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## The Socialist City

*David M. Smith*

[W]e have yet to create the socialist city.

*(B.S. Khorev, 1975)*

[C]ities in Eastern Europe are 'socialist' not in the sense that they are necessarily better or worse than they used to be, or better or worse than comparable cities in capitalist countries. They are socialist in that they are different.

*(I. Szelenyi, 1983)*

Is there (or was there) a distinctively socialist city? This question is of practical as well as academic interest, for cities of the future will to some extent reflect those of the past – the more so if rigidities of pre-existing forms impede the process of change. If socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union created such resilient urban structures as not to be easily altered by post-socialist society, the kinds of city inherited from the old regimes will survive, at least in part, well into the next century. And, in so far as urban life must adapt to the existing built environment, the socialist city will act as a constraint on the development of new social formations.

Some commentators deny the existence of a 'socialist city'. To the extent that the cities created or substantially modified under socialism may have failed to reflect distinctively socialist principles, such a view could be sustained. For example, if communal rather than family living represents the socialist way of life, then arrangements of this kind characterize only a small minority of existing accommodation in most cities, and even then their origin and preservation is likely to have been a case more of practical necessity than of ideological preference. If equality in housing conditions, local environmental quality and access to services is a distinctive aspiration of socialism, then the urban landscape of the planned urban unit (or *mikroraiion*) might more persuasively be described as socialist. However, the concept of the neighbourhood unit with integral service facilities is by no

means exclusive to Eastern Europe and the former USSR; indeed, it might be regarded as emblematic of the urban development of modernism. A broader view of urban spatial structure, with carefully planned functional zones tied together with cheap public transport, might suggest a more calculated order than in the typical capitalist city. But this scale is no more likely to yield anything really distinctive, which could be derived from socialist principles, than the level of the locality.

Thus, we are faced with the more realistic possibility that, if there is a socialist city, it is simply that regimes committed in principle (if not always in practice) to some form of socialism produced cities which are different from those in other kinds of society. The difference may simply be in the extent to which such features as neighbourhood units, land-use planning and public transport predominated, rather than in a fundamental alternative to the capitalist city. The focus of this chapter is on features of the Eastern European and former Soviet city which appear to differentiate them from the cities of the advanced capitalist world in this sense. Given the wide scope of the topic, the emphasis is on some (but by no means all) features of spatial structure which actually invite comparison of the supposedly 'socialist' city with those of Western Europe and North America: general physical organization, socio-economic differentiation and ethnic segregation. A summary of the empirical evidence, highlighted by reference to case studies, leads to some more interpretative observations on inequality in the socialist city.

### PHYSICAL ORGANIZATION

The question of whether there might be a distinctive socialist city was the focus of a seminal work by French and Hamilton (1979). They drew attention to the neglect of the cities of the socialist world, compared with the voluminous literature on urban structure in North America and Western Europe and also in the developing world. Writing on urbanization, planning and housing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union subsequently expanded (see, for example, Bater, 1980; Andrusz, 1984; Morton and Stuart, 1984), but as French (1987: 310) pointed out later, the internal geography of the city still received only restricted attention.

Socialism certainly gave rise to the expectation of a different kind of city from those of the Anglo-American textbooks. Urban living has a particular significance in Marxism, as a progressive force encouraging collective rather than individual identity, and city planning was

viewed as an important means of achieving political purposes (Andrusz, 1987). Central planning along with state ownership of land meant that urban development could be subjected to much greater control than under capitalism. The internal structure of the socialist city was supposed to be planned to facilitate the delivery of a wide range of social services as means of collective consumption, in addition to facilitating the planned development of the productive forces in the interests of the efficient operation of the economy. Cheap public transport was a high priority, to ensure convenient access to work, leisure and other sources of need satisfaction. The public provision of housing was one of the most important means by which the state sought to ensure satisfactory and relatively egalitarian living standards for all, and it was the apartment blocks which came to predominate which give such a special character to the urban landscape.

A description of how the ideal socialist city might be organized is provided by Demko and Regulska (1987: 290):

The abolition of private property, removal of privileged classes, and application of equity principles espoused by Marxist/socialist leaders should radically alter urban patterns. In the housing arena, the expectation would be one of non-discriminatory, non-spatially differentiated housing in general. No social or occupational group would have better or more favourably located residential sites so that one would find a randomly distributed housing pattern. Similarly, public services of all kinds, including transportation, should be of equal quality, availability and accessibility, Commuting to work . . . would be minimised and no group would be more dependent on or penalised by such travel than others. Such amenities as high quality physical environment, including recreational environment, would be equally accessible to all. All such urban conditions would be similarly equitably arranged and available.

Of the various reasons why reality might depart from such an ideal, history is probably the most important. Socialism could not be built overnight, and nor could its cities. In one of the first textbooks to give serious treatment to the socialist city, Rugg (1972: 252–6) made a distinction between 'partially-changed cities' and 'new cities'. Those which have been partially changed by socialism originated in an earlier era, like the large and long-established national capitals of Moscow, Budapest, Prague and Warsaw. But even within this group there were differences in the extent to which socialist planning has replaced the pre-existing urban fabric, depending on the extent of

the war damage and the resources devoted to construction, for example. The new cities were usually created for some specific function associated with industrial production or mineral extraction, their form representing the purest version of the planned socialist city with its stark functionality. Another contribution of the historical dimension is the time taken to construct the new city, or to impose it on the past, with different periods, planning styles and building standards generating diversity in the urban landscape.

As was suggested at the outset, there is a view that the cities of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are not fundamentally different from those of the advanced capitalist world, especially Western Europe. They share much of the same historical and physical legacy, and are subject to the same forces of modern industrial society. Friedrichs (1988: 128) claims that: '[e]xcept for a short period in the early 1920s . . . there are no specific socialist types of land use, distribution of new housing, internal organisation of residential blocks, or location of companies. Even the principal goal of socialist city planning – to locate new residential areas close to working areas – has been pursued in Western planning too.' However, while it may be hard to find evidence of highly distinctive urban and residential forms, to argue that modern industrial cities are all very much the same is to overlook some special features of those in socialist countries, not least with respect to their general spatial structure.

A simple model of the growth of the Eastern European city, devised by Ian Hamilton, is illustrated in figure 3.1. The city comprises several distinct zones, which he described as follows (French and Hamilton, 1979: 227):

- (1) the historic medieval or renaissance core;
  - (2) inner commercial, housing, and industrial areas from the capitalist period;
  - (3) a zone of socialist transition or renewal, where modern construction is partially and progressively replacing inherited urban or relict-village areas;
  - (4) socialist housing of the 1950s;
  - (5) integrated socialist neighbourhoods and residential districts of the 1960s and 1970s [and 1980s];
  - (6) open or planted 'isolation belts';
  - (7) industrial or related zones;
  - (8) open countryside, forests, or hills, including tourist complexes.
- Broadly speaking, outward expansion of the city areas yields a concentric-zonal pattern, successive stages of building being readily recognisable in architectural styles and skylines. This pattern tends to 'overlay' a more sectoral or 'wedge-like' distribution of functional zones associated with particular site qualities, historic traditions, and major transport arteries. Fundamentally distinct, however, are the pre-socialist inner and socialist outer urban areas.

