DMZ
Korea DMZ Workshop In Progress
2008 Autumn
The Korea DMZ Workshop is an ongoing effort between students and researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Design to foster dialogue on diverse issues of the Demilitarized Zone in Korea. We aim to explore the significance of this protected and confined landscape through the various disciplines of design: landscape, urbanism, and architecture. We envision this boundary as a potential space of project, one that offers unique opportunities for ecological and sustainable planning as well as opening new pathways to reconciliation through design. The research conveys investigation of the political, cultural, historical, and geographical background of the polarized and divided territory of Korea in seeking to create new knowledge and visions for the future DMZ. This workshop was coordinated by KoreaGSD in conjunction with a doctoral thesis research on Transformation of Buffer Zones through Environmental Reconciliation currently being undertaken by Anna Grohling (Doctor of Design candidate). Her recent work on the Cyprus Green Line will serve as a lens to frame the Korea DMZ from the local and global perspectives.

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For detailed program: http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/koreagsd/dmz

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BOUNDARIESCAPES

Territorial conflicts create and displace boundaries and Buffer Zones, resulting in disconnections between geographies and populations. These linear landscapes of division act like negative imprints in physical and mental topographies. Once obsolete, the buffer or no-man’s land offers a unique opportunity in which to address the psychological rift that is constructed along the geographical separation, the mental manifestation of dividing being, in general, more difficult to overcome than the physical barrier. In place of a tabula rasa erasing of the boundary, we propose that planners and architects consider the space of the boundary as one that can participate in the scarification process of the wounded city, one that includes the healing of its traumatised inhabitants. As a backbone of the reconstruction plan, the linear territory of the fault line has the potential to become a symbolic space of reconciliation, of dialogue between the segregated populations, a place in which the selective histories and polarized memories can be overcome. In the last few years, the World Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has been seeking to revive the idea, already present in some frontier zones, of constructing Peace on a common project of conservation of Nature. Through a regional approach to biodiversity conservation, a number of ecosystems have been identified in areas of conflict and constitute as natural reserves that are designated under the titles border parks, peace parks, transfrontier nature reserves, transborder or transboundary protected areas. The concept of the Peace Park applies to a defined border zone, the main objective being to construct and promote mutual cooperation and confidence between bordering countries, creating a sort of natural buffer zone which can participate in preventing future contestations and conflicts. While protecting the nature and biodiversity of the site, the park acts as a landscape of memory, more specifically in frontier zones that have experienced trauma and violence. As well as being symbolic acts and having a positive effect on biodiversity, Peace Parks are catalysts of regional strategies of cooperation and development and can influence the local economy as potential attractions for tourism. As early as 1932, an international natural park was founded along the Canadian-US border in the region of the Waterton glaciars to preserve the ecosystem and to celebrate the long history of peace and friendship between the two nations and the most ancient example of a Peace Park created by the International Union of Conservation of Nature is the Park La Amistad between Panama and Colombia, created in 1982. The Marine Peace Park, situated in the Red Sea between Israel and Jordan, was established following the Peace Treaty signed by both countries in 1994 to protect water, natural reserves and historical heritage, underlining the importance for both countries to preserve biological diversity along their borders. In November 1989, immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the opening of the border, the Green Line was established by the German Nature Conservancy Association (BUND) as the first natural reserve within reunified Germany. Running the length of the former Inter-German border (between East and West Germany), it is the longest chain of forests and biotopes in the country and involves nine of the 16 Federal Landers (or states) of reunified Germany.

