Rurality Within the City: a study of the interrelationship between urban and rural areas

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Rurality Within the City:
a study of the interrelationship between urban and rural areas
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Thesis project
School of Architecture 2012-2013,
Syracuse University
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Today, big cities offer a living environment enviable by people everywhere for its wealth, resources, and convenience. Indeed, in a big city, its citizens have the best chance to get a good job as well as easy access to practically anything else they could ask for, which is why it is so popular for people to want to move into these areas. However, in South Korea, there are a significant number of people doing just the opposite; moving from the big cities to the suburbs, and the number of these people have been rapidly increasing since 1997, when the IMF (International Monetary Fund) Korea bailout occurred. Some reasons for this big moving trend include the problems of living in big cities such as the current unemployment crisis, the high living costs, and availability of education for their children. However, a large number of people decide to return to the city where they came from due to the difficulties in the suburbs such as low