서울 2020

# UNPACKING SEOUL: CONCERNS OF A SOLUTIONIST METROPOLIS

A COLLECTIVE INQUIRY ON SEOUL

*organized by the MSc Governing the Large Metropolis*

SciencesPo
URBAN SCHOOL

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# UNPACKING SEOUL

## INTRODUCTION

# UNPACKING SEOUL : CONCERNS OF A SOLUCIONIST METROPOLIS

*By Pranav Kuttaiah & Francesco Palmia*

The study of contemporary Asian metropolises poses a theoretical challenge to much of the extant literature in Urban Studies. The emergence of "global cities" discourses (Sassen, 1999) coupled with the rise of an "Asian focus" within regional and economic geography has begun to recognise the emergence of Asia's metropolitan centres within global financial supply chains. The recent emergence of a 'southern' urban theory has equally pushed back, suggesting an epistemic need to understand historical and contextual specificity, local political economy, and the use of thick description in building urban theory through the means of the "rooted" case study. The major East Asian megacities sit on the border of these two discourses, arguably in need of new vocabularies that capture their specificity as well as generalizability across various regional and global scales. Such a theoretical exercise is not simply of academic interest, but of urgent need in terms of robust public policy. Asia will be the nervecentre of much of this century's urban agglomeration. Scholars like Davis (2017) estimated that by 2025 Asia would have eleven urban conurbations of over 20 million inhabitants - putting metropolitan issues in the continent at the heart of an urban agenda.

A relevant case study in this regard is that of the South Korean capital, Seoul. The fabled 'Miracle on the Han River' stands today as a fascinating example of the intersecting features of global, local, and particularly 'glocal' churns in demography, governance, and economic restructuring. Seoul, with a greater metropolitan area comprising nearly 25 million people, is home to approximately half of the total South Korean population while the city itself accounts for approximately half the nation's GDP. This tenuous demographic and economic relationship, the overlapping jurisdictions that map across an increasingly dense agglomeration, and the churns of a larger Korean society in transition are at the core of our collective inquiry into this fascinating metropolis.

In contextualising the city, a few key dimensions must be acknowledged which tend to steer the representation of Asian (and particularly East-Asian) cities in the broader theoretical literature. In particular, Asian urbanisation seems to have undergone a shift in attention regarding the scale of analysis. A number of scholars moved from a state-centered focus towards a more urban-led focus. Starting from the discourse around the "Asian Tigers", Asian urban development has always been described as a success story of state and market synergies, which gave rise to the term "Korean Style". After the Asian Financial Crisis, instead, Asian metropolises started to be recognized for their independent capacity to position themselves as global cities (Roy and Ong, 2011) and to formulate a characteristic model of Asian urbanism (Cho and Križnik, 2017).

In the particular context of Korea and Seoul, this shift may acquire significance since it mirrored the reformulation of power relations in the multilevel governance of the Seoul metropolitan area. As several scholars have argued, the Asian Financial Crisis highlighted economic inequalities and social polarization driven by the unsustainable developmental state and Korean conglomerates *(chaebols)* during the rampant growth of Korea (Cho and Križnik, 2017, Joo, 2019). The lived realities of such emerging socio-economic relations are yet to be analyzed in detail by formal academic work but have found an avenue on the global stage through acclaimed Korean art and cinema - such as the Oscar-winning movie Parasite (Bong, 2019). In combination with longer-term processes of democratization and decentralization, these crises marked a shift in the model of governance of Seoul. It led the Seoul Metropolitan Government to recognize the growing social needs of the population and to seek alternative

sources of economic growth. However, the causes of this shift of scale remain understudied, from understanding the emergence of new 'advocacy coalitions' (Sabatier, 1988) on the ground to linking the process to wider forms of consultant-led policy interest in local actors (such as proactive mayors) as a means to argue for universalisation of "best practices" and rallying against federal red-tape (Montero, 2020).

Overall, the report focuses on Seoul and its urban policies. On the one hand, it takes into consideration the global position that the city holds. On the other hand, it recognizes the necessity to analyse the local scale to identify a new vocabulary for Asian urbanisation. By doing this, the volume mobilizes multiple perspectives with a dialogic attitude between urban domains that are often separately considered. The report seeks to provide a horizontal understanding of Seoul's urban policies thanks to an interdisciplinary approach. An institutional analysis was integrated with an investigation of the policies subsystems looking for the roles of interest groups and coalitions in the policies framing and implementation. Social interactions and the built environment have been scrutinized in order to understand the structural conditions and the exogenous forces affecting urban policies. Methodologically, a collective inquiry was realised and supported by parallel historical and media analysis, ethnography, spatial analysis, and direct interviews and interactions with policy experts and local government officials. Despite the technocratic specializations of a number of our interviewees, the report also seeks to contextualise the regimes of urban governance with a nuanced understanding of Korean federal and local politics - linking schemes and programs, state capacities, land acquisitions, legal and institutional frameworks, and a host of other instruments and planning schema to the very real ideological leanings of those who wield them.

The report is organized into four main sections, each of which has been broadly summarised below. This categorisation is based on a combination of methods used by the respective authors as well as the scale, scope, and theme of the arguments or aspects of the city that they seek to make propositions about. The volume thus avoids the pitfalls of a methodological preference towards solely a historical, geographical, or political scale of analysis in order to unpack contemporary Seoul. The report also follows a temporal trajectory: acknowledging the historical legacy of the country in shaping contemporary urbanisation (Section 1) and the evolution of its conflicting vertical multilevel governance and politics (Section 2). It goes on to challenge and historicize what has been termed the "Korean Style" state-driven model of development, calling for a local understanding of urban governance and infrastructure development (Section 3). Despite vertical conflicts and discrepancies, a common ground between state and local government actions is identified in the framing of developmental policies and in their ultimate goal to find an alternative source of capitalization in exporting expertise and know-how (Section 4). The key questions addressed by the authors within the more global framing of each section are highlighted below:

### *Modernity Redux: The Shaping of a 21st Century Form and Consciousness*

Seoul has the visible air of a city that has risen from the ashes, a metaphor that is used repeatedly by many of its residents in describing its self image. For contemporary urban scholarship, the historical method remains an indispensable weapon in the arsenal of scholars who wish to dissect the meaning and underlying subtext of such stories of scale. Seoul is an example of the necessity of unpacking the institutional, legal and cultural histories behind the urban form of the 21st century metropolis, without which its most important lessons may indeed be lost behind a veneer of contemporary solutionist 'best practice' buzzwords. In the first article, Yusuf Ashmawy and Sarah Nouvellon take us to the early 20th century to examine the effects of Japanese colonialism in constructing various facets of Korean modernity, and by extension, Seoul's urban planning regimes and institutional architecture. They provide us

with insight on how the infrastructural tabula rasa at the end of the colonial period and the subsequent civil war must be nuanced with modern 'legible' categories of state-building that could precipitate relatively quick advances thereafter.

The modern metropolis of Seoul can hardly be understood in a vacuum of its more contemporary political history - and in particular the trials and tribulations of transitioning from military rule to a democracy at the end of the 1980s. Taking a more macro approach to cultural mores and its effects on urbanisation, Jade Lacoume and Coline Rouchié delve into the historical details of the Park-Chung Hee regime, nuancing its effect on the construction of urban "middle-classness", alienation and its spatial fallout in the city of Seoul. This is taken up in even greater depth by Janvier and Yang, who use the entry point of the city's overriding visual metaphor - that of gigantic and ubiquitous highrise buildings - to trace a material, political and cultural history of the 'republic of apartments'. The paper provides not simply a history of the changing political economy of aesthetics, but also a firm material analysis of instrumentation and policy that enabled the creation of such urban form. Finally to conclude the section, Beifan Li and Mona Menadi seek to unpack the tenuous relationship between the history of the Korean state's branding and urban development strategies in Seoul, with particular emphasis on the Seoul Olympics of 1988. By contextualising the emerging rifts in priority and the emergence of strong metropolitan agendas from the 1980s, they set the stage for the next section that looks at the relationship between nation and city in more detail.

### *Global Ambition and Local Mediation: The Governance Dichotomy of an Emergent World City*

Contemporary urban debates often oscillate on a key question: whether the rescaling of states and concomitant planetary urbanization is resulting in the reduced importance of nation-states in processes of highly financialised regional agglomeration (Brenner, 2004), or whether states continue to be decisive actors not just in their interface with metropolitan governments (Sellers, 2005) but also in their proactively 'urban' strategies of regional development and free trade in the service of wider strategic and geopolitical goals (Le Galès, 2016) . In this context, understanding Seoul, its wider metropolitan region, political structure, interactions and tensions with the Korean state is of immense scholarly significance.

To begin this section, Florinda Bartoli looks to unpack the governance implications of the Korean Developmental State on Seoul - particularly on the effects of financial instruments and the creation of fungible real estate assets in the city with an unravelling spatial impact despite being conceived at the federal level. This is complemented by Lucie Lescudé and Ying Zhang's further deconstruction of the shift in relationship of the federal government to the city, from public investment in housing to the development of model towns in the wider metropolitan region - part of what some theorists have come to see as 'zones' of 'infrastructure space' (Easterling, 2015). Azilis Pierrel and Anne-Sophie Tchuisseu add another crucial interlocutor to the mix, with an analysis of the relationship between the *chaebols,* Korea's traditional family-owned industrial and technological behemoths, the Korean state and the resulting spatial imprint on the city of Seoul. Rounding off the section with meticulous details and thick descriptions of a number of Seoul's 'participatory governance' initiatives (and their relationship with federal involvement and aims), Francesca Bonalda, Gabriella Costa-Ferreira and Lina Homman Ludïye use the methodology of case studies to illustrate emerging churns in local governance in contemporary Seoul.

### *Urban Change "Seoul Style": the Contemporary Governance of the Built Environment*

The third section of this volume analyses the entrepreneurial effort of the Seoul Government

to lead a new generation of urban developments. The aim of the chapter is to scrutinize how the Metropolitan Government adjusted its style and instruments to face the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis. The Crisis, indeed, revealed that the state and market driven urban development was not resilient to economic and socio-political changes (Cho & Križnik, 2017; Shin, 2020). The “republic of apartments” (Gelézeau, 2007), that resulted from the developmental state housing policies, experienced growing tensions and inequalities due to its lacking welfare and social urban policies. As it happened in the ‘70s when the developmental state moved from industrial to property-based development (Joo, 2018), at the beginning of the millennium the city’s government moved towards a development aware of the need of social infrastructure (Shin, 2020). The shift was also pushed by a blossoming civil society that was aware of the limits of liberal developments and started to seek alternative approaches (Cho & Križnik, 2017). This can in part explain the political success of Mayor Park who won the elections in 2011 advocating for a “city governed by citizens” (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2012). In terms of urban projects, the shift can be identified looking at the new emphasis on participatory approaches and urban regeneration rather than the previous focus on mega and redevelopment projects. Overall, the section recognizes the identification of an entrepreneurial and citizen-oriented approach to urban development pushed by coupled processes of decentralization, liberalization, and democratization. Despite the originality of the Seoul-style urban governance, the articles identify it as a local implementation of the developmental state or as a model of governance in line with what Song termed “productive welfarianism” (2009).

The five articles of the section mobilize different theoretical points to analyse strategies and instruments of the “Seoul-Style” urban governance. The first article by Emma Raiga-Clemenceau and Julia Manien uses multiple stream analysis to observe how the project of the transformation of a landfill into the World Cup Park succeeded in intercepting the policy window to be conceived and implemented. While the project reached the top of the political agenda only being framed through ecological and social discourses, the idea of the park coincided with the larger prospect of becoming a world class city and with the willingness to prompt neighbourhood rehabilitation raising land value. Similarly, in the second article Carrick Reddin and Shaoni Purkait highlight the gap between grassroots’ vision and the ultimate political goal. The two authors analyse how the local government has used land-use, zoning regulations and city branding strategies to encourage investments in real-estate and to transform Seoul into a world-cultural city while calling for the preservation of historical culture and design. The third article by Arnaud Cholous and Victor Labaeye uses the concept of social acceptability to scrutinize the case of the implementation of Yangcheon Recovery Facility. They argue that the government, owner of the plant, acted by modifying the perception of risk and of environmental impact thereby increasing the level of trust in the institution without really involving the local community in the decision-making process.In the fourth article of the section, Mace and Thijs draw their arguments from concepts taken by ecological political theory applied to two development projects led by the Seoul local government, the new Magok district and the Alternative Seun District Plan. The authors observe how the top-down growth-oriented tradition of the developmental state was both implemented and challenged by discourses about Ecological Modernization and Sustainable Development. One of the elements of the Alternative Seun District Plan is the focus of the last article by Noémie Guigue and Natasha Sohail who investigate the Again Sewoon project, a regeneration plan implemented and showcased by the local government. Through an analysis of the built environment and of the decision-making process, the authors mobilize the concept of gentrification challenging the success of innovative anti-gentrification practices.

***Towards a K-smart city the new korean urbanism***

The fourth and last section of the book takes a specific angle analysing how technology and

more importantly the discourse around it is used to sell products, namely urban additions, and urban policies. Thus, the section horizontally re-opens several points already addressed in the previous sections such as conflicting and competitive practices between state and local governments and the governance of the built environment. Technologic solutions have been applied to cope with security, ecological, management issues. On analysing them, it may be argued that they have been applied to reach similar goals in different ways that reflect different styles of government. While the State Government framed technology as a panacea for all urban issues, the Seoul Government has integrated technology in its shift towards the above mentioned "productive welfarianism" (Song, 2009). This different use of technology in the implementation of new urban developments to both solve problems and create an attractive and branded image implies different results in terms of space democratization, and ultimate result of local benefits and urbanity. Despite conflicting practices, this new type of solutionism as a branding tool highlights the importance for both levels of government to build attractive images and to showcase Korea and Seoul's efficiency and expertise. Looking at the activity of Korean institutions overseas, it is argued that the State and Local Government joined the effort to accumulate and capitalize know-how by exporting it.

The first of the three articles of this section by Constance Brown and Pauline Dutheil analyses the gap between the necessity for technological solutions to address economic and ecological issues and the rhetoric of the "smart city" used by the State Government to promote the Songdo international new city. This new "smart" real-estate development used by the State in competition with the Seoul Metropolitan Government seems to be in line with the past developmental state reaching a new level of "post-humanism". Similarly, Selina Colin and Antoine Fabre scrutinize the level of urbanity and space humanization comparing the State-driven Songdo new development with a similarly technologically framed project led by the Seoul metropolitan Government, the Digital Media City. They conclude that in order to sell a product (as a new urban space is) technological performance standards are not enough. Instead, using technology to enhance both performances, welfare and leisure services is a key element to increase attractivity and to precisely target the recipients for differentiated access to services. The third article by Augustin Bauchot and Violette Caubet takes an alternative point of view looking at the role of branding and framing tools to capitalize know-how. The authors mobilize policy transfer theories to understand how the willingness of both levels of government to showcase Korean and Seoul-style can be a tool to export and sell local expertise abroad. With this shared goal, state and local governments joined in the creation of new institutions to sell know-how. The article, moreover, raises a recent concern about the conflicting position between the government exporting strategy and the growing bottom-up culture of open and data sharing, identified mainly in the FabLab movement.

### *Conclusion: Towards New Trajectories of Analysis*

One of the evident pitfalls of academic work emerging over the course of the year 2020 is the sheer impossibility of being able to fully account for the pace of new developments in the midst of the coronavirus crisis. This report has largely been a collective effort drawing on various facets of Seoul's urbanisation experience up to our final day in the city on the 19th of January 2020 - one day before the country's first reported case of covid-19. Since then a series of events have occurred that must be acknowledged as vital to contextualising emerging contours of the city's governance, but whose effects may be too early to theorise through methods of academic scrutiny.

First, as numerous reports have noted, the "Korean Model" of dealing with the pandemic has drawn heavily on mobilisation and coordination capacities between federal and local authorities (Chung and Soh, 2020). Thus it may be underscored that while competition

Korea as opposed to various centre-state-local tensions that have emerged in other major democracies of the world. This in part may be credited to mechanisms of public health coordination developed in non-crisis times (as an aftermath of dealing with both the SARS and MERS threats) that enjoy largely bipartisan support.

The second major development of the post-covid landscape in Seoul was the death of its incumbent and longest serving mayor, Park Won-Soon, by suicide. Much of our report's focus on bottom-up sustainability practices in the city trace their origins to the developments of coalitions mobilised during his tenure. Park was also seen as a potential successor to the current President, Moon Jae-In, which has led to multiple concerns over the party, city and federal government's future. While the mayorship of Seoul is likely to be taken over as an internal affair of the party, new presidential contenders are emerging such as Lee Jae-myung, the governor of Seoul's neighbouring Gyeonggi province who has widely been praised for his Universal Basic Income inspired policy solutions for the former manufacturing hub in the aftermath of the pandemic's first wave. Lee advocates a focus on tackling job loss from automation, which he believes to be an inevitable result of the post-pandemic landscape. This development indicates a potential shift in priority within the party, moving from a human rights and sustainability centred political future (Park) to a more job security based liberal-centre approach (Lee). Given the Korean Democratic Party's sweeping return to power in the National Assembly Elections of April 2015, it would appear that this internal debate will be key to the future trajectory of the state and the city.

Finally, a notable development has been the effect of federally formulated housing policy that has had deep city-wide impacts in Seoul, suggesting a new trajectory of state and city interactions. The policy stemmed from the fact that President Moon Jae-in had inherited weakened mortgage rules from the previous administration, and therefore wished to slow buy-to-rent demand. This resulted in the creation of the Housing Lease Protection Act, led by the finance minister Hong Nam-Ki. The act sealed increases of "*jeonse*"[1] deposits at 5% as well as allowing tenants to extend standard two-year contracts for another two, unless landlords themselves move into the property. The Act led to an unprecedented shortage of jeonse housing nationwide - but particularly in the city of Seoul - as landlords sought to empty properties ahead of July 2020 implementation. This was inadvertently incentivised, as landlords hoped to increase deposits for new tenants, expecting not to be able to raise them again for four years. The issue gained traction in the international press when Hong himself faced eviction by his landlord as a result of the policy.

In short, therefore, Seoul - like much of the world - is entering an epoch of flux that may prove to represent a moment of 'punctuated equilibrium' (True et. al, 2007) in its larger governance landscape. Nonetheless, we believe that the issues and themes highlighted in this report will serve to better understand and document the existing nature of historical roots, conflicts, tension and resolution mechanisms within which post-pandemic trajectories will have to negotiate and mediate the future. In this regard, we hope the report serves to generate wider interest and debate as well as the formulation of new theoretical vocabularies and methods to situate the fascinating urban transformations of contemporary Seoul.

[1] Jeonse is a lump-sum returnable deposit paid in lieu of monthly rent. Landlords invest the deposit and reap the returns on interest.

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# 1 MODERNITY REDUX

## THE SHAPING OF A 21ST CENTURY FORM AND CONSCIOUSNESS

# DETECTING "JAPANESE-NESS": UNDERSTANDING THE COLONIAL ROOTS OF SEOUL'S MODERNITY

*By Sarah Nouvellon & Yusuf Ashmawi*

***"They never apologized"***

As he showed our group around The Seoul Museum of History, the tour guide emphatically reminded us of the overdue retribution and apology from Japan, for transgressions committed during their 35-year rule over Korea. Built upon the former site of the 17th century Gyeonghui Palace which was later dismantled and turned into a Japanese middle school by the colonial administration, the museum could not of course bypass the Japanese colonial era in its 600-year display of Seoul's path towards "modernity". Nevertheless, labels such as "The Stolen Capital, Kyongsong (Keijō)"[1] or "a symbol of the crumbling Great Han Empire" seemed to emphasize the desired narrative: the Japanese occupation had forged a detour from the city's steady trajectory towards greatness, from the geomantic perfection of the Hanyang of the Joseon dynasty through to the dazzling success story of the Seoul known today (Sorensen, 2016, pp. 177-78). If not to say "detour", the museum's display attempts to at least negate claims that Korea's post-war development has its origins in Japanese colonial policies and investment[2]. It cited examples such as "Chogno, Street of Modernity", which boasted the first Asian electric street car in 1899, as veritable evidence of this pre-colonial modernisation. Moreover, the visitor is not shielded from the brutal reality of the Japanese colonial era. With documented ideological genocide, forced labor, sexual slavery, and tens of thousands of Korean deaths for the sake of the Japanese empire, any positive colonial influence a thorny proposition - as it always is in any attempt at defining the post-colonial[3].

Akin to the museum's curation, Seoulites and scholars of Seoul display understandable reluctance to tell the story of Seoul's recent development as one rooted in its colonial prequel. More so, there is generally little attachment to a "post-colonial" narrative of Seoul. The city's remarkable growth and rapid ascendance among major global cities has made it subject to analyses largely centred around global capital flows, inter-city competition and smart city variations; the city's colonial past and concomitant questions of cultural or physical legacy are discussed only tangentially. Besides the city's "success" in itself, two other factors precipitate such absence of "post-coloniality" in accounts of Seoul. The first is more generic and relates to a post-WWII bias in detailing the political economies of developmental states - especially in accounts of the East-Asian post-war miracle. This analysis assumes a sort of tabula rasa - "a new beginning" which obviates the need to find any earlier beginning. The second factor is more specific to Korea's war-torn fate after decolonisation. Having brought utter destruction and poverty to Seoul, the Korean war facilitated a "Rising from the Ashes"[4] narrative in official and unofficial accounts of Seoul's ascendance, thus rendering impertinent many particularities of the colonial (and pre colonial) era.

That Korea was war-torn and had to overcome extreme conditions in the 50's and 60's "Miracle on the Han" is indisputable. Ultimately, however, the concept of a city "rising from

[1] Upon arriving, the Japanese renamed Seoul to Keijō, the Japanese word for capital city.
[2] There are many examples of literature that has supported these claims - see for example: (Akita & Palmer, 2015), (Henry, 2014); (Lim, 1999); and (Kohli, 1994)
[3] Besides its temporal "after-the-colonial" connotation, we take "post-colonial" to mean "an attitude of critical engagement with colonialism's after effects" (Radcliffe, 1997, p. 1331).

the ashes"[4] inspires scholarly cynicism. It potentially underplays the significance of Korea's pre-war early industrialization efforts (Eckert, 2014, p. 253) and diverts attention from a potentially insightful analysis of Japanese colonial administration of Seoul and the different structures they erected or destroyed. After all, even a visit to The Seoul Museum of History takes on new meaning once one is made aware of the colonial attempt to "Japanize" the historical site on which it stands - and the possible themes of nationalism, sovereignty and reclamation that could have motivated the choice of locating the museum there. In this essay we show that the Japanese imperial project in Korea, with its ambition to both exert colonial dominance as well as display Japan's modernity, consolidated around the spatial and architectural restructuring of Seoul. We then use the example of the Land Readjustment Program to illustrate the persistence of colonial legacy in Seoul's modern urban development practices and to allude to the potential insights gained from examining historical transformations preceding Seoul's post-war development.

### *A violent and structuring process of assimilation*

As the Japanese Empire emerged victorious from the conflict with the Qing Dynasty in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, there was a shift in regional dominance in East Asia. Japan capitalized on this victory to revive its influence over Korea, imposing a series of obligations on the country, such as ceding the monopoly of gold to Japan and accepting the Japanese Dai-chi Bank as its central bank. The protectorate treaty signed in 1905 was ostensibly an extension of these established economic relations. Yet, this treaty catalyzed the complete dismantling of the Korean government. Indeed, by 1907, Korean public administration structures had become subject to Japanese control, the national army was disbanded in 1908, and ultimately the country was indirectly ruled by the Japanese through the Resident-General of Korea. Finally, the Japan-Korea unilateral treaty of 1910 - signed without the consent of the Korean emperor Sunjong - signalled the formal annexation of the country and sounded the death knell for independent Korea.

The Japanese colonial governance of Korea was by no means a passive process. Its guiding principle rested on the idea of assimilation: the introduction of Japanese institutions into Korea was perceived as the only way to turn the country into a "civilized" one. This policy rested on the devaluation of the Korean language and history and a systematic eradication of prominent cultural symbols, which were regularly destroyed, replaced or renamed. It also motivated the establishment of the Governor-General as the chief administrator of the Japanese colonial government in Korea and the custodian of this process of "Japanization" of Korea..

This administration oversaw many structural changes to Korea's economy and political structure, many of which reverberate today. For instance, the industrialization efforts initiated by the Japanese government in Korea - mainly to meet demand for goods in Japan and later to provide for Japanese soldiers during the war - meant that Korea had a superior industrial capacity compared to other post-WWI Asian societies. With industrialization processes fully maturing in the 1930's, Korea became host to large factories and a new elite class of large business groups. The Japanese also pioneered a sort of state-driven "planned capitalism" (Lim, 1999, p.604), with direct involvement by the Japanese government to support industrial activity. Although mainly large Japanese "zaibatsu" firms, there were also Korean entrepreneurs who benefited from the Japanese government's aid programs (Jeong, 2011, p.164). Eventually this would give way to the concentration of economic power with a

[4] This is a common motto of Seoul and South Korea's post-war development. In the museum, the final section (1945-2002) was itself entitled "Period of Rapid Growth Seoul, Rising from the Ashes to become a Metropolis".

few dominant Chaebols (large Korean conglomerates) and the penetrating role of the state, characteristic of Korea's political economy for decades later.

This industrialization and economic restructuring process also engendered "a certain imbalance between urban and rural areas" (Jeong, 2011, p.172), motivating rural migration to Seoul and other industrial cities. Moreover, the established assimilation policy favored the migration of Japanese people to Korea; most of them settled in Seoul, the headquarters of public administration offices and of many of the newly established industrial firms. Overall, Seoul's population increased more than four-fold during the 35 years of Japanese occupation between 1910 and 1945 (Jeong, 2011, p.160). With its population soaring, and given its status as a main locus for symbolic expression of Japanese imperialism, Seoul became a site of many urban experiments.