CYPRUS AND KOREA

Cyprus and Korea are partitioned by a Military Buffer Zone, a boundary that stretches from coast to coast, dividing the territories into polarised North and South states. In these enclosed linear enclaves, the negative impact of war and separation has allowed the power of nature to reclaim its original territories, inserting a positive dimension into these landscapes and allowing them become havens of natural biodiversity. Since the War of Korea and the 1953 Armistice Agreement, the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separates the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea from the Republic of South Korea. Extending for 2km on either side of the military dividing line, this linear enclave stretches for 248 km along the 38th parallel, from the east to the west coasts of the Peninsula. The resulting disconnections of geographies, ecosystems, networks and populations and the divergent political ideologies and economic systems have created widely differentiated developments on either side of this territorial rift. Recent research being conducted by the DMZ Forum has identified positive evolutions in the negative species of the boundary. It has been observed that these territories, extracted from human development, have transformed into reserves for biodiversity, natural havens in a rapidly expanding and urbanizing context. The DMZ and contiguous zones contain five rivers and many ecosystems with over 1,200 plant, 50 mammal, 80 fish and hundreds of bird species, many of which are endangered. Intensively cultivated ricefields have morphed into wetlands, flourishing with flora and fauna that are reclaiming the agricultural landscapes. A similar case of endangered and rare species occupying a buffer zone exists in Cyprus, in the ghost town of Varosha, to the south of Famagusta, a modern resort enclosed within buffer zone since 1974. A rare species of turtle, which only nests in the in certain areas of North Cyprus, has reappeared on the shores of this abandoned urban beach, and its survival is also endangered by a future reunification. The 180-kilometer-long separation zone crossing the island in the Mediterranean Sea—at some points 20 kilometers wide, in the narrowest stretch 3 metres in the divided capital of Nicosia - was established following the Turkish occupation and is overseen by peacekeepers from nine designated United Nations countries, as well as by 13,000 Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot soldiers. The Green Line divides the capital city, Nicosia, in two, and the international airport of Nicosia lies enclosed in the Green line. The barrier itself consists of concrete walls, barbed wire fencing, watchtowers, anti-tank ditches, and minefields. Parts of it are patrols by United Nations peacekeeping forces. In April 2003 the Turkish Cypriot government significantly eased travel restrictions across the barrier, which had consisted of a near 30 year ban on crossings. Since Cyprus’ joining of the European Union (de facto only the southern part joined), travel restrictions have been abolished for all EU citizens. vast region of 64 million of full of rare species.
FROM MILITARY BUFFER TO TRANSBOUNDARY ENVIRONMENTAL PEACE PARK

Garden of Eden, Walled Off Paradise or Involuntary Park describe the unexpected natures that are emerging in the enclave territory that separates the Korean Peninsula into North and South. Also referred to as the most dangerous and highly militarized border in the world, the Korean Demilitarized Zone embodies the dichotomy of the boundary as the space of the worst and the best. Also referred to as a Subtopia, the future of the DMZ could potentially become an Ecotopia, integrating forward looking and sustainable strategies to reconcile preservation and development, as well as acting as a Memoryscape to the victims of the separation. As potential laboratories of ecological planning, these spontaneous natural landscapes can also open up gateways to peace and become memorial sites to the many victims of the conflict. A future reconciliation between the two countries would actually endanger the site, as it would provide an increased pressure to build transport, industrial or agricultural infrastructures. Today, the United Nations Program for the Environment (UNEP) and the DMZ Forum are actively trying to convert the zone into a natural Peace Park, attempting to reunite the two countries along what is left of their common natural heritage. This will ensure that the future development respects the natural balance of the site. Future scenarios and projects should address the historical, ecological and memorial sites along the DMZ corridor. Historical sites include the unexcavated site of Gungnye’s Kingdom, the first Korean capital city, a highly symbolic locus to a unified Korea, which lies within the DMZ. Sites of memory related to the division would include the recycling of the numerous tunnels that pass under the buffer as well as the fortress and fortification structures, and could include projects for the propaganda villages in the North and South that mirror across line. The five rivers that cross the boundary as well as the wetlands enclosed in the DMZ will be integrated in landscape and environmental planning schemes and form the backbone of conservation schemes and new landscapes. A DMZ exoticy could serve as a sustainable model for future developments along the DMZ and the rest of the Korean Peninsula.
The Birth of DMZ

The peace has come. July 27, 1953, the armistice agreement was signed in Panmunjom. The Korean War temporarily stopped. From this war, North Korea lost over 2.7 million people which are 28.4% of the total North Korea population, and South Korea lost about 1.13 million people, 85% of which were civilians. While sixteen countries, including the United States, participated in the UN army, the Soviet Union and China participated in the Communist army. The UN lost 63,577, and China lost about one million. Total 10 million lost their families and 160 thousand orphans were left.

