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Chapter 1 : Communal Living in Russia

The Transformation of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Russia (BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies Book 30) - Kindle edition by Isolde Brade, Konstantin Axenov, Evgenij Bondarchuk.

How a capitalist Pyongyang might develop. Pyongyang, the capital city of North Korea, is one of few socialist cities in the world that has not adopted this new economic model. On the other hand, Pyongyang is comparable to socialist cities of decades ago, in that it exhibits a strong potential to attract huge investments if and when it begins to open its market to other countries. This change has, in fact, already begun to take place, raising the following questions for architects: Framed Pyongyang In spite of recent developments in its fledgling tourist industry, North Korea is still the most enclosed country in the world, and even Pyongyang, its capital city, remains under a veil. The information we currently have about Pyongyang primarily comes from media discussions of its political or social issues. In contrast to reports of its dictatorship, nuclear weapons programs, and the trend of nationwide starvation, the actual urban layout of Pyongyang has not received much attention. Courtesy UrbanNext Pyongyang, however, was considered by other socialist countries to be an ideal socialist city when it was first built during the s, instead of to be a city of veil or dictatorship. In the absence of the political dictatorship of today, Pyongyang provided an experimental field in which socialist architects attempted to apply their ideal urban structures to the real world. Left in complete shambles after the war, the reconstruction of Pyongyang afforded planners the rare opportunity to create a new structure from the ground up. Thus, in order to fully understand the urban structure of Pyongyang, it is necessary to first consider the larger context of the model socialist city, its historical context, and how it differed in key ways from the capitalist city model. During this period, several socialist countries supported the reconstruction of North Korean cities by providing resources as well as technological assistance. Pyongyang received support from Hungary and Bulgaria, and not surprisingly, the architectural style and urban structure of Pyongyang showed some similarities to the two countries at the beginning of reconstruction. Based on a master plan in that reflected the ideals of socialist city planning, Pyongyang was planned as a one-million population city that would stretch from the Daedong River to the Botong River; the density of city was to planned as 20 percent to 25 percent. This scheme captured the socialist concepts of constructing a proper city in a well-planned way. Throughout the decades, Pyongyang realized a number of its socialist urban planning goals. The three major socialist urban morphologies mentioned above were well executed in the city. To resolve disparities between cities and to balance development between urban and rural area, [the] architects of Pyongyang aimed to set aside self-productive units within the city. This district is well structured in the area across from the central administration district, and the two areas together comprise a key axis of directionality for city expansion. Both riversides were developed major landscaped areas and most major boulevards were heavily planted. Additionally, to maximize the effectiveness of labor and production for workers, they created several leisure parks in the city so that the public could have enough rest and recover before returning to production. In Pyongyang, most of the leisure parks were located close to historical or memorial areas. The central part of the city was structured as a place for administrations and institutions. Major socialist buildings and symbols are located in this area, and the main square, Kim Il Sung Square, is also located there. Juche Tower, which is a symbol of North Korean ideology, is located directly across the river from the square. Together they create a major axis of symbolic spaces. Moreover, additional symbolic buildings and statues are distributed all around Pyongyang in order to serve as physical sites of propaganda for socialist ideology. Pyongyang was reconstructed based on the master plan that was designed by Kim Jung Hee in In the master plan, Pyongyang is structured as a multi-core city. Several different symbolic spaces are distributed evenly throughout the city and each of them become a core of each district. Also, main landscape structures are planned in between districts and work as buffer zones so that they cannot expand freely. This distribution of districts is mainly done to maintain the proper size of the city and to prevent social differentiation that can emerge from marked

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development in distinct areas. At the same time, each distributed central square works as a symbolic space that testifies to the centrally controlled society. In the s, Kim Il Sung ordered the re-development of an architectural strategy of Pyongyang. They consisted for the expansion of the major boulevards and the construction of high-rise residential buildings along the boulevards, large-scale civic and cultural facilities, symbolic statues and squares, and leisurely and convenient facilities for foreigners. Once proposed, these five strategies became a major urban development standard with the larger scheme of the master plan in . For instance, focusing on the development along major boulevards clashed with the development of several multi-cores. Consequently, this destroyed the multi-core system and only certain areas located near the start of the boulevards could function as core-like districts. Also, denser development of certain areas conflicted with the principle of evening distributing residents around Pyongyang. Additionally, even symbolic urban spaces came to congregate in the central part of the city instead of being distributed throughout the city. This phenomenon resulted primarily due to of the rapid growth of the city. Although North Korea, like other socialist countries, controlled migration of the population, it could not halt illegal immigration into the city and rapid urbanization of Pyongyang. As the city grew denser, housing shortages became a problem. To resolve this problem, as mentioned above, Pyongyang developed several high-rise residential areas. At the same time, informal residential areas emerged. They mostly arose in areas originally planned as landscape areas in the master plan, and housing resembled typical one or two-story houses that were designed for agricultural areas. This informal development not only broke with the landscape structure in the city, but also rendered micro-districts impossible. Hence, compared to other organized areas that were developed according to the master-plan, the informal development area lost its balance between residential units and service facilities. In short, the urban morphology of current-day Pyongyang portrays a mixture of the physical forms of the ideal socialist master plan and the realities of the actual development scheme.