### *Transforming the colonized city*

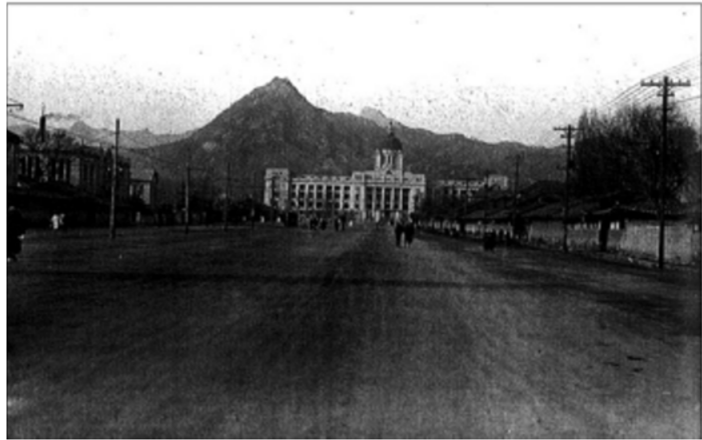
Urban reconstruction in Seoul started before the annexation, as the Japanese had seized executive power several years earlier. However, it is after 1913 that the Government General of Chosen started to announce huge urban plans aiming at 'improving the city'. The Government-general was the main and only institution responsible for such "improvements" and played an important role in the Japanese colonial strategy of urban planning (Kuroishi, 2016, p. 171). The distinguishing characteristic of this urban planning strategy was the paradigm of modern urban space as a means to exercise and transmit power (Grunow, 2016, p. 500). Indeed, the colonial strategy of improving the built environment was essential in the elaboration of the relationship between the colonizer and colonized, the former embodying ideas of progress and civilization which justified the domination of the latter.

Colonial public works were especially centered around street-improvement projects. In total, the projects entailed widening and beautifying 141 streets in the city - a total length of around 42 miles. As Tristan R. Grunow outlines in his article Paving Power: Western Urban Planning and Imperial Space from the Streets of Meiji Tokyo to Colonial Seoul, the Japanese imported such focus from western planning traditions, then exported them from Tokyo to their colonies (Grunow, 2016, p. 506). Although ostensibly "productive", these street improvements still retain what Carl Schorske characterized as "disruptive a-historical cultural transformations and rejections of the past" that signalled modernization - and in this case colonialism (Schorske, 1979, as cited in Grunow, 2016, p.510). They helped the colonial authority "produce 'Japanese' spaces that would project Japanese power by constructing 'colonial difference'" (Grunow, 2016,, p. 528).

This holds even more truth when analyzing the systematic destruction of traditional buildings. For example, the Gyeongbokung Palace, a spiritual landmark for the Korean people, was demolished and replaced by the Japanese Governor's House. A group of Japanese-style buildings were also erected in the city center, including the Town Hall, the Imperial University and Shinto Chosen shrine (Zhang & Wang, 2018, pp.109-110). Generally, many spatial and architectural changes brought by the Japanese acted to destroy the revered age-old Fengshui structure of the city: a brutal rejection of Seoul's past and humiliation of its colonial subjects.

### *Case study : The Land Readjustment Program*

When such colonial traces fail to be "anonymously embedded in the urban fabric", they evoke an undesirable memory of subjugation and pain and a reminder of a rejected power hegemony (Grunow, 2016, p.512). As such, the Shinto Chosen shrine, which represented



Japanese colonizers dramatically staged "before-and-after" photos such as these of Kwanghwamun street in 1905 (left) and 1930 (right) to popularize urban improvements in Seoul. around the world.

*Source: Grunow, T. (2016). Paving Power: Western Urban Planning and Imperial Space from the Streets of Meiji Tokyo to Colonial Seoul. Journal Of Urban History, 42(3), 506-556.*

Japanese attempts to subdue Korea's history and interfere with Seoul's geomantic configuration, was demolished only months after independence. Similarly, in 1995, on the 50th anniversary of Korea's independence, Seoul witnessed the symbolic demolition of the Japanese-built Government-General Building. Interfering with cosmic auspiciousness of the Royal Place, the Government-General building stood as an inescapable reminder of colonial transgressions. Its demolition came among President Kim Young Sam's larger plans to "clean up the remains" of colonialism under the slogan "constructing history as it is" (Park, 2010, p.85).

Nevertheless, many such "remains" were able to survive the soaring nationalist sentiment in Seoul following independence by being reinvented as Korean or simply because they lacked enough "detectable Japaneseness". For instance, the tram line built by the Japanese, and crossing the city from its southwestern to its northeastern ends was replaced by the Metro line 1 in the 70's, and remains a main lifeline of Seoul's transport (Zhang & Wang, 2018, p.109). The Land Readjustment framework is another colonial tool that was incorporated by post-independence governments as part of a natural and ostensibly "a-historic" process of

urban development. It has been regarded as a pillar of the Korean "Property State" politics that undergirded Seoul's rapid urbanization process in the 60's and the 70's, however, its colonial origins are rarely cited.

The mid-1920's marked the emergence of a prevailing discourse emanating from the transnational building of city planning practices across the globe and characterized by aspirations to pursue a comprehensive and systematic transformation of space, going beyond what came to be regarded as superficial alterations (Todd, 2014, p.50). Thus Seoul's respatialization through urban reforms reinforced Seoul's integration into the capitalist world system and the display of Japanese authority over a territory conceived as a constituent of a unique Japanese empire.

Drawing on the German precedent of land readjustment system, colonial authorities instituted mechanisms of readjustment of land use for investment-free construction of public facilities. When delving into the historical conditions for international implementation of Land Readjustments programs, common circumstantial patterns surface. For instance, colonized territories - both in Europeans and Japanese colonies - act as auspicious fields for experimentation with urban land development techniques - techniques which struggle to bypass stronger property ownership in the mainland metropolises (Lee, 2018, p.211). The first interpretation and implementation of land readjustment in Korea was done in 1937 and succeeded a series of legislation such as the land ownership reorganization of 1915 with which urban land was usurped and transformed into colonial government property. These preliminary legislations were coupled with discursive and repressive strategies to exhort Koreans into ceasing their land (Todd, 2014, p.53). Similarly, the mechanism has been extensively used across the world, given the growing need for large amounts of land and the lack of financial resources to acquire it.

In Seoul's post-war context, the institutional framework of land readjustment remained effective prior to its progressive evolution in more complexified forms after 1962 - facilitating the development of large-scale projects and reconstruction. With Japan's extensive use of land readjustment in 1945 for the reconstruction of its cities, South Korean reconstruction after the Korean war was enhanced by land readjustments which has been used in 1968, for example, in order to develop and finance the mega-project of the Gyeongbu highway. Therefore, the ambitious economic development seeked by post-colonial strong-state governments, yet lacking capacity to buy land, made land readjustment the main driver of modern land and Korean property state development (Yu Min Joo, 2019).

***Conclusion***

As with the Land Readjustment Program, many of Japan's traces can still be found in Seoul. However, such traces fade into the background of a burgeoning global metropolis that can lay claim to 'globality', and hence obscure the significance of its "post-coloniality". Indeed, South Korea's elevated rank within the global power hegemony means Seoul is often exempt of colonial historiography that characterizes much research on some African or South East Asian cities. More generally, Japan's colonial history is often sidelined, with post-colonial analysis largely limited to remnants of the European imperial project. Although much can be understood by looking into Seoul's trajectory since the end of the Korean war, examples such as the Land Readjustment program point to the importance of scrutinizing Korea's colonial history to better understand its present day urban structures and development patterns.

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# DECONSTRUCTING "KOREAN SPIRIT": ALIENATION, IDEOLOGY AND ITS ROOTS IN THE PARK CHUNG HEE REGIME

*By Coline Rouchié & Jade Lacoume*

## *Introduction*

On the second day of our Study Trip to Seoul, we were guided through the Seoul Museum of History by a particularly enthusiastic elderly gentleman who had an extremely specific and interesting point of view on the history of development of his country. On arrival in the city, it takes very little time indeed to be introduced to its sheer scale: highways, bridges and massive infrastructure developments dot the landscape incessantly between the airport and the city-centre. Our guide shared his explanation for South Korea's fast growth and urbanization: the fact that Korea lacked natural resources meant that the country had to efficiently use its human capital, investing a lot in education and fostering a "Korean spirit". When pressed further on this coinage, he emphasized that the "Korean spirit" entailed a certain resilience that pushed the inhabitants of the country to produce a lot of effort and work very hard for the growth of the country. This spirit, he added, explained why the urbanization and modernisation of the country could proceed so rapidly. He indeed told us that he was born in a shanty town, had to wait for hours to access basic health and sanitation services and that now he had his own apartment with all the services he needed. His lifetime was therefore representative of the amazing development of Korea; development seen as 'progress' by him. This explanation behind Korea and Seoul's growth spurred us through the remainder of the trip as we endeavoured, in subsequent meetings, visits and interactions to question, analyse, place and examine this historical explanation. This essay is a reflection on these provocations.

The guide's testimony spurred us - particularly his example concerning the benefits of modernization - to think of the concept of 'alienation', as defined by P. Coulangeon: *"The concept of alienation, coming from law, where it deals with transfer of property, has been imported to sociology by Karl Marx to define the condition of workers in a capitalist regime, separated from the product of their work and deprived of its organisation. It therefore designates all individual situations of dispossession benefiting outside entities to the loss of control on aims of his activity. Therefore, alienation deprives a human of his humanity, assimilating him to an interchangeable machinery deprived of self-control. The posterity of the concept comes from political and cultural spheres. In the political field, situations of alienation manifest themselves through the adhesion of individuals to purposes that go against their interests as a result of an "ideological apparatus". Ideological alienation proceeds the following way, at individual and collective scales, through the adoption of a 'fake consciousness' that manifests itself within culture, the use of mass media and the industry of culture and entertainment. In contemporary sociology, the concept of alienation is implicitly present in theories of symbolic domination and cultural legitimacy"*[1].

We therefore seek to question the "Korean spirit" through the concept of alienation as applied to architecture, urban planning and the specific case of evictions in Seoul. First, we further develop and explain our choice of using the concept of alienation to better understand Seoul's history. Secondly, we will study a specific application of alienation observed through the creation of an urban middle class during the Perk Chung Hee regime, embodied by architecture, urban planning and eviction examples in Seoul city before concluding.

[1] Coulangeon Philippe, « Aliénation », in Paugam Serge (dir.), Les 100 mots de la sociologie, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, coll. « Que Sais-Je ? ».

### *Historical concerns: "Korean spirit" and the Concept of Alienation*

In the guide's discourse, the definition of a "Korean spirit" seemed particularly intriguing. It may be useful to deconstruct momentarily whether a specific "spirit" in such a case may indeed be applied to an entire population, and to what extent it represents a very particular historico-political construction? The articulation of the "Korean spirit" perhaps closely resembles the construction of the "Dunkirk spirit": the idea that a people share a common spirit, and a common characteristic of being united and resilient in the face of a larger challenge. The "Dunkirk spirit" was developed during the Second World War by the British, after their defeat in Dunkirk in 1940, when the British had to evacuate France via Dunkirk. In purely historical and military terms, it was undoubtedly a defeat, and yet, an impressive narrative and imagination was built around this event, describing the British people as a united people facing difficulties with resilience and strength. This political construction that began with the British press recounting the event as a success in 1940 is still present today in the imaginaries as seen in advertisements using the "Dunkirk spirit", or in the massive success of the movie Dunkirk (2017, C. Nolan). This may be a relevant entry point to better understand the "Korean spirit". It would indeed seem that there has been a historical and political construction favoring the idea that Koreans are hard workers. The origins of this construction may also be potentially traceable to historical events: the end of the Korean war, the split of Korea in two and the dictatorship period that followed: a history that was politically used to build this "Korean spirit".

What was this construction aiming at, especially during the dictatorship? In this essay, we argue that it may have essentially developed as an ideological tool to promote control over labour and hasten the development of the country, while also making the population, amenable to principles of the dictatorship. Indeed, if the people believe they have a natural, innate strength and ability to work hard, they would be likely to follow such a path. This imaginary, ideological manipulation, is already very linked to the variety of alienation as defined by Coulangeon as an "ideological alienation proceeds towards, through individual and collective scales, the adoption of a 'fake consciousness' that manifests itself within culture, the use of mass medias and the industry of culture and entertainment".

Indeed, this investment in Korea's human capital was seen through its education system: starting from the dictatorship, means were dedicated to education and a highly competitive system was developed. We understood this through the testimonies of several people during the study trip, who explained to us that school was essential in one's life and that it was complemented by extra classes throughout. Competition, to our respondents, seemed to govern every step of the educational system. Moreover, it is underlined in an OECD report from 2014 that "*the story of Korean education over the past 50 years is one of remarkable growth and achievement. Korea is one of the top performing countries in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey and among those with the highest proportion of young people who have completed upper secondary and tertiary education. Korea is continuously exploring ways to improve its education system and has dramatically increased government investment in education over the last decade*"[2].

### *Applying Alienation to Seoul: Park Chung-Hee and the construction of the 'middle class'*

The idea of having an entire population fully devoted to its work and to rebuilding a country

[2] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014), Strong performers and successful reformers in education : lessons from PISA for Korea, Paris, France : OECD.

was a strongly nationalistic discourse that rang a bell with the concept of alienation, and the associated phenomenon of “work dispossession”. This results in the loss of consideration of unity of the self of one who isn’t able to see him or herself in the outcome of their work. The notion of “false consciousness” as a broader mechanism embedded in cultural and social life makes sense in a time of ideological control over populations during the dictatorship. In Marxist theory, the original vision of work is the way for people to ‘realize’ themselves through the creation made by the fruit of their labor, which is in turn constructive of one’s identity. In those terms, the work done by the workers during reconstruction times in Korea is not aiming at constructing their identity as individuals, but a national identity.

The idea that all the efforts must be concentrated to rebuild the country was central in Korea, especially during the Park Chung Hee dictatorship period (1961-1979). At the time of the coup, the city of Seoul was one of the poorest of the region and of the world, left out after a devastating war and the division of the country in two. This was also notwithstanding the previous humiliation of Japanese colonization. Rebuilding national pride through the modernization of the country was the ultimate priority of the regime and thus, of the population as a whole.

To achieve that, the central power spread the representation of the middle class as the concretization of the modernization of Korea. If the state was dynamic in developing the economy with national plans, it was also in promoting a specific way of life to accompany these transformations. The urban middle class man was the embodiment of success, of social upgrading that followed the economic development of the country. Living a modern life in cities, working for chaebols (which expanded significantly under the regime), owning of an apartment: it was the dream that everyone in the country should expect if they worked hard enough for the nation. These representations and the creation of the “middle class” promoted by the state was a way to legitimize the regime, which indeed encountered few workers’ oppositions during this period (Choi, 1997).

Indeed, this middle class was politically docile given that the state gave them a comfortable position by developing the country. To come back to the concept of alienation, the dispossession of the work for the profit of the state could reinforce the false consciousness of Korean workers by promotion through various propaganda channels. On one side, the middle class living style that all Koreans could attain one day, and on the other the national pride that would accomplish Korean reconstruction, development and modernization. This could also hide the questionable redistribution of the money made by this very rapid industrial development, in a context where few very powerful companies were working very closely with the state. Besides the hard work required, the idea of economic and political discipline was a condition to the achievement of the nation’s goal.

This social control was directed at households with the image of a well-organized family life, relying on a working man and a wife that could manage the household wisely. In 1967, state officials launched the Women’s Central Council for Savings Life, along with a campaign encouraging housewives to keep a household account book on a regular basis, in order to encourage money savings at the household level. This was seconded by representations on television, a medium that more and more people were able to afford. A ‘family and ritual code’ was also created in 1969, to regulate the customs (especially in more rural areas), that were seen as unnecessary for national development and modernization (Yang, 2012). The state thus extended its presence in all aspects of the people’s personal lives.
This unifying and centralised model that was promoted at the time is very visible today in the city’s architecture. With standardized huge buildings thirty floors high and similar-looking apartments rising up everywhere in Seoul, the uniformization processes and

the development of the middle class is ubiquitous. The middle classes were in turn also surrounded by middle classes with similar living styles. To be the owner of an apartment is a real success in life, which is another argument that could support the success of the state. During the Park Chung Hee era, massive buildings were indeed constructed to overcome the housing shortage that Seoul knew at the time.

This process was, however, often realised very violently for the poor. Between the end of the 1950s and the 1980s, most of the squatter settlements were evicted in Seoul, with plans aiming at building up to 40,000 housing units for the year of 1966 for instance. The city remains marked by the forced evictions that occurred across long periods of time. In the late 80s, it was in fact pointed out by the Habitat International Coalition as one of the most brutal and inhuman evictions in the world (Kim, 2010). Thousands of squatters were evicted and displaced for development projects. The Olympic games of 1988 provided an opportunity for the metropolitan government to remove the remaining areas that were considered as slums or squatter areas, and aggravated evictions issues. Finally in the 1990s, a *Join Redevelopment Project* method was created, that gave the right to apartments before construction to people that were going to be evicted, which slightly improved the situation.

***Conclusion***

The concept of alienation - especially ideological alienation - helped us better understand many aspects of our study trip to Seoul. Though this concept has to be critically and carefully used - since it carries a strong ideological tilt within itself - we believe it is enlightening in decoding many urban examples in Seoul. Historico-political manipulations indeed have multiple impacts on citizens behaviours, imaginaries, but also on urban organization, planning and architectural issues that we can still see today in the city.

To take another theoretical understanding of the meaning of work, one could think in Rousseau's terms, developed in Emile or On Education, where work is seen as a social obligation. By working, human beings pay back the debt they owe from their belonging in a society (here, the Korean state), which is protecting them. However, it has been later criticized as an argument to justify workers' and lower classes exploitation, with no regard to the fairness of this payback between individuals and the resulting inequalities. This theoretical framework can give another light to the mass mobilization of the Korean population to rebuild the country and restore national pride through modernization.

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# REPUBLIC OF APARTMENTS : THE HISTORY AND IMPLICATIONS OF SETTING A NEW HOUSING STANDARD IN SEOUL

*By Léonie Yang & Thomas Janvier*

## *Introduction*

Seoul, the capital city of the Republic of Korea and the largest megalopolis of the country, impresses visitors in many ways. The sheer verticality of the urban landscape provides a stark and looming skyline, in which high-rise concrete buildings prevail over any other types of housing (see *Figure 1*.). Multi-story buildings are a staple of many metropolitan regions around the world, where increasing dwelling density is necessary to accomodate large populations with limited landmass. In Seoul, the size of these buildings - on average 15 to 30 stories tall - and ubiquitousness of the form is unlikely to have emerged simply from utilitarian concerns linked to housing availability. More deeply rooted cultural and historical factors need to be accounted for when attempting to explain this prominence of high-rise housing. Apartments have come to be seen as inseparable from modern Korean urban life over the course of the country's rapid economic development from the 1960s onwards, and continue to retain strong cultural power as symbols of success: owning an apartment is a necessary stepping stone for any Seoulite aspiring to attain middle-class status. This paper's aim is first to try and trace the genealogy of the high-rise typology in Seoul, and to describe the major historical forces that have given birth to its present dominance. Attention is then drawn to the way it has spatially and socially shaped Korea's capital city, being both status-markers and residential enclaves, as well as the attempts of the governments to overcome its limitations.

Figure 1. Aerial view of Seoul shedding light on the prevalence of high-rise apartments in the built environment. Photography by Léonie Yang.

***The changing housing typology of post-independence Seoul***

At the end of the Korean War in 1953, South Korea was a poor and overwhelmingly rural country with very limited natural resources and capital reserves at its disposal to spur economic growth through industrial activities (Joo 2019). The country got independence from Japanese colonial domination less than a decade earlier, and this protracted period of occupation had profoundly impacted the morphology of its capital city, Seoul. Indeed, the Japanese colonial government had introduced modern Western notions of urban planning first applied in Tokyo, Osaka, and later, Pyongyang - in what is now the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - which mainly consisted in widening existing roads and clearing land for large new boulevards. In this process of 'ordering the streets', the original layout of Seoul, which was guided by a Korean adaptation of Feng-Shui (Pungsu) design principles and took the form of a pedestrian-centric and 'chaotic' street-pattern characterized by narrow streets and frequent dead-ends, especially in peripheral residential neighbourhoods, was essentially lost (Pedrabissi 2016).

The impact was also architectural, with Japanese and Western-style buildings constructed for colonial officials and administrative departments. In the 1950s, and until the late 1960s, the dominant form of housing, nonetheless, remained rather traditionally Korean. The urban hanok, a low-rise U-shaped building, with rooms arranged around a central courtyard, was an affordable and familiar housing type integrating the ondol floor-heating system - vernacular to the Korean context - making it a popular residential arrangement for common citizens (Pedrabissi 2016) (see ***Figure 2***). Increased demographic pressure in Seoul as refugees from war-torn areas flooded into the city, coupled with wartime destruction of a significant portion of the capital's housing stock, prompted the appearance of squatter settlements on its urban fringes and hillsides, nicknamed 'moon villages', which organized themselves spontaneously into detached hanoks, built with more or less durable materials (Gelezeau 1997).

This phenomenon was further accelerated in the 1960s as the country witnessed a dramatic rural exodus, spurred by the rapid economic growth and industrialization taking place during the developmental state period under Park Chung-hee's authoritarian leadership. It is during this same period that lack of residential facilities became singled-out as a major issue in the government's policy agenda: South Korea's rising GDP was driven by industrial activities in its major cities, first amongst them Seoul, and accommodating the growing urban-based workforce was indispensable if the country was to continue on its ascending trajectory, and if the government wanted to maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of the people it ruled (Pedrabissi 2016). In these conditions, the low-density housing which had dominated Seoul's urban landscape in the past, and continued to be developed autonomously in the city's periphery by recently arrived migrants from rural areas, showed its pitfalls as a remedy to the ills of an exploding population (Joo 2019, p. 44).

The solution to this pressing issue devised by the authorities would in fact insert itself in the continuation of the urban re-ordering process initiated under Japanese colonial occupation. Where the Japanese had mainly concerned themselves with modernizing transportation infrastructure and street-grids, the Korean state would take inspiration from Western modernist architectural principles of functionalism, Fordist mass-production of housing through standardization, if not monotonous uniformity, and promoting large-scale visions of urban development to push forth high-rise apartments as the new model for Korean urban living (Ham & Jang 2017).

Figure 2. View from the courtyard of a hanok in the center of Seoul (Namsangol Hanok village). This hanok was restored and refurbished to look like it would have under the Joseon dynasty (1392-1897)
Photography by Jean-Pierre Dalbéra, https://www.flickr.com/photos/72746018@N00/48973420241

### *The public-private nexus under the developmental state: diffusing the high-rise model*

Though the diffusion of the high-rise apartments in Seoul was a gradual and non-linear process, it nonetheless had dramatic consequences on Seoul's urban profile and the composition of its housing stock, all in a relatively short time span. This was made possible by the overwhelming power of the state in guiding urban planning procedures and promoting the appearance of an industrialized construction sector tightly controlled to further its policy aims. South Korea under Park Chung-hee's regime has been characterized as a 'developmental dictatorship state' given the government's heavy intervention in the country's economy, as well as its strong capacity to guide economic activities by regulation and setting targets through five-year plans (Joo 2019, pp. 21-22). The state fostered the development of - and established a strategic alliance with - a limited number of large privately-owned conglomerates (chaebols) in the 1960s, actors which would possess sufficient capital and know-how to make its growth-first agenda operational. Steering chaebol activities through tax-incentives, access to finance, and other government-granted benefits proved itself an effective course of action to rapidly modernize the Korean economy (Fukagawa, 1997). This logic of a strong state cooperating and colluding with chaebols was superimposed to the real-estate sector, which, just as the rest of the economy, was to be controlled and guided to alleviate demographic pressure and ensure continued growth mainly through the mass-provision of housing.

The initial drive to build apartment complexes in the 1960s was not overwhelmingly concentrated in Seoul's inner-city districts (Chang-deok & Myung-jun 2011). Through experimentation and pilot projects, the high-rise form diffused itself, physically in the

cityscape, and more profoundly if immaterially in the collective consciousness of South Koreans, as a symbol of modernity. Although characterized by an apparent homogeneity in design nowadays, with south-facing linear blocks of apartments being the dominant model responding to now clearly established consumer preferences (see *Figure 3*.), it is important to note that high-rise projects have taken various forms in the early years of their appearance in Seoul (Ham & Jang 2017). If at first the government had attempted to take on the role of developer, this approach was quickly shown to be unsustainable given that the bulk of public resources were directed towards industrialization, leaving insufficient state capability to also support housing provision at the required scale (Joo 2019, p. 45). The collapse of Wau apartments, a public housing project, definitively halted the state's direct involvement in construction (Woo-hyun 2019) (see *Figure 4*.). Rapidly increasing the volume of housing in Seoul would only be possible by appealing to chaebols, able to complete the large projects needed to cope with the demand for housing, contrary to the 'traditional' small-scale developments which were usually conducted by individual entrepreneurs or aspiring homeowners on plots of land which they occupied (Woo-hyun 2019).

The quintessential materialization of these attempts at dramatically expanding Seoul's housing stock through private development projects - guided by regulation and incentive systems set-up by the government - is probably the dramatic urbanization of Gangnam, a still-rural area in the late 1960s and early 1970s, located south of the Han river. The government had restricted avenues for real-estate development by implementing a green-belt area around Seoul between 1971 and 1977, redirecting private capital towards areas such as Gangnam, which were still legal to construct on (Joo 2019, p. 46). As a tabula rasa for applying on a large scale the modernist principles which had already been tried out in various real-estate operations dotted around Seoul, large swathes of Gangnam were targeted through zoning legislation as uniquely suitable for high-rise development projects (Joo 2019, p. 46).

Figure 3. Apartments in Yeouido, Seoul's main finance and investment banking district.
Photography by Léonie Yang.

Figure 4. Wau apartments' collapse in 1970.
Source: Seoul History Museum. http://h2.khan.co.kr/201607011751001

Additionally, financial support from the state towards chaebols, coupled with tight restrictions on access to loans by any other smaller developer or constructor ensured that only massive tower complexes would be able to sprout in Seoul's emerging new neighbourhood, today symbolic of the city's advanced economy and thriving consumer culture (Choi & Kim 2014). Operating in tandem with chaebols, the Korean state thus succeeded in creating a new image for a future-oriented Seoul, capital city of a rapidly developing South Korea, which found its concrete incarnation in Gangnam's triumphant verticality.

