavl City Hall	10
6. The "Yaroslavl White House"	15
7. Church of John the Baptist at Tolchkovo	16
8. Frescoes, Church of John the Baptist at Tolchkovo	18
9. Bell tower, Church of John the Baptist at Tolchkovo	21
10. Housing project, St. Petersburg	36
11. Demidov Lycée	37
12. Kazanskii Boulevard	38
13. Homes in the Fruzhenskii District	39
14. Housing district in the Zavolzhskii District	40
15. Cooperative apartment building	41
16. Single-family house	69
17. New housing development in Korovniki	71
18. New apartment house for pensioners	72
19. Cathedral of the Transfiguration	81
20. Reconstruction of a historic house	82
21. Site of the former Engel'gard House	84
22. Museum of Musical Instruments	90
23. Volkov Theater	91
24. Church of Elijah the Prophet	94

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

	<i>Figures and tables</i>	ix
25. Main entrance, Church of Elijah the Prophet		96
26. Interior frescoes, Church of Elijah the Prophet		97
27. Interior frescoes, Church of Elijah the Prophet		98
28. A Yaroslavl street sign		102
29. Church of St. Nicholas the Wet		111
30. Yaroslavl Regional Administration Building		118
31. New housing construction		124
32. Monument to Yaroslav the Wise		128

## TABLES

1. Employment by economic sector, 1990	6
2. Privatization of housing by urban district, city of Yaroslavl, March 1992–March 1993	61

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Preface

---



Somewhat over a decade ago, the Institute for Governmental Studies of the University of California at Berkeley invited me to write a volume on the governing of Leningrad for the Franklin K. Lane Studies Series on Regional Governance. This invitation eventually led to the publication of *Leningrad: Shaping a Soviet City* in 1990.

On receiving the institute's invitation, I immediately set out to discover what I could about the city. Having lived in Leningrad, I thought I knew the town rather well. Unfortunately, I had failed to appreciate how little information was available about the place. Many of the data that analysts in the West would normally consult about economic, social, and political urban development were classified. Now that Leningrad has become St. Petersburg, and archives and planning offices are open to Western specialists, I understand that even those data that did exist might not have been of much assistance. Soviet officials did not always collect data similar to those gathered by their Western counterparts; or, if they did, dissimilar categories and headings were frequently employed. Even now, a researcher must approach a post-Soviet Russian city with more than the normal amount of caution. It is still as important as ever to think creatively about the data problem.

In pursuing my investigation of Leningrad's development, I began to draw on the physical city itself as a text for political analysis. Information on employment patterns may have been concealed and politicians may have been reluctant to speak to foreign researchers, but one could still walk the streets of Leningrad—at least, most of them—and look around. Such an approach would not have been at all unusual in such fields as urban history, urban geography, or urban planning. But political scientists have not attempted to draw on the physical contours of urban space for information about how urban politics works. Political scientists in the United States and Europe simply had no reason even to

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

*Preface*

try to do so. When analysis demanded information, the Western investigator merely turned to official data, surveys, or interviews. By contrast, with the interest taken by the Leningrad administration of the KGB in my own research, I was forced to seek surrogate sources of information, and in so doing, I discovered the physical texture of the city as a valuable resource for understanding Leningrad's economic, social, and even political development. I began to appreciate just how much we can learn about the who, what, where, when, why, and how of urban politics from the very stones of a city.

I remain convinced that a city's physical development contains important clues to its political life, especially in post-Soviet Russia. Local archives are opening up across Russia, public opinion polls can be carried out for the right price, and politicians are more than happy to grant interviews. Yet many critical decisions are not contained in the chronicles of an archive. Public opinion remains too volatile to be a reliable guide to the overall course of events. Politicians and other officials have themselves changed so much in recent years that they too are often unable to recount Soviet-era events accurately. In short, additional data are required to make sense of the current bedlam that is Russian political life.

I should like to propose that political disputes surrounding changes in a city's physical structure offer valuable insights into contemporary Russian politics. This is nowhere more the case than in urban communities, where so much of the tumult of the Gorbachev and post-Soviet eras has been played out.