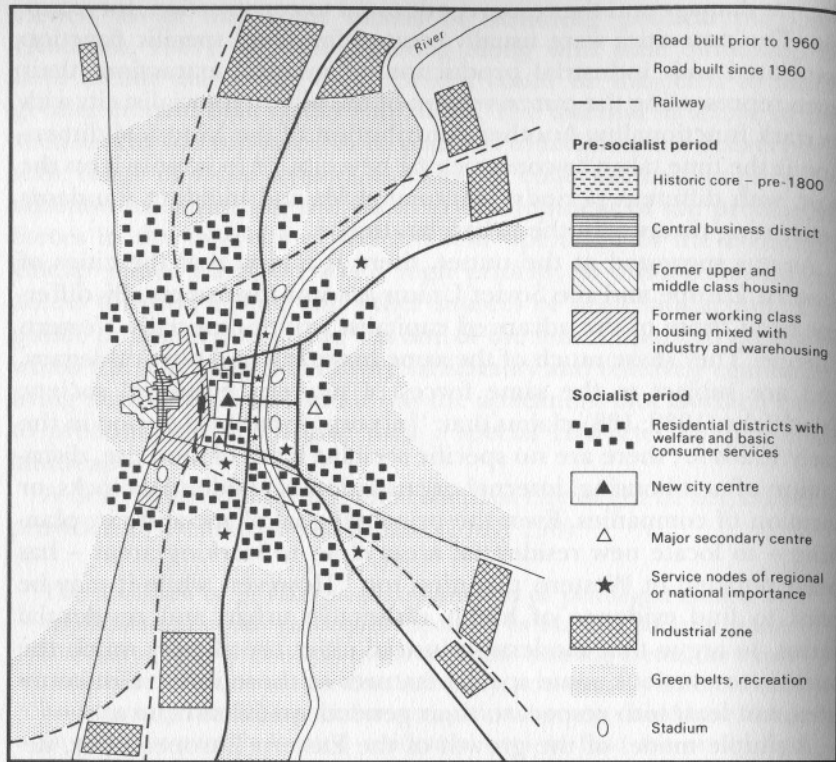


Figure 3.1 Model of the growth of an Eastern European socialist city  
 Source: French and Hamilton (1979: 228, figure 9.3)

The inherited inner area will be subject to more differentiation than the socialist outer area with its planned uniformity. The historic core and its preservation may have necessitated construction of a new city centre, as in figure 3.1.

This model indicates some similarity with the advanced capitalist city, at least to the extent of finding broad zones of differentiation in the forms of sectors and wedges. But how far is this pattern indicative of socio-economic differences, of the kind which we have come to associate with the spatial form of the capitalist city? This is a question to be addressed in the major part of this chapter. But before leaving the physical organization of the socialist city, something needs to be said about the built environment at a more local scale.

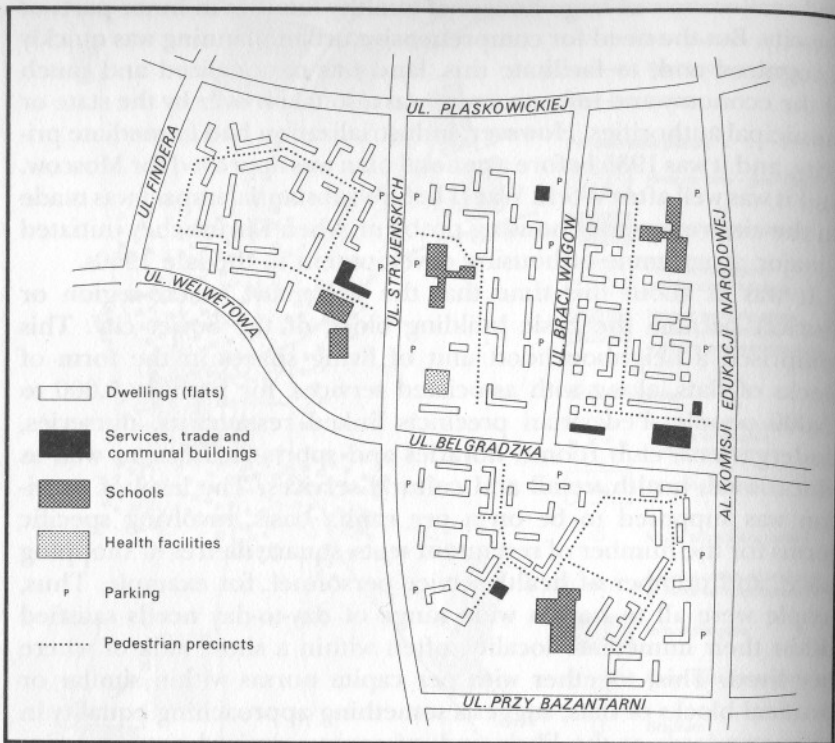
Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, one of the first pragmatic steps taken to create a more equal society was the confiscation

and reallocation of large houses of wealthy families in inner parts of the city. But the need for comprehensive urban planning was quickly recognized and, to facilitate this, land was nationalized and much of the economy and infrastructure was also taken over by the state or municipal authorities. However, industrialization had immediate priority, and it was 1935 before a general plan was approved for Moscow. And it was well after World War II before substantial impact was made on the city's enormous housing problem, when Khrushchev initiated a major programme of housing development in the late 1950s.

It was at about this time that the *mikroraion* (micro-region or district) became the basic building block of the Soviet city. This comprised a neighbourhood unit of living spaces in the form of blocks of flats, along with associated services, for perhaps 5,000 to 15,000 people. Pedestrian precincts linked restaurants, nurseries, kindergartens, club rooms, libraries and sports facilities, as well as educational, health, retail and cultural services. The level of provision was supposed to be on a per capita basis, involving specific norms for the number of restaurant seats, square metres of shopping space, and number of health-service personnel, for example. Thus, people were all to have a wide range of day-to-day needs satisfied within their immediate locality, often within a short walk of where they lived. This, together with per capita norms within similar or identical blocks of flats, suggests something approaching equality in living standards as the likely and, of course, desired outcome (see French, 1994, for further discussion).

At a broader spatial scale, each *mikroraion* was supposed to form part of a nested hierarchy of service provision. Thus, several micro-districts may have been aggregated to form a larger residential complex of perhaps 30,000 to 50,000 population, for the provision of a wider range of services within a radius of 1,000 to 1,200 metres, compared with 150 to 200 metres for the *mikroraion* (French and Hamilton, 1979: 102); one variant of this type of structure is illustrated in Bater (1980: 102). Residential districts were aggregated up into urban districts of 100,000 to 300,000 inhabitants, which themselves formed part of urban zones with perhaps a million people in a major sector of the city. In health care, for example, the polyclinic providing basic outpatient services might cater for the 20,000 to 50,000 population of three micro-districts, with general hospitals serving a wider area of perhaps 300,000, and major specialist hospitals in each of the larger zones.

The concept of the *mikroraion* was quickly adopted in other socialist countries. It proved to be well suited to the needs of rapid post-war reconstruction and renewed urban expansion, particularly in the



**Figure 3.2** Layout of housing estate of the late 1970s at Wyzyny in the Ursynow-Natolin district on the southern edge of Warsaw  
*Source: redrawn from the plan on public display*

1960s when mass prefabricated techniques came to predominate in urban housing construction. Figure 3.2 illustrates the kind of estate which was being built in the outer areas of Warsaw in the late 1970s, revealing more diversity and imagination of layout than in the earlier phase of the Soviet *mikroraion* (as illustrated in Rugg, 1972: 51).