***High-rise apartments disrupting and shaping the city: homogenization, eviction and residential enclaving***

The process of urban development and redevelopment has been particularly detrimental to Korean low-income residents. Paving the way for the dominance of high-rise apartments in the residential sector has necessitated the destruction of entire neighborhoods composed of 'traditional housing'. The latter had some downfalls in terms of energy-efficiency and safety norms, but they could have, in some cases, been solved through proper renovation or 'upgradation' of the existing buildings. Although the government has been increasingly implementing preservation of ancient districts and buildings in its policies since the 1980s, the massive process of evictions it undertook from the 1950s to the 1970s has been particularly violent. Largely carried out without proper compensation, and on very short-notice, residents of cleared neighbourhoods often found themselves with no resources to relocate in equivalent living conditions and comfort. Regulations are stricter nowadays but this phenomenon still persists in the poorest areas inhabited by citizens with scarce financial resources. In the process of 'raising living standards' and housing successive waves of rural migrants, the built environment has been reshaped through the destruction of entire communities and their sense of neighborhood. The Seoul Metropolitan government has started the Human Town Project, aimed at 'fighting the high-rise threat' (Sung 2010), by improving the quality of life for residents living in 'villas' through the provision of neighborhood facilities, thanks to a bottom-up approach with more active citizen participation.

In addition to a change in the architectural landscape, with new living standards and homogeneity as a striking feature of the Korean context, the apartment form of housing has strongly shaped and limited land use and social diversity. Indeed, the larger the residential complexes, the lower the costs for amenities shared among the residents, such as children's playgrounds, paths, parking lots but also the diversity and variety of commercial shops due to agglomeration effects. Studies found that as the size of the complex doubled, the property value that buyers intend to pay increased by 4%. Yet, this 'club goods' logic has created large swaths of residential areas that cannot be entered by outsiders, i.e. gated communities (Yang 2017). In these large strictly-residential compounds, equipped with outdoor and indoor connected technologies (surveillance cameras, security offices, home

automation), the emphasis has been put on verticality, convenience, and safety, but has somehow destroyed the sense of neighborhood that could be felt in traditional districts, at a more human scale. Inside each apartment, the layout is identical: a heated and wooden floor, a leather couch, a large refrigerator, a sizable TV screen and fast internet connection, regardless of its location in Korea. Professor Lim from Sungkyunkwan University assesses: ‘The interior of every apartment in Seoul and even Jeju Island is the same’ (Lim 2010).

***Limits to the high-rise homeownership standard: socio-economic strains of high-rise cultural supremacy, and early attempts at state redressal***

Contrary to many Western countries, where this type of housing has been associated with low-income neighbourhoods, the high-rise apartment has become the norm for Koreans living in Seoul (Kim 2003). According to Statistics Korea, apartment homes came to 10.3 million in 2019, which accounts for 60.6% of homes (Kim 2019). Koreans have started from scratch in the aftermath of the Korean War, and have developed a taste for the new as a sign of wealth and prosperity, for those who can afford to buy brand-new products. The middle class, which benefited from the “Miracle on the Han River”, has been able to acquire at least one if not several properties, through a legal framework promoting mortgages on apartments more actively than on other types of housing (Sung 2010). Korean families bought apartments prior to their construction through the allotment system (bunyang), which consisted of a fierce competition between buyers to purchase a property at below-market rates whose value would skyrocket when construction ended, providing the middle class with a straightforward path to wealth through homeownership in high-rise apartment complexes.

Being a homeowner has become a major criterion of life success, and a reflection of one’s status in society for nuclear families (see *Figure 5*.), breaking with traditional patterns of staying with extended family under the same roof, mostly in rural areas. Apartments have become a symbol of social recognition, an “apartment ownership” based identity has emerged, replacing the traditional identity defined according to one’s original birthplace (kohyang) (Gelézeau 2007). If the traditional household represented a place that had to be overwatched by women called jibboda (literally ‘looking after the house’), the apartment was presented an opportunity to go to work without worrying about safety. Yet, the apartment standard has also impacted women’s ways of life negatively. It has led to situations where working women are renting smaller apartments and sending their children to their mother in-laws in the countryside to save some money and buy a larger unit so that their children do not get discriminated against for living in a house or other low-rise dwellings. Prices depend on the school a child will be able to attend depending on his place of residence, as education represents a huge investment and stake in the Korean society. For instance, the district of Gangnam has a dense concentration of privately operated extracurricular schools named hakwon which are vastly attended by Korean students hoping to get into the most prestigious universities, especially SKY (Seoul National University, Korea University and Yonsei University). As a consequence, the real estate value in this area fluctuates according to the educational policies of the government (Sung 2010).

Since 2000, speculative activities in the real estate market have become more and more intense. It is increasingly difficult to be a homeowner. The middle class is pushed further away from the city of Seoul which has become unable to house the numerous urban dwellers aspiring to benefit from the opportunities concentrated in the capital city. In Seoul, the ‘ratio of housing price to household annual income is about 10 times’, which is three to four times higher than in other economically advanced countries, despite government

anti-speculative measures such as the increase in capital gains and property taxes (for a representation of how this high cost of apartments compares with the cost of other dwelling types, see *Figure 6*.). Real estate policies have become major issues in political campaigns at all levels, from the municipal to the Presidential one (Choi 2019). Moreover, the uniquely Korean rental system named cheonsei, consisting in making a lump-sum deposit worth 50% to 80% of the unit's market value, has started to present some limitations. Indeed, the economic conditions that characterized Korea (rising house prices, rising interest rates, shortage of rental housing units) have faded as large-scale housing units were provided and people became more pessimistic over housing price escalation (OECD 2018). The youth is nowadays facing employment insecurity and finding it difficult to settle down in urban areas as a family, directing them towards the private rental sector or the public rental sector (OECD 2019). Further, this is one of the reasons why the government is struggling to tackle two demographic trends: a low birth rate and an aging population.

The Seoul Metropolitan government has started to develop its public rental housing sector, not only by purchasing small-size studios rented at lower-than market rates but also by promising to supply 62,000 public homes by 2022 with apartments' standards for the building envelope area. During a meeting in their offices while on our study trip, Seong-hee Cheon, the General Manager of the Housing Welfare Planning Department at Seoul Housing Corporation, insisted on the fact that the historically significant state intervention in the Korean real-estate market was increasingly leveraged to push for social housing quotas in publicly backed new-town developments, with Mayor Park promising 10% of the city's housing stock to be public by the end of his mandate[1]. The central government has encouraged the building of residential towns sprouting at the periphery of Seoul and in other provinces to curb the rising prices due to the disproportionate concentration of opportunities in the capital city, often at the expense of the green belt (Lee 2018). However, it has been obliged to control more strictly large developers, such as the construction branches of Samsung and Hanhwa, which have been trying to offset a plunge in orders from the Middle East where they were very active in the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, in other Korean cities, oversupply has started to seriously threaten the real estate market, leaving consumers unable to purchase brand new high-rise apartments (Kim 2016).

### *Conclusion*

In the past decade, Korean public organizations such as the Korea Land and Housing Corporation and the Korea International Cooperation Agency and construction companies like Hanwha and Hyundai Engineering have started to export their expertise developed over decades abroad. They introduce themselves as the 'Korean style smart towns and apartments' promoting Western living standards, Korean features and technologies, and a relatively reasonable price considering their large-scale development. Some countries Korea is working with are Paraguay, Bolivia, Algeria, Ethiopia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Nepal, India, Indonesia, Vietnam and China (Kim 2018). These residential enclaves as an alternative to other forms of housing nevertheless represent a serious threat to land use and social inclusiveness. They might reinforce spatial and social segregations in the long run and hence deepen the inequality gap between those who can afford living in them and those who cannot. The republic of apartments still has a long way to go in finding ways to tackle deepening inequalities domestically, and to avoid them being perpetuated abroad. This model is also still put to the test regarding its capacity to provide long-lasting buildings, and requires further innovation in its recycling chain.

[1] Personal communication, SHC, 2020.

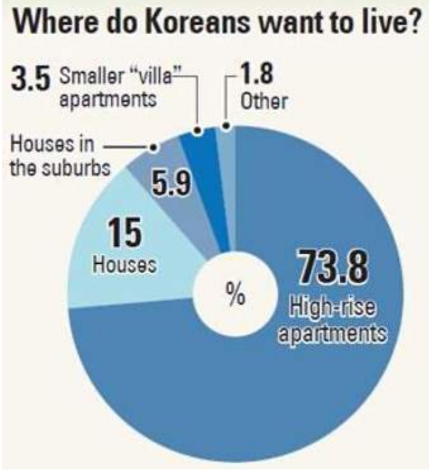


Figure 5. Survey of 3560 Korean people conducted in 2009 regarding housing

Figure 6. Seoul Housing Price Index by Housing Type. Black: Housing cooperative. Red: Apartments.

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# COMPETITIVENESS AS A BRANDING STRATEGY: TRACING THE HISTORY AND TENSIONS OF SEOUL'S URBAN GOVERNANCE

*By Beifan Li & Mona Menadi*

***Introduction***

In the common narratives of Seoul's history, the "fifty years of rapid growth and development" often appears as the key phrase. From the visit to the Seoul History Museum, to the Korea Land & Housing Corporation, from water treatment facilities to cultural and art organizations, these keywords frequently encapsulate the shared memories of Korea's modern history, with a striking uniformity. If speed were to be the mantra of Seoul's past, then "global city" sums up Seoul's present and future. New development projects, completed or ongoing, ambitiously position Seoul among international metropolises like New York, Paris, and London and project its future as a central node with financial flows. The country's rhetoric greatly emphasizes the global competitiveness of its capital city. Outside the national frontier, Seoul markets itself as a global metropolis. Looking inward, Seoul brands itself as a green, smart, and happy city. This paper seeks to understand, from a historic perspective, to what extent this national branding strategy impacts urban governance and policy. If Seoul intends to benchmark itself against western metropolises, how does that translate to an urban reality?

***Global Competitiveness: How Korea's Self-branding Impacts Seoul's Urban Policy***

From the City Hall to its History Museum, Seoul brands itself as a global city. However, Seoul's development model is drastically different from the globalists' concept of a world city. Sassen (1999) and Friedmann's (1995) world cities like New York and London often dismiss the role of the state and focus solely on the cities and their financial networks. In contrast, the rapid state-led urbanization in the second half of the century makes Seoul a distinctively different model from the standard world city paradigm. Hill and Kim (2000) argue that while New York and London are "market-centered and bourgeois," Seoul's late industrialization makse it "state-centered and political-bureaucratic." This comparison highlights an imperative to investigate Seoul's history in order to understand the nuances of its global city positioning and tag.

Seoul's population grew from 2.4 million to 8.3 million between 1960 and 1980, quadrupling in twenty years following Korea's liberation from Japan and the Korean War (Joo, 2019) . The accelerated urbanization led to many problems related to overcrowding including famine, water, sanitation, etc. To accommodate the explosive demands and curb the increasing expansion of informal settlements and shanty towns, the state initiated large-scale apartment projects that largely resemble what we see today: towering apartments of more than 10 to 20 stories high, with uniform forms and balconies, usually coming in more than ten buildings at a time. These complexes "comprise nearly 60 percent of housing stock in Seoul and in Korea." (ibid.) With the goal to construct quick, many, and cheap, Seoul's uniform physical structure was a byproduct of its urbanization and development. In housing-scarce cities, these types of developments are not particularly exceptional. Scholar Anne Halai in 2016 introduced the term "property state," to describe the role of private real estate developers in land-scarce cities like Singapore and Hong Kong (ibid). In Korea, the role of the private developers is instead spearheaded by state-led corporations like the Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH). LH has an unparalleled financial and legal capacity to build massive urban real estate and expand the urban fringe. Because of the top-down, state-centered approach, Seoul's uniform physical appearance as a rapidly-urbanized

capital is unique from the world cities like New York and London, which present diverse neighborhoods constructed by various developers and actors.

The state's ambition to compete globally continued to impact Seoul's urban history. Mega events like the Olympics can be qualified as "relevant sites of global authority" (Collins, 2008.) Following the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Korea's successful bid for the 1988 Seoul Olympics was seen as a way of staking its claim in a predominantly Western-defined global stage. Manzenreiter and Horne (2002) highlight the 1988 Olympics as a way to showcase Korean economic and technological achievements. The capital city Seoul often bears the weight of the state's ambition to introduce itself as a rapidly-modernizing country with global competitiveness.

Since then, Seoul has invested and completed the Big Four mega events: Olympic Games (1988), the World Expo (1993), the FIFA World Cup (2002), and the Winter Olympics (2018). Black and Van der Westhuizen (2004) noted the act of hosting major global games as a "pivotal strategic response to the exigencies of globalisation," aiming for both a perceived increasing marketing power and a political legitimation through celebrating national identity. With these objectives, the branding of Seoul therefore often included an invisible Western spectator. The presentation of Seoul as a globally-competitive city is therefore a political tool that serves a national political and economic goal. As Black and Van der Westhuizen (2004) further elucidate: *"[E]stablishing a country's status as a brand is trumpeted as a means to attract foreign students to its universities, tourists to its hotels, investors to its economy and media moguls to project images of its cities, people, architecture, culture, and food on screens across the globe."*

The globally-competitiveness branding strategy has found its way throughout different levels and types of organizations in Seoul. At Incheon's Free Economic Zone, the promotional video referenced the newly-developed suburbs as a "global business frontier." At Korea's top Yonsei University's newly constructed Songdo campus, a one hour drive from its main campus in Seoul, various collaborations with Western universities were often prized as part of its "global push" as Korea's "window to the world"[1]. These are just a few of the illustrations of the impact of the national branding strategy on the capital, which bears the weight to champion itself against global benchmarks. However, as seen repeatedly, the emphasis on modernization and development has led to forced evictions, displacements, and gentrification in Seoul, which will be discussed later in this book. The other side of the coin is less glamorous, and often connected to the marketing ambitions of the state to pitch its capital against global metropoles - in the process of which other prices had to be paid.

***Competitiveness Translated into City Branding Post-decentralization Reform: Cases of the Cheonggyecheon Restoration and the K-Smart City***

A change of paradigm occurred in 1998 when Seoul directly elected for the first time a full-term mayor named Kun Goh. This decentralization of power from the national government allowed the city to develop according to its own agenda, while answering to national goals and policies. Seoul governance under Mayor Kun Goh turned citizen-centric. Goh reduced government staff, eliminated agencies and privatized some administrative functions, while creating partnerships with citizen groups, inviting them into policy decisions. His ambition was to achieve "good governance" while also attempting to establish an e-government (Lee, 2010). These drastic changes in city operation had a strong impact on the following urban developments and on the city branding strategies developed by Mayor Kun Goh's

[1] Yonsei University Website: https://oia.yonsei.ac.kr/intro/messPre.asp

successors.

***The Cheonggyecheon Restoration***

Mayor Lee Myung-bak, mayor of Seoul from 2002 to 2006, published a cultural and environmental vocational note called "Seoul Vision 2006" which planned to transform Seoul into one of the most citizen-friendly and eco-friendly metropolises of the World. This change in the city's development paradigm, from growth-oriented to a balance between growth and the environment, arrived when there was high national pressure to increase the global visibility of Seoul. Different restoration projects would help raise Seoul as an international symbol for the country (Lee and Anderson, 2013).

The Cheonggyecheon restoration is the centerpiece of Seoul Vision 2006. It consisted in revitalizing the Cheonggyecheon Stream located in downtown Seoul, previously covered by a highway. The urban renewal project goal was to promote a more eco-friendly urban design by reintroducing green spaces and promoting the city's historical heritage. Here, the city-rebranding is clear: Seoul is a people-oriented, culturally rich and environmentally appealing city. The goals of such development were also clear; Mayor Lee Myung-bak stated that "once the stream is restored, we want this area to stand out as a center of foreign investment. The ultimate goal is to make Seoul a great city, one that can compete as an attractive center of business with Shanghai, Tokyo and Beijing" (Krinik, 2011). Therefore, behind the culture-rich, eco-friendly and people-oriented city branding were Seoul's global city ambitions. This project is often referred to as "the most successful urban renewal project in terms of long-term impact on economic growth and urban development in Seoul" (ibid). This is for a number of reasons. Most importantly, it has been instrumental in the aggressive marketing of "global Seoul" by promoting a new image of the city, while helping increase its economy and its international profile by actively participating in the development of cultural tourism. It also addressed difficult urban issues left aside, improving the quality of life around the stream.

Krinik (2011) refers to the Cheonggyecheon restoration as a symbolic reconstruction that can be seen as an outcome of competitive urban policy. These city branding strategies put in place by Mayor Lee Myung-bak proved to be efficient. The city was ranked in the top 10 on the A.T. Kearney Global Cities Index for several years after the Cheonggyecheon restoration and moved up to an Alpha on the Global and World Index between 2000 and 2010 (Lee and Anderson, 2013).

***The K-Smart City***

Mayor Park Won-soon, mayor of Seoul from 2010 to 2020, focused the city branding of the metropolis on the development of a sustainable smart city. The e-government that Mayor Kun Goh had introduced during his mandate had evolved and the will of Mayor Park was to go beyond this concept. Seoul has been involved in the World Smart Cities Organization (WeGO, based on its previous name: World e-Governments Organization of Cities and Local Governments) since its launch in 2010. It even took the chair of the organization 3 years in a row (Lee and Anderson, 2013). This global network has been a privileged space for the promotion of Seoul's technology and digital policies.

One of the most emblematic features of Seoul's Smart City is its Smart City Platform established in 2017. It is presented as the "core tool for smart administration as being the world's first smart city platform based on 32 million administrative big data and cutting-edge

information and communications technology (ICT)”[2]. The Smart City Platform displays public data and is constantly evolving with new technologies such as artificial intelligence or voice recognition. This urban planning and management tool has been accessible to every citizen since April 2020[3], following the objective set by Mayor Kun Goh in designing a citizen-empowered city. The Smart City Platform is promoted worldwide, and many cities around the world show interest in importing the system. To address this demand, Seoul created Appia Consortium, which is a public-private consultative body advising cities around the world that are interested in becoming more “smart”[4]. Practically, this entity has effectively been able to export the “K-Smart City” experience to various cities worldwide.

Seoul Smart City is a strong branding strategy and places the city on the map of the ongoing Global Smart City competition. Transparency on the urban management of the city and on the accountability of the government are advertised to the citizens. Yet, the impact on the freedom and privacy of the inhabitants is less talked about.

### *Conclusion*

Global competitiveness has been a major driver of Seoul’s city branding across time. First by the organization of major mega-events with high urban and economic development goals attached. Then by the influence of global trends, such as the sustainable city or the smart city. Great efforts have been made to parallel global metropolises such as New York, London, and Tokyo. These branding strategies not only impacted domestic policy making and urban planning, but also became part of the smart city product itself, exporting to various cities around the world. The remaining question is the impact of such branding strategies on Seoul’s citizens themselves. Privacy and freedom are sometimes overlooked, secondary to the city’s ambition to become smart, sustainable, and globally competitive. How much of the human-centric policy approach can be grounded to real changes for citizens, or is it part of the evolving branding strategy of the city? This question remains to be answered.

[2] Seoul Metropolitan Government Website: http://english.seoul.go.kr/
[3] ibid.
[4] Seoul Smart City Platform White Paper – Manual of Smart City for Citizens and Mayor, Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2019

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# 2 GLOBAL AMBITION & LOCAL MEDIATION

## THE GOVERNANCE DICHOTOMY OF AN EMERGENT WORLD CITY

# GOVERNING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE

*By Florinda Bartoli*

The South Korean state experienced an incredibly strong growth since the end of the Korean War in 1953. Quite rapidly, its capital city, Seoul, rose from the ruins of its past to a global city. This phenomenon has made Seoul and South Korea the centre of numerous studies on developing countries turning into pumping hearts of the modern economy. Therefore, the South Korean "economic miracle" (Desouza, 1998; Kim, 2002; Pak, 2016) has been praised and analysed thoroughly. Yet, under the pressures of an increasing internalisation of its economy, it started to show its weaknesses and the need for adaptation. Firstly, it has been increasingly harder for the state to generate opportunities for profitable investments, provoking a reduction of the number of financial inflows and augmenting the pressures on consumers (Pirie, 2018). Secondly the industrial bases of the Korean economy shifted from industrial to post-industrial, with a focus on services and advanced technologies, that changed the socio-economic structure of the country itself and, perhaps, the basis of the developmental model (Pirie, 2018). Finally, the lack of a strong welfare system, inherent into the developmental state's logics, increased social inequalities with the adoption of more neoliberal policies after the 90s. Given the aforementioned concepts, this paper will illustrate how recent changes in Seoul's governance, such as the participatory democratic model, represent an attempt to fix the negative externalities of the developmental era as well as an effort to adapt governance in the city and to a new politico-economic configuration.

### *Economic Background*

The development of Seoul and South Korea heavily relied on private investments, yet state coordination decreased from the 90s, following a more neo-liberal model (Chang, Park, and Yoo, 1998) thereby leaving firms more independent. Nevertheless, even before the Asian crisis in 1997, the rate of profit from those investments kept decreasing, reaching a low of 6.1% in 1996 (Pirie, 2018). At the same time, the capital-output ratio, meaning the amount of capital needed to produce a unit, was rising, making not only investments but even production less advantageous (Jeong 2007, 58 –60).

The situation for investments in South Korea was unsustainable and the burden shifted increasingly towards private households, a structure that persists till date. In fact, in the ten years from 1996 to 2006, the households that were borrowing money doubled from 25 to 50% (Chung 2009, 86), while corporate borrowing decreased, and their savings went up to 33% of GDP, illustrating the basic lack of any attractive possibility for investments. Since households rather than companies were the ones spending and borrowing more, their debt more than doubled as well, reaching 184% of their disposable income in 2018 (OECD 2020a).

Considering the indebtment of households and the lack of investments on the firms' side, it is hard to keep defining South Korea as a 'developmental state', since its financial system has shifted. Nevertheless, the past economic model still has impacts and consequences on the current imbalances in Korean lives and has left a major mark on the structuring of social inequalities in the country. Given the concept of path-dependency, it would be hard for the government to completely steer away from a developmental mentality. Hence, the developmental past of the South Korean economy and state still shapes the present policies. Yet, some different economic and social ideas can be slowly integrated into the system. While the incorporation of neo-liberal policies came before the structuring of a

comprehensive, redistributive welfare system, more recent actions seem to be taking into consideration the need to address inequalities. Such policies, while still in need of improvement, reduced Korea's Gini coefficient so that the country performed better than the US or the UK (OECD 2020b). While the whole Korean state has to deal with some consequences of the developmental state, Seoul seems to have adapted earlier than the rest of the country, adopting more participatory processes of policy making and trying to expand their welfare programs. To underline the importance of Seoul's role in coping with the consequences of past economic choices, the housing market and housing-related policies appears as the strongest example.

***Housing in Seoul***

Currently, half of the entire Korean population lives in the Seoul Metropolitan Area, but even in the past the city was a main point for urban concentration. Only in recent years has the urbanisation rate started to decrease. Due to the high attractivity of the city, housing shortage has always been a main issue. High-rise apartments quickly became the main construction type in Seoul, and even if the construction rhythms were impressive, there was a constant lack of housing, leading to a steady increase of prices.

Consequently, the amount of people that could not afford to sustain housing costs in the city rose and specific policies targeting the struggling households were needed. While it has been initially tackled by the central state, the Seoul Metropolitan Government took an increasingly proactive role in the shaping of housing policies and provision. Already from 1989, the Seoul Metropolitan government started to provide public housing to the people living in the area, complementing the actions of the National Government that started public housing policies from 1962. In the following years however, strategies and funds changed, in adaptation to space restrictions and financial needs.

According to the Asian Development Bank Institute, the first projects of public housing in the late eighties were carried out by the metropolitan government, building on the city's properties. The projects were carried out by the Seoul Housing & Communities Corporation, created for that specific mission, but the land needed was more than what was planned, forcing the SMG to change its strategy and rely increasingly on the private sector for new big developments.

The liberalisation of the housing market that took place between the 90s and the early 2000s shifted the power in the housing finance market, with commercial bankers rather than governmental actors being the major lenders and increasing the mortgage debt to 31% of the GDP (Kim and Cho 2014). While the ratio is not too astounding compared to other developed countries, it is important to underline that it is a part of an already big debt Korean households live under. Financialization of housing made it more dependable on the private sector and on strong property development projects, transforming housing from a right to a commodity. Considering the lack of space in the core of Seoul, this often took the form of urban regeneration programs or urban renewal. Yet, the increase in prices combined with a lower economic growth than expected forced several Asian economies, South Korea included, to provide some sort of assisted housing to the weakest parts of its population. Furthermore, considering how particularly pressing housing issues were in the capital, it gave the SMG the chance to affirm its governing power over metropolitan dynamics.

The city of Seoul started directly buying housing units in 2002, to then redistribute as public housing. From 2007, it also started an affordable housing program aimed at middle classes,

called SHift, that demanded a lump-sum deposit (between 50% and 80% of the market value) instead of a monthly rent. While the program has political roots in SMG, its financial backing was linked to the National Public Housing Fund, yet until SHift, those funds were limited to the lowest income quartile (Kim and Cho, 2014). In addition to that, SHift also included zoning policy that forced land developers to include 17 to 20% of social housing in their developments (Ha, 2010). The policy led to higher redistribution from urban renewal capital gains. Finally, low-income residents can apply to the Cheonsei program for lower interest rates than private banks combined with an up to 6 years lent for the house deposit. (Kim and Han, 2012).

In more recent years, the trend of increased autonomy of the Seoul Metropolitan Government vis-à-vis the central state continued, and housing was a central issue to that. In fact, by the end of 2013, 70% of the existing public house estates in Seoul were supplied by the Seoul Housing Corporation (SH) (Kim and Cho, 2014), hence under the lead of local authorities rather than national ones. The Land and Housing Corporation (LH), at the national scale, was then responsible for the remaining 30%. The trend continued after 2013, with Mayor Park Won-Soon, elected in 2011, providing an additional 25% of public housing between 2012 and 2017 and promising even more (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2016). Nevertheless, it is important to reconstruct the financing of those public housing structures.

***Future scenarios and conflicts***

As indicated previously, despite neoliberal tendency, deregulation and privatization, housing and land policies are still characterised by their developmental state past, hence they are still under state control. Yet, the decrease in centralisation, the rise of entrepreneurialism and the solidification of democratic practises has empowered local government. This empowerment has led to more pressures on metropolitan governance, which pushed the city of Seoul to take the lead on public housing policies. While public and assisted housing is nowadays one of the main goals of Mayor Park, the finances of those projects mainly come from other forms of land developing. Private housing and smart cities are the current Korean strategy to gain money from the land. The SMG adopted the same techniques as well, as demonstrated by SH's project "Magok, R&D Complex Development" and "Sangam DMC, IT Media Complex Development". Both projects are led by the metropolitan government of the city of Seoul. They consist of urban redevelopment projects offering private companies and international actors a thematic area to create special hubs. They market them for their services, green areas and for Seoul's location in the international sphere. The business and industrial areas, combined with private properties help the city finance the construction of public housing. However they do not identify the main issue as housing. Firstly, housing and land remain considered as commodities, rather than necessities. Secondly, it is important for the national and local government to keep land prices high so that new developments can be profitable. Thirdly, private actors remain the main funders of public projects, even if in an indirect way. Hence, the public housing program in Seoul remains strongly attached to market logics and variations, making the system susceptible to changes in preferences or demographics.