DMZ, a symbol of ideological dispute between North and South Korea, is the distributed area of 2km to south and north from the present cease-fire line set up according to the cease-fire agreement on July 27, 1953. And, outside 5-20km behind DMZ, the South set up another line called the Civilian Control Line. DMZ is the area promised to prohibit from stationing of the army, deployment of arms, and from installing the military facilities. And, effectively keeping the promise in Civilian Control Line, the South, according to its necessity, prevented civilian from settling there and from making the industrial activity. Needless to say, the North might have set up such a line to its purpose. Devoid of people, only rare plants and animals exist in an unnatural nature preserve.

Now, it is totally unexpected heritage from the Korean War. It is a huge war museum showing the past and present of sharp military confrontation between North and South. Various weapons, steel helmets and badges ofrank are just lied in the area. Also it is an ecologic nature history museum preserving self-generated ecosystem in vast region of 64 million of full of rare species.

Separation

Across her 3,000 history, Korea had built up its homogeneous culture and society. However, cultural and social separations began to emerge after Korea was divided into two different government bodies.

In 1910, the Choson dynasty, the last kingdom in Korean Peninsula, was annexed by Japan. As the aftermath of the World War II, the surrender of Japan led to the immediate division of Korea into two occupation zones, with the United States administering the southern half of the peninsula and the U.S.S.R. taking over the area to the north of the 38th parallel. This division was meant to be temporary until the United States, U.K., Soviet Union, and China could arrange a trusteeship administration.

In 1948, Initial hopes for a unified and independent Korea quickly evaporated as the politicians of the Cold War and the domestic opposition to the trusteeship plan resulted in establishment of two separate nations with diametrically opposed political, economic, and social systems.

In the 21st century, today, it has been more than 50 years, since Korea was divided into the North and the South.

Toward different directions... socially and culturally

After 50 years of division into two opposed entities, currently, social and cultural gaps between North and South Korea are getting more evident.

Not only from the very evident difference of political bodies, the gaps between two countries can be seen from every aspect of social and cultural factors: from their economy through their pop-culture.

Now, they are two different countries, but once they were one. At this point, we need to find bridges to reconnect and resurrect their common cultural and social base.
Dispersed Families

June 25, 2000, Kim Dae-Jung, the former president of South Korea and north Korean leader Kim Jong-II made a famous joint declaration at Pyongyang, the 6.25 declaration. It was one of the biggest political events in the Korea history. Kim Dae-Jung received the Nobel Peace Prize after the summit for his efforts to reconcile with North Korea and promote democracy in the South. One of the agreements of the declaration is permitting many dispersed family meet together. So, after the year 2000, we had 12 meeting events at hotels in Seoul, Pyongyang and Kumgang Mt., the one after the other. On July 13, 2005, the number of South Korean people who officially applied to meet their family in North is 124,339. Even though the government made 10th national event of dispersed family meeting for 6 years, the number who met their family is just 3,852. The remaining people who are waiting for their turn are rapidly passing away. In average, ten people already died today. Moreover, the events were just 5 days meeting and after four nights, they re-separate with no promise. It is the continuing tragedy for everyone.

715,968 still missing. 3,852 have met their family once.

![Image](image-url)
Kaesong Industrial Complex

This project aims to address the space between two political contexts. The site is located at the Demilitarized Zone on the Korean peninsula, between two states still technically at war. The political moment is the present one, where efforts for inter-Korean relationships are being made, after being separated for nearly fifty years.

With doubts about the sustainability of the Communist monarchy and the freefall of the North Korean economy, experts are beginning to suspect that reunification on the Korean Peninsula may happen sooner than expected.