Transformation of a Socialist City As other socialist countries have already experienced, North Korea is also in the midst of [a] transition to adopt the capitalist system in some ways. There are several indications that highlight this transition. For instance, the secretive Pyongyang government recently launched an experiment with the free market in , beginning to deregulate prices and hiking salaries. Also, small vendors, which had been controlled strictly by the government, are starting to emerge at major squares, and even underground real estate deals are taking place. Collectively, these changes can be seen as early indicators of a market-oriented economic system. The former Soviet Union, its Eastern European satellite, and China each underwent this transition a decade ago, and several cities amongst them, like Moscow , Shanghai, Beijing, have already [become] booming metropolises in the world. As noted earlier, socialist cities have different urban structures and morphologies from capitalist cities. These contrasts not only reflect different political ideologies but also differences in the flow of capital. Hence, when socialist cities start to allow capitalist forms of capital flow, the urban figures also change based on this new logic. The socialist city center has been the area where most of this transformation unfolds. Further, public spaces or institution areas in the city center that have weaker capital power tend to be occupied by bigger capitals such as business fields. Therefore, it is the central area of the city [that] begins to morph into the central business district, something that a socialist city has not had before. For example, the more evenly distributed activities of the socialist past will become concentrated in certain areas, while denser and higher pedestrian flows will develop around metro stations, major boulevards, or squares. Moreover, new warehouse-style transactions taking place outside the city will begin affecting the structuring of suburban areas where few developments have been witnessed under socialism. Suburbanization is also connected to the restructuring of social classes within the city. In an ideal social city, there is no class segregation and [the] government strictly controls the movement of its residents. However, as social classes begin to diversify based on personal earnings within the market-oriented system, upper classes have tended to relocate to areas that have better living quality. This observation is closely related to the system of the micro-district. Aiming to consolidate areas of production and living into one space, the micro-district creates a worse environment for residents than an area that is mainly focused on residential development. Therefore,

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social class differentiation leads to the segregation and restructuring of programs within a city. Courtesy UrbanNext

Pyongyang Transformation

The urban structure and layout of Pyongyang will likely shift alongside major economic transformations that have already begun to take place. It may be beneficial for Pyongyang to develop a new set of plans to reflect its transition to a market-oriented system. Courtesy UrbanNext

What growth models are open to Pyongyang?

There are several possible development plans for the city. The incremental growth model differs from the ad-hoc master plan that ignores the existing socialist city structure and puts an alien structure onto the city. Just as the urban DNA of Pyongyang has resulted from the mixing of the original socialist master plan and development scheme, the incremental growth model will also be capable of forging a new DNA of Pyongyang, fusing it with its existing DNA. Thus the second questions to consider is: Studies of other former socialist cities that have already been through the transition suggest that the urban mutation will occur easily in areas where the existing socialist structure and the market-oriented system collide. Because of its advantageous infrastructure and location, the area has a strong potential for attracting new investment in a market-oriented economic system. A desire to improve the residential environment will likely force production facilities, like light industries in the micro-district block, to be relocated to outside of the city; further, a new mix-used development, which is a typical development type in capitalist cities, will fill the gap. Similar types of transformation will unfold, albeit in distinct ways, in areas where informal development schemes arise. How does a new development interact with existing structures of the area? However, like the notion of production-consumption within a block, the physical relationship between programs is very strong in Pyongyang. Thus, when a new parcel system is introduced for the sake of the market-oriented system, instead of just dividing parcel based on existing programs, the inter-relationship of programs should be carefully considered. For example, a parcel can be composed of both production facilities and residential lots, and it can be developed as a mixed-used program. This not only ensures the maintenance of the existing character of Pyongyang as a socialist city, but also makes possible gradual development within a block instead of a whole block scale development. Courtesy UrbanNext