For example, the Korean population is currently shrinking and aging, with fewer children and longer life expectancies. This reduces the number of potential buyers in the private market, hence reducing the profit companies would make in developing the land and potentially decreasing funding for public housing. Furthermore, new generations seem to dislike the apartment housing style, and they are not as capable of buying houses as an asset compared to the previous generations (Lee, 2016). This could potentially create too large a housing supply, incapable of maintaining land prices high enough for governments

to make profit out of. While on the one hand a decrease in land prices might make the private market more affordable, it could also drain funds from public and assisted housing programs, increasing inequalities.

For the future, the Seoul Metropolitan Government will probably have to keep bargaining its position towards the central government to maintain an equilibrium between land prices' inflation and deflation. At the same time, political changes might undermine the current stability as well. While the current composition of the National Assembly, elected in 2016, is smoothing the tensions between local and national government, Mayor Park could encounter more difficulties in case the Conservatives win the 2020 elections or the 2022 presidential race, creating a conflict between two opposite political parties.

### *Conclusion*

In conclusion, it can be said that the Seoul Metropolitan Government has been trying to use urban inequalities and households' bankruptcy to gain more independence in local planning and housing. However, pressures from the private market are still strong, since techniques used by current agencies such as the SH are the same ones of those used at the national level (LH). Furthermore, the developmental past of South Korea is still determining the role of housing in the local economy, the financialization of land and housing and the role of the private sectors towards households. Current economic elements, such as households' increasing debts, as well as sociological trends, such as the shrinking size of Korean families, are putting more pressure on the stability of the current model and underlining its fragility. Finally, political changes might worsen the current situation even more, creating tensions between democratic and conservative plans. The Seoul Metropolitan Government should outline its priorities and formulate policies that recognise people's rights to housing by regulating the centrality of private actors in land developing. Otherwise, public housing programs might not be enough to cope with increasing urban inequalities and households' indebtment and bankruptcy.

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# AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SEOUL: FROM A STATE-SPONSORED PROPERTY MARKET TO PUBLIC RENTAL HOUSING

*By Lucie Lescudé-Plaa & Ying Zhang*

South Korea's fast-paced economic growth in the second part of the twentieth century has been associated with a growing concentration of population and economic activities in its capital city, Seoul. The government's industrialization strategy led to the creation of new manufacturing jobs in the capital city, which attracted many new inhabitants from the countryside: between 1966 and 1970, Seoul's population grew 9.4% annually (Joo, 2019), and fast urban growth continued into the following decades. Given this influx of new inhabitants, the city's existing housing stock soon became insufficient, which led many people to resort to informal housing: in the 1960s and 1970s, an estimated 20-30% of Seoul's urban area was made up of slums and squatter settlements (Kim & Han, 2012). As a result, housing policy until the 1990s focused mostly on boosting housing supply and on fostering urban regeneration to redevelop dilapidated urban areas. During this period, the state took an active role in stimulating the Korean real estate market, especially for the mass construction of apartment complexes, which are a prominent feature of Seoul's urban landscape until today. Though very profitable for the private sector, the state-sponsored construction of apartments targeted a wide range of income groups that included the middle-class and lower middle-class. In that sense, it has been largely successful in bridging Seoul's housing deficit (Joo, 2019). However, slum clearance which was carried out as part of urban regeneration in Seoul's urban core displaced low-income residents. Many were evicted from their homes and could not afford to remain in the newly redeveloped areas (Kim & Han, 2012). In sum, during this period the government adopted a supply-based approach to housing welfare, assuming that reducing housing shortage and increasing the housing supply ratio would drive prices down and meet the housing needs of most of the population. This strategy was successful in bridging the quantitative housing gap: in 2014, the housing supply ratio in Seoul reached 103% (OECD, 2018). It also made housing accessible to a larger part of the population and reduced housing informality: from 30% in 1960, only 10% of Korean lived in informal settlements in the 1980s (Kim, 2014). However, until the 1990s, there was no consistent framework for providing housing to the lowest-income households (Lee & Ronald, 2012).

With the slowing down of population growth, and as Seoul no longer suffers from a quantitative housing deficit, the focus of urban development and housing policies has shifted to new types of projects, including new town construction under the smart city concept. On the other hand, the public sector has developed a framework to improve the housing conditions of low-income families. Indeed, despite an increase in housing supply, land and rent values have continued to increase, and housing prices tripled between 1986 and 2008, making private-market housing unaffordable for an important part of the population (Kim & Han, 2012). In 1989, the first large-scale public housing program was introduced in the form of permanent rental housing. It targeted very low-income families who were receiving welfare assistance. Since then, the public housing system expanded to include many different programs, each of them with different levels of government subsidy, lease period and eligibility criteria. Nowadays, there are more than 20 different types of public rental housing in South Korea, as well as public housing for sale.

From a residual approach in its early stages, public housing today caters to a larger part of the population, with some newer public housing programs including the middle-class. For example, Shift Housing, which originated in Seoul, is a type of public housing available to those earning up to 180% of the average monthly income (Chen, Man & Stephens, 2014).

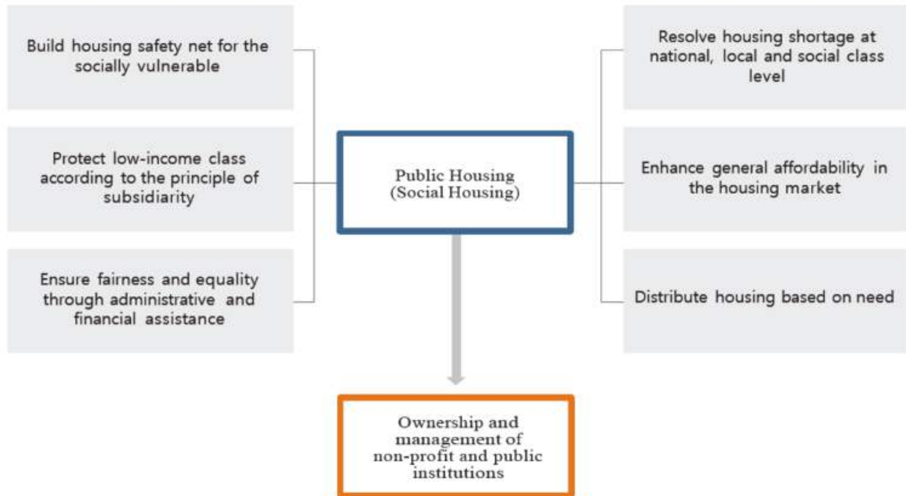


**Figure 1:** Purposes of Seoul Public Rental Housing
*Source: Eun-Cheul Park (2015), Seoul's Public Lease Housing Policy, Seoul Solution.*

However, the proportion of public housing remains low compared to the OECD average of 8%: out of 3 million housing units in Seoul, 200.000 are leased through public rental housing (6.67%), although there is a goal to bring the proportion up to 10% (SH Meeting, 14th January 2020). The construction and management of public housing is led by public enterprises at the national and metropolitan level. 70% of public housing in Seoul is provided through the Seoul Housing Corporation, a public company connected to the Seoul Metropolitan Government, while the remaining 30% is provided by LH, which operates directly under the central government (Park, 2015). While LH mainly carries out large-scale projects, SH focuses mostly on small-scale projects within Seoul, including urban regeneration and the provision of public housing through the purchase and renovation of empty or deteriorated houses.

Public housing status by program.

| Program | Supply period | Qualification | Rent levels compared to market rent (%) | Inventory as of 2012 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Permanent public housing | 1989–1993 | Less than 50% of the avg. income | 10–20 | 190,679 |
| Redevelopment public housing | 1990-Present | Redevelopment area tenant residents, Housing savings account subscribers | 50–70 | 55,339 |
| 50-Year public housing | 1993–1997 | Less than 70% of the Avg. Income<br>Less than 50 m²: Less than 70% of the Avg. Income (priority to monthly income of less than 50%) | 50–70 | 46,181 |
| National public housing | 1998-Present | Less than 60 m²: less than 70% of the avg. income<br>Greater than 60 m²: less than the avg. income | 70–80 | 411,604 |
| Purchased, leased public housing | 2003-Present | Less than 50% of the avg. income (*Note:* disabled – less than 100%)<br>Less than 60 m²: less than 70% of the avg. income | 10–20 | 43,503<br>85,625 |
| Shift housing | 2007-Present | Less than 85 m²: less than 150% of the Avg. Income<br>Greater than 85 m²: less than 180% of the avg. income | Less than 80 | 19,974 |

*Source:* Data from Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation (MLIT), modified by the author.

**Figure 2:** Types and Eligibility Criteria of Public Rental Housing in Seoul
*Source: Kim Soo-Hyun (2014), Belated but Grand? the Future of Public Housing in Korea*

The building of public housing in Korea entails a close cooperation between the public and the private sector. For new development projects, the most common procedure is the commissioned construction of housing units on publicly owned land. The question of land is crucial because only 3% of the Korean territory is marked as housing land, and two thirds of the land surface in Korea is privately held, either by individuals or by corporations (LH Meeting, 17th January 2020). In order to commission the construction of new housing units, public-owned corporations such as the Land and Housing Corporation (LH) first have to acquire necessary land surface, which is particularly challenging in a city as dense as Seoul. When public housing construction started in the 1990s, Korea's urbanization rate had already reached 74%, which is relatively late into the urbanization process compared to other countries who have developed public housing programs (Kim, 2014). Land scarcity is a recurrent problem hindering the expansion of the public housing stock, and as a result, a large part of public housing units are built as part of large complexes on the city outskirts, where land is more easily available. This is especially the case for housing targeting the lowest-income groups such as permanent rental housing.

Due to a high urban density, until 2003 the provision of public housing in central areas had been limited to redevelopment rental housing: by law, 20% of housing units in redevelopment areas have to be allocated for public housing targeting former residents (Kim, 2014). Redevelopment rental housing is a useful tool to include low and middle-income households in urban renewal projects, however, not all former residents can be relocated on site and its effects were overshadowed by the general rise in housing prices in those areas. To tackle this issue and increase the provision of public housing in the inner city, in 2003 a new form of public housing, called purchased rental housing for lease, was introduced. Through these programmes, public housing companies can buy or rent private housing units in more central areas of the city in order to renovate them and use them as public housing. One of the objectives of purchased rental housing was to avoid spatial concentration of public housing in large complexes, thereby enhancing social diversity. However, as of 2013, purchased rental housing for lease only makes up 7.2% of the total public housing stock in Seoul (Park, 2015).

According to the OECD (2018), Korea's public housing market is largely disconnected from the private rental market: despite the broadening of public housing programs to include part of the middle-class, the Korean housing model remains overwhelmingly targeted to households whose needs can't be covered by the market. As such, Kim (2014) claims that the public housing market can be qualified as a 'residual dual market' or a 'dualist residual market'. Despite public housing being the cornerstone of housing support for low-income households, there are some public initiatives to support housing affordability in the private rental market. The main one concerns publicly-provided low-interest loans for renting under the Chonsei arrangement - a type of lease where, instead of monthly rent, the tenant makes one lump-sum deposit which is refunded at the end of the lease. In addition, the government covers the majority part of the housing costs for public housing. More recently, housing vouchers have been introduced for low-income families housed in the private rental market. A program of this kind, Seoul's monthly rent assistance system, was first introduced at the municipal level in 2002, and 23.300 households benefited between 2002 and 2010 (Jang, 2015). In 2015, a similar program was implemented at the national level, called the Housing Voucher Program. Through these policies, the government offers other alternatives to public rental housing and continues to enhance housing affordability for vulnerable social groups and low-income households.

To sum up, the public sector-led housing policy in Korea has gone through a change from the 1960s to nowadays. Before the 1990s, to address the housing pressure, the state

took an active role in stimulating the Korean real estate market through mass construction of apartment complexes. Though it bridged the quantitative housing gap and eased the housing stress, the low-income groups were left out from the policies because of the rising housing price. Moving to the new century, the public sector of Seoul started to development large-scale public housing programs to improve the housing conditions of low-income families. Public housing in Korea entails a close cooperation between the public and the private sector, with public-owned corporations like LH and SH playing central roles in the construction and allocation of public housing units. New programs such as redeveloping rental housing and purchased rental housing for lease were introduced to address the density issue in SMA. In addition to the supply side, the government also introduced a housing voucher policy for low-income families housed in the private rental market, so as to enhance the housing affordability. Thus, Seoul's housing market has witnessed a transformation of the role of the public sector, from sponsoring property market to developing public housing programs, and from a supply-focused scheme to a combination of both housing supply and affordability.

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# THE ROLE OF CHAEBOLS IN SEOUL'S URBAN PLANNING AND REGENERATION

*By Azilis Pierrel & Anne-Sophie Tchuisseu*

The urban regimes of contemporary Korea can scarcely be understood in the absence of an analysis of a particular institutional arrangement: the Chaebols. Chaebols are family-owned conglomerates of business groups that played a critical role in the influence and emergence of South Korea as a major global power, and by extension, Seoul as a "global city" (Sassen, 1999). Some of the major ones include LG Electronics, Lotte, Samsung, Hyundai etc, and all their subsidiaries. After the Asian financial crisis of 1997, some of the chaebols disappeared because of their high indebtedness. However, their place in the Korean economy is still crucial as the top five of chaebols represent 50% of the South Korean stock exchange market, something that structures their relationship with the government. The superpower (the 10 biggest chaebols represent almost 50% of the South Korean GDP in 2018)[1] of the chaebols means that the state cannot afford to see them collapse, a seemingly Korean equivalent of the logic of 'too big to fail' that has emerged in years since the 2008 financial crisis in Western economies (Chang, 2014). There is therefore an omnipresence of the chaebols but also a strong dependence on the state. The chaebols have a strong influence on political life that has been particularly pronounced in the wake of the crisis. The unofficial relations between the families of high-ranking officials and politicians and the families at the head of conglomerates are often at the root of many scandals that have broken out over the last decade. These relationships have a strong impact both politically and strategically and create a sense of social and economic injustice among the population. The aim of this paper is to explain the influence of the chaebols on urban governance, especially in the metropolis of Seoul that concentrates the majority of the South Korean population and GDP. It seeks to unpack to what extent the actions of chaebols shape Seoul's urban landscape and regeneration.

### *The Corporatization of City Making*

Chaebols have been present in the construction of South Korea both literally and figuratively since the "construction" of the country from the end of the Second World War. However, it was under the presidency of Park Chung-hee (1963-1979) that a close link was created between the government, business and urban development. Chaebols benefited from South Korea's developmentalist policy of the 1960s. Park Chung-hee's military coup in 1961 marked the beginning of a policy of a state that had invested heavily in the physical infrastructure necessary to sustain the Korean economy. With the Establishment of the Economic Planning Board and the creation of Five-Year Economic Development Plans, the state began to direct investment towards selective industrialization in a forceful, step-by-step manner. The introduction of low-interest loans and disciplinary measures initially promoted different industries and selected the driving forces of the national industrialization policy (Joo, 2018).

The developmental state thus sought to promote an economically driven urban development and selected huge national players, the chaebols, to help realise its industrial and urban policies. President Park openly encouraged the Chaebols to seize economic power in exchange for their participation in rebuilding the country. These large conglomerates therefore benefitted from particularly low interest rates, relaxation from regulation and tax cuts, but also financial subsidies, a fixed wage system, cheap electricity and the end of trade

[1] https://pulsenews.co.kr/view.php?year=2018&no=562268

unions. Thus, chaebols are at the heart of strategic urban choices, through their involvement in national industrial policy and associated urban development.

In the 1970s, the "Republic of the Chaebols" experienced a certain retreat with the privatization of the financial sector at the national level (Kim, 1997). The democratic regime no longer supports the chaebols through national industrialization policies combined with large-scale urban projects. The Federal government began to turn into a "property state", as defined by Haila (2000), with a strategy aimed at guiding capital and enterprises towards investment in real estate. With the industrial circuit experiencing a downturn, chaebols moved their capital towards the built environment and investing in properties. The State helped facilitate these new avenues of revenue, in particular by launching national affordable housing projects, led with the partnership of chaebols. This change in policy was inherently market-oriented since it was no longer based on national industrial objectives, and therefore reduced the role of government regulation.

This urban development carried out in conjunction with the chaebols, responsible for construction, financing and strategic choices, is sometimes described as "chaebol urbanism" (Douglass, 2015). Supplying mass housing units in a quantitative logic is becoming a strategy for chaebols. The medium and high-rise apartments, pursued by the rising Korean middle class, is one of the main business areas today for chaebols. They have often set up subsidiaries to build and sell new units. For example, the Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co. has been responsible for the construction of whole apartments in the Gangnam neighborhood since the 1970s. Although the relationship between the chaebols and the State has evolved, it has followed a boomerang movement (Kalinowski, 2009). This proximity between state projects and chaebols is described as a 'path dependency' facilitating virtual monopolies in the housing market.

### *The Role of Chaebols in Shaping the Contemporary City*

Urban projects driven by the State through public-private partnerships with the chaebols take the form of megaprojects that tackle entire neighbourhoods at a time. Through the establishment of massive plans at the national level, it enables projects with a technology tackling entire urban fragments for residential purposes. Urban development is rapid and vertical, with large-scale apartments for the Korean middle class seeking housing. These projects are both government and chaebol initiated, however most observers have noted that the chaebols retain great power in many domains from financing to finally achieving an operation.

The chaebol model involves developing land from a core area and then expanding. As Douglass (2015 notes: "chaebol intrusions into Seoul mimic a feudal pattern of dividing territory into fiefs, each dominated by a specific chaebol". We can observe territorial divisions of Seoul shaped to the domination of specific chaebols. Examples of this include Lotte's impact on Jamsil-dong with the construction of the Lotte World Tower (556 meter high) that is part of a huge complex including apartments, stores, business offices. For its part, LG occupies more than 1,7 million square meter in the Magok District. Samsung played a role in the redevelopment of the rich District of Gangnam and plans a tower in the Seoul Digital Media City in Sangnam-dong. Investment in buildings in addition to economic activities such as telephones and cars has led the chaebols to diversify and acquire a territorial base within the capital itself but also in secondary cities such as Ulsan.

### *Participation, Gentrification and the Move Towards New Exclusionary Geographies*

Metropolises face housing problems, and Seoul is no exception. To meet the growing demand for housing, the Seoul government has been carrying out mass renovations since the early 1960s. Redevelopment efforts have been concentrated on older built-up areas characterized by low density and high land prices. Two methods were used: the first was to eliminate substandard housing in certain critical areas and relocate its occupants to suburbs, with this being done within the framework of a development plan and with funding decided by the government without the participation of residents. The second was the improvement of housing by residents with minimal government intervention. Both methods did not have the expected results. In the first case, the methods used were strongly criticized because of the brutality with which the government treated the populations of these neighborhoods.

The renovation project by the inhabitants themselves suffered from their passivity in the absence of coercive measures and financial support from the authorities. It is because of this double failure that a method inspired by public-private partnerships was favored. Once the project to be renovated has been chosen by the municipality a company must agree to participate. The companies participating in renovation projects are often chaebols that also have branches in construction. Within the framework of the renovation projects an association of inhabitants is created. The role of the association is to have the approval of most of the inhabitants so that the project can start. Based on this initial approval, each inhabitant receives the right to own a dwelling once the renovation is completed. As it is understood from the outset that the construction company may build more dwellings than are necessary to house all the inhabitants, it is allowed to sell the additional dwellings on the real estate market to cover the construction costs of the renovation project. In this way, municipal authorities are not obliged to use their limited financial resources to improve deprived neighborhoods.

Nevertheless, there are many drawbacks to this kind of partnership. The main one is that the housing sharing agreed between the residents' association and the construction company is not often respected. The creation of the residents' association is not always based on consensus of all residents. Associations sometimes find themselves manipulated by a small number acting to protect and grow their real estate interests. As a result, even if most of the inhabitants are dissatisfied with the agreement with the chaebol, the renovation project still goes ahead. This has important socio-economic consequences. Indeed, the neighborhoods being renovated are working class, and households with low incomes are no longer able to live in their original neighborhoods because the cost of living increases considerably. One of the direct consequences of these renovations will be the gentrification of Seoul's working-class neighborhoods. The less advantaged inhabitants will be forced to move away and lose their jobs because they can no longer find housing close to their jobs. The renovations will therefore also have the impact of destroying the social identity of certain neighborhoods which are deprived of their inhabitants and their traditional local jobs. The Seoul municipality has chosen to set up public-private partnerships, most often with chaebols, which means that the city council does not have to finance these renovation projects. However, the pressure exerted by the chaebols and the passivity of the Seoul government is leading to profound changes in the concerned districts.

### *Conclusion*

The Chaebols have played and continue to play a role in the construction of the Seoul metropolitan area. The role of the Chaebols is far more extensive than the trace they leave on the Korean urban territories. The presence of Chaebols in the city tends to reinforce its

economic weight and thus, at some point, its influence. Chaebols are today an integral part of Korean culture. They have had an impact on corporate culture, for example, and are very often at the heart of TV series (dramas) known to be a vector of Korean culture throughout the world. Chaebols are therefore omnipresent and are actors of hard power (economic weight) but also of soft power (drama, tourist sites, ex: Lotte Tower, Seoul).

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# SEOUL´S PARTICIPATIVE URBAN GOVERNANCE

*By Francesca Bonalda, Gabriella Costa & Lina Homman Ludiye*

## *Digital education and social innovation as an instrument for civil participation*

Seoul's recent history has been characterized by branding efforts to create an attractive image of itself as one of Asia's economic powerhouses. These efforts intensely advertise the city's achievements in its rapid economic development, modernity, and technology, and are eager to promote their image as an important global player (Berg & Björner, 2014; Karvelyte & Chiu, 2011). Former mayors Lee Myung-bak (2002–2006) and Mayor Oh-hoon (2006–2011) both used branding strategies which prioritized upgrading and transforming Seoul's image as a competitive Asian global city. The development and implementation of these strategies mostly took place among government and private-sector experts, and they almost entirely targeted external audiences. They relied on top-down approaches to bring fast developments (Cho, 2011). However, in 2011, Park Won Soon won the election after then-Mayor Oh-hoon's resignation, changing the political trajectory of municipal policy. This election symbolized the defeat of conservative political forces which, up until that point, had been the dominant political power in South Korea. Park Won Soon was a former lawyer and a longtime human rights and social activist, and did not belong to any political party—highly unusual, given Korea's strong political party system. He built his political power and support around the idea of a need for a paradigm shift in response to Seoul's overall fatigue with growth-first ideologies, subsequent social inequalities, and class divisions.

Currently, the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) is comprised of 25 autonomous districts and 24 affiliated agencies. These agencies are managed on a public-private partnership basis and cooperate to find solutions for urban problems from a citizen-centered perspective. This article aims to analyze the participative approach of Seoul´s urban governance at the municipal level, especially in light of the relatively recent political shift brought on by Mayor Park's election. The first part will be more contextual in its approach, laying out the historical processes that have taken place since 2000 to lead Seoul from a growth-minded state to a more participatory one. The second part will examine two case studies–the Seoul Digital Foundation, and the Fab Lab–to demonstrate good examples of how such participatory policy is put into place at the ground level. The argument of this article is that city branding, as well as the participatory approach it encourages, have a transformative function - they serve as an instrument to support a change in the government's policy.

## *I. Contextualizing the shift towards a participatory model*

With the inauguration of Mayor Park Won-soon, Seoul saw a major shift in its approach which rejected the neoliberal and growth-centered perspective; this shift heavily contrasts the approach to city branding, which focuses on promoting a city's competitive assets dictated by public–private partnerships, with little citizen involvement. An example of the former, Seoul's branding practices accelerated under Mayor Lee Myung-bak[1] (2002–2006) sought to apply the private sector's efficient marketing strategies to the public sector (Kang, 2004). Similarly, Seoul's ambition to brand itself as a global city peaked under Mayor Oh Se-hoon (2006– 2011): Oh's signature policy was that of the "design city" policy, in which significant financial resources were devoted to "creating the image of a global city through 'design'" (Interview with member of SMG, August 2015). Mayor Oh's strategy was to apply

[1] Notably also a former CEO of Hyundai Engineering and Construction.

concrete numbers to the city's branding strategy, declaring that Seoul's brand should become among the top 10 most competent globally and that the city was aiming to increase the number of tourists to 12 million a year (Kim & Lee, 2012). The branding strategies of both Mayors Lee (2002–2006) and Oh (2006–2011) targeted external audiences and prioritized upgrading and transforming Seoul's image as a competitive Asian global city to the international market. The development and implementation of these strategies took place behind closed doors; they did not emphasize communication with internal audiences (Cho, 2011) and seldom engaged the public. Both mayors' branding projects appeared similar to the "growth-first" strategies that had previously shaped Seoul's development and reflected a push towards the postindustrial transformation of Seoul into an attractive global city. At the root of these branding exercises were indirect continuations of the previous regimes' ideologies, strategies, and processes of pursuing economic growth and competitiveness on the global market.

The paradigm introduced by Mayor Park Won-soon presented a strong bottom-up contribution, allowing for diverse views and pursuit of a more socially progressive path. Local residents and stakeholders were seen at last as co-producers of a place rather than as consumers (Hankinson, 2004; Houghton & Stevens, 2011; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012; Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). Local residents are those most affected by a city's transformative branding measures and for this reason the process of place reinvention began to be developed as a "demand-oriented process in which the input from local citizens has a key role" (Olsson & Berglund, 2009). Local residents legitimize and facilitate the transformative efforts; branding is now an interactive process that brings together the government and the general public in both decision-making as well as in implementation and re-creation. This implies a deeply engaged public and attention for bottom-up interests as opposed to participation as a formality. Transforming the established semiotic and economic production of a place, along with its governance and underlying ideology, is far from straightforward. It involves continuous and multiple processes of assemblage and construction that are both planned and contingent, and are inherently political.