The South Korean government fears a hasty reunification process because of the effects that it may have on a strong, although young and fragile economy. If reunification happens as fast as it did in Germany (a matter of months according to some, 2 hours according to others) at least 20 million impoverished inhabitants of North Korea will storm South Korean borders.

Solely driven by the fear of this ominous threat, the South Korean government has adopted policies - namely that of unfettered economic assistance to the North - that will slow down North Korea’s collapse. These policies, collectively dubbed the Sunshine Policy, are highly controversial due to the opacity of the funding’s distribution once it reaches North Korea.

Two major projects arose out of the Sunshine Policy, the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Kumgangsan Resort. Dubbed as joint North-South projects, most of the funding was (and is) provided by Hyundai-Asan, a South Korean private company.

These two projects, one industrial and the other tourist, represent a very specific and unique relationship between two nation-states that have drifted apart economically, politically, and culturally, but are tied together by threads of blood and kin.
KAESONG INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX:

The joint South-North Korean economic complex opened in 2004 with the help of major investment by the South Korean public/private investment company, Hyundai-Asan. Capital was invested for the reconstruction of major infrastructure, such as a highway and railroad line that links the South and North, along with major construction of the complex itself.

Plans have been drawn up for the continuing development of the region as a central urban nexus, to be completed in 2012. The complex looks into the future as a central urban point for a reunified Korea.

As shown in the map below, transit to and from South Korea from the Kaesong industrial complex consists mainly of goods, machinery, or intangible infrastructure, such as capital, electricity, and communications. From North Korea, human labor is commuted in and out of the complex.

The complex is an opportunity for both nations to supply their greatest assets to a joint industrial effort. South Korea supplies technologically savvy infrastructure and capital, while North Korea supplies cheap physical labor.

North Korea sees to gain $600 million from the complex annually, while South Korea benefits from North Korean labor, which is paid $37.50/month for each worker.

The project is greatly ambitious as the two governments hope for an expansion from the approximately 20 South Korean companies that invested in the complex at its opening in 2004, to at least 2000 international factories in 2012. This would increase the number of North Korean employees from the approximately 8000 employees to 700,000 employees.

Included in this surge of civilian labor would be a major urban planning scheme incorporating residential, commercial streets, and leisure areas to create a joint reunified city.

map title: INTER-KOREAN FREE TRADE ZONE,

KAESONG INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX:

The mapping on the left indicates the decentralized nature of checkpoints and instruction that the North Korean laborers must go through on a daily basis to become effective workers. The mapping on the right indicates the utopian nature of the planning scheme, 20 million square meters to be built by 2012, that includes not only residential and commercial zones, but golf courses to attract tourism.

There are three major issues to the Kaesong Industrial Complex:

1. Opaque Wage Distribution
Rumors run rampant about how out of total wages paid to the laborer, only $1 is actually given to the worker per month; the rest is supposedly supporting the Kim monarchy, including his nuclear program. The lack of transparency as to where the wages are going is a particular issue that is being watched closely by global watchdogs, Human Rights Watch and the United States. There has been discussion recently for a bank network to be set up within the complex.

2. Poorly trained North Korean Labor
Another issue is the lack of skills North Korean laborers have. As of now, the ratio of South Korean supervisor to North Korean workers is 1:4. The ideal is 1:10, but as quoted in The New York Times, “that will take time.” Also in the same article, it is said that North Korean construction workers are one-third as efficient as their South Korean counterparts. The mapping on the left attempts to indicate some of the issues with training, and how a potential method to raise efficiency would be to create a centralized educational facility.

3. Lack of Labor Community
The other is the fear of labor abuses, due to a lack of labor community. As stated by the Human Rights Watch, "Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining" is one aspect of International Human Rights Treaties that is not being followed at Kaesong.

map title: DIAGRAM OF URBAN/LABOR CONTEXT OF KAESONG
Two Capital Cities: Pyongyang and Seoul

To study the effects of the political and social differences within the Korean peninsula, which has been divided for more than 50 years, a reading of urban morphology the capital city of S.Korea and N.Korea, Seoul and Prong- yang respectively, was done.