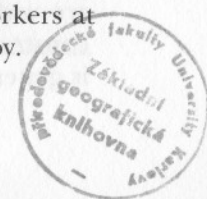
How far a city as a whole could be described as socialist in its physical organization was largely a matter of the extent to which it was dominated by the *mikroraion*. In some cities, like the rapidly renewed Moscow and the almost completely rebuilt Warsaw, the *mikroraion* became virtually ubiquitous, albeit with variations in details of layout and height of apartment blocks as styles changed with the times. In other cities, such as Prague, most of the pre-socialist urban fabric survived the war, and much of it also avoided subsequent redevelopment by virtue of its continuing capacity to function.

Elsewhere, cities with single-family dwellings of relatively poor quality would have the *mikroraion* imposed more rapidly than those with more substantial pre-socialist housing stock, depending on the priority given to a particular city's needs within some broader strategy of resource allocation. In any event, the uneven adoption of modern urban construction, both among and between cities, created considerable variety in the physical organization and appearance of the Eastern European and Soviet city.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC DIFFERENTIATION IN THE SOVIET CITY

The special significance of socio-economic differentiation in the socialist city is obvious. Socialist society was supposed to be relatively egalitarian, particularly in comparison with capitalist society. And the physical organization of the city, and of urban life in general, was supposed to promote collectivist sentiments, as well as giving practical material expression to egalitarian ideals. In so far as socio-economic differentiation could be detected in the socialist city, there was a contradiction with the strict egalitarianism of communism implicit in the dictum 'to each according to need'. Material advantage might be effectively hidden behind the walls of externally homogeneous apartment blocks, but if socio-economic differentiation achieved a more conspicuous expression, in the urban landscape or as discernible patterns of segregation, then the contradiction was all the more potent as a possible threat to the legitimacy of the prevailing political order. This section reviews evidence of socio-economic differentiation in the Soviet city, exemplified by Moscow, followed by references to some other cities.

While the individual *mikroraion* could be expected to deliver something like equal access to all elements of the urban infrastructure built into it, this was not the case with the broader intra-city structure of service provision. The need to locate at least some facilities centrally in relation to large populations, in the interests of efficiency, operated against the more even distribution required to approach equal accessibility. Another source of inequality in the planned spatial distribution of services was the time lag between construction of the housing blocks and the related services, as part of the general problem of uneven attainment of the norms which were supposed to ensure local parity of services. Quality of services could also vary among districts, with the superior facilities provided for workers at particular enterprises not open to other people living nearby.



Some parts of a city like Moscow would therefore have better access to services than others. The inner districts would be at a particular advantage, for it was here that the more specialized facilities tended to be concentrated (often as a legacy of history), and from here that accessibility to other parts of the city would be best because of the (historical) focus of transport lines. The central part of the city was therefore 'distinguished by the presence of theatres, a built-up area in keeping with Moscow's prominence as the nation's capital, a well-rounded urban environment and a high density of retail outlets selling manufactured goods' (Barbash and Gutnov, 1980: 567-8; Smith, 1987: 77-82). There were outliers of such facilities at major transport nodes further out.

Housing space was allocated according to a per capita entitlement, the minimum having been set at 9 square metres in 1922. While this had been achieved as an average standard in Moscow by 1970, large numbers of families had much less while others enjoyed well above the average (Bater, 1986: 96; see also Hamilton, 1993). Inequality in living space was exacerbated by variations in quality of accommodation.

Housing quality varied on two main dimensions: type of tenure, and period of construction. Housing tenure in the former USSR divided roughly into three-quarters 'socialized' and one quarter privately owner-occupied. Private housing was often of poor quality by conventional (state) standards; it was confined largely to the fringes of cities, to small towns and to the countryside, with very little in Moscow. The socialized sector was further subdivided into government, industrial or departmental, and co-operative housing. In 1989 almost three-quarters of Moscow housing was owned by the city government, and 16 per cent by industrial and other ministries which had built for their own workers. While some enterprises may have provided good housing as well as services at the place of work, period of construction seems to have been a more important source of differentiation in housing stock than the particular institution responsible for it.

As a general rule, the later the construction the better the quality of state housing, but this is not always the case. For example, in the 1930s under Stalin a number of large apartment blocks were built in ornate style and to relatively high standards, for members of the Party and other privileged groups. However, those constructed during the early period of large-scale residential development initiated by Khrushchev were often badly built; they are now deteriorating and are widely regarded as slums (French, 1987, 1994). More recently constructed accommodation in micro-districts on the edge of the city is generally of a higher standard.

The third element of socialized housing, the co-operative, was an important source of qualitative differentiation under socialism. Co-operative housing was constructed on behalf of groups of individuals, usually based on a workplace association (such as a particular enterprise or ministry), who thereby acquired collective ownership of their complex or block. Membership required an initial monetary deposit, and monthly payments higher than rent for a state apartment. Co-operative housing was concentrated in the largest cities; it accounted for about 10 per cent of all housing in Moscow in the 1980s. While not conspicuously different from the best state housing in external appearance, co-operative housing was usually built to higher standards.

The relationship between socio-economic status and housing at the end of the socialist era has been examined by Ellen Hamilton (1993), at the scale of the 33 regions into which Moscow is divided. She measured social status by people with higher education, car ownership, residents convicted of crime, and proportion of juveniles in the population. The first two are fairly conventional affluence indicators often used in Western research, while the other two would be expected to reveal relatively low family incomes. These four conditions were found to have similar degrees of inequality among Moscow regions, as measured by the coefficient of variation, and are also highly correlated one with another (see table 3.1). When compared with per capita living space there is a clear spatial correspondence:

Table 3.1 Indicators of social status of the population of Moscow by region, 1989

Indicator	Coefficient of variation	Correlation coefficient <i>r</i> with other indicators		
		2	3	4
1 People with higher education per 1,000 population aged 15 and over	24.1	0.80	-0.76	-0.75
2 Cars per 1,000 population	14.8		-0.66	-0.68
3 Residents convicted of crime per 1,000 population aged 15 and over	15.8			-0.60
4 Juveniles aged under 15 per 1,000 population	10.6			

Source: Hamilton (1993: 200, 201, tables 3 and 4)

the higher-status population and the more spacious accommodation is concentrated in the inner parts of the city and the western regions. There is also evidence that these patterns are closely reflected in people's perceptions of the relative prestige of residential areas (Siderov, 1992).

Hamilton (1993) goes on to explore the role of the state housing allocation system in accounting for her observations. While housing had been considered a right of every citizen, with distribution according to need and not to ability to pay, it has also been treated as a privilege and reward for social categories of workers. The correspondence between high-status population and most spacious housing suggests that those whose labour was most valued by the state enjoyed a double advantage. Low rents implied a state housing subsidy, the greater the more space people had. As high status would also be rewarded by relatively high incomes, those most able to pay for housing received the largest state subsidies. While this might be perfectly consistent with the socialist dictum of 'to each according to quantity and quality of labour contribution', particular groups may have been able to ensure for themselves superior housing, along with other benefits, merely by virtue of their capacity to influence the allocation system.

Soviet socialist society had a distinct elite, comprising the upper levels in political, administrative, managerial, military, academic and artistic life. As the capital city of a country with a high degree of central control, Moscow had a disproportionately high share of such people. As well as having relatively high salaries, they were rewarded by access to special facilities providing health care or goods not generally available, for example. An additional allocation of housing space may also have been provided, often in special buildings. Evidence from a variety of sources suggests some spatial concentration of the elite (French, 1994, ch. 6). For example, Matthews (1979: 107-8) pointed to the old Arbat district in central Moscow as being a favourite location for blocks of prestige flats belonging to the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the KGB, and to villas built on the Lenin Hills near Moscow State University as well as new blocks in central locations; French (1987: 313-14) reported a wedge of inner Moscow with a high proportion of apartment blocks inhabited by the elite. There were also areas of fine *dachas* outside the city.