City branding and the participatory approach it encourages have a transformative function: they serve as instruments to support a turn in the government's policy. City branding has, in this perspective, a double role: it is both a political project of policy change and used by the local government in an effort to bring about a new policy paradigm of citizen-centered governance. Thus, city branding becomes as instrumental in the policy paradigm shift as a process and not an outcome. With the election of Mayor Park Won-soon, different layers of transformation took place: the city branding exercise has been transformed in its strategies, goals, and in its overarching ideology. Seoul transformed its identity in a way that resonated better with local residents. While there is a need for strong internal branding to provide a meaningful identity of a place to its residents, the mayor acts as a key agent of policy paradigm shift, which in turn can be reflected and elevated by city branding.

## *II. Case Studies*

### *Case Study #1: Seoul Digital Foundation (SDF)*

An understanding of this first case study needs to be contextualized within is financial processes, as laid out by the Global Digital Seoul 2020 Plan. Launched in 2016, the Global Digital Seoul 2020 "Diginomics" Plan laid out Seoul's digital strategy for transforming the city into one of the world's leading e-Governments. Since then, thanks to a public-private partnership between the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) and private investors, the project has received over $245 million USD in investments. As stated in "Global Digital Seoul 2020 - New Connections, Different Experiences", the SMG intends to enhance economic growth, establish demanded infrastructure, and engage citizens into the policymaking

process through digital technology. Mayor Park Won-soon declared in 2016:

*"Using digital techniques, most policies will be established by citizens, the beneficiaries of public digital service with an aim to make our city one of the world's leading digital capitol by 2020. Plus, through a new digital industry, our city will create jobs, which will stimulate the economy, and solve various urban problems".*

Undoubtedly, the question of empowering citizens in the urban policy making process comes up as one of the major objectives of Seoul's digital strategy. The Seoul Digital Foundation (SDF) is a clear example of this new dedication. Created in May 2016 as a think tank, the SDF is tasked with the responsibility of fostering the digital economy, solving urban issues through innovative technologies, and developing and facilitating digital literacy education for residents of Seoul to empower them to participate in the policymaking process.

A cornerstone of the Seoul Digital Foundation is open communication with citizenry to involve them in decision-making processes, using digital tools as means of reinforcing the importance of technology in the cities of today. The City Hall receives online and offline inhabitants' opinions to facilitate public hearings, which result in not only a large compendium of public concern and comments in regards to municipal issues, but also some proposed solutions as well. Public authorities understand now, more than ever, the potential for civic intervention in the policymaking process. In this context, the Seoul Digital Foundation was created to help citizens understand their role in the resolution of urban problems. The Seoul Digital Foundation has two primary goals for its civic digital policy: education and empowerment.

The education aspect was introduced after a realization that citizens themselves often had knowledgeability and ideas to solve problems faced in the urban sphere, but not necessarily the tools for bringing such ideas to fruition. SDF organizes workshops in public schools and local community groups with the objective to introduce inhabitants to digital tools. Once the digital tools are better understood by citizens, they could use the skills acquired to create

Figure 1: Goals of Global Digital Seoul 2020 Strategy. Source: Seoul Metropolitan Government Official Website

their own applications and digital tools based on their ideas. This procedure of empowerment directly involved inhabitants into the governance processes of the city, allowing them access to comprehensive facilities and programs designed by and for inhabitants. The SDF also created a platform where these ideas could be shared and shaped. Because of a large variety in the scale of problems tackled, those which did not fit the city's immediate need or scope are stored in a data base to by analyzed by the SDF think tank.

The SDF's think tank is a fundamental instrument to better understand the new urban context with the massive arrival of digital technology. In particular, there is a growing demand for new policies regarding both the security of information and economic regulation. Regarding the former, projects such as CCTV installation throughout the city and the creation of a big data campus demand new policies for the maintenance of individual right to privacy. The emergence of new economic structures, along with the emergence of shared economy, online-to-online commerce (O2O), and expansion of industries based on new digital technologies, have forced policy makers to also seek ways of avoiding violations of common interests. The SDF operates using data provided by public authorities, citizens, and the private sector and collaborates with academic institutions to promote research surrounding public policy analysis and production. Their actions are also organized in coordination with 10 other think tanks involved in public policy analysis world-wide, such as the Instituto Brasileiro De Cidades Inteligentes, Humanas E Sustentáveis in Brazil and Open & Agile Smart Cities in Belgium. The international alliances are created and maintained through the promotion and participation of international events such as the Smart Seoul Conferences, the Hackathon with United Nations Innovation Challenge and the Global Digital Innovation Alliance. Such relationships solidify the SDF's commitment to connecting local innovation with global connectivity.

*Case Study #2: The Fab Lab*

The Seoul Innovation Park opened at Eun Pyeong-gu in April 2015, built on vacant land formerly used by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. As described by the Fab Lab founder, the unoccupied area represented a great opportunity to build a sense of community and renew urban governance and participation modes. The aim of the Innovation Park in Seoul is to bring together people and ideas to solve social issues, in the variety of different functional spaces built together in an extended complex. The implementation of the Seoul Innovation Park has largely been supported by the SMG as a way to bring citizens and innovators together and to implement experimental and innovative processes to resolve issues of inequality, injustice, and imbalance.

The Innovation Park is divided into different sectors, each of them targeting different fields of activity. The park has a variety of "working places" such as offices and co-working spaces where citizens can meet and work together in a traditional setting. There are also a range of "specialized places", such as the Fab Lab, an exhibition space, an upcycling park, a wood-working space, and a theater venue. These spaces are meant to cultivate specific skills and help people learn through a variety of mediums through workshops and events. The Innovation Park also includes outdoor spaces, the Seoul Metropolitan archives, and cultural facilities to supplement the focus on technological innovation.

The Seoul Innovation Fab Lab, a "digital Fabrication Laboratory", is a recent addition to the international community of Fab Labs (comprised of a network of over 1,700 Fab Labs spread across 100 countries worldwide), which aims to build a sense of community and cultivate creativity and technical prowess. The global community gathers fabricators, innovators, artists, scientists, engineers, educators, students, amateurs and professionals

**Spaces of Seoul Innovation Park**

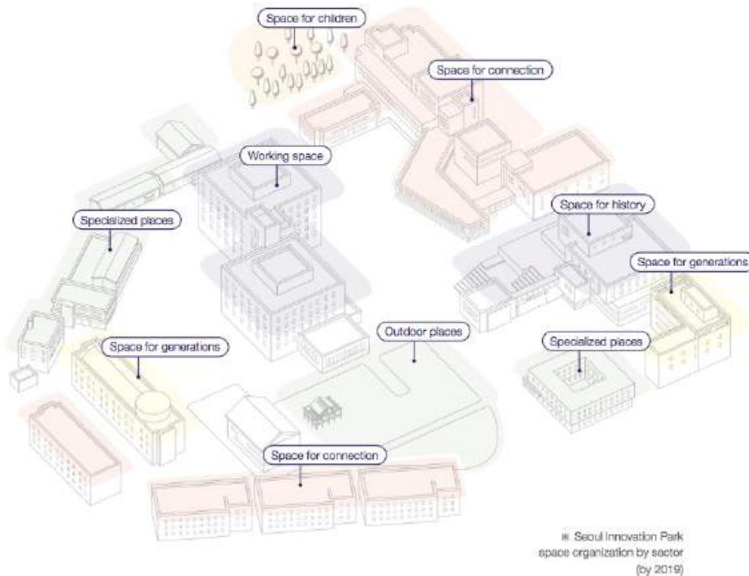


Figure 2: Spaces of Seoul Innovation Park
*Source : Seoul Innovation Park Tour Guide, october 2016*

around educational programs and digital fabrication services.

The "Fab culture" is primarily oriented around public education and citizen empowerment through technological innovation. Indeed, one of the main objectives of Fab Labs is to develop and enhance the public's agency. Like other Fab Labs, Seoul's features a wide range of digital equipment and machines to allow individuals to experiment and create (almost) anything they would like. The aim of the Fab Lab is also to cultivate confidence within community members in their own practical skills and abilities, as well as to create a broad social network that can foster an experimentation and creative dynamism. It plays the role of an innovative incubator, aiming to bring people together and raise social consciousness of what can be made at an individual level. Thus, the Fab Lab has intrinsically become a tool for improving participation of civic groups in policy making process.

In order to solve social problems, the Fab Lab supports collaboration and invention among local residents. It offers time slots and workshops for people to come and create together, equipment and machinery for the production process, and staff members to advise and supervise projects. The Seoul Innovation Center also includes the "Fab Academy", which offers content sharing among all Fab Labs part of the community and videos for interactive classes. As such, the Fab Lab in the Seoul Innovation Center serves as a tool to directly connect citizenry with the decision-making and problem-solving processes of local urban governance in Seoul.

***Conclusion***

The strategies to transform Seoul's image as a competitive global city have been promoted since 2002. Since then, and until 2011, the two conservative mayors of the city, Lee Myung-bak (2002-2006) and Mayor Oh Se-hoon (2006–2011), reinforced public-private

partnerships and a top-down approach to realize this strategy. The city's competitive assets dictated without much citizen involvement. Thereby, the election of Park Won Soon in 2011 represented a turnover to defeat of the conservative party and the regain of a stronger, more bottom-up approach to decision-making processes. A more socially progressive path was followed with the election of Mayor Park Won-soon, which rejected the growth-centered perspective and instead tried to more actively engage citizen participation. Local residents and stakeholders are seen as co-producers of a place rather than consumers. In this context, public policies and investments started to take place to improve the citizens' knowledgeability and participation in the urban fabric of Seoul. The Global Digital Seoul 2020 Plan and the Seoul Innovation Park are examples of these new public and private interventions, and the Seoul Digital Foundation and the Fab Lab are the respective ground results. Even if their impact in the urban fabric is hard to measure since they are young initiatives, they form a concrete part of Seoul's participative governance system.

**Figure 3:** Robotic Arms
*Source: Seoul Innovation Park website, https://en.innovationpark.kr/project-2017/*

If Seoul's metropolitan governance has been characterized, up until the early 2010s, by a desire to reach an international audience, the internal initiative such as the Seoul Digital Foundation and Fab Lab nonetheless show that those roots still exist in Seoul's foundations. Both effectively tap into the local community, as well as global networks. If nothing else, this represents a fundamental dedication to the "glocalization" and connectivity of Seoul's municipal governance on a variety of scales. It may be too soon to tell if the government has struck the right balance between global branding and local engagement, but the results as of now remain highly promising for both the municipality and the residents.

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Future of Seoul, drawn digitally. Seoul Digital Foundation, Jan. 2020

© Photo: "Copy-paste". Seoul 2020. Alexandra van Milink.

# 3 URBAN CHANGE "SEOUL STYLE"

## THE CONTEMPORARY GOVERNANCE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

# UNDERSTANDING THE TRANSFORMATION OF A LANDFILL INTO AN ECOLOGICAL PARK THROUGH THE MULTIPLE STREAM ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK: THE CASE OF NANJIDO ISLAND, SEOUL

*By Emma Raiga-Clemenceau & Julia Manien*

### *Introduction*

From 1978 to 1993 the Nanjido Island, located in central Seoul along the Han River, was used as the city's dumpsite. Over the years, more than 90 million m3 of garbage were accumulated. Besides domestic waste, which covered 65% of the area, the island was used to store the city's construction materials since the strategic location served the numerous condominium and new town building sites in and around the metropolitan area. Moreover, the island was inhabited by the most socially vulnerable groups that make a living collecting recyclable materials. Despite the rich history, a walk through the island today does not tell you about the historical functions of this place. Starting from the '90s, indeed, the landfill was transformed into a well-designed ecological World Cup Park built to commemorate the 2002 Korean-Japan World Cup Games.

Analysing the policy streams that led to the transformation of the island, it can be argued that the newly designed World Cup Park perfectly reflects the political shift towards the market logic and entrepreneurial approach that Seoul experienced entering the 21st century. Starting from the '90s, indeed, under a double process of liberalization and decentralization (Joo, 2018) the Korean capital-focused its resources to fuel projects of regeneration of sites that embodied the ill effects of the urbanization and industrialization. In the case of the World Cup Park, the "success story" of the transformation of the Nanjido Island landfill into an eco-friendly park, urban regeneration is associated to and depends on what the SMG describes as an ecological regeneration of the space.

The project was controlled and funded completely by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) which directly spent more than the 220 billion won (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2015). Even though the design of the park required public-private partnerships, and the monitoring was assisted by groups of citizens, SMG has remained at the heart of the park's governance. More practically, the project was implemented in two distinctive phases. Firstly, from January 1998 to October 2002, the stabilization of the landfill was launched, consisting notably of a leachate treatment and the extraction and recycling of the gas generated by the garbage. Secondly, from October 2000 to June 2002, the work was focused on the construction of the ecological park over the land.

The 2002 FIFA World Cup was the megaevent that framed the narrative around the project of the park. However, the World Cup Park can be seen as a strategic spark for a more ambitious urban and regional development. Beyond the merely social and ecological rehabilitation of the Nanjido Island, the park was conceived aiming to shape the Sangam area where the World Cup Stadium is located. More precisely, the ecological park was devised as a showcase project in order to launch the branding image of a "green" developing neighbourhood, namely the Sangam eco-city.

The following article analyses at the window of opportunity that led to the design and the implementation of the World Cup Park using the Kingdon's multiple stream analysis framework (1984). In order to understand a "policy window" the convergence of three streams, namely problem, policy, and politics, has to be investigated. The transformation of the landfill was initiated in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when sufficient attention was

**Figure 1:** Sangam New Millennium Town Master Plan
*Source : Seoul's Digital Media City (DMC), SeoulSolution Policies.*

given to the landfill – categorized as a "problem" in a time of crisis for Seoul, while also symbolizing the decay of the property-based developmental approach. Moreover, solutions to transform the site had to become available and feasible. After discussing a wide array of plans to remove the waste, the landfill stabilization and the construction of a park over the garbage was the solution negotiated between many actors with different interests and resources. Policymakers also had the reason to support the project. The project of a publicly accessible environmental-friendly open space was coherent with the goal of tackling inequalities that emerged during the Asian Financial Crisis and of building a modern and exportable world-class urban centre.

### *The Problem Stream*

Problems do not naturally exist, they are the result of a process of issue framing (Kingdom, 1984). Policy issues have to be recognized as such by policymakers and they have to be considered as deserving their attention to becoming "problems". Considering that there are no objective tools to identify which issues deserve policymakers' focus, and that only a small share manages to receive sufficient attention, the way and the context in which these issues are framed as problems are central. This is demonstrated by the problem stream that led to the transformation of Najido Island. While it was used from the end of the 1970s onwards, it was only recognized as a problem later in the '90s. During this period it was considered an anachronistic infrastructure for a city that aimed to be a global city with a post-industrial economy. Afterward the island was framed as an opportunity to serve a megaevent and the development of a neighbourhood. Eventually, the area was deemed a social and environmental issue.

Figure 2: Park Plan
*Source : Sustainable Urbanism in Seoul, arcgis.com esri.*

It is firstly important to underline that the landfill started to receive policyan makers' attention in a period of national crisis. Along with the immediate economic and social shocks, the Asian Financial Crisis marked a historical moment in the quick development of South Korea. South Korea realized it had to move from a property-based development towards a new post-industrial economic model. In this context, the landfill was seen as a negative effect of the rapid population growth, fast urbanization, and industrialization of Seoul. The site was considered as something of the past, an inheritance that hindered the development of a new post-industrial city.

Secondly, the landfill site began to represent an opportunity to answer the infrastructural and land demand due to the upcoming 2002 FIFA World Cup that would both take place in South Korea and in Japan. Transforming the landfill into a World Cup Park was therefore a way to solve logistical problems induced by the organization of the World Cup, with a longer-term perspective to transform Seoul into a global city hosting megaevents, in line with its transition to become a post-industrial city.

Finally, the use of Nanjido Island as a landfill site started to be framed as an environmental and social issues. Beyond the risk of slope collapse, waste degradation was generating leachate, odour and harmful gas that were deteriorating the surrounding ecosystem. These two points were progressively categorized as safety and health problems. Moreover, growing attention was further directed to the landfill as the area became predominantly home to the urban poor. Handling these issues was in coherence with branding Seoul as an environmentally and socially sustainable city.

***The Policy Stream***

According to the multiple stream theory, the pace at which problems arise and fall on the agenda is relatively quick compared to the time necessary to design a solution. Therefore, most of the time solutions are already available before the situation is recognized as a "problem". Thus, these solutions must be exploited at the right time, as the attention given to a problem is volatile.

Looking at the World Cup Park project, it appears that solutions were pre-existing to the recognition of the landfill as a “problem”. Solutions were in fact already discussed at the beginning of the 1990s, as the City of Seoul began studies to craft future management measures as early as 1991, even though the landfill continued to be used until 1993. During this period, different processes and plans were reviewed, and it was concluded that the best solution would be to “maintain the current state, to begin environmental pollution prevention and stabilization work, and to defer its use for the future” (Seoul Metropolitan Government, The Seoul Institute, 2014).

The second criterion is the value acceptability of the solution, as it has to be approved within the political community to be sufficiently supported. Transforming the landfill into a park was part of a wider set of environmental pollution prevention projects and waste management policy. This allowed the World Cup Park project to be perceived as only a component of a wider environmental-friendly project rather than an infrastructural intervention to favour the upcoming World Cup Games. Moreover, the Nanjido Ecological Park has a set of comprehensive resource recycling functions, with a resources recollection facility, a distinct heating facility, a leachate treatment plant, and a landfill gas collecting facility enabling the collected gas to be used as regional heating fuel. As a result, the value acceptability of the project was guaranteed by the fact that it was presented as a solution that would restore the site’s ecosystem, mitigate pollution while not having to move the tons of garbage - turning an abandoned land into an environmentally friendly park.

Furthermore, the selection of a solution depends on its tolerable anticipated cost. Turning the landfill into a park was economically more advantageous, as removing the waste would require huge expenses. Moreover, even though it would not allow direct use of the land as a construction site (for domestic housing contractors or businesses for instance), it would still be a profitable solution as it would be central to the hosting of the World Cup, and would directly contribute to the urban restoration of the area. The project indeed contributed to the transformation of Sangam in a new town development, responding to the city’s land needs following its fast urbanization.

***The Politics Stream***

Besides the rising understanding of the landfill as a multifaced problem and the emersion of a feasible solution, it is important to also look at the “politics stream” in order to understand how the project of the park reached the opportunity of the implementation. The third analysed stream focuses on the receptivity of the society to certain solutions at particular times. More precisely, the “politics stream” sheds light on economic, social, and cultural factors understanding how they influence the capacity of interest groups to support a given policy.

The end of the 1990s was marked by Seoul’s efforts to recover from the Asian Financial Crisis and to pay back its loan from the IMF. This resulted in massive public investments directed to ameliorate the built environment in order to rebrand Seoul as a global city and to eventually attract investments. The World Cup Park is an example of this strategy. The park was indeed entirely paid from the ordinary budget of the city, amounting to a cost of 223 billion wons. The public expenditure was justified in the context of the World Cup. Moreover, it was part of the city’s effort to mitigate the recession.

The beginning of the 21st century, moreover, represented a new era for the city of Seoul, an opportunity for the city to grow and reap the benefits of hosting such a colossal event as the World Cup. Investing in the construction of an ecological park cannot be dissociated from

the fact that Seoul was hosting the event: it served as a stimulus for the establishment of the park in such a short period of time. The project of an ecological park built for the World Cup is not politically neutral, nor an idea born out of nowhere in Seoul. Looking back at the previous world events hosted in metropolises around the world, the concept of ecologically friendly events was recent but not new at the time. The 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympic Games in Norway were indeed the first Olympics to integrate environmental issues into the organization of the games. They were followed by the 2000 Sydney Olympic, today remembered as the “green Olympics”, in light of the restoration of the Homebush Bay Area - also a landfill site restored in order to build the stadium on top of it.

This period was also one where policy entrepreneurs promoted a new vision and economic model for the city, as a post-industrial world-class metropolis, with strong environmental policies and exportable solutions worldwide. The park was in fact framed by the SMG as a symbolic site, one where nature could reborn and coexist with human culture. The language used to promote the project is charged with the city’s desire to overtake the industrialization approach by welcoming nature once again.

The park was not an isolated project, but at the heart of the larger plan of the Sangam new town carried out from August 1998 to May 2000, the core project supported by Seoul’s mayor at the time, Goh Kun. Sangam was to be the new sub-centre of the metropolis, in which residences, traffic systems, hi-tech industries would harmonize with the preservation of the environment. The World Cup Park was presented within this plan, supported by the strong political will of Goh Kun, as a green public space on the backdrop of the Sangam new town, therefore a core project to help foster Sangam into an eco-city.

Finally, we cannot fully understand the success of this policy without positioning Seoul in the context of world-class cities making (Roy and Ong, 2011). To achieve the status of a world city and transition from post-industrialization, primary cities are incited to compete with megaprojects, in order to attract an affluent creative class keen to live in greener cities and other forms of investments. The World Cup was in fact a major opportunity for the city to capitalize on spectacular urban projects such as the innovative ecological park, which furthermore promotes values of environmental preservation to break with the image of mega urbanized and industrialized metropolis.

The ecological park was highly regarded in the international community, as an innovative “example for foreigners of contemporary environmental restoration techniques. It was benchmarked by countries such as Indonesia and Cambodia and won the Special Award from UN-Habitat for having developed and improved human settlement and quality of urban life. The booklet published to explain and promote the park was crafted in order to “be of help to city governments contemplating the use of suburban areas as waste landfills or securing green space for residents”, addressed to city governments who experience “overcrowding and other environmental problems caused by development during urbanization” (Seoul Metropolitan Government and The Seoul Institute, 2014). We can therefore understand the benefits for Seoul to build such a park, especially when the city was at the centre of the world stage during the Games, in order to showcase its skills and to export them worldwide.

***Conclusion***

All in all, the transformation of the city’s sole landfill into the ecological World Cup Park was enabled at a precise historical moment, which can be identified as the city’s post-industrial turn. The Multiple Streams Analysis Framework is here useful to understand how and why

this project was born, firstly from the characterization of the landfill as a symbol of the city's industrial past - and therefore as a "problem" -, then from the selection of the ecological park among solutions proposed by a vastly mobilized set of urban actors. The analysed case, furthermore, can explain how the project was politically coinciding with the city's larger prospects of becoming a world class city. The park, indeed, was conceived as an initial step to develop the whole district. After the humiliation that the city faced during the Asian Financial Crisis, hosting the World Cup was a leverage in order to reshape the image of the city through public investments.

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# BUILDING A WORLD-CULTURAL CITY: LAND-USE AND ZONING REGULATION IN SEOUL

*By Carrick Reddin & Shaoni Purkait*

***Introduction: Zoning Policy and District Units Plans in Seoul***

Walking down the streets of the historic Insadong district is a contradictory cultural experience that raises questions about the development of the South Korean capital. In the district that is branded as the "historical culture" zone, small traditional artisan shops, attractive modern art galleries and high-rise office towers are juxtaposed together creating a mixture of forms and styles. What led to this amalgamation of historic and modern elements? Starting from the authors' experience of three differently branded cultural Seoul districts, the article scrutinizes the instruments used to govern the development of the city as a world cultural city.

The capital city of South Korea, Seoul, is a dynamic metropolis with many unique and zestful neighbourhoods. In the past twenty years, local governments have used zoning and land-use planning to shape these neighbourhoods into specialized districts known for culture, history, art, fashion, and more. Through Urban Management Plans and District Unit Plans, municipal executives establish the zoning and land-use regulations that steer the development of neighbourhoods.

The current system of land-use planning and zoning was established in 2002 with the National Land Planning and Utilisation Act. This act established a rigid hierarchical urban planning governance structure, while it also devolves important responsibilities to urban governments. Districts and metropolitan plans must adhere to the national plan. The Comprehensive National Territorial Plan (CNTP) is the current national plan which sets forth long-term policies "for the land-use, development and conservation of the national territory […] it includes policies for population reorganisation, industry placement, infrastructure supply, living environment improvement, resource-management of national territory, and environmental conservation" (OECD, 2012). The 2002 legislation devolved many urban planning and development powers to local authorities. The devolution of these powers is concretized in a shift from a managerial to an entrepreneurial approach of urban governance (Harvey, 1989). More practically, two local-level instruments used by local governments to shape urban development were introduced: the Urban Management Plans and the District Unit Plans.

The Urban Management Plan is the main zoning plan in Korea. Developed by local governments and approved by regional governments, these plans impose legally binding restrictions on land-use (OECD, 2019). In Seoul, the most recent urban management plan was passed in 2015. The Seoul Plan 2030 represents a shifted focus toward citizen-centred development. However, it builds upon the planning and zoning policies elaborated in the 2020 Basic Urban Plan, passed in 2004 (Seoul Solution, 2017). The 2020 Basic Urban Plan set forth the vision for shaping the Seoul that we see walking down its streets today. Its goal was to make "Seoul as the world-cultural city and the central city of north-east Asia" (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2004). The 2020 Basic Urban Plan established four cultural and specialized zones for Seoul. The central downtown, where Insadong is located, was labelled as a zone of "historical culture", the northern section of Seoul as a zone of "eco/unification culture", the eastern section of the city as a zone of "mass culture" with fashion stores and stadiums; the southern section, with Seocho, as a zone of "modern culture and arts" with museums, theatres, and art galleries; and the western section, where Hongdae is located,

as a zone of “international culture and arts”.

Within each of these zones, District Urban Plans are used to establish a vision for block and neighbourhood-scale development. The OECD explains, “In Seoul […] District Unit Plans exist as the lowest level of land-use plans in order to steer the development of small neighbourhoods and individual blocks”.

This article focuses on the last thirty years during which the Seoul Metropolitan Government has gained powers over its urban development. The following sections explore three districts of Seoul analysing the instruments -zoning and land-use planning - that have been introduced to govern the production of the world-cultural city vision. In a context of fast political and economic changes such as processes of democratization and liberalization, the instrumentation analysis helps to better understand the difficult balanced power relation within the policy subsystem.

***The Historic City: Ikseon-Dong (Insadong)***

Insadong’s development began more than 500 years ago when it was home to government officials of the Joseon Dynasty. Since the end of the Korean War, the district has grown as Seoul’s historic centre of cultural and artistic life (Krich, 2000). Insadong was initially designated a “cultural street” in the mid-1980s in the lead up to the Seoul Olympic Games. Indeed, during the Olympics and in the years following, Insadong became the main destination for tourists visiting Seoul. Following the “cultural street” distinction, the neighbourhood experienced large-scale development led by chaebols (conglomerates), prompting intense gentrification and the destruction of historic buildings in favour of large office buildings and malls (Yun, 2017).