In short, sixty years of socialist rule, twenty-first century Pyongyang is showing early signs of change, and the developments are nothing short of unprecedented. It will usher in new paradigms, a new economic system, and a new social structure. Therefore, a new structuring of Pyongyang is needed. There may be numerous strategies or scenarios to greet this new era of Pyongyang, and the scenario of incremental growth I have outlined is one I find particularly important. Pyongyang may or may not exhibit gradual growth patterns in the future. This scenario, however, takes into consideration the existing structures of Pyongyang and anticipates how they will be shaped by a new era. The hidden history of the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, Socialist Urban Planning, Tong Il Han Kook, From the socialist to the capitalist city:

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Chapter 2 : Editions of The Transformation of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Russia by Isolde Brade

The authors examine the modern trends in the urban development of western and post-socialist countries, and explore the theories of the transformation and post-transformation of urban space. Providing a wealth of detailed qualitative research on the Russian city of St. Petersburg, the study examines the changing structure of its retail trade.

Text Throughout nearly all of the Soviet period, urban housing was in critically short supply relative to the needs of the population. The intensive industrialization and urbanization of the USSR in the twentieth century put enormous pressure on existing housing stock, and the Soviet government did not begin to prioritize adequate housing until the late s. At the time of the Revolution in , eighty percent of the population of Russia and a higher percent in the rest of the USSR lived in rural villages and towns. By the s, nearly the same percentage was urban. This represents a dramatic shift from country to city, relative to other nations of the world. Poverty and privation drove people from the countryside, while Soviet official industrialization campaigns encouraged and sometimes forced their movement to cities. From the s into the s, a significant number of Soviet families lived in communal apartments, while many lived in worse conditions in barracks or "dormitories" mass housing for workers. For many families, gaining a room in a communal apartment represented a step up in their housing, especially if they found themselves in the most desirable cities of Moscow or Leningrad. Like Iraida Yakovlevna from "A Room for Her Daughter," many people without housing, especially people from the rural areas, tried to get work as janitors so as to gain a room in the city. In the Soviet Union, housing in cities belonged to the government. It was distributed by municipal authorities or by government departments based on an established number of square meters per person. As a rule, tenants had no choice in the housing they were offered. They did not cover the real costs, and were subsidized by the government. Often, housing the so-called "department housing" was provided by the workplace. Administrative control over housing and the movement of citizens was carried out by means of the residency permit. In cities right up to the s, most families lived in a single room in a communal apartment, where they suffered from overcrowding and had little hope of improving their situation. A comparative minority of people lived in "private" apartments or still lived in dormitories and barracks. Although as far back as the s, a private apartment for each family was declared a goal of Soviet housing policy, large-scale construction was begun only at the end of the s. Extensive construction of low-quality five-story concrete-block buildings, dubbed "Khrushchevki," or "Khrushcheby," which rhymes with the Russian word "trushchoby, " meaning slums , mitigated the situation to some degree. Nevertheless, the declared goal was not met, even in the s when high-rise projects with private apartments became the main form of city housing. At that time, some cities, including Leningrad, had almost a third of its citizens "on the housing list. The limit of nine square meters per person held up to the early s, after which it began to increase. For those who could join a cooperative, housing was comparatively affordable: Petersburg , by contrast, the market value of a square meter in the cheapest new apartment is about ten times the average monthly salary. If, for example, a family with one large room in a communal apartment split in two for example, after a divorce , those people could exchange their living space for two small rooms in different communal apartments. People who got one big room were said to be "moving in together" Russian s"ezzhayutsya and those who exchanged for two small rooms were said to be "moving away from each other" or "splitting" Russian raz"ezzhayutsya. Further Study Andrusz, Gregory D. State University of New York Press. Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History. Woodrow Wilson Center and Cambridge: Brumfield, William Craft Western Technology, Utopian Dreams. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Housing and Income Distribution in Russia: The World Bank Research Observer 1 2 1: Czaplicka, John, Blair A. Ruble, and Lauren Crabtree, eds. Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Moving to the Separate Apartment: Soviet Architecture and City Planning, University of California Press. Click the image to see a larger version, uncropped and annotated.

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Chapter 3 : The Transformation of Urban Space in Post-Soviet Russia: 1st Edition (Hardback) - Routledge

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