Thus, despite a planning process driven by egalitarian ideals, inequality in living standards was evident in socialist Moscow. Some of this could be attributed to the hierarchical structure of service provision and to the process of physical development over time as well as

space. But there is also evidence of some spatial sorting of the population by occupational group. The spatial form of socio-economic differentiation suggested by the available evidence may be summarized as follows (Smith, 1987: 86). The inner areas presented a variety of environments and social groups, with some good housing which combined with access to cultural facilities to generate what may to most people have been the best of all worlds in Moscow, other than that of the discreet enclaves of the elite. In contrast, there were the remains of the poor inner-city housing areas, less substantial than in other Soviet cities, occupied by people of markedly lower social status than the intelligentsia and professional groups that tended to predominate in the inner city. The outer areas were differentiated by wedges of varying environmental quality and socio-economic status, with the better sectors having relatively high proportions of co-operative housing and the occupations that tend to go with it, the inhabitants trading off higher levels of access to cultural facilities, shopping and other services in the city centre for new housing of good quality and proximity to open space on the edge of the city. In the outer sectors where state housing predominates, environmental quality was better than in those old, inner areas occupied by people of lower occupational status, except for their favourable access to services.

This description suggests elements of both the concentric zone and wedge models of urban spatial structure. The question of which of these two forms predominates in Moscow has exercised the curiosity of a number of observers. S.I. Kabakova, who attempted to estimate land values in the Soviet city, came up with almost perfect concentric zones (Bater, 1980: 127, figure 5). French suggests that at first glance the Burgess model could have some relevance for Moscow, given the street pattern of concentric rings and radials and the concentration of central area functions, but also finds some evidence for the Hoyt sectors in the location of industry, in the tendency of particular social groups to move outwards in the same sector, and in the planned green wedges (French and Hamilton, 1979: 90-2; French, 1987: 311, 313). The most thorough analysis of the applicability of the two descriptive models to Moscow, by Barbash (1982), confirms that one is not obviously more convincing than the other and that it depends on which element of environment, economy or society is considered.

Evidence from other Soviet cities to substantiate particular patterns is rare. An early exception is found in a study of the city of Ufa by L.N. Fenin, who explored the link between social groups and their location (summarized in Matthews, 1979: 112-13). Information was

compiled on the inhabitants of three types of district: the old centre, the newly constructed areas, and the outer areas characterized by a high proportion of privately owned dwellings with garden plots. Although no district was socially exclusive, the intelligentsia more frequently lived in the centre, while the outer districts had a larger share of artisans. The newly built districts generally came in between. Fenin also suggested a gradation of income corresponding with the three types, with the central district leading.

The areas of private housing on the edge of cities like Ufa reflected the pace of urbanization, and the failure of the city authorities to keep up with housing demand by state construction. Private housing might lack such amenities as running water, but to the migrant from the countryside these fringe areas provided a first foothold in the city, with the ability to supplement uncertain official supplies of food from their own plot. And some apartment dwellers may have envied the freedom which private housing offered. Thus, qualitative differences between inner and outer areas were very much matters of perception, depending on individual or family attitudes and values.

At the risk of some simplification, the following broad typology of socio-economic and environmental differentiation in the larger Soviet city may be suggested:

- 1 inner, high-status areas of good housing, occupied largely by professional groups; some congestion and pollution, but good access to central services (added to which were special places and privileges of the elite);
- 2 inner, low-status areas of old and deteriorating property; environment affected by industrial or commercial development, but good access to facilities of the city centre;
- 3 outer areas of relatively high status (more or less distant from the centre, depending on the size and growth pattern of the city), with relatively high proportions of co-operative flats; employment predominantly white-collar; service provision and/or transport to the city centre fairly good;
- 4 outer areas of lower status, with a predominance of state housing, and a relatively high proportion of in-migrants; mainly manual employment; industry with a detrimental environmental impact; access to services low, and exacerbated by time lags in construction of infrastructure;
- 5 peri-urban areas and suburban enclaves of private housing of very poor quality, much of it occupied by recent migrants from the countryside; low or non-existent service provision.

To these may be added, for the sake of completeness:

- 6 quarters occupied by distinctive ethnic groups, possibly but not necessarily in lower-status occupations; probably comprising socially cohesive communities; housing possibly reflecting cultural preferences; service provision depending on position within the general spatial structure of the city.

The situation of such ethnic groups will be taken up later in this chapter.

While housing, occupation and access to the service infrastructure predominate in this typology, there are strong indications that it is reflected in some other social conditions. In health, for example, there is the evidence from Moscow suggesting an association between child health and occupational status (Barbash, 1983, summarized in Smith, 1987: 84–5). Quality of education is also likely to have been associated with local population characteristics. Social pathologies such as crime, alcoholism and what the Soviets called 'hooliganism' were also connected with particular parts of the city; these tended to be the old and deteriorating neighbourhoods, usually in the central area, along with some of the new, lower-status residential complexes in the outer districts, with a predominance of single rural migrants no longer subject to traditional controls of family and community (Morton and Stuart, 1984: 122–3; Andrusz, 1984: 218; French 1987: 312).

A further element in the social geography of the Soviet city was the tendency for family size to be negatively associated with socio-economic status. The peripheral zones customarily accommodated a younger population with larger average family size (Bater, 1986: 94). Spatial sorting may have been a response to the differential attraction of particular parts of the city in relation to stage in the family life cycle, but there may also have been a less voluntary element in population shifts as people were displaced by inner-city renewal bringing in those of higher status (Andrusz, 1984: 218).

How far did such zones comprise extensive areas of the city with relatively homogeneous character, as opposed to more of a mosaic or patchwork of internal diversity? In Soviet urban planning, any tendency towards social separation and associated bourgeois class attitudes should have been prevented by residential mixing, at least by neighbourhood and preferably by residential block. Firm evidence on the extent to which such mixing was achieved is rare, but it was probably less than the socialist ideal. Nevertheless, Andrusz (1984: 220) asserts that, '[g]enerally speaking however, and with singular exceptions, blocks of flats in the Soviet Union are characterised by social class heterogeneity – certainly by Anglo-American standards.'

French and Hamilton (1979: 98) stated that social segregation tended to be by building, rather than by street or area. However, this may have been true more of the inner than the outer residential areas. Bater (1986: 94) suggested that, in the new micro-districts and in suburban tracts of individual houses engulfed in the process of urban expansion, 'the social-class composition of particular neighbourhoods is not always as varied as Soviet planning policy suggests it ought to be.' Areas of housing built by industrial enterprises almost inevitably had a working-class character, and tracts of private housing had a similar composition. Higher-status people had other choices, with better housing and environment.

There was certainly some clustering of accommodation for higher-status groups and the elite, as was observed above with respect to Moscow. Bater (1980: 101) suggests that this led to a degree of residential segregation as early as the Stalin era. Concentrations of co-operatives may also have existed in certain parts of the city but French (1987: 314-15) points out that sites for such housing were controlled by the local authority, which had the power to prevent spatial clustering of those who could afford such accommodation. For members of the elite allocated good state housing, apartment size and furnishings may have mattered more than location (Bater, 1984: 149). And there was always the chance factor, which may have enabled an enterprising or fortunate individual to take advantage of that uncertain flexibility and inefficiency which characterized the Soviet bureaucracy.