The most glaring example of this chaebol-led development is the 131-meter tall Millenium Tower, constructed by Samsung at the edge of the neighbourhood on what was previously artisan shops. The extent of this development prompted large-scale protests which led the Korean government to, in 2000, place a two-year moratorium on new building permits in Insadong (Douglass, 2016) Efforts over the last two decades to maintain cultural and historic heritage have involved restrictions on land-use and zoning policies which recall the idea of a historic, cultural city. However, the complex relationship between the state and industry has meant that zoning restrictions may be changed when they suit the desires of those in power, both politically and economically. For example, under the leadership of Mayor Lee Myung-Bak, the Seoul Metropolitan Government officially designated Insadong as the nation’s first National Cultural District. Through District Urban Plans and Urban Management Plans, the government set restricted height, land-use, and setback requirements to delineate their intention to preserve and promote traditional cultures while preventing uncontrolled development and commercial encroachment. However, with the 2004 passage of the Basic Seoul Urban Plan for 2020, the metropolitan government boasted the “historical culture” of the central district, where Insadong is located, while simultaneously relaxing land-use regulations. For example, the new plan loosened restrictions on building height for residential buildings in the area while continuing a policy of historic preservation, effectively contributing to gentrification (Kim, 2011)

The election of Mayor Won-soon Park in 2012 represented a shift toward citizen-centered development in Insadong. Indeed, in Insadong, government urban planning documents were revised to curtail the growth of commercial chain stores in the district. However, tensions remained between the historic, grassroots vision for development in Insadong and what is permitted through planning and zoning laws. For example, in 2013, the Seoul Metropolitan

government lifted a 35-year-old ban on community-wide land development in Insadong in order to widen roads for emergency services. The legislation also removes some caps on building height and setbacks, effectively allowing for the large-scale development which led to the building permit moratorium 13 years earlier. Government officials promised that "the city government will try its best to preserve Insadong's historical features." (Suk, 2013) At this same time, Mayor Park gave increased power to citizens and civil society groups to participate in the development and implementation of urban plans. The Seoul Plan 2030, published in 2015 as a revision of the Seoul Urban Plan for 2020, set forth a vision for the development of Seoul until 2030. The plan was the first of its kind to be formed in close collaboration with citizens and grassroots groups.

The case of Insadong shows the complex relationship between government, chaebols, and grassroots organizations in negotiating the urban form of Insadong through zoning and urban plans.

***The International and Independent City: Hongdae***

Hongdae is a district of Seoul located south of the Han river. The area, known for its nightlife, music, and arts scene, owes its names to the presence of Hongik Daehakgyo, one of South Korea's most prestigious colleges of fine arts. Beginning in the 1990s, the area became home to young artists and musicians who participated in the development of the neighbourhood by converting existing buildings into studios, music venues, and communal gathering spaces (Joongang Special Reporting Team, 2012). Built upon a reputation for alternative music and student nightlife, Hongdae evolved rapidly at the turn of the century as, amidst the Asian Financial Crisis, forces of globalization and neo-liberalization took hold. Following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the value of real estate in Seoul dropped more than 50% and many chaebols faced bankruptcy. Facing economic collapse, the South Korean government agreed to a bailout by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after having accepted to adopt liberal economic and trade policies. The IMF investment brought structural adjustment programs, which included opening Korean markets and deregulating financial industries. Alongside the liberalization of the national economy, the Seoul Metropolitan Government changed land-use regulations in select districts to encourage investment in the real estate market. The liberalization of the Korean economy and urban form was formalized in the Seoul Urban Plan for 2020, which called for new land-use and real estate finance laws. The plan also identified Hongdae and the surrounding western district as future media and digital industry zones. These neighbourhoods were meant to attract investment in the media and digital sectors as part of Seoul's transition to a service-oriented economy. In Hongdae, laws allowed for the construction of new large-scale buildings and an influx of franchise businesses, raising overall rents and displacing long-time residents such as artists and clubs (Cho, 2019).

Prompted by what was seen as the displacement of traditional culture from the Hongdae district, the local government sought ways to preserve the traditional aspects of Hongdae, particularly its reputation as a centre for musical and artistic expression. In numerous reports between 2001 and 2005, city representatives called for the designation of Hongdae as a "cultural district" like Insadong. The area was eventually designated as a cultural district, however, plans for the area keep open the possibility for external investment and real estate speculation, intensifying issues of displacement (Cho, 2007).

The effects of this relaxed land-use policy and economic deregulation are seen as one walks down the streets of Hongdae – McDonald's and Zara are scattered in ground floor retail spaces of new high-rise buildings, while small back streets are filled with chic nightclubs

and underground music bars. Countless students strut the streets in the latest fashions. The area today is an amalgamation of hip nightlife, free markets, and street art exhibitions. Recent trends in development in the neighbourhood's historic core have displaced the independent culture that made Hongdae famous. Today, the traditional independent scene and street vibrancy is found in the southern end near the Hapjeong station.

The case of Hongdae shows efforts by the government to guide the development of a neighbourhood famous for its independent, alternative culture. Local culture was sacrificed for large-scale development and investment, bringing new shops, clubs, and businesses to Hongdae. The Seoul Plan 2030 proposes that Hongdae and the surrounding northwest region ¨specialize in the creative cultural industry" and improve the management of housing and transit infrastructures. Based on the area's trajectory over the past several decades, it seems the grassroots culture of Hongdae will continue to be displaced in order to make room for international brands and private investment.

### *The Modern and Artistic City: Seocho*

The district of Seocho was incorporated into city-wide development plans in the mid-1980s. State-subsidized development of housing and high quality educational facilities sparked a period of large-scale construction including the development of the Seoul Arts Center in 1988 and a number of private high-rise buildings in the 1990s. Quickly, the area grew as a highly sought-after place to live. Through government-led urban design and land-use policies, SMG and the Seocho government encouraged artistic and cultural development in efforts to attract external investment and provide a high-quality of life for the citizens of this upper-class district.

Throughout its history, Seocho and the surrounding Gangnam region have comported a loose zoning code with lax planning regulations, allowing for an amalgamation of different architecture styles and land-uses side-by-side. The Urban Design Office of Seocho City boasts this as one of their strengths, citing the mixed-use nature of the district as one of its most attractive elements. The Seoul Urban Plan for 2020 identified Seocho and the surrounding area for "modern culture and arts" development. This legislation maintained lax land-use development laws, which supported further investment in the district. Alongside this development, the government invested heavily in supporting the modern cultural life of Seocho (Jung et al., 2013)

One example of this investment in culture is the creation of an urban design office for Seocho. One of its only kind in Seoul, the government office focuses on the promotion of culture (arts, music, shows, libraries) in an effort to be the center of culture for Seoul and for Korea. As representatives from the Urban Design Office describe, "Seocho is a good place to raise children, to live healthful lives, to spend time in nature… we use urban design to create main avenues with different cultures - corporations, shopping, taking walks, etc."[1].

The integration of urban planning regulation with urban design principles represents a shift in the way local governments seek to promote Seoul as a world-cultural city. Indeed, this shift is represented in the latest plans for the district. In the Seoul Plan 2030, the southeast region spans Seocho and Gangnam districts. In this region, the SMG recommends the "enhancement of global business and commerce function." (Simrc, 2014) It also suggests promoting the specialized cultural arts area found near the Seoul Arts Center in Seocho. Alongside the maintenance of land-use regulations that attract large-scale investment, Seocho is investing in urban design and citizen-centred public policies to establish its

[1] Notes by the authors took during a site visit at the Seocho-gu Urban Design Office

reputation as a centre for modern arts and culture.

***Conclusion***

The City of Seoul has undergone transformational development over the past sixty years. Save some historical streets and buildings, the city would be unrecognizable to a Seoulite of the 1950s. In efforts to establish Seoul as a global city, local and national governments used urban planning and zoning policy to effectively guide investment and development. In the mid-20th century, development priorities focused on export-oriented industrialization and the commodification of land, enabled through urban plans which called for such. Private development, much of which was led by chaebols, exploded in the 1980s and 1990s. This development was facilitated by lax zoning and planning laws across the city which, following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, were further relaxed in order to incentivise investment.
Beginning in the early 21st century, as South Korea entered its second decade of democracy, communities began to speak out against what they saw as excessive state-subsidized private development and gentrification. A number of reports issued between 2000 and 2005 calls for the preservation of historic neighborhoods and local culture. The importance of culture in Seoul's development was made explicit in the Seoul Urban Plan for 2020, which, published in 2004, made recommendations and associated land-use policies to support the development of Seoul through the lens of distinct cultural districts. Despite the recommendations of the plan, government actors continued to bend planning rules to allow for large-scale, private development.

It appears this corporate-led development trend may be changing. The Seoul Plan 2030, published in 2015 under the direction of the progressive Mayor Park, calls for a renewed commitment to cultural heritage and a focus on citizen-centred development. The plan, developed with strong community participation, imagines a Seoul where citizens have access to all they need to thrive - health, education, employment, culture, transportation, housing, and more. However, in order to achieve the promise of Seoul Plan 2030, the government has to acquire the institutional capacity of integrating citizen-led efforts within rooted political relationships based on the Chaebols' powerful position. An already working example of this type of integration in Seoul can be taken from the sharing city projects led by the Dosigong Gam architecture atelier. By developing regulations that allow citizens to exercise their creativity in building a city that reflects their culture, their dreams, and their future, Seoul would value its cultural diversity and heritage achieving its goal of being a world-cultural city.

**Photograph 1:** Insadong at night taken by the authors

**Photograph 2:** Insadong at evening taken by the authors

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# MAKING SEOUL'S POLICIES SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE: THE CASE OF YANGCHEON RECOVERY FACILITY

*Arnaud Cholous & Victor Labaeye*

Not only public policy analysis focuses on policy design, but also on policy implementation and on the different strategies to build consent and trust. Indeed, one of the steps policymakers have to think about when implementing public policies is the way they will earn people's consent and approval. The process of democratization initiated in the late 1980s in South Korea has put an emphasis on this dimension of policymaking, especially at the municipal level in Seoul. The city's built environment today is the result of the different ways the municipality has sought to gain Seoulites' trust. Indeed, various strategies are used to smoothen the implementation of public policies of very different scale, and therefore build consent in the Seoul Metropolitan Area. The SMG has initiated a major process of participative democracy that has been growing since the 2000s. Since the election of Mayor Park in 2011, a new form of governance has dawned (Hong, 2015). A "collective governance" appeared as the necessary response to a demand for improved democracy after controversial mega-projects and previous mayoral mandates (citizens's hall, cyber democracy, …).

An emphasis has also been placed on increasing the social acceptability of urban projects even though it is not an exclusive feature of the democratic framework of South Korea. For instance, in the 1980s already, the State provided fair compensation for evicted households as a way to smoothly carry out its massive housing projects (Joo 2019).

The concept of social acceptability has been primarily theorized in the study of environmental regulation policymaking but can be useful to analyze the implementation of any other project. Merging Yelle's (Yelle 2013) and Stankey & Schindler's (Stankey & Schindler 2006) understanding of social acceptability, 8 main parameters influencing the social acceptability of a project by a population can be identified (Mern 2019):

- The impact on the environment: direct and indirect impacts a project will have on the local environment which can be compensated or mitigated.
- The real or perceived risks: Different actors might have different perception of the potential risk a project can pose. It can be dealt with through transparency policy from the project carrier.
- The values, beliefs and expectations: It shapes the perception that each actor will have of the project before it is implemented.
- Local knowledge: Using local expertise and experiences can help increase acceptability.
- Social, economic and territorial context: Local context of the geographical area must be taken into account when implementing a project.
- Level of trust in institutions and promoters of the project: The level of trust local population has in its decision-making bodies and project developers plays an important role.
- The level of involvement in decision-making: Involving local actors in the decision-making process allow them to influence a project that has direct effect on their daily-life.
- The benefits and repercussions for the community: To be widely accepted, a project needs to bring direct or indirect social and economic benefits to the communities it is affecting.

If not exclusive to a democratic form of governance, social acceptability plays an important part in gaining local communities' consent which is more critical in a democratic framework. Indeed, civil society and citizens in a democratic governance system have a greater ability to undermine or strengthen a project (protest, legal challenge, …) and in the meantime, most of the policymakers depend on the suffrage of local communities. Thus, the theoretical aspects of social acceptability can be traced in various urban project implemented in the city of Seoul. One interesting example of social acceptability applied to urban project is the construction of the Yangcheon Resource Recovery Facility. The construction of the facility (along other ones) came in response to the major issue of waste management in the 1990s. As no recycling facilities existed at the time, huge waste landfills covered western edges of Seoul (where the DMC, Noeul and Haneul parks stand today). Not only did it pose environmental and public health threats, but the large area covered by waste could be used for new urban developments as land prices were skyrocketing. Operational since 1996 and located on the south bank of the Han river, the infrastructure functions as a sorting center, a recycling facility as well as a heating central for the Gu (using non-recyclable waste). It is operated by a private company but the land and the facility is owned by the SMG. Usually, this kind of facility is not popular among nearby residents as it can cause various nuisances such as pollution, unpleasant smells, increased trucks traffic and a decrease of land value. Yet, no significant protestations rose against the project whether it is at the time of the construction or today. It is partly explained by the implementation of measures aimed at increasing the level of social acceptability of the Yangcheon facility.

Regarding the impact on the environment, the real or perceived risk and the level of trust in promoters/institutions, levels of pollution induced by the activity of the facility are monitored in real time in order to meet the legal requirements in terms of pollution regulation. Those information are made publicly accessible by the facility as a way to ensure transparency and provide reliable data on the effects the facility could have on direct air pollution and its potential side effects such as the decrease of land value or the development of pollution-related pathologies on neighbouring residents. It is a guarantee of limited impact on the surroundings of Yangcheon facility while providing a trustworthy assessment of the potential risks.

An important aspect of the social acceptability strategy of the facility leans on the delivery of direct and indirect benefits and repercussions for the community. In addition to the creation of hundreds of jobs, the facility brings tangible benefits and advantages to local dwellers such as half-priced heating charges, free sport and art classes, an education center for the children of the area, sport infrastructure such as a swimming pool with reduced fees and various green spaces. The case of Yangcheon shows that proactive policies in favor of social acceptability can help build the consent of populations when it comes to large, unpopular but necessary infrastructures.

Yet, Yangcheon facility's social acceptability strategy does not encompass the use of local knowledge and an involvement of local communities in decision making in any way. The technicality of this specific utility is definitely an explanation. It remains difficult to introduce local knowledge in the science of sorting and recycling waste and involve local communities in the administrative and technical decisions of the facility. Still, the example of Yangcheon provides an interesting insight into the relevance of the theory of social acceptability applied to the context of Seoul's modern governance and its inherent limitations.

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# SUSTAINABILITY IN SEOUL: ECOLOGICAL MODERNIZATION OR ENVIRONMENTAL PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE, OR BOTH?

*By Juliette Thijs & Achille Macé*

Emerging from the rubbles of the Korean civil war (1950-53), Seoul quickly rose to become a key metropolis of South East Asia. Today, the centralised top-down development of the city has shifted to what is claimed to be a more sustainable and eco-friendly model. This article will exam how this development shift occurred and whether it is path-dependent to Seoul's emblematic fast development. Then, it will take two case studies - Magok district and the Alternative Seun District Plan - in order to grasp the vision of sustainability adopted by Seoul. These cases were chosen as they both exemplify two trends in Seoul: Top-down Ecological Modernization (EM) and more Bottom-up human-centered Sustainable Development. EM is based on the idea that the political-economic system can be reformed into a sustainable way through technological innovation (Parr, 2012). It is generally based on top down techno-managerial forms of governance and decision-making where citizens are not integrated into the process. In contrast, a more deep ecology environmental participatory governance approach is based on bottom-up practices that put citizens at the center of sustainable development (Fischer, 2018).

The Korean state's trajectory since the end of the civil war in 1953 has been characterized by top-down fast-pasted economic growth. The state had a central role in hand-picking sectors and industries that would enable the country to develop. The 1970s labour-intensive heavy manufacturing industry transformed into a few mega-companies, called "chaebols", in the 1980s that gained ground in the global market (Hyung and Sheng, 2012). Park Chung-hee, president from 1962 to 1970, was essential in guiding this state-controlled capitalism and establishing Korea's cities. The developmental state, where economic development was the key goal of the government, had outstanding social benefits uplifting the once poor country to the forefront of globalisation through its export-oriented industrialization (Joo, 2018). This lead to a once predominantly rural population shifting to an urban more wealthy one. However, from the 1960s, or the early stage of Korea's development, it became apparent that this growth had high environmental costs too. Pollution, congestion and informality pushed the state to think differently and diversify its activities out of Seoul.

A shift occurred with the democratisation of the state in 1987. Roh Tae-woo was elected president and turned the country into a "property state". The Asian economic crisis further brought reforms with IMF loan's neo-liberalisation conditions and through the decentralization of power to local administrations. Seoul quickly gained the status of a world-city metropolis. Local authorities took up an entrepreneurial role where attracting global investments and attention became their main goal. To do this, Seoul had to follow a worldwide narrative based on turning cities into innovative environmental and social hubs. In 2003, mayor Lee Myung-bak, for example, removed a highway that covered the Cheonggye stream to transform it into a recreational space for pedestrians. These types of symbolic urban transformations illustrate the need for metropolises to be anchored in a robust environmental narrative. As Kriznik (2013) shows, cities are in fact dependent from each other through nodes of global economy. They create and adapt to global trends. Sustainability is no exception. The narrative of sustainability brings in investments, tourists, and capital, but also enables Seoul and Korea to export its know-how internationally. Songdo, a new smart city built on reclaimed land, is an example of such development. It attracted multinational corporations through the use of a green narrative although it has no real environmental impact and is perceived as a "a non-korean city for non-koreans (Joo, 2018)

In complete contrast, Park Won-soon who became mayor of Seoul in 2011, based his strategy on making Seoul more human centered city where citizens were put at the center of urban governance. His goal was to increase open and participatory dialogues between the Seoul Metropolitan Government and local habitants. He also put in place initiatives like Seoul's "sharing city" programme in 2012 which promoted a culture of sharing rather than accumulation. Its goals are to increase social ties whilst reducing waste and creating a new form of economic development. The city has created an online platform (Seoul Sharing hub) that enables companies and individuals to share skills, goods, services and knowledge, amongst others.

These two types of projects share the same narrative, but their implementation and impacts diverge. In the next part, we explore how sustainability is understood and practiced in the smart-green cluster of Magok and in the Alternative Seun development plan. Both projects are central in the recent development of Seoul and illustrate that the concept of sustainability is fluid and adapted to different visions and interests. We will look at how they can be located in relation to Korea and Seoul's history of governance.

***The green cluster of Magok***

The development of Magok is presented in the official documents issued by the Seoul Housing Corporation, its developer, as the "Green city of the Knowledge industry, opening North-East Asia's future"(Official SHC documents). Magok is meant to be a hub for high technology sectors, research centers and startups in which major Korean companies are already investing such as LG, Lotte S-oil, or Nexen. However, Magok is also conceived as a "self-contained town for green-innovation", as Kim, president of the SH Corporation puts it (seoulsolution.kr). The sustainable dimension of Magok is materialized first through a focus on green tech research. The neighbourhood is also built using housing energy efficiency and has numerous integrated green spaces. Indeed, a park connects all parts of the districts in an ecological axis; it is pedestrian and bicycle friendly and the botanic garden aims at creating a "harmonious" garden town (Ibid.). Its housing developments are energy-savvy due to new technologies and the size of the apartments are not too big to fit the needs of the young professionals that would come to live there.

However, Magok was not always meant to take this path of development. The project was repurposed over the years even if the shape of the cluster remained. As the largest remaining empty swath of land in Seoul, it has been part of the Han River Redevelopment Project, which, issued in the beginning of the 2000's, also concerned the development of the Sangnam Millenium New Town or Digital Media City. Initially, the focus was on the development of a North-East regional cluster for high tech. However, according to Shwayri (2016), the relative failure of Songdo to reach its goals impacted the conceptualization of Magok: the project had to learn from the mistakes of the megalomaniacal, too international IFEZ and incorporated the increasing challenge of sustainable development. A more human-sized and green local paradigm for the project appeared and was branded as distinctive from the too ambitious national logic of IFEZ (Shwayri, 2016). Through this adaptation, Seoul's local development rationale distinguished itself from the national one.

Meant to be completed in 2020, the Magok cluster illustrates a conceptualization of sustainable projects as one in which public-private partnerships are the backbone. Sustainability is defined through its energy-savvy buildings and green spaces, while its estate development targets young dynamic professionals. There is only a relatively small decoupling of economic growth and environmental harm (Lee, 2012), but also a will of distinction from the national projects and rationale.

Figure 1: Magok, South Korea.
*Source: Korea Post, 2014 http://www.koreapost.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=592*

Even if the Magok project is illustrative of the Seoul local green growth conception, it is not fully representative of the way Seoul approaches sustainability. Indeed, Magok did not raise too much contention about the socio-economic dimension of sustainability as it is planned in a quasi-empty swath of land, however the Seun regeneration plans did. In this sense, one can point out that Magok is in line with the historical top-down governance of the country where citizen participation is at beast a box-ticking practice. The neighborhood favours the growth of its historical chaebols although it seeks to favour the development of smaller businesses. Overall, sustainability here is geared towards a business-friendly development, technological development and the market at the expense of socio-ecological change. Although the local government through the Seoul Housing Corporation does not have the small role as previous public entities, it takes on the hat of a "facilitator" to government-business partnerships which enables reforms but no fundamental transformations. It enables the creation of "green utopias" that are not robust environmentally or socially.

***Urban Sustainability, Green-Washing and the Alternative Seun Development Plan***

The Seun district regeneration has been a long-discussed topic in Seoul's development agenda. It is a historical neighbourhood in the east of the city center that has been shaped by national and local policies through time. In 2006, the "Urban Renaissance Master Plan for Downtown Seoul" was launched to increase the international competitivity of the area. The plan consisted in a neighborhood regeneration around four themed-corridors and planned for instance the famous restoration of the Cheongyyecheon alongside the Historic Corridor as well as the Dongdaemun Design Plaza along the Creative one. One of the corridors was named the "Green Corridor" and its ambition was to replace the Seun Sangga, a kilometer long building that mixes commercial and residential purposes from the 1960's, by a linear green space and to reorganize the area. However, no investor could carry the financial cost due to the 2008 crisis and the strict restrictions of the building regulations downtown. Furthermore, a local protest

rose, fueled by locals fearing indirect eviction, and after many delays, a new plan was proposed in 2013.

Therefore, the Alternative Plan was put in place thanks to a long participatory process which favored incremental changes and the conservation of existing small businesses (Schuetze, Chelleri, 2015). The Plan will strengthen existing businesses, value the historical areas and build similar limited buildings in the surrounding area. When we visited the Seun Sangga, the lower floors of the buildings were still filled with small electronics shops. Inside and outside of the building, there were small exhibition rooms that displayed what was once sold there, still sold and the main materials used. This small exhibition is perhaps a first element in the museification of the area and may pose a threat to the future of Seun. However, this projet can be inscribed in the lineation of Park-son's work in creating a more human-centered city based on putting citizens first. Although this project may not fit in the classical dimension of "environment" in sustainable development, it definitely ticks the social and economic dimensions of it. Preserving the building and the hundreds of employments in the building was a unique move that allowed citizens to keep their livelihoods in a time when lower economic classes are generally pushed out of city centers. In this sense, it diverges from the green-washing strategies and the EM practices of public authorities. If the Green Corridor - destroying the Seun Sangga building to have a park instead - had gone through, it would have had devastating impacts on the small business owners. According to Schuetze and Chelleri, the participatory practices saved the area from being green washed. However, despite the conservation of important parts of the original environment, some spaces are still devoted to real estate developments in this prime

Figure 2: The original Urban Renaissance Master Plan for Downtown Seoul.
*Source: Schuetze, Chelleri, 2015*

location. On the top of the Seun Sangga, we discovered the plans for a near real estate project about to be constructed. The official guide failed to mention it before someone pointed it out. The future of the neighborhood is still not guaranteed and only time will tell if the processes of gentrification, that will probably occur, will put pressure on Seun Sangga's functioning and existence.

Indeed, in the famous case of the Cheonggyecheon stream, the project led to gentrification and higher rents. The actual environmental sustainability (Myung-Rae, 2010) as well as its social equity of the project are highly questionable (Joo, 2018). However, it is through these projects that demands for participatory democratic mechanisms grow. In the human-centered city of Park-son, bottom up decision making is praised to be a solution to avoid greening areas without taking into consideration social and equality dimensions.

The two case studies exemplify how Seoul's public authorities have developed multifaceted understandings of sustainable development and how these understandings were structured to promote a form of distinction between National and Local paradigms. On the one hand, Magok is illustrative of the top-down logic of creating eco business-friendly clusters, innovative integrated neighborhood based on principles of Ecological Modernization. In this sense, sustainability is used in a rhetoric of economic growth, international wealth attraction and corporate interests; while aiming at not replicating the mistakes of the national IFEZ. On the other hand, the Alternative Seun Development shows that there is an attempt to reach a wider form of sustainability that overcomes image-making greening practices through integration of bottom-up participative approaches and social equity. Although these approaches are well inscribed in Park-Son's mode of governance, the project is quite unique in Seoul's history of mega-projects. However, both approaches seem to aim at differentiating their projects from the past quantitative rationale of the property state to a more qualitative sustainable one. Only time will gives us a better understanding of the nature of the governance of Seoul towards a more sustainable pathway. Magok and Seun are only two examples among many others such as the grassroots local villages (Wolfram, 2015), the community-based Urban Projects of Kkumaru or Bupyeong Culture Street (Kriznitz, 2013).