There are two particularly sweeping transitions among the transformations that are occurring simultaneously in Russia today: one from a totalitarian-oriented political system, the other from a centrally administered economic system. The ultimate destinations of these journeys remain very much in doubt at this writing. In both cases, the who, what, where, when, why, and how of politics are all undergoing profound changes. By focusing on the policy issues surrounding the physical development of a single provincial city—on the politics of housing privatization, historic preservation, and land use in the Volga town of Yaroslavl—I hope to be able to shed light on both the emergence of the post-Soviet city and the reform process itself. I seek to define the socialist nature of Yaroslavl and other Soviet-era Russian cities in the pages that follow and to chart the dramatic transformations that are accompanying

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xiii

the broadening of political life and the introduction of market relations into the economy.

Most readers probably will conclude that my accomplishments in this volume are rather modest. I pose far more questions than I am able to answer; I offer only incomplete impressions where in-depth detail may be demanded; I include few numbers for quantitative analysis. I provide, in short, a Polaroid snapshot when a portrait in oil may be preferred.

My only defense against such charges is that the transitions in Yaroslavl—as in all of Russia—are moving so swiftly that the subject does not as yet lend itself to formal portraiture. The December 1993 parliamentary elections and constitutional referendum marked the end of Russia's first post-Soviet republic. Nevertheless, the situation has continued to change. Yaroslavl life will be substantially different by the time the first reader sees this sentence in print. Modest snapshots have a value in such a fickle season, especially for historians from some distant future who will begin to read the outcome of Russia's current *smuta* (time of troubles) back onto today's events. Meanwhile, observers of the contemporary Russian scene must settle for posing questions that may reveal but tiny portions of the dramatically new landscape that is just now taking shape.

Many questions emerge from my conversations and my observations during seven visits to Yaroslavl between June 1990 and September 1993—a period that roughly corresponds to Russia's first post-Soviet republic, headed by President Boris Yeltsin. A list of my more formal meetings with Yaroslavtsy and others may be found in the Selected Bibliography. These sessions do not exhaust the extent of my encounters in the city, however. I also had several meetings with Yaroslavtsy in Moscow, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. This list merely chronicles those moments when everyone understood that they were speaking “for the record.”

I have come to consider many of my Yaroslavl interlocutors as something more than mere objects for social science investigation. I found these women and men to be struggling with much honor and no little dignity to come to terms with a world in turmoil—a world for which they could never have been prepared. It is easy to become cynical about the motives of politicians in any country, let alone in the chaotic Russia of the early 1990s. Nonetheless, I am compelled to observe that nearly all of the sixty-odd officials interviewed for this study aspired to act in

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

*Preface*

a manner that would advance the interests of their community. I have sought—even at moments of disagreement or disapproval—to treat these “subjects” with the fairness, honesty, and respect they most certainly deserve.

If I have been successful, this study will reveal something to the reader about the post-Soviet transition not just in Yaroslavl but in Russia more generally. It may also demonstrate the ways in which an examination of disputes over physical urban space can provide information for political analysis. My rather minimalist intent is that the pages that follow will begin to interest political scientists in a new source for useful insights into the political process, a source composed, quite literally, of the stones, cement, and glass that surround them every day.

I should note at this point that I have relied on the Library of Congress system of transliteration of Russian into English, except in the case of commonly Anglicized names. This exception has singular significance for this particular work because it has led me to transliterate in the text—but not in the footnote citations—the name of the subject community as Yaroslavl rather than as the more precise Iaroslavl'.