In view of the imprecision and ambivalence of some of the evidence, the most appropriate conclusion, following Andrusz (1984: 220) is that, '[i]t is impossible in Soviet cities to identify ghettos, whether rich or poor: there are only tendencies towards the congregation of social groups.' But, as he emphasized throughout his study of the Soviet urban scene, there was an association between housing quality, tenure, social group and spatial location; this, along with differentiation of the urban infrastructure, generated a distinctive kind of city with its own emergent patterns of inequality. How far this generalization holds for other Eastern European countries, where there is more direct evidence of both the processes involved and their outcomes, will be examined in the section which follows.

#### *Other evidence of socio-economic differentiation*

Some of the most thorough investigations of socio-economic differentiation within cities outside the former Soviet Union cover the

cities of Warsaw, Prague and Budapest. In the first two cases, historical comparisons can be made, to reveal something of the impact of socialism on the pre-socialist city. The evidence is summarized here, followed by a study of the two regional centres of Pecs and Szeged in Hungary.

Warsaw has a special place in the creation of the socialist city. Its population had reached almost 1.3 million in 1939, but five years of wartime devastation left barely 162,000 people in 1945. The new society therefore had almost complete freedom to reconstruct a major city according to new ideals. Two important principles were 'the right to adequate living conditions in cities - by the proper location of service centres for education, culture, etc.' and 'the principle of social equality - by applying uniform criteria with respect to every social group and area' (Regulska, 1987: 326). By 1949 sufficient progress had been made for President Bierut (quoted in Regulska, 1987: 327) to proclaim:

New Warsaw cannot be a reproduction of the old one, it cannot be only an improved repetition of pre-war concentration of private capitalist interests of the society, it cannot be a reflection of contradictions dividing this society, it cannot be a scene and base for exploitation of people and expansion of the privileges of the owners' class... New Warsaw should become a socialist capital. The fight for the ideological image of our city must be carried out with full consciousness and with all the required energy directed towards this goal. New Warsaw through the development of industry will become the centre of production, the city of workers.

In 1949 all existing housing was 'communalized' or taken into state control, except for small, one-family dwellings. Then the state (or city of Warsaw) took the major role in new housing construction. But pressure on resources led to the encouragement of large-scale co-operative development from the late 1950s, tapping people's savings in return for a shorter waiting time, and to a decline in city-financed construction, which was discontinued in 1973. Initially, co-operatives paid much more attention than municipal authorities to the appearance of housing estates and the supply of services, but as co-operatives came to dominate the scene such concerns seem to have become less important (Ciechocinska, 1987: 11). Modern estates on the fringe of the city often lacked good transport as well as services, though quality of accommodation may have been some compensation. Thus urban environmental attributes as well as the dwellings themselves came to vary with the location, date of construction and housing tenure.



Something of the impact of socialist reconstruction has been revealed by Weclawowicz (1979). He analysed variables measuring population characteristics, occupation and housing by enumeration districts in 1931, and derived an index of 'economic-class position' describing the principal component of differentiation which could be extracted from the data. There was a clear decline in socio-economic status, from the compact central zone, through a transitional zone, and out into a peripheral zone. The reversal of the usual generalization concerning the capitalist city could be explained by the fact that the process of outward movement of wealthier people had begun from Warsaw only after 1981, generating few high-status areas on the periphery.

The population of Warsaw in 1970, at 1,315,000, was not much greater than in 1931. But the physical structure of the city had been very largely renewed. Weclawowicz (1979) chose variables which coincided as far as possible with those used for 1931, and derived an index reflecting educational and occupational characteristics along with form of housing tenure as the principal component of differentiation. This captured what he termed 'socio-occupational position', rather than economic-class status as in 1931, because it was less concerned with income differentials which predominated under capitalism than with the broader social evaluation of labour in particular occupations. The highest index values tended to be in the central part of the city, reflecting the concentration of writers, journalists and artists along with others occupying crucial (and privileged) positions and working in nearby offices, educational institutions and so on. This was the outcome of a selective housing policy which enabled these groups to settle in central locations which had been rebuilt soon after the war. The lowest values identified areas dominated by housing construction of the 1960s.

Weclawowicz concluded that there had been great changes in spatial structure between 1931 and 1970. In the inter-war period Warsaw had an urban form strongly differentiated by class, whereas the pattern in 1970 was more a reflection of socio-occupational position, a selective housing policy, and stages of settling the post-war city. The classic models of the capitalist city, with their wedges, concentric zones and multiple nuclei, were too simplistic to describe Warsaw's spatial structure in 1970, which was more of a mosaic differentiated in local detail. Later research at the broader scale of the Warsaw urban region reveals a 'substantial increase of spatial disparities' between 1978 and 1988 (Weclawowicz, 1991: 29; 1992), reflecting the prevailing social and political transformation and in particular the increasing shortage of housing.

Another interpretation of socio-spatial disparities in Warsaw, at the end of the 1970s, is offered by Dangschat and Blasius (1987; see also Dangschat, 1987). They identified distinct clusters of districts, defined mainly by age and type of housing. Education appeared to be an important means by which access to a differentiated housing stock was determined. These authors claim that disparities in Warsaw were not fundamentally different from those in their Western European counterparts. An alternative position is advanced by Ciechocinska (1987: 22-4), who is closer to Weclawowicz (1979) in asserting: '[t]he pattern of sociospatial differences in Warsaw differs considerably from the text-book examples of social inequalities which occur in many developed and third world countries.' She saw the basic source of inequality as the shortage of housing, which generated a distinctive process of differential access. The shortage could mean a wait of many years for a housing co-operative unit, but especially valuable employees in managerial or leadership positions had a better chance of obtaining such flats. Only families with incomes well below the average could obtain city-owned flats, and their concentration usually in older parts of the city led to strong socio-spatial differentiation. Constraints on the exchange of flats, along with the housing shortage, meant that most people were tied to their accommodation virtually for life. Such stability was conducive to a perpetuation of the existing differences in the socio-spatial structure.

Prague has a population of about 1.2 million in the city, 1.6 million in the wider metropolis. The special interest of this city is that, unlike Moscow or Warsaw, Prague has seen the formation of socialist society largely on a pre-existing physical structure typical of the European city of industrial capitalism. Prague was the first major Eastern European city to be the subject of thorough investigation of internal differentiation after the advent of socialism (Musil, 1968). This was followed up by a comparison of the city in 1930 and 1970 (Mateju et al., 1979), similar to that of Weclawowicz in Warsaw. The pattern for 1930 revealed five types of area, differentiated according to such conditions as proportion of working class in the economically active population, dwellings with a bathroom, and density of occupation. As Mateju et al. (1979: 190) saw it: '[t]he urban fringes were becoming proletarian, while wealthy strata tended to retreat from the centre of the city and from the industrial areas of the intermediate zone into newly built residential quarters. The city's centre was inhabited by the petty bourgeoisie, clerks and working-class aristocracy.'