Figure 3: A small electronic shop in Seun Sangga. *Source: Author's own photography, 2020.*

Figure 4: Electronic shops and exhibition rooms in Seun Sangga. *Source: Author's own photography, 2020.*

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# LIMITS AND CHALLENGES IN URBAN REGENERATION: THE CASE STUDY OF SEWOON GROUNDS

*Noémie Guigue & Natasha Sohail*

## *Introduction*

Crossing the road coming from the Jongmyo Shrine, the oldest Confucian shrine protected by the UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, the modernist structure of Sewoon Sangga can be easily recognized. The one-kilometer long megastructure which dates back to the 1960s is a multi-functional arcade that was built during the conservative Mayor Kim Hyun Ok's tenure (1966-1970). The structure was conceived in order to create a progressive image of Seoul to the eyes of the world (Kwak, 2002). At the time of construction, the Sewoon Sangga was believed to harbor the "Third Industrial Revolution" (Schmidt, 2018). Despite the massive plan, at the end of the '80s only three out of eight buildings were realized. The initial modernist emphasis started to shrink in those years arriving at its lowest level during the Asian Financial Crisis. Jeong Jae-Eun in the first scene of its film "Ecology in Concrete" (2017) perfectly captured the new image that the megastructure has acquired from the beginning of the millennium. The physical decline only partially represents the functional decay.

While the dimensions of the project, the pace at which it grew, and the symbolic modernization it carried out well represented what has been termed the "Korean Style transformation (Shin, 2020), the more recent regeneration project of the site, the Again Sewoon" project, perfectly frames the contemporary "Seoul Style" of urban governance. The "Again Sewoon", indeed is the face of urban regeneration in South Korea. Promoted by the democratic mayor Park Won Soon (2011-2020) after what has been interpreted as a political shift towards a citizen-centered policy paradigm (Joo, 2018), the project aimed at preserving the city's heritage while promoting progressive governance of urban projects. Branded as the "Future Heritage" of Seoul (Schmidt, 2018), the main goals of the project were to create walking public spaces to connect two blocks of the megastructure and to revive the electronic repairing industry of Seoul. Beyond the goals, this article will focus on the values of proposed throughout the project. To materialize the citizen-centered paradigm declared during the 2014 elections, Mayor Park and the City Hall framed the "Again Sewoon" project using principles like non-demolition led development, inclusiveness, public participation, anti-gentrification, connectedness, preservation of the historical and industrial identity of the neighborhood, the welfare of the local community, etc. Although the regeneration project has been successful in complying with most of its development principles, it is arguable that some others have been less reproduced during the implementation phase. This article analyses the implementation phase of the "Again Sewoon" project in order to understand how and to what extent its initial values have been accomplished. In other words, the article is an effort to explore the limits of the Sewoon Arcade regeneration project in terms of its inclusiveness, anti-gentrification approach, and ability to preserve local businesses and historical identity of the neighborhood.

## *Non-Demolition*

In January 2016, Mayor Park Won Soon revealed the "Again Sewoon" Project, a revitalization plan to put life back into the dying industrial heritage of the Sewoon Sangga megastructure. Under this project, the Sewoon Arcade would have been redesigned rather than demolished and rebuilt. This strategy implies a new role for residents and shoppers within the project design and its implementation. However, despite the showcased values of the project, it can

be argued that participation remained only a symbolic effort.

In 2016, after having spoken with the Sewoon's dwellers, Mayor Park stated that "you residents are the real architects of the new Sewoon Shopping Mall". Following two of the most important values of Park's tenure, participation, and innovation (Kim & Ahn, 2016), the project was launched by an intensive work of participatory design in order to draw the most adaptive ad suitable public space possible. The Seoul Metropolitan Government organized 270 interviews with the citizens, 29 Sewoon Forums, 25 expert advisory committee meetings, and an international design competition for Sewoon Sangga (The Seoul Institute, 2018). To further strengthen the participatory aspect of the project the Mayor requested the formation of a citizen committee in order to ensure that the citizen perspective would be incorporated in the "Again Sewoon" project. However, despite the attempts of citizen participation, the role of the citizen committee remained only limited to consultation and advisory work and did not have a real role in the policy and decision-making phase. The process of consultation and placation practiced by the Seoul government falls under "Tokenism" (Schmidt, 2018). Focusing on the symbolic effort, it did not represent actual citizen control on the project. Beyond the citizen-centred design with its elevated pedestrian walkways and the public pedestrian rooftop, the project failed in preserving the community's identity and in preventing gentrification.

***Preservation of community's identity and Anti-Gentrification***

Once the walking platforms (designed during the participation process) of the arcade were completed, many businesses were located to revive Seoul's vanishing repair industry. During the shop allocation process, Mayor Park tried to insure the adoption of anti-gentrification parameters. More precisely, he signed the Anti-Gentrification Cooperation Agreement in 2016 with the majority of Sewoon Sangga's businesses to empower tenants against rising rents (Shim, 2018). Despite the attempt, when the shop allocation process began, signals of gentrification emerged.

As defined by Clark gentrification is "a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socioeconomic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through reinvestment in fixed capital" (2005 p.253) . In this article, this definition by Clark (2005) has been mobilized to highlight the gentrification within Sewoon Arcade in terms of shop holders' selection.

A walk within the arcade today is a living experience that narrates to the visitors about the historical evolution of electronic devices. It depicts the story of human legacy in terms of both invention and innovation. Along the walking platforms and within the tall buildings there are shoppers specialized in repairing home appliances, mobile phones, cameras, video games, etc. At this point in the walk, it can seem that the project of revitalization succeeded in preserving the industrial heritage of the structure. However, a walk around the district where the Sewoon Sangga is located reveals a different plot.

The tour not only savors one with the sight of the first computer, mobile, or video game model in the world but also brings up a sharp contrast between the shop holders placed within and outside the arcade. The shops within the arcade have walls embellished with numerous degrees, certificates, and awards of the shopkeepers commonly referred to as "Meister". These certificates and awards create an advanced image of the city in the sector of highly qualified repairers and manufacturers. However, once out of the arcade it is possible to observe numerous manufacturers who hold small hut-shaped shops with little or no certificates hanging on their walls. The contrast between the two professional

**Photograph 1:** Condominiums and hut-shaped shops around Sewoon Arcade
*Source: Libertad Sobrado*

environments, within and outside the arcade, raises questions about the equal participation of all the citizens and business owners in the Sewoon regeneration project along with questions about the anti-gentrification attempt.

A second element that highlights the risk of gentrification is the new Sewoon Grounds district. It is an urban intervention that will replace the low and crowded shelters next to the Sewoon Sangga, where the non-specialized shopper described above are located. The new white building with green terraces is envisioned as a “people-oriented urban design” (kcap, 2016) that will dynamize craftsmanship and will overturn the Sewoon district. The dense multi-story building pops up as a stark contrasting the values of the regeneration project. Moreover, the upper-class building foresees the replacement of makeshift huts and small manufacturing businesses conflicting with the idea of the anti-gentrification agreement. Inhabitants are also being under pressure to leave their place in view of destruction (Michael, 2019).

The new Sewoon Grounds district was launched by the Rotterdam based architecture studio after that the Seoul Housing Communities Corporation commissioned them the job in 2016, the same year during which Mayor Park revealed the regeneration project of the arcade. This timeframe coincidence further reinforces the idea of the instrumental role of the “Again Sewoon” regeneration process well hidden behind the bottom-up participatory project.

### *Conclusion*

Observing the development process that the Sewoon Sangga along with its district is experiencing, a general tension is revealed between small unprivileged communities and

**Photograph 2:** Sewoon Grounds, sustainable mixed-use urban redevelopment with preservation of historical structures
*Source: KCAPS Architects & Planners*

more rooted and powerful actors. Two trends can be identified by looking at this tension: gentrification and exclusion. On the one hand, Sewoon Arcade may appear more like a museum enclave in the middle of a newly developed neighborhood, being therefore the last remnant of the industrial past. On the other hand, the new Sewoon Grounds project by both local government and real estate developers is quickly steering the new image of the district homogenizing it according to modern and high-rise standards. Thus, Mayor Park Won Soon's new inclusive policy is unable to keep all its promises by pretending to restore the industrial identity of the district with participative decision-making. So far, this symbolic effort has worked partially by showcasing Sewoon Arcade as a promising project and by revealing deep contrasts and inequalities.

From a comparative perspective, it can be argued that manufacturers' local resistance to eviction and gentrification may not be sufficient in the long run against what Goldman identifies "speculative urbanization" (Goldman, 2011). Some aspects of his analysis of Bangalore's world-class projects is a sobering thought in the case of Seoul. To create a world-class city, Bangalore's government goes hand in hand with real estate developers in the transformation of the urban space into money-maker land at the expense of many dispossessed citizens. Despite the participatory narrative, the coupled projects of Sewoo Sangga and Sewoon Grounds reveals a scenario with similar public-private interests and networks. Moreover, using a historical perspective it can be found a linear trajectory of deep-rooted practices that go on since the 1990s and are responsible for new-build gentrification projects such as the last Sewoon Grounds design. It is the case of megaprojects with a growth-oriented paradigm analyzed by Joo (2018) such as the Dongdaemun Design Plaza, built by Zaha Hadid in 2006, or the Han River Renaissance Project.

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# 4 TOWARDS A K-SMART CITY

## THE NEW "KOREAN URBANISM"

# UNPACKING THE "SMART CITY": A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE QUESTIONS FACING SMART CITY TECHNOLOGY

*By Constance Brown & Pauline Dutheil*

The "smart city" presents itself as a new urban model to answer the challenges of the Anthropocene, or the age of man. In Seoul, the South Korean government has, in the past two decades, begun a campaign to further integrate "smart" technologies into the governance of daily urban life; a micro-level example of this model is the "smart welfare" program presented by the Seoul Digital Foundation[1], which proposes to transform care services for the elderly living at home with a "Senior Digital Tour" (Seoul Metropolitan Government, n.d.), an "IoT based healthcare management for the elderly", and for the general population with the development of "Smart Hospital Services" as a means of improving the efficacy and public access to geriatric healthcare. At a slightly larger scale, the Songdo smart-city, in the Incheon Free Economic Zone (IFEZ), is a satellite city 45 minutes outside of Seoul proper and functions as a prime example of how governments are able to use new technology networks to regulate every aspect of daily life, including traffic and public safety.

In this article, we wish to question the relevance of the rhetoric of the adjective "smart" to describe increasing surveillance and data collection and a more general trend to put high-tech at the center of the urban environment. We argue that though it does provide impressive branding opportunities and solves some problems facing cities today, the manner in which "smart-city" technologies are being implemented fail to tackle the fundamental issues of climate change and rising social inequalities which are shaping the twenty-first century in the context of the anthropocene. In order to do so, we will look at the case of Incheon Free Economic Zone (IFEZ), developed in the periphery of Seoul beginning in 2003, which brands itself as a high-tech "smart-city" of its time. The purpose of this article is not to provide answers, but rather to raise potential key questions and concerns to be addressed in the future of smart city development.

Technological progress has overshadowed social progress in the priorities laid out by the smart-city model; some "smart-city" initiatives manage to answer social issues in a relevant way, a notable example being Sharing City Seoul: a project of the Seoul Metropolitan Government which pushes for sharing services, such as car-sharing or used clothing donations, at the metropolitan scale with the help of technological platforms. Such projects allow for a new approach for consumption that do work to fight against systems of overproduction, overconsumption, and unnecessary waste of goods such as clothing and natural resources. However, the bigger part of the "smart city" initiative has to do with the branding opportunity it offers for high-tech companies to pour technological gadgets into an urban paradigm in which monitoring and control become ends in themselves instead of means to achieve particular goals.

Much of South-Korea's rapid development can be attributed to its high-tech firms, which enable it to export its skills all over the world. Called "chaebols" in Korean, large South Korean companies such as Samsung, Hyundai, LG, are at the origin of Korea's economic success. Generally formed in the years following the Korean War (1950-1953), these groups arose, on the one hand, from the determination of President Park Chung-hee (1961-1979) to apply in Korea the methods that had made the Japanese economy successful, and in particular the idea of having a few large industrial groups closely linked to the State carry out most

[1] Seoul Digital Foundation was created by the Seoul Metropolitan Government in 2016, their mission is to solve urban issues.

of the work of economic development: substantial financial aid and multiple advantages to promote their development, notably the granting of a legal status different from that of the industry as a whole, which would enable them to crush competition, whether local or international. These groups of companies, from various fields, have significant economic and political power. Another characteristic present in all the chaebols is their management: None of these groups has changed hands since their conception. Within this context, it is natural to consider technology as the driving force for Seoul's continuing transformation.

It could be argued that South Korea is tending towards post-humanism, in which human beings and machines have an increasingly interdependent relationship. Such is the case of IFEZ, a free economic zone located at the outskirts of Seoul, where companies are taxed very lightly or not at all to encourage economic activity. IFEZ is functionally a hyper-technologized and sanitized ghost town which uses new-technologies for surveillance and regulatory purposes with little to no consideration for environmental or social consequences. Within its 132.9 square kilometers, the project includes an extensive network of security cameras, LEED-certified buildings, kilometers of bike paths and charging stations for electric vehicles, as well as a pneumatic waste disposal system in which garbage is thrown underground and then recycled. According to the project's website, IFEZ aims to be "the hub for the government's strategy of making Northeast Asia's economic center" (Incheon Free Economic Zone, 2018). To this end, infrastructure and housing units under construction since 2003 are expected to welcome 512,000 new residents and numerous tax incentives are also being put in place to attract international firms (Incheon Free Economic Zone, 2018). However, the city remains only partly occupied with most Koreans preferring to stay in the capital, despite the advantages and incentives offered by the municipal government to bring them to the satellite city.

At a time when environmental awareness is growing, numerous critiques of the "smart-city" model arise from an ecological standpoint. This urban model is not universally transferable because of unequal repartitions of technology and financial resources across the world. In fact, the implementation of these projects requires investment costs that are unaffordable for developing countries. The very establishment of Songdo, the urban sector of the IFEZ project, built on 600 hectares of artificial land reclaimed from the Yellow Sea, raises questions about the sustainability of the means deployed to achieve such a feat. The buildings, at the cutting edge of the latest construction and administrative technologies, also raise questions about contemporary ways of building. They are in direct conflict with low-tech, which advocates practices of reuse and recycling to minimize the use of new materials.

As humanity becomes more and more entrenched in and dependent on the technological advances it creates, new questions about the use of such technology on a moral plane arise. Smart city initiatives are far from exempt; handing over governance to automatized systems may threaten radical, "human" decision-making processes which could answer the social and environmental challenges of our time. World news outside of the Korean peninsula has brought to the world's attention the potentially harmful effects of government surveillance through the integration of technology into everyday life; Western news and media sources have been particularly outspoken against the Chinese government's use of Artificial Intelligence to track and isolate the Muslim Uighur population in the north-western region of the country. States such as South Korea who wish to promote the use of smart city technology must also be aware of the rising scrutiny placed on such technology, especially its implications for or against our fundamental rights and freedoms.

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# GIVING EMPTINESS A S(E)OUL: EXAMINING THE FRAMING OF TECHNOLOGY-FORWARD DEVELOPMENTS IN SONGDO AND THE DIGITAL MEDIA CITY

*By Selina Colin & Antoine Fabre*

## *Introduction*

In the past few decades, Seoul's local governmental authorities have heavily pushed a series of marketing strategies aimed at branding certain key districts in ways that would attract private actors to the area. These emerging districts are known as "development clusters" and boast a heavy integration of technology into day-to-day life as a means of re-positioning the city as one of a globalized future. On its path towards becoming a "smart city", Seoul has built several clusters and new neighborhoods. However, these areas, primarily based on a "tabula rasa model", have been faced with a strong need to create specific and, more importantly, attractive frames in order to appear alluring both for investors and inhabitants. Thus, clusters have tried to develop, in a more or less successful manner, different strategies – that range from incentives to storytelling and other sorts of branding processes – in order to reach these "attractivity" goals. The development of the city of Songdo, found 45 minutes outside of Seoul proper, and the "Digital Media City" (DMC) are two significant applications of this targeted marketing, but with differing results. Where the city's initiatives in Songdo have encountered difficulties in "humanizing" the area in the face of empty streets and high vacancy rates, its efforts conversely seem to have succeeded in the DMC. Analyzing the case of the DMC can be used as a tool to give insight into approaches that can be applied by local authorities in order to reduce feelings of perceived "soul-less-ness" in a city's district. This article aims to outline the importance – throughout Seoul's recent developmental processes – of the use of incentives and framing strategies for the re-affirmation of the city's identity as well as for the justification of its urbanization methods.

## *Songdo: A double-edged sword of "artificial framing"*

The complexity of Seoul's identity can be pieced out through the multitude of top-down initiatives in the theater of the city's spatial and social transformations. The presence of several specialized clusters illustrates the quest to find a compromise between projects deemed economically attractive for investors and those attractive for the citizens themselves. The former mayor of Seoul, Goh Kun, expressed in this sense that his vision for the city was "a city that takes its rightful place among the great cities of the world, one where the environment and the population interact harmoniously" (Barde, 2014). There is a dichotomy between the development of a global image and an evolution to the benefit of local communities. It is therefore a question here of studying the impact of this artificial framing which acts as a double-edged sword. While innovative clusters make it possible to develop strategies for economic attractiveness and competitiveness, it is also a question of adding the average citizen, who remains the driving force behind these projects, to the equation. Despite the OASIS online suggestion system launched in 2006 by the mayor, allowing citizens to contribute their ideas on city policies and to discuss them directly with the municipal authorities, it is nonetheless clear that the focus of clusters remains skewed towards prioritizing the integration of technology into urban life. The marketing of this integration follows the "flagship store strategy" in the way that different clusters are marketed as having specialization between them (Genaille, 2007). In any case, it is apparent that the notion of attractiveness and branding is thus at the heart of the issues.

Local elected officials and developers are keen to justify and explain the choice to invest in technologically-inclined communities, especially in the face of public criticism. At a macro level, such a push for the "smart city" seeks to develop the city in a way that will be attractive at the international level. Nevertheless, at the micro-level, citizens also need to be considered in order for a development to be used and thus, considered "a success." Municipalities have to take in to consideration the "human" side of development, to go further than the classic package that a cluster can offer in terms of economic attractiveness; they must break with a top-down logic in order to really involve citizens in the design of this or that cluster–it is their right to the city (Lefebvre, 1996). Clusters therefore serve to create favorable spaces in the metropolis where networks and centrality are created for a given specialization.

Much of the criticism and hesitation surrounding smart cities comes in the relation to the ethics of the application of technology to every aspect of urban life, especially as it relates to individual privacy and economic biases. Jake Snow, a Technology and Civil Liberties Attorney at the ACLU of Northern California, explains that:
"*These technologies can cause real harm to people. They have the power to exacerbate racial or economic inequality, or turn your city into a panopticon in service of a surveillance state. Like other tools, their effectiveness depends on when, where, and how they are used. City planners and other officials looking into smart initiatives have a duty to thoroughly investigate the technologies in question and any costs and risks that might accompany its use*" (Snow, 2018)

Despite such critiques, developments like that of Songdo continue to be followed through, without any consideration for the will or need of citizens. Despite skyrocketing housing prices and increasing benefits offered by the South Korean government to incentivize migration to Songdo, its streets and shopping centers remain depressingly empty of citizenry. If nothing else, this demonstrates that the core driving force of such cluster is technology performances, rather than resilience. Following this logic of branding and the search for permanent innovations, clusters can forget one of the most important points which is the appropriation of space by citizens to make it a lived-in and livable environment. This is the risk of development projects that are not spontaneous. In the Songdo cluster, considered as a cutting-edge showcase for smart city development, the greatest challenge is to run into one's neighbors.

Tax incentives and other perks policy are even unable to attract foreign businesses and workers. Only a smattering of companies, nonprofits, and universities have opened offices in Songdo, including the Green Climate Fund, IBM, George Mason University and the State University of New York. The population of the entire city is about 100,000, which represents only a third of the projected population. For a high-tech city of the future, parts of Songdo look more like a sparsely populated American suburb of the 1970s - arranged in a grid pattern with wide avenues for cars, but little space for face-to-face human interaction. The cluster, in spite of its technological advance, has thus failed to integrate major characteristics of urbanity such as unpredictability, diversity, openness and authenticity. This project of smart city represents well the Korean concept of "pali pali" of which means "hurry-hurry". The city is very much alive, but it is invisible (Poon, 2018).

The core conflict within cluster is between selling a product (serving economic objectives) versus creating a distinct identity for residents (serving social objectives). Internal communications are therefore very important to link the two; the city must be made for everyone, combining economic development projects while keeping in mind the rights and needs of its citizens. This can thus be analyzed through the prism of the growth process of destruction/creation developed by the economist Schumpeter (Spencer & Kirchhoff,

2006). The attraction can be both complementary to other sites but compete with them. There is a close relationship between economic means and the socio-cultural content that must be the effect. To create attraction is to make an investment but which can only be justified by a return, in this case monetary. It is therefore necessary to arouse the interest and envy of an external population. In the long term, the brand image is important, but the transfer of “standard images”, rather than emphasizing the specific character of a project obeys a more or less uniform and unauthentic model. It is a question of creating and not copying (Ilmonen, 2007), just as one must not only think in terms of flagship but also take into account the project in terms of duration and inclusiveness (Genaille, 2007). If this is not taken into account, clusters can quickly become a form of elitist gated communities, especially those whose strategy is based on an exclusive economic zone that is accessible only to the wealthy.

The case of Songdo shows us that a compromise must be found between the economic and social project that a cluster represents. Beyond mere market logics, moving towards a search for “added societal value” instead of focusing on the search for greater global outreach serves common interests. In the following section, we explore how such an approach, creating bridges between project actors and civil society, would provide the “humanity” that clusters such as Songdo seem to lack.

***The Digital Media City: finding a compromise***

Located in the Sangam-dong district (only 7 kilometers away from the city’s Central Business District), the site of the DMC has–up until recently–been a no man’s land for decades. Unable to attract development, it was used as a waste landfill until 1997. However, growing environmental (such as fire hazards and pollution) and economic concerns related to the area have gradually pushed the metropolitan government to convert this space. Thus, throughout the 2000s, in the frame of its larger “Millennium City Project”, the metropolitan government announced its resolute will to establish a secondary city center that would stand as an eco-friendly international digital-media and entertainment research cluster (Seoul Business Agency, personal communication, January 2020). In cooperation with the national government, the municipality started thus funding and planning the large ex-nihilo project of the DMC. In other words, it embarked on a journey of creating a whole new district – covering approximately 570,000 square meters – from virtually nothing. The Digital Media City stands as a case of success regarding the combination of a strong technological and economic hub with a leisure area conducive to urban wandering. In the case of the DMC, public space has been taken into account in the development of the cluster as place-making strategies are adopted. Seoul’s “Digital Media City” (DMC) is a successful embodiment of the municipality’s efforts to create new types of developments and consequently, innovative clusters.

What stands out as particularly interesting with this project is the strong entrepreneurial dimension that the local government undertook to ensure the DMC’s success and generate revenue. It showcases how much public actors can value the private sector, as well as how the need to achieve certain objectives (such as fostering attractivity and competitiveness) can – as entrepreneurial behaviors are actively adopted and risks increasingly endorsed – transform the nature of local governmental actors. Indeed, even before the start of the project’s implementation in 2006, the municipality had put into place several market-oriented strategies aimed at luring stakeholders, both public and private, to the area; of particular interest were powerful investors, developers, and tenants who could, through the influence of their own brand, function as “magnets” for other firms and organizations of the same tenure.

More precisely, in order to entice the settlement of private actors, the municipality established a myriad of measures aiming at accommodating and supporting the latter. For instance, to increase the site's accessibility, it has ensured the provision of high-quality infrastructure – for both the telecommunications networks and transit network. Additionally, the local government has also ensured the provision of high-quality services in terms of work and housing, education, leisure, and health (Seoul Business Agency, personal communication, January 2020). Regarding leisure, the district proposes large green spaces (including the ecological regenerated landfill park, the size of New York's Central Park, built on the riverside region), entertainment venues (a new stadium designed to host festivals such as the DMC Festival of sports events such as the World Cup), as well as lively streets with numerous cafés and restaurants (Seoul Business Agency, 2020). The district is also envisioning new plans for a mall, a hospital and research & development industry spaces. All of this was/ is being done with the aim of rendering the space a true "living community" marked by places of communication and interaction: "will not just be a scientific base but also a living community where its potential for both work and leisure can be fully realized" (Digital Media City, n.d.). Lastly, but very importantly, in order to attract the implementation of private actors, the municipality has made a strong usage of financial incentives (Seoul Business Agency, 2020). It has thus offered businesses considerable tax exemptions as well as low bidding price levels for land sales. Throughout these strategies, the DMC's development policies have brought together the best national and international, scientific and artistic talents to become a major driver of Seoul's economic growth by blending technology, economy, culture, heritage and environmental project.

Looking at the DMC in the present day, the aforementioned use of different tools and measures by local authorities have overall been fruitful in attracting influential private actors as well as in achieving the branding and competition goals that were set. Firstly, property values have largely increased. Secondly, around 575 firms have established themselves in the area since its very recent creation and around 40,500 people are currently employed in the DMC. Among these firms, both global (10% being foreign) and local firms are represented, including LG Telecom, Pantech or LG CNS (Seoul Business Agency, 2020). Some of them have even set their headquarters in the DMC, an initiative which has largely benefited the DMC's economy. It has especially been the case for Korean broadcasting firms who started to settle in the area since 2012, eventually transforming the area into a center of filming and broadcasting. Thus, the DMC truly achieved its branding goals of standing as a high-tech complex for digital technology and media industries (broadcasting, filming, gaming, music, e-learning etc.) which can also simultaneously function as a testing site for future technology, such as that of a 5G network. This achievement has ultimately allowed the district to gain considerable prestige as the latter is now perceived both as innovative as well as an auspicious ground for venture markets. All of the aforementioned elements point out that in the DMC's case, public investment preceded private investment and that strong activity relocation processes (of companies already present in the capital - already built ecosystem) have marked the project. The coherence of the project was maintained as it progressed with the aim of exposing an innovative technology cluster. The City of Seoul, rather than looking for an easy real estate profit through the immediate sale of the land, strictly selected organizations and companies corresponding to the dynamism of the DMC. In addition, the Seoul Metropolitan Government provided key facilities such as the research center to foster collaborations.

Nowadays, the DMC's major objective is to enhance the power of its brand through the lens of globalization. More precisely, Seoul's Digital Media City has a few key goals that it lays out quite strongly on its website. First, it aims to become a major tech hub:

"equipped with the world's top digital media capabilities, it will be the world's first planned media and entertainment IT cluster…the DMC is designed to be a hi-tech city of information that will become an international Mecca of all things from the media world" (Digital Media City, n.d.)