In closing, I should like to express my gratitude to the Carnegie Corporation of New York for providing the financial support that made this study possible. In addition, I should like to express heartfelt thanks to my Moscow colleagues Vsevolod Vasil'ev, Mikhail Marchenko, and the late, much missed Georgii Barabashev for their support. My American colleagues Jo Andrews, Timothy Colton, Jeffrey Hahn, Henry Hale, Jerry Hough, Lolly Jewitt, Susan Lehmann, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss are to be credited for intellectual guidance. Tatiana Pavlovna Rumi-antseva, of Yaroslavl, deserves special acknowledgment for her energetic and steadfast encouragement of my research efforts as well as for her unflappable good humor. Matt Keough and Susanna Bolle, Kennan Institute interns, were very helpful in assisting with the preparation of this manuscript. Todd Weinberg, Annemarie Wollam, and Galina Levina, of New Europe Associates (Moscow), provided invaluable logistical support. William Craft Brumfield generously granted permission to include several of his elegant architectural photographs in this volume. Most important, Edward Bergman, Pavel Il'yn, Aleksandr Khodnev, Patricia Kolb, Leonard Plotnicov, Hank Savitch, Steven Solnick, Joseph Tulchin, and various anonymous readers, together with the participants at several

Cambridge University Press

0521026016 - Money Sings: The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Yaroslavl

Blair A. Ruble

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Preface*

xv

seminars and conference panels<sup>1</sup> (especially at my graduate alma mater, the University of Toronto), offered sharp criticisms and perceptive comments that, I hope, have improved this study during its several revisions.

<sup>1</sup>Earlier versions of this study were presented at various conferences, in the following papers: "Novyi oblik goroda: politika sobstvennosti v Iaroslavle," *Mezhdunarodnaia nauchno-prakticheskaiia konferentsiia: Predstavitel'nye organy mestnogo samoupravleniia v sovremennom mire, Iaroslavl', R.F. (27–28 apreliia 1992 goda)*; "Okhrana istoricheskogo naslediiia, chastnaia sobstvennost', i ekonomicheskoe razvitie: konkuriruiushchie ili dopolniaiushchie tseli v Rossii?," *Mezhdunarodnaia konferentsiia po istorii gorodskoi srede i sotsial'no-kul'turnoi politike, Moscow, R.F. (24–29 avgusta 1992 goda)*; "A Case Study in Policy Making: Urban Planning in Iaroslavl'," *Conference on Democratization in Russia: The Development of Legislative Institutions, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (October 29–30, 1993)*; "The Politics of Property in Iaroslavl'," *American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies National Meeting, Honolulu, Hawaii (November 15, 1993)*. Sections have also appeared in print as the following works: "Iaroslavl' in Russia: Learning the Politics of Compromise," *Woodrow Wilson Center Report* 2, no. 2 (1990): 14–15; "Living without Institutions," *New Outlook* 3, nos. 1–2 (1992): 7–9; "Narisuem—budem zhit'?" *Severnyi krai (Iaroslavl')*, August 21, 1992, p. 2; "Reshaping the City: The Politics of Property in a Provincial Russian City," *Urban Anthropology* 21, no. 3 (1992); "Novyi oblik goroda: politika sobstvennosti v Iaroslavle," in *Iaroslavskii gorodskoi sovet narodnykh deputatov i Tsentrazucheniiia obshchestvennogo mneniia i sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniia "TsIOMSI," Mezhdunarodnaia nauchno-prakticheskaiia konferentsiia: Predstavitel'nye organy mestnogo samoupravleniia v sovremennom mire. Doklady. Tezisy vystuplenii, materialy diskussii (27–28 apreliia 1992 goda)* (Iaroslavl': Iaroslavskii gorodskoi sovet narodnykh deputatov, 1993), pp. 95–125; "From *Khrushcheby* to *Korobki*," in William C. Brumfield and Blair A. Ruble, eds., *Russian Housing in the Modern Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 232–70; "A Strange Village from Another Galaxy: From Moscow to Yaroslavl' and Back," *Woodrow Wilson Center Report* 5, no. 2 (1993): 12–14; "Rossiiskie reformy i okhrana istoricheskikh pamiatnikov v provintsial'nom gorode," in O. G. Sevan, ed., *Sotsiokul'turnoe obosnovanie formirovaniia predmetno-prostranstvennoi srede goroda (po materialam mezhdunarodnogo soveshchaniia "Istoricheskaiia gorodskaiia sreda i sotsiokul'turnaia politika")* (Moscow: Rossiiskii institut kul'turologii, forthcoming).