It was onto this pattern that a new order was imposed. The early years of the socialist period, up to the latter part of the 1950s, were

characterized largely by the redistribution of existing housing stock. Geographical differences were evened out, with the proportion of manual workers in the inner zones increasing to about 40 per cent in 1961 compared with a little over a quarter in 1930 (Musil, 1987: 31). The 1960s saw the beginning of a phase of accelerated housing construction, which continued through the 1970s. Large estates were built on the fringe of the city, to relieve congestion in the centre and facilitate reconstruction of the inner areas as well as to accommodate the growing workforce. The social ecology identified in 1970, reflecting the first part of this phase, revealed types of area similar to those of 1930, but with significant changes in the character of various parts of the city. Differences among the areas identified had become smaller than in 1930, as reflected in decreases in the ratio of maximum to minimum values from 1.18 to 1.14 for proportion of the population that was working class, 3.39 to 1.69 for dwellings with a bathroom, and 1.62 to 1.14 in the number of persons per room.

The socio-economic (or class) structure had become much less important in the spatial differentiation of Prague. More significant in 1970 was the material quality of the urban environment, with a distinction between the old, obsolescent parts of the city and the newly developed areas, along with family and age structure (Mateju et al., 1979: 192–3; Musil, 1987: 32–3). A process of homogenization of urban space had been set in motion, but there was still spatial differentiation arising from the inherited built environment, its variability, and how it compared with new construction. And there was a social dimension to this differentiation: some areas still had a relatively high-status population, while old people were more likely to be in poor and overcrowded housing. The greatest social homogeneity was found in the new outer suburbs, where housing was allocated to families with similar characteristics on the basis of need.

The 1980s appear to have been characterized by a growing differentiation within both the old and new parts of Prague. The better-quality housing became dispersed, unlike that of the pre-socialist period. And in the new housing estates, state, enterprise and co-operative blocks of flats were mixed. Thus, Musil (1987: 35) saw 'an increase of heterogeneity in macrostructure', accompanied by 'a certain homogenisation which contributes to the emergence of problem areas', occupied by old people and less-qualified workers, in the inner districts and some older industrial parts of the city.

The inherited built form of the capitalist city clearly had an important bearing on the changing social geography of Prague during the socialist period. To quote Musil (1987: 32):

even an extensive house building programme carried out in the sixties – and, it may be added, even in the seventies – combined with many other deep social changes, were not able to completely transform the inherited features of Prague's social ecology. The inner parts of the city did not essentially change and the traditional attraction of certain districts for certain social groups remained rather strong. Also the inherited location of industrial as well as non-industrial workplaces undoubtedly played an important role in shaping the ecological pattern of the city.

The socialist period expanded the city and created new residential areas of relatively uniform quality, at least with respect to state housing. But districts of poor housing and low environmental quality remained. Access to housing of varied quality, along with the freedom of those with the means and ability to build or acquire private housing or join a co-operative, provided scope for people to differentiate themselves, in terms of their accommodation and the local environment which goes with it.

Budapest has a population of about 2.1 million people. The city suffered considerable damage during World War II, and the rest of the 1940s was preoccupied with repair or reconstruction. Some subdivision of housing took place, and redistribution was accelerated when the Communist Party took over in 1948–9 (Hegedus and Tosics, 1983: 475–6). There were attempts to restrict the growth of Budapest in the 1950s, which exacerbated a housing shortage compounded by poor quality and lack of amenities within the existing stock.

At the end of the 1950s, plans were drawn up to build 250,000 new dwellings in the city, 80 per cent of them from public funds. However, the economy could not support this level of activity; official prejudice against the private sector was relaxed, so that, in the 1960s and 1970s, 30–40 per cent of construction came from private building by those who could afford it. The public housing programme, with its high-rise estates, required relatively open areas, and these were found mainly between the densely built city centre and suburban settlements annexed to the city in 1950. These new dwellings were the subject of allocation criteria favouring large families, predominantly of the working class. The very best housing remained the high-quality single-family and multi-family blocks of the traditional residential districts. The most obsolete and run-down area was between the inner city and the estates. A process of spatial sorting of the population was thus taking place, associated with growing polarization of housing classes (Hegedus and Tosics, 1983: 483, 489).

While the 1970s had seen a reassertion of social need criteria in

housing distribution, Hegedus and Tosics (1983: 491) claimed that this was not reflected in a moderation of segregation tendencies. However, this interpretation has been questioned by Sillince (1985: 146–7), who showed that variations in the ratio between ‘physical’ (manual) and ‘non-physical’ workers in each of the 22 districts of Budapest had gone down sequentially from 1960 to 1980. His interpretation is that social class segregation had progressively fallen over these 20 years. Some support is provided by Ladányi (1989: 560–1), who found the spatial segregation of five out of six socio-economic groups decreasing during the 1970s.

The geographical features displayed by Sillince’s ratio of physical to non-physical workers shows a high degree of consistency from year to year. In other words, the pattern of social differentiation had not changed much over two decades, with the more working-class districts concentrated in the south and west and those with a higher proportion of non-physical workers in the central and western parts of the city. Further detail at a finer spatial scale is provided by Ladányi (1989). He concludes that the higher-status regions of the city are the most compact and segregated, while the lowest-status regions, although sharply separated from the high-status groups, are more dispersed and segregated on a smaller scale. This suggests a patchwork or mosaic of socio-economic differentiation, rather than broad homogeneous zones. Ladányi (1989: 565–6) summarizes the situation as follows:

Workers, or more precisely, poor people . . . lived in the worst, furthest parts of the city, without any conveniences, which were polluted and located next to industry, or they lived in deteriorated, or originally poor-quality apartment-houses, or in poor one-family houses near railroads or main streets, in the back apartments of the older apartment-houses without any conveniences, in concierge-flats, in subtenancy, as night-lodgers, in cellars or in attics etc. . . . The highest-status social groups symbolise their ‘being different’ by their spatial separation and, as they have enough power, they can develop their ‘own’ part of the city.

Pecs and Szeged, regional centres in Hungary with populations a little less than 200,000, are the subject of one of the most thorough investigations of housing inequality under socialism. In 1968, George Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi carried out a survey involving 2,300 families in the two cities. They were particularly concerned with how the unequal distribution of social privileges and disadvantages, arising from the differentiation of socialist society, was related to the spatial

distribution and mobility of the social groups concerned. The account here is based on Szelenyi (1983).

The allocation of occupational groups among different kinds of housing revealed a striking distinction between relatively high proportions of bureaucrats, intellectuals, technicians and clerical workers in first-class state housing and lower proportions of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The same distinction was shown for those with their own bank-financed or co-operative apartment. However, in private housing, usually of poor quality, the situation was reversed. So in general, the higher-status groups received better housing, with the highest state subsidies. Those who had been awarded state housing included 37 per cent of the high bureaucrats and almost 40 per cent of intellectuals, compared with figures of around 21 to 15 per cent for the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Again, the situation was reversed for those who had built or bought their own houses, with only 26 per cent of bureaucrats and 21 per cent of intellectuals in this category compared with about 35 per cent of skilled and semi-skilled workers and 44 per cent of the unskilled.

Szelenyi (1983: 63) summarized the spatial sorting process as follows:

the social groups with the highest incomes move steadily towards the highest housing classes in the state and market sectors, and come close to monopolising them. Below that, the highest class of housing available to most of those with lower incomes is the second market class, i.e. the range of family houses omitting the superior ‘villa’ category. The housing options and opportunities of these lower classes are limited more by state policies which allocate state housing and credit than by the people’s capacity to pay. Public policy thus provides that, on average, the richer classes get better housing for less money and effort, while the poorer classes get worse housing at the cost of more money or effort, or both.

