



Practicing Community: Class Culture and Power in an Urban Neighborhood

Rhoda H. Halperin

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Cincinnati's East End river community has been home to generations of working-class people. This racially mixed community has roots that reach back as far as seven generations. But the community is vulnerable. Developers bulldoze "raggedy" but affordable housing to build upscale condos, even as East Enders fight to preserve the community by participating in urban development planning controlled by powerful outsiders.

This book portrays how East Enders practice the preservation of community. Drawing on more than six years of anthropological research and advocacy in the East End, Rhoda Halperin argues for redefining community not merely as a place, but as a set of culturally embedded and class-marked practices that give priority to caring for children and the elderly, procuring livelihood, and providing support for family, friends, and neighbors. These practices create the structures of community within the larger urban power structure.

Halperin uses different genres to weave the voices of East Enders throughout the book. Poems and narratives offer poignant insights into the daily struggles against impersonal market forces that work against the struggle for livelihood. This firsthand account questions commonly held assumptions about working-class people. In a fresh way, it reveals the cultural construction of marginality, from the viewpoints of both "real East Enders" and the urban power structure.

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