Pyongyang:
- Location: 39°02'N, 125°45'E
- Population: 2,741,269
- Area: 3,194 km²

Seoul:
- Location: 37°33'N, 126°59'E
- Population: 10,297,004
- Area: 606.4 km²
Mapping of Pyongyang

Figure 1 is a mapping of the conditions that occurred between the period of the independence from Japanese colonial era (1945) and the Korean war (1950). Industries were developed on the south part of the river and highly dense areas and institutions were located on the north. Now the city has grown towards the north, and has a series of public facilities such as stadiums, public buildings, and squares.

Fig. 1
1947 Pyongyang

Mapping of Seoul

In 1947, the development in Seoul was concentrated in 'Old Seoul', which was bordered by Hansung fortress, and expanded to the south part along the railway. Institutions were evenly dispersed and the network of trams was well formed. The city has grown mostly towards the south across the river, and a series of parks have been developed along the river.

Fig. 3
1947 Seoul

Fig. 4
2006 Seoul
Holidays and Currency

Holidays
Holidays in North Korea focus on propagandizing its governing ideology. Their holidays show its disconnection with long history of Korea. In contrast, South Korean holidays are based on a cultural and historical lineage of traditional Korea. However, since North Korea recognized Lunar New Year’s Day and Korean Thanksgiving as their holidays, North and South can have more shared holidays.

Currency
From the currency, we can see the iconic figures and culture of the country. North and South Korean money visualize the gaps between the two. The figures on the money, North Korea put importance on their ideology, by representing their leader's birthplace and social classes. However, South Korean money presents important historic figures and cultural pieces.
Industries and Pop-culture

Economy

North Korea has one of the world's most centrally planned-controlled economic systems. In North Korea, the population continues to suffer from prolonged malnutrition and poor living conditions, because the large-scale military spending eats up resources needed for investment and civilian consumption. This brings great economic gaps between the North and the South, since South Korea has pushed itself toward its economic development and now has the world's 10th largest economy according to GDP.

Pop-Culture

In North Korea, not only its economy, but also its pop-culture is centrally controlled by the government. North Korean government's firm political control prevents diverse cultural experiences. Here, the pop-culture is considered as a part of ideological devices. It is contrasting with South Korean pop-culture, which is based on commercialism and personal interest. Even though we can expect North Koreans should have their real pop-culture at an individual and invisible level, the predominant pop-culture has been manipulated by its government. The gaps at public and cultural level should be one of the most biggest differences between the North and the South, which they will face, when they are reunified.
Natural Condition of the Korean Peninsular

Looking the Korean peninsular from the air gives us many different aspects of ecological connections, no matter the existence of the DMZ. Meteorological observation is one of the areas that two Korean governments should bring out the mutual collaboration for a better forecast and analysis of a natural hazards and disasters. For example, the Korean peninsular suffers from the heavy dust clouds from the Gobi desert in Northern China in every spring. The current accuracy of South Korea’s dust cloud forecasts is around 50%, because South Korean Meteorological observation Center can not obtain the dust data that comes from the China across the North Korea, South Korea currently has a diplomatic agreement with China to access the dust cloud condition from its origin in Gobi desert. Few other natural disasters that threatening the overall Korean peninsular are Typhoon, natural fire, earthquake, heavy snow fall...etc.

Korea: Climate and Natural Disaster

Monthly Typhoon Tracks

Typhoon Tracks Distribution

Ansool clouds coming to Korea

Earthquake locations around the DMZ, Since 1978
Artworks for the DMZ

Project DMZ is organized by artist, architects, Korean-Americans, to discuss and promote the role of aesthetic power in relation to bringing Korean reunification.

"Project DMZ's organizing committee struggled with these questions during the year they engaged in research and dialogue to generate the project's program: the project participants struggled with these questions, and these questions persist with the documentation of the individual projects that follow. The proposal themselves are heterogeneous.

Jane Doo, ‘Introduction’, Project DMZ

Project Director: Cathleen Crabbe
Project DMZ, New York: Storefront for Art and Architecture, 1988

Visions for the Future