So, whereas under socialism housing is supposed to have a special significance as an equalizing element of state provision, received as a right and not as a reflection of income, in Pecs and Szeged it was found to be a source of inequality compounding other inequalities arising from occupational status.

Szelenyi went on to consider the spatial structure of the two cities, to see whether there was any correspondence between the physical and functional characteristics of areas, their housing, and their demographic and social composition. Relatively high proportions of

intellectuals, other white-collar workers and skilled blue-collar workers lived in the new multi-storey housing estates, fitted with bathrooms, water, gas and electricity, and, to a lesser extent, in the city centre. Correspondingly lower proportions of the professionals lived in the more industrial areas and outer zones of private village-style dwellings. Unskilled workers made up more than half the households in these zones of poorer housing, with only 18 per cent in the new state housing areas. Szelenyi (1983: 117) concluded:

the degree of segregation of our cities is measurable. It is also clear that all the measured social and spatial advantages tend to be superimposed on one another to increase the privilege of the privileged, while the corresponding disadvantages go together to worsen the situation of the disadvantaged. The higher social classes with the higher status and the better educational qualifications are situated in the better zones of the city; the lower social classes with lower status and less education tend to live in the poorer zones.

Furthermore, those with low incomes who got poor housing in poor districts typically paid more for it than the richer people did for better housing in better districts. State housing allocation favoured those of high status, the workers seeking new accommodation largely being forced out of the city to build for themselves. Thus, contrary to the expectations of socialist ideals, the housing allocation system was found to have a regressive redistributive impact: a finding confirmed by others elsewhere (for example, Hamilton, 1993, in Moscow – see above).

### ETHNIC SEGREGATION

Socio-economic differentiation in the capitalist city often has an ethnic or racial dimension. The cities of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union had distinct and often substantial ethnic quarters in the pre-socialist period, most notably the Jewish ghettos. The elimination of the ghettos by the Nazis represented one of the most dramatic changes in the internal structure of cities which came under socialist regimes after World War II. Warsaw and Lodz in Poland are obvious cases where large Jewish populations were exterminated, with their former residential areas, religious edifices and so on almost entirely destroyed. Only occasionally did the physical structures of the ghetto survive the holocaust, as in Prague and Krakow.

Evidence from Soviet cities points to some ethnic segregation continuing during the socialist period. For example, although the

major cities of Soviet Central Asia are now predominately Slavic, many of the indigenous people still prefer to live in traditional quarters, Samarkand being a case in point (see French and Hamilton, 1979: 145–65, for a discussion of Islamic cities). However, detailed investigations, including mapping, are rare.

A notable exception is a study of Kazan, capital of what used to be the Tartar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. Rukavishnikov (1978; see Bater, 1984: 152–6; 1986: 98–9, for summaries) produced detailed maps for 1974 based on a survey, and also reconstructed features of the city at the turn of the century so that the present (or recent past) could be compared with the pre-revolutionary patterns. Kazan was originally an ethnically homogeneous city populated by Tartars. Russians began to move in when the middle and upper Volga country was annexed by the Russian state c.1550. The proportion of Russians steadily increased, so that by around the end of the nineteenth century, when the total population was roughly 150,000, Tartars accounted for 15–20 per cent. A clear spatial separation of the two groups could then be identified: the better eastern part of the city was inhabited by predominantly Russians and the western part by Tartars. It was also possible to identify distinct areas occupied by merchants, at the intersection of the Tartar and Russian districts, and by the nobility, in the Russian district away from the city centre in the higher and more attractive parts of the city. Thus, according to Rukavishnikov (1978: 64):

pre-Revolutionary Kazan confirms the well-known proposition that capitalist cities are characterised by settlement in socially and ecologically different parts of the city according to class affiliation. The contrasts of pre-Revolutionary Kazan were defined not so much by ethnic as social factors, for the conditions of life of the Russian and Tartar proletariat were virtually the same.

Since the Revolution the population of Kazan has greatly increased, to exceed one million. The proportion of Tartars has also increased, with migration from the surrounding territory; by the time of the 1974 survey it had reached 31.1 per cent, with 64.1 per cent of Russians, and the balance made up by other ethnic groups. Districts with relatively high proportions of Tartars could still be identified, roughly corresponding with those at the turn of the century. But nowhere did Tartars exceed 80 per cent of the total population; they were to be found living in all parts of the city, often side by side with Russians. Rukavishnikov (1978: 73) refers to the 'mosaic ethnic structure of socialist Kazan in the 1970s', compared with the more evident segregation of the capitalist city.

As to the social geography of Kazan in the 1970s, revealed by occupational structure, Rukavishnikov (1978: 68) claimed: '[n]o rigid relationship between an individual's status in society and his place of residence is to be found.' However, his maps do suggest a peripheral dominance of workers and a concentration of professionals in the central parts of the city. Some degree of social segregation must therefore be recognized, although the development of the city under socialism clearly generated more spatial diversity. While high social status and Russian origin were much less closely associated than before the Revolution, there must have been some relationship between ethnic group and living conditions in Kazan, because Tartars predominated in the original (and poorer) Tartar parts of the city as well as on the urban fringes. Rukavishnikov (1978: 72, 74-5) also found such a relationship in the industrial city of Al'met'evsk, with Tartars primarily in zones of old and modern private housing, which is usually of inferior quality. And, while no localization of social strata was said to exist here, highly qualified professionals, creative intellectuals and managers were found to live primarily in newly built areas, presumably in state flats, and in those adjacent to the city centre.

Two further cases may be presented briefly, to show the distribution of different national groups among broad subdivisions (regions) of two capitals of former Soviet republics. The first is Alma-Ata, capital of the Kazakh Republic. Russians comprised about 660,000 or 59.1 per cent of the total population of 1,117,000 in 1989, outnumbering the Kazakhs by almost three to one. However, this ratio is

**Table 3.2** Distribution of Kazakh and Russian population in the city of Alma-Ata (percentage of total), by region, 1989

Region	Kazakh	Russian	Other
Alatayskiy	23.7	60.0	16.3
Ayezovskiy	17.8	61.5	20.7
Kalininskiy	25.9	56.3	17.8
Leninskiy	21.3	59.1	19.6
Moskovskiy	15.9	61.9	23.2
Oktyabr'skiy	14.5	64.8	20.7
Sovyetskiy	30.4	54.1	15.5
Fruntsenskiy	28.6	54.2	17.2
City	22.5	59.1	18.4

Source: Goskomstat Kazakhskoi SSR, Alma-Atinskoe gorodskoe upravlenie statistiki, Itogi vsesoyuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1989 goda (Alma-Ata, 1990)

smaller than it was in 1979, when the percentage of Russians was 65.9, compared with 16.7 Kazakhs. Table 3.2 shows variations in the proportions of the national groups among the eight regions into which the city is divided. The highest proportion of Kazakhs is in the central Sovyetskiy region, followed by Fruntsenskiy to the east. The lowest proportions are in the northern Moskovskiy and Oktyabr'skiy regions, where there are the highest proportion of Russians. But despite the variations shown, and the broad geographical pattern, the picture is one of predominantly mixed populations rather than of strong spatial segregation: an impression reinforced by the personal observations of residents.

Smaller ethnic or national groups may be subject to greater spatial concentration, however. In Alma-Ata there is a distinctive area of Turkish and Chechen people (from the northern Caucasus), relocated by Stalin. Initially they were socially deprived, but today their level of living is reported to be relatively high due to their activity in the alternative or informal economy. However, they are still concentrated in a relatively poor part of the city in an ecological sense.

The second case is Tbilisi, capital of the Republic of Georgia. Here Georgians predominate, with 752,000 or 62.1 per cent of the total population of 1,211,000; the Russians (149,000) are actually exceeded by the Armenians (176,000). The figures in table 3.3 identify

**Table 3.3** Distribution of national populations in the city of Tbilisi (percentages), by region, 1987

Region	Georgian	Russian	Armenian	Other
Leninskiy	66.9	12.0	8.6	12.5
Pervomanskiy	71.8	11.3	10.1	6.8
Oktyabr'skiy	62.4	8.8	18.1	10.7
Kalininskiy	71.9	8.4	11.2	8.5
Ordzonikidze	77.9	7.4	6.1	8.6
Kirovskiy	42.6	8.9	23.8	24.7
Im. 26 Komissarov	38.1	17.6	35.6	8.7
Zavodskiy	38.1	24.7	19.7	17.5
Gladinskiy	66.9	12.0	8.6	12.5
Saburtalinskiy	77.9	7.4	6.1	8.6
City	62.1	12.3	14.5	11.1

Source: Goskomstat Gruzinskoy SSR, Tbilisskoe gorodskoe upravlenie gosudarstvennoy statistiki, Naseleniye, zdavookhraneniye i sotsal'noe obespeneniye v gorode Tbilisi (Tbilisi, 1987)

two regions where Armenians comprise about a third and a quarter, respectively. Similarly, there is one region, covering the eastern extremity of the city, in which Russians make up a quarter of the total population. The impression is, then, of somewhat greater segregation than in Alma-Ata. The Georgian population exceeds three-quarters of the total in some regions, but falls to less than 40 per cent in others. The size of the Russian population here and, more particularly, in cities like Alma-Ata has important implications for future political and social stability, in the face of the reassertion of nationalism.

### INEQUALITY IN THE SOCIALIST CITY

Discussion of the socio-economic or ethnic differentiation of the socialist city leads to the central issue of inequality with a spatial expression. Among both indigenous and Western students of the East European and Soviet city, there is almost universal agreement that the degree of social segregation and inequality under socialism was less than under capitalism. However, there are substantial differences in interpretation of both the spatial pattern of inequality and its extent. Some observers argue that urban inequalities were very greatly reduced under socialism, and that what did exist could best be described as a mosaic or patchwork, or in similar terms. This is essentially the conclusion arrived at by Weclawowicz (1979, 1981) in his studies of Warsaw and other Polish cities, and adopted by French and Hamilton (1979: 16–17). However, this view has been challenged by Dangschat (1987) in particular, who found 'surprisingly high' segregation of social groups by education, age and household size in Warsaw, contradicting what he described as the conventional wisdom of a low rate of social segregation in the socialist city. In place of the mosaic pattern, or segregation at the level of the apartment block, this alternative view claims the existence of relatively large and homogeneous areas in socialist cities. In a review of earlier experience and more recent research, Szelenyi (1987: 6) is sympathetic to this position:

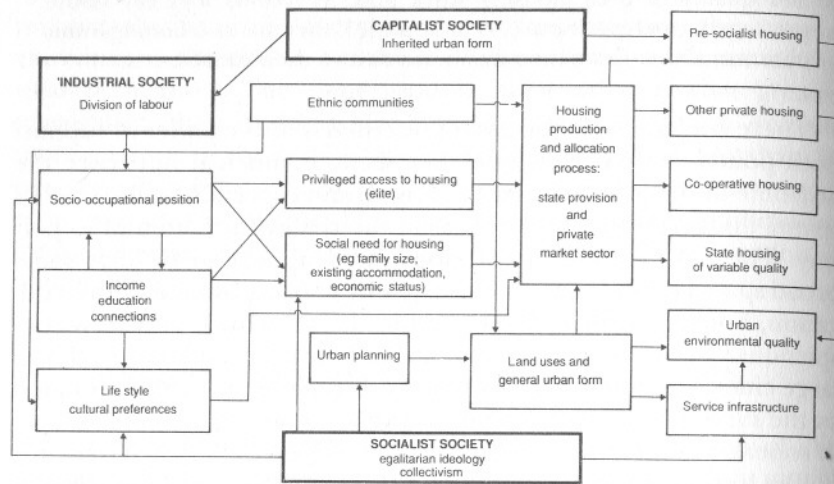
due to public ownership of most central urban land, due to the uniquely state socialist, exceptionally high degree of concentration of financing and of construction-firms, [an] unusually high proportion of new urban housing in socialist cities is being built in large estates, in a geographically concentrated way. Socialist city planning creates large geographic areas which are quite homogenous in terms of the nature

and quality of their housing stock and, as follows logically [from privileged, class-specific access to housing], they are also homogenous in terms of the occupational composition of their inhabitants.

There is evidence in the cases presented in this chapter to support both points of view. However, they seem as much if not more the outcome of the particular method used, and especially of the level of spatial disaggregation adopted, as of the reality they attempt to portray. The most sensible resolution would appear to be that some broad spatial differentiation of inequality in occupational status, education, housing, certain demographic characteristics, and (less conspicuously) income is very likely to be found in medium-sized and large cities, but punctuated by smaller distinctive areas differentiated by the survival of pre-revolutionary/pre-war housing, and by enclaves of superior or inferior state housing or co-operatives. Much depends on the history of the city in question, its pattern of (re)development, and the survival or otherwise of distinctive social areas, local communities or environments.

Turning to the process whereby socio-economic differentiation or inequality arises in the socialist city, this will clearly be different from what occurs under capitalism. However, residential segregation can be expected where there are socio-economic disparities within urban society, a variable housing stock, spatial concentrations of differing housing conditions, and competition for dwellings within the housing system. To these might be added differences in local levels of service provision and general environmental quality. And some residential sorting can also be expected to arise from the existence of distinctive ethnic or cultural groups, as well as from variations in family structure which lead to residential selectivity. All these conditions were in fact met, to a greater or lesser extent, under Eastern European and Soviet socialism. Some socio-economic segregation was the inevitable outcome. And once residential segregation has been established, the inequalities may be self-reinforcing.

The broad features of the process of intra-urban differentiation are sketched out in figure 3.3. On the right-hand side is the variable housing stock, service infrastructure and local environmental quality, patterned by pre-socialist forms as well as by new urban development. To the left is a suggestion of the means whereby differential access arises, from the productive and redistributive mechanisms and the role of individuals within them. While details may require modification in the light of how particular societies function nationally, this is general enough to capture the essence of the Eastern European socialist city as an inegalitarian system.



**Figure 3.3** Elements of the process of inequality in the socialist city  
*Source: Smith (1989: 72, figure 8.2)*

What we have observed, then, is the central paradox of the socialism which actually existed: the continuation of inequality in a society built on supposedly egalitarian ideals. To quote Szelenyi (1987: 7), '[a]n ideologically egalitarian housing policy and urban planning produced an inegalitarian system of housing allocation, and produced, and keeps reproducing, the residential segregation of occupational groups.' It is not that those who ran the societies concerned somehow deliberately subverted the system: '[t]hey create inegalitarian cities not because they wish to do so, but because they operate as key agents in a new social structure, which is shaped by new types of class antagonisms.' That such a society was ultimately self-destructive is, now, a matter of history. But the cities thus created, their people as well as the built environment, will continue an active role in the formation of post-socialist society and its cities, just as the socialist city and society could not completely transcend its own past.

#### NOTES

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