Second, it highlights a recognition of and design for issues of urban ecology in development: "it will be the first place in the world where state-of-the art digital technologies coexist with the natural environment", "an eco-friendly city that will brighten the future of Seoul" (Digital Media City, n.d.). Third, the DMC seeks to stand as an international research and knowledge hub: "*once established as the world's best knowledge-based center through academy e-industry-research collaboration, …residents will have enhanced access to contents and services from the many universities, research centers, and companies and their products in Seoul*" (Digital Media City, n.d.). Fourth, the DMC seeks to endorse and support Korean history, culture and, economy, in order to bring prosperity to the whole country and act as a "*centerpiece of contents production reflecting the history, culture, and economy of Korea… creating the most sophisticated business community in the world, one that will not just bolster the economy but propel culture and environment…[the] DMC will be a catalyst of 'glocalization' to satisfy the two complementary demands of globalization and localization of culture*" (Digital Media City, n.d.).

By using such superlative and ambitious discourse, the local government pushes even further its branding and framing process. And one of the strategies through which it promotes it is emphasizing the site's interconnectivity potential: "make Digital Media City an inroad into East Asia and beyond" (Digital Media City, n.d.). Indeed, throughout its official discourses, local authorities push forward how greatly the DMC is interconnected with the region and world, as well as how much development potential that can foster for the coming future of urban development.

***Conclusion***

This article has looked at the ways in which the framing of new urban developments in South Korea that emphasize an integration of technology into daily governance can work either for or against the perceived success of said development. Both the cases of the Songdo Smart City and the Digital Media City demonstrate a desire on the municipal and state government's part to capitalize on available land as part of a greater campaign to insert Seoul into a globalized economy driven by technological innovation.

There are however, several points that go unaddressed in this analysis for reasons of scope of analysis. First, the issue of physical location of each development within the geography of the city go unexplored. An initial analysis would claim that the DMC's placement within the boundaries of the city of Seoul as opposed to 45 minutes outside of the city (as is the case for Songdo) make it more attractive to potential tenants, as it places them closer to the network of resources available in a dense metropolis. However, without further exploration, this point cannot be confirmed. Second, this article hinges on the idea that a certain sense of "warmth" or welcoming surroundings associated with a place having a "soul" is a prerequisite for its success as a new urban development. Further analysis would look into the origins of this idea, and how our Western viewpoint on the matter plays into notions of the social effect of a space. Thirdly, and related to the second point, analyzing the cases of Songdo and the DMC call into question how success is measured in an urban development, and who measures it. How does a municipal government measure the success of a project in comparison to the developer who built it? A resident of the area in question?

Nonetheless, the key takeaway from this article is that in these two cases, finding a compromise between economic goals and creating a sense of identity within the development in question is a key part in why the DMC was so popular, while Songdo remains used at below-capacity levels. While it may be too early in the timeline of smart-city development globally to make any definitive statements about whether livability is necessary factor for necessary success, it may be nonetheless important for municipal governments and project developers to consider the implications of giving a development a sense of social coherence and “soulfulness” as a means of generating interest in the public.

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# KNOWING, SHOWING, GROWING
# SEOUL IN THE GLOBAL MARKET FOR KNOW-HOWS

*By Augustin Bauchot & Violette Caubet*

***Introduction***

A key sector of Korean growth models is that of knowledge and policy exportation. Through the global market for know-hows, a term used to describe the worldwide financialized exchanges of policy and technological knowledge, South Korea and its metropolises have gained worldwide recognition and new financial inputs. Public agencies such as the Korean Land and Housing Corporation (LH) have played a key role in this development–having gone as far as to create an entire branch dedicated to global consulting–and reached new markets throughout the world, including Vietnam, Colombia, and Tanzania, to name a few. To grasp the full picture of the insertion of Korea and Seoul into this worldwide market, however, one must understand the long history of policy and technology transfers towards South Korea and more specifically, Seoul; in particular, the strategy of "innovation shopping" (a term used by LH) has been particularly successful as a development path for importing specific tools from countries such as the US or Japan. Within the framework of policy transfer, a theory described by Paul Cairney as "the transfer of policy solutions or ideas from one place to another, such as by one government importing the policy in another country" (Cairney, 2011), this article will examine the dual movement of knowledge, analyze the role of both national and local actors in it, and aim to insert this dual phenomenon in a context of the financialization of knowledge.

***Policy and technology transfer in the development of South Korea, past and present***

South Korea's growth model relies on the acquisition of technology for rapid industrial development. Under the developmental state of the post-war, internal factors such as economic incentives, government intervention in licenses purchase, or export promotion policies explain South Korea's knowledge acquisition and economic growth. However, South Korea also relied heavily on external factors, especially technology transfers from both Japan and the U.S.A. Until the mid-1980s, South Korea strongly encouraged foreign transnational corporations to invest in high valued-added industries while enforcing policies against foreign direct investment (FDI) such as ownership restriction by or export requirement to a third-party. Since the creation of a National Research and Development Program in 1982, the attitude has changed because of the need to recycle trade surplus, which has led the government to loosen restrictions on both foreign licenses and FDI (Joo, 2019). Simulation models developed by Fry (1997) report that FDI was responsible for 2.6% of growth in South Korea between 1983 and 1992. South Korea also imported technology through licensing: between 1964 and 1995, 48.1% of technology licensing agreements were from Japanese firms, while 28% came from American firms.

Importing technologies from the U.S. and Japan during the developmental state of South Korea was an important external factor of economic growth. We can now observe a duality in South Korea's path to development in that the role has been reversed with Seoul now exporting technology and knowledge to other fast-growing countries. Examples of this include the exportation of the public transportation system from Seoul to other cities worldwide such as Bogotá, Bangkok, and Ulaanbaatar in Columbia, Thailand, and Mongolia, respectively. Bogotá, the Colombian capital, is now equipped with the same public transportation system as Seoul due to a collaboration within the Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP) which led to the adoption of Korea's Intelligent Transport System (ITS). KSP provided consulting and

recommendations for transport infrastructures projects and financing for the city of Bogotá, which is now known for having a very effective system to move its multi-million resident population.

***National and metropolitan strategies of know-how exportation***

"Korea still has the memory of being a poor country and has the benefit of a wealthy country right now and that's an experience that I think Korea can share with its partner countries in Africa and in Asia, and should share." (KSP, 2018). In this statement, American economist Jeffrey Sachs depicts a narrative which has gained importance over the last decades: that of a country moving from a "dominated" to a "dominant" position in the global hierarchy, from a "developing" to an "industrialized" economy. This move gives South Korea more responsibility but also more opportunities to capitalize on its knowledge production and exportation.

The creation of the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) in 1991 marked a turn in the Korean approach to know-how sharing. The country moved up the global hierarchy as described in previous chapters, but also took a role in helping others to develop. This could be done through loans or grants, but also took the form of knowledge exportation from 2004 onwards, with the creation of the Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP) by the Korean Ministry of Economy and Finance (MOEF). Far from a "free" sharing program, it was, in reality, the institutionalization of policy consultation, project modularization, and joint consulting programs with international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Kim & Tcha, 2012). With this program, the central government created a framework to sell knowledge around the globe. The aim was to generate economic rent linked to the "Korean-style" city knowledge, but also to favor the implantation of Korean firms abroad, which has since benefitted the chaebols, who have gained markets worldwide as the international cooperation projects multiplied (Joo, 2019).

On its part, the Seoul Metropolitan Authority gained major interest in the knowledge market with the arrival of mayor Park in 2011. "Exporting Seoul abroad" became a growth opportunity for the metropolis (Joo, 2019). Using its image as an "economic miracle", Seoul branded its policies for exportation to developing metropolises around the world, and by 2016, the SMG had signed agreements with 35 cities in 25 countries to share 42 of its policies (Joo, 2019). Seoul's policy export strategy was implemented through the creation of the Seoul Urban Solutions Agency (SUSA) in 2015, an agency which aims to "[transfer] Seoul's urban development knowledge, experience and know-how to provide urban solutions to challenges that cities face" and "[facilitate] public and private cooperation for provision of urban solutions" (SUSA, 2017). This short presentation leads to two main observations: the metropolitan authority has used a public agency to lead policy exportation and marketing, inserting it on a global competitive market; and the overall objectives of Seoul's strategy might join that of the national government in promoting private Korean companies abroad. Indeed, in her book Megacity Seoul, Yu-Min Joo states that the underlying motivation of mayor Park may be "to support local businesses in finding new opportunities and markets overseas as SMG exports its policies" (Joo, 2019).

***South Korean in the global market for know-hows: the financialization of knowledge***

The insertion of Korean knowledge sharing into the global market has been made through national and metropolitan public policies. However, one type of actor illustrates and bears at its core the marketization of know-hows: metropolitan public corporations (like SUSA) and national ones as well. Walking into the LH administrative building in Gangnam-gu,

one is welcomed by the numerous images of country or regional delegations who have come to learn about the “Korean best practice”, or to negotiate contracts for global consulting from the public company. The website of the corporation similarly advertises its “knowledge sharing programs” (not to be confused with the national KSP), which appear to be intensive training programs for public officials in situ, along with “international projects” which encompass a wide variety of services, from Master Plan delivery to service contract management or construction of industrial zones, used in countries such as Myanmar, Kuwaït or Bolivia (LH, 2019). In the meantime, more than 9,000 employees, both in a Korean and international workforce (the latter of which is distributed into 50 subdivisions), are working for the corporation’s national and international objectives around the world.

Reinforcement of Korean public agencies and private actors in the global market for know-hows have also led the way for counterforces to develop through free sharing data and technologies movements. The Seoul Metropolitan City has developed an open database platform which is primarily used for making geo-location-based services, to make information visually available through the use of GIS software or similar data visualization platforms. The open source data movement relies on participatory services which aim to drive civic engagement, with approximately 10% of smart city services involving the processing of data collected through user’s inputs (J.H. Lee and al., 2014). Another example of this push for open data and micro-level knowledge sharing is the TIDE Institute-financed Fab Lab Seoul, which is a citizen participative campus for individuals wanting to use and exchange tools, information and knowledge regarding open source hardware and develop technology related projects. Fab Lab Seoul is part of an international movement of Fab City cooperation: a network of 28 cities exchanging both data and projects for the cities. The Fab City movement is based on an alternative sharing technology goal that is to promote a city where citizens become manufacturers of their own needs, reclaiming technologies collaboratively and contributing to a control of materials, energy and knowledge. Those open source and sharing programs designed as free circulation of know-hows among citizens and urban space, but also among cities around the world, might challenge the historical commercialization of technologies flows operated by South Korea.

### *Conclusion*

Seoul’s insertion into the global market for know-hows is not a new development. The metropolis has long used policies from both developed and developing countries metropolises in order to grow economically and to gain importance at the global scale. In the 1990s, however, national and local governments started turning towards knowledge and policy exportation as a way not only to generate public revenue, but to also favor the development of private companies abroad. This has been done through the establishment or reinforcement of public agencies and corporations, who have taken the role of figureheads for knowledge and policy exportation, blurring partly the line between Korean public and private actors in their chase for global markets. However, the “marketization of knowledge” cannot be generalized without mentioning some counterforces: the Fab City movement links Seoul with other large metropolis around the globe and promotes free sharing of data and technology. The two trends, marketization and free circulation of knowledge, might generate important conflicts in the years to come if the Open Data initiatives and Fab City movement take deeper roots in the Korean metropolis.

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© Photo: Strolling around "The city of the future". Songdo 2020. Alexandra van Milink.

# 2020 AND BEYOND

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

# 2020 AND BEYOND : CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

*By Shirene Shomloo and Pauline Le Bozec*

In hindsight, our study trip came at an extremely particular time in world history. Our departing flight was on January 19th, the day before the first case was announced in the country, and though we knew that the virus was spreading rapidly through neighboring countries (notably, China), we did not at the time realize how quickly the state of the world was about to change (Seo, 2020). Thus, this report represents a body of work that may quickly be read as outdated or un-encompassing enough of the wide range considerations and outcomes that have come out of the global and local events that have come out of 2020.

Nevertheless, our field work was marked by this narrative thread of a Seoul emerging from its past and barreling down into its future. This report, it should be noted, provided us a distinct opportunity to witness and contribute to a larger international conversation on mechanisms and processes of governance in Seoul. Each of our visits could be placed on this chronology, held onto the same thematic undercurrents. The report can very roughly be divided along these lines as well. Part 1 takes a historical viewpoint in contextualizing the Seoul of today, looking at events at a variety of scales such as the country's colonial relationship with neighboring Japan, or the city of Seoul's relationship with the broader national government in relation to the 1988 Olympic Games. Parts 2 and 3 bring into focus contemporary issues of governance of the city. The former looks at issues of governance and how tensions and collaborations between the city and the state serve as a useful jumping off point to better understanding how the city functions and further drives its own growth. The latter focuses on this development itself: how the built environment of Seoul has and continues to function as a fundamental vehicle for growth in the city. Finally, part 4 of this report looks to Seoul's future by way of the use and integration of technology in "selling the city" to a broader, global audience driven by its image as a "city of the future."

In the face of our field study and the subsequent ensemble of the articles compiled in this report, what is ultimately fundamentally clear is that the city of Seoul is sitting at a developmental crossroads and despite placing massive amounts of capital and energy into its branding as a city of the future, it remains haunted by the realities of its past in its present. This is even clear in the physical form of the urban landscape; Seoul is a city where the physical forms of neighborhoods can change vastly from one corner to the next. Perhaps few things literally illustrate this better than the view we got at the top of the Sewoon Arcade on the first day of our trip: to our left lay the Changdeokgung Palace, Jongmyo Shrine, and their respectives grounds and gardens–symbols of the country's expansive heritage–while at our foreground lay the shorter, crowded-together, and often dilapidated buildings of a 20th century Korea entrenched in it colonial history and attempt to break free from it, and finally out in the distance are the high rises of a modern, technologically advanced city of the future.

### *In the face of disaster: the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Korea*

Without a doubt, the most significant development since the writing of the articles of this report has been the COVID-19 crisis. South Korea, along with many of its neighbors, has been praised for its aggressive and effective response to the Coronavirus outbreak, particularly by news sources from the United States and Europe, which have both had a much more difficult time in containing the virus's outbreak (Fisher & Sang-Hun, 2020; Yan & Babe, 2020; Yoon & Martin, 2020). Once it was clear that the virus had taken hold on the Korean peninsula, the

**Photograph 1:** View from the top of the Sewoon Arcade in Seoul.
*Source: Photo by Shirene Shomloo, 2020.*

South Korean government adopted a method of prevention against the virus which differed from European techniques; South Korean began aggressively imposing mass testing, self-isolation, and contact tracing, following a protocol known as "test, trace, contain". A self-quarantine for travellers into the country was also advised and enforced. Notably, no general lockdown was imposed as was seen in other countries around the country such as India, France, and the UK.

The strategy of mass testing is largely considered the explanation for South Korea's successful management of the crisis. East Asian countries are well-versed in the management of epidemics: in 2015, a patient in South Korean came down with MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-related Coronavirus), which because of its high infection rate, infected 186 and killed 36 people. The "test, trace and contain" technique on 17,000 people helped contain the outbreak over a period of 2 months; part of the reason this was carried out so effectively is due to the Korean government's use of jurisprudence, which allowed authorities to have access to mobile and credit card data in order to trace cases. Such direct and centralized action proved once again to be highly successful in face of COVID-19, which saw a peak of around 8,000 active infections at the pandemic's peak in the spring in comparison to countries such as France and the United States, which are currently peaking at well over 1 million and 3 million active cases respectively at the time this conclusion was written in November 2020 (South Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare, Coronavirus, 2020; CDC, 2020; Santé Publique France, 2020).

Nevertheless, the South Korean citizens' reaction to the governments' reaction to the crisis was deeply divided, especially in regards to the ethical questions that arose out of such aggressive containment tactics. On the one hand, the situation allowed the continuation of a rather normal everyday life while much of the rest of the world spiraled into a string of

lockdowns and economic stress. On the other hand, several concerns emerged in the public debate. First and foremost was the lack of privacy: the South Korean national government very openly used citizens' private data to inform their own decisions as well as public decisions. Authorities went so far as to share location and activity history of those testing positive, with information such as with the use of private data and the identity of those testing positive made known to the larger public, such as "when people left for work, whether they wore masks in the subway, the name of the stations where they changed trains, the massage parlors and karaoke bars they frequented and the names of the clinics where they were tested for the virus" (Singer & Sang-Hun, 2020). This heavily raised the question of the implication of the government in the citizens' individual freedom; even in a society as highly surveilled as South Korea, these measures are perceived as extreme because of the extent of sharing of the information.

Moreover, as it was the case in many other countries–such as the United States and France–with the rise in awareness of police violence, enforcement of pandemic measures disproportionately targeted minorities and under-represented groups. In South Korea, the LGBTQ+ community in particular was targeted in May, when an outbreak of cases was traced back to the Itaewon district of Seoul, known for its higher number of gay bars and clubs, resulting in online and media harassment towards the already-ostracized community. Furthermore, though the physical measures taken were less extreme than in other countries, an official survey showed that 40% of the Seoulites found that their mental health was affected by the health measures of the government. Though most of the respondents found the social distancing and test, trace, isolate protocole necessary, they also found it troubling (Sajid, n.d.).

The politics of President Moon have also been highly criticized by conservatives throughout the country, and caused a protest mid-August, which led to a new cluster and a significant number of new cases at the end of the summer. Despite a perceived return towards "normalcy" in the summer, a new wave of cases started back up in September, with the death count remaining relatively low.

### *The Korean state at a crossroads: Changes in the political regime*

Yet despite the controversy surrounding the specifics of the methods of coronavirus mitigation, public opinion has held President Moon Jae-in in a net positive light. In part due to this very aggressive and effective response to the pandemic, and despite the active nature of the virus at the time, South Koreans elected President Moon Jae-in's party to the national assembly in an election that saw an all-time high in voter participation. This flip in the political leaning of the national assembly was largely seen as the public's endorsement of the president's politics; before the COVID crisis, the president's approval ratings had dropped to around 30% for a variety of reasons, including a lack of job creation and scandals in his cabinet (McCurry, 2020). The election results also mark the largest majority in power since the country's transition to democracy in the 1980s.

Though it may be too soon to fully see the consequences of this transfer of power, in just a few months we have already seen a significant shift in the direction of Korean legislation. Take for example Soyoung Lee, South Korea's youngest parliament member, who has been at the forefront of the campaign for a Korean green new deal which would drastically reduce Korean use of fossil fuels. This political shift may prove to change the entire course of Korean urban development as described in the articles in this report. This South Korean green new deal, unveiled in full in October, and backed by President Moon Jae-in, includes a number of policies and initiatives in the urban development sector to promote "balanced development" with the aim of promoting both economic growth while also addressing ecological concerns

raised by climate activists (Sajid, n.d.; Choi, 2020)[1]. Notably, it acknowledges the very power that Seoul and other large cities of the country have in advancing and representing the national vision of the future; it very explicitly targets urban development as one of its axes of reform so as to emphasize a need for ecologically-minded development while maintaining the economic growth of the country (Choi, 2020).

As climate change becomes a more prominent part of the political schema pushed forward by the younger political generation, it may very well be that we will see a very different type of development in South Korea in the coming years: one that shifts away from purely economic interests favored by the right-wing and centrist politicians and places emphasis on ecological consciousness as well. In any case, one cannot help but heavily question the future of the dominance of the "smart-city" narrative that the Seoul Metropolitan Government (and more broadly, the national government) was seen to be pushing in part 4 of this report. If public opinion remains in favor of the current (which it very well may, given current numbers), it is likely that we will see a not insignificant shift in priorities of Seoul's urban development (Yonhap, 2020).

***Where do we go from here?***

Seoul is a city that has invested massive amounts of time, effort, and capital into propelling itself out of its own history and into a globalized, technologically-savvy future. We have seen throughout the articles in this report the varying success the city and state governments have had in doing so, and even since the writing of the articles it has become abundantly clear how much the trajectory of a city can change in such a short period, if the mitigating circumstances are extreme enough. Our visit began and ended as the city was on the precipice of disaster, so in many ways, this report functions as an analysis of the "before times", in what future historians may refer to as the "Pre-COVID-19 Era". It is certainly too soon to know the full extent of the changes in urban governance that the Coronavirus will have, but with the extreme changes in political power we have seen at the state level, it is likely that they will be significant.

To mind comes the wide and empty boulevards of the Incheon Free Economic Zone in Songdo and the expansive network of surveillance and tracking technologies that worked to keep the development running smoothly. At the time of our visit, we were struck by stark contrast it provided to the European cities we are familiar with, characterized by and lauded for their narrow and crowded streets and a sense of "life" and human connection–a concept that Fabre and Colin notably bring up in their article in Part 4. However, would such wide boulevards devoid of human beings seem attractive now to a Western eye, in a time when close human contact is generally seen as a threat rather than a plus? Patterns of development are sure to change, but it is unclear whether collaboration in the face of global issues will be prioritized or rather if countries will start favoring personal space and isolation.

Our analysis has demonstrated the ways in which Seoul has only recently made the shift towards recognizing the importance of bottom-up, citizen-driven governance tactics; one can't help but wonder how these will evolve in the theoretical "Post-COVID-19" world that, at the time that this report is being compiled, feels all too far away. We await the results with anticipation, but until then, it is clear that Seoul is headed to a future heavily by an increasingly globalized point of view, but whether that is for better or for worse is yet to be seen.

[1] South Korea has been criticized for its heavy reliance on fossil fuels to support its rapid growth, being named one of the world's "biggest carbon villains" in 2016. (Watts, 2020)

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book would not have been possible without the indispensable support and kindness of many individuals. First and foremost, we would like to thank members of the Urban School's pedagogical team, ***Cristina Reyes-Garcia, Kate Kwak, Pauline Emile-Geay*** and ***Sandrine Boisard*** for tirelessly organizing and overseeing the study trip itself; the Scientific Director, ***Tommaso Vitale*** for assuring conferences, preparing readings on different policy sectors as well as on Seoul's history and context, and providing guidance in the preparation, writing, and editing of this report; the Dean of the Urban School, ***Patrick Le Galès*** for his knowledge and helping to equip us with the theoretical framework for this trip since day 1; and finally, the Executive Director, ***Guillermo Martin*** for its continuous presence and dialogue all along the collective enquiry. We would also like to thank the myriad of people who opened their schedules and doors to us in Seoul, for giving us their time and attention in our study of the city and its complex structures and processes of governance. Those people include:

***Dosi Gong Gam Cooperative Association Architecture Office***
Mr. Lee Junhyung

***Fab-lab Seoul***
Ms. Gu Hyebin

***Global Green Growth Institute***
Ms. Maeng Jiae
Mr. Storey Donovan

***IFEZ Smart city operation center***
Mr. Lee Sangho (Ryan)
Mr. Kim Sunghwan

***Korea Land and Housing Corportation (LH)***
Mr. Kim Jung Ik
Mr. Lee Seunghwan

***SBA (Seoul Business Agency)***
Ms. Go Sumin
Ms. Go Suhyun

***Seochogu Office - Urban Design Division - Public Design Team***
Ms. Kim Sun joo

***Seoul City : Urban regeneration bureau***
Mr. Gil Hyun Ki
Mr. Kang Maenghun
Ms. Lee Jooyon
Mr. Baek Wunseok
Mr. Kim Jungbeom

***Seoul City : Seoul Innovation Bureau***
Mr. Choi Jeonghun

Ms. Park Soonhui

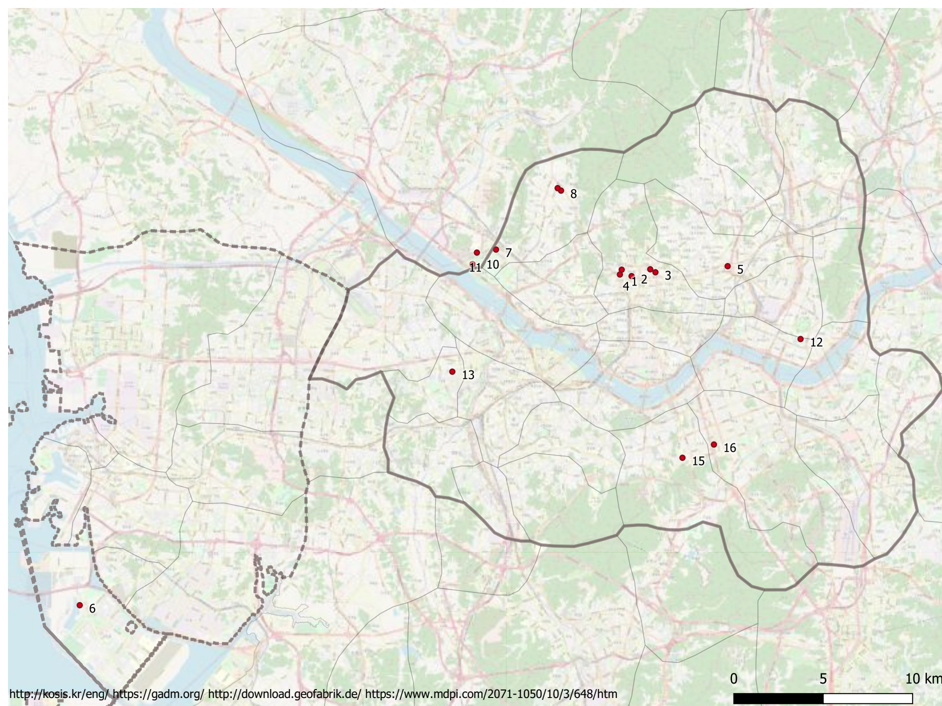
*Seoul Digital Foundation*
Ms. Kang YoonGyeong

*Seoul Foundation of Arts and culture*
Ms. Lee Jieun
Mr. Kim Yeongho

*Seoul Housing & Communities Corporation (SH)*
Mr. Kim Daecheon
Mr. Cheon Seong hee

*Seoul Museum of History*
Ms. Lee Jaekyung

# VISITS MAP




**Map 1:** Map of our visits during our trip
*Author: Daphnée Govers, 2020.*

***Legend:***

Seoul
Incheon

Visits

- 1 - Seoul History Museum
- 2 - Seoul City Hall
- 3 - Seun Sangga Arcade
- 4 - Global Green Growth Institute
- 5 - Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture
- 6 - Songdo G-Tower
- 7 - Seoul Business Agency
- 8 - Seoul Innovation Fab Lab
- 9 - Buldwang
- 10 - Hanuel Park
- 11 - DMC Center
- 12 - Guui Arisu Water Facility
- 13 - Yancheon RPF
- 14 - ICLEI East Asia Office
- 15 - TBC Seoul Institute
- 16 - Seocho-gu Office

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