

AAS 2012, Toronto application

Seoul I -- Transforming the City: Governmentality, Urban Planning and Social Movements

Organizer/ Chair: Joy Kim, Princeton University

Discussant: Christine Kim, Georgetown University

This panel showcases the vibrant city of Seoul (Hanyang, Hansŏng, Keijō) by studying how the capitol in its historical and geographical specificity has developed during the 20thc into a rich and diverse urban center despite, or perhaps because of, the strategic urban planning envisioned by a series of totalizing states. The organization and everyday uses of Seoul's spaces together reflect a complex network of stratified processes by both visible and invisible actors existing within permutations of governmentality and play. Baek Yung Kim's research looks at the Government-General's Hausmannization of Keijō during the colonial period which unintentionally fostered the ancient back alleys for indigent processes to survive and persist. Changmo Ahn's paper discusses architectural and urban planning of the Pak Chunghee era (1960s and 1970s) which developed out of the anti-Communist, Cold War propaganda and resulted in many of the national monuments visible today in the cityscape. Lisa Kim Davis tracks and compares the social movements of the urban poor as they faced housing challenges and adopted survival tactics in the face of strategic spatial effacement. Joy Kim shows how traditional spaces are selectively preserved and emplotted in political (dis)course and how conversely, pedestrians and consumers take over in unpredictable ways to create their own memories. This panel engages the variations in which individuals and socioeconomic groups contend with the city and competing interests through lived practices.

Visibility and Invisibility in Urban Space: Squares and Back Alleys in Colonial Seoul

Baek Yung Kim, Kwangwoon University (author, *Chibae wa konggan*)

This paper studies the formation and pragmatic uses of squares and alleys (*kolmokgi*) in colonial Seoul. As a 500 year-old historic capital of the Chosŏn Dynasty governed by neo-Confucianism, the central area of Seoul was filled not only with winding alleys in the overpopulated area but with public squares for both official and cultural purposes. I propose to divide the spatial strategies of colonial rule into two theoretical groups: spectacularization and panopticonization. When reorganizing a colonial space, the state implemented Hausmannization to ensure visibility. Due to traditional urban fabric, the state developed the Japanese-settled south area, alienating from the colonial production of space the north area occupied primarily by the local population.

Two main public squares were configured (mid-1920's), with the completion of the Government-General headquarters and the *Keijo* municipal office building. These were rarely used for social gatherings, but served as symbols of the colonial state's politico-executive geographical domination, while the *Singung* square located in *Chōsen Shrine (Namsan)* was used to propagandize the *Kōminka* movement, or glorify imperial militarism. Due to the exorbitant resources a complete urban rationalization required, the municipal government (*Keijōfu*) left the urban tissue of most back alley areas relatively untouched, both in the north and south areas. In contrast to the back alleys around Japanese-occupied *Honmachi*, however, the *Chongno* alleys remained underdeveloped and deteriorated.

The public squares formed and used in colonial Seoul then were sites for colonial propaganda, while the back alleys formed by traces of the ancient city impeded visibility for the state.

Anti-communist Architecture and Urban Planning in 1960-70s Seoul

Changmo Ahn, Graduate School of Architecture, Kyunggi University

(Author, *Tŏksugung*)

This paper examines how Cold War ideologies were engraved in the life of Seoul's inhabitants through architecture and urban planning. The 1960s and 70s witnessed epoch-making events such as the April 19th student revolution, the May 16th military coup, and the five-year economic development plan. President Park Chung-hee, at the center of this era, aimed to distract public attention away from his weaknesses (the coup, young leftist activists, and a in the Japanese military), by co-opting art and architecture as political propaganda.

Park took advantage of the arts to buttress his illegally gained influence. The Federation of Artistic and Cultural Organizations of Korea (FACOK) was founded under the support of 5.16 coup forces, with the Korean Institute of Architects under the umbrella of the FACOK. The Park regime took advantage of the tragic of Korea's division and South Korea's economic destitution to justify abuses of power by preying upon popular emotions. Anti-Communist paranoia was used to assume total control of society.

The Freedom Center, statues of "national" war heroes such as Yi Sunsin, the War Memorial, and plans to fortify Seoul were spatial strategies to captivate the population, as were the coastal development plans for the Han River and south of the river. My paper shows that architecture was not only a good means to propagandize political achievements but also an effective way to indoctrinate the ruling dogma amongst the inhabitants of the city.

***Seomin* in Seoul: comparing tenant movement activities**

Lisa Kim Davis, University of California, Los Angeles, Dept. of Geography

Over the decades of the second half of the 20th century and the early 21st century, the urban poor people's movement in Seoul has morphed and persisted to accommodate shifting tides of the changing structural political economy of South Korea. This paper compares and contrasts some urban poor people's movement locally-based groups at different times as they adjust to new challenges. As the standard of living has risen with modern conveniences more available to a broad urban population, urban poor people and the wider grouping that some echelons of urban low-income persons can sometimes be considered part of, *seomin* or commoners, face continuing difficulties in housing and livelihood although the Seoul cityscape has repeatedly changed in form. Utilizing movement group historical documents, media records, and interviews taken over a period of ten years, a portrait of continuity and change will be extracted by understanding the evolution of urban poor people's movement group activities before and after the turn of the most recent century. Little recognized or acknowledged except by politicians at election campaign time, these locally-based groups wage a spirited struggle to maintain a sense of community in the face of late modernity.

Keywords: urban poor people, tenants, Seoul

Constructing the Past: Restoration of *Traditional* Spaces in Seoul

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Seoul is a dense metropolis located at the heart of Korean peninsula, by far the largest and the most important urban center in Korea. As a site of power, wealth, and influence, it has been the focus of competing visions and imaginations. The ideological and intellectual contests waged over its (re)construction and (re)imagination, and the role of “tradition” and “traditional spaces” in such a vision will be the main subject of this paper. Since the Seoul Metropolitan Government celebrated 600-year anniversary of Seoul as the national capital seat in 1994, there was a new surge of interests in urban studies. The city government sought, through events to commemorate, celebrate and memorialize Seoul history, to solidify Seoul’s place in Korean history and society as the most important and influential urban center.

One of the most significant discussions regarding Seoul’s future was the question of what to do with the historical sites and remaining structures from Chosŏn dynasty. In this paper, I will examine a number of restoration and reconstruction projects and the issues fundamental to such historical preservation. The ways in which the relics of the past figure into Seoul’s future urban landscape speak to the way history is imagined and constructed. How is the past being remembered, and how does it shape the construction of national memory? Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this paper seeks to interrogate the relationship between the urban space and its inhabitants, and the role of historical memory in such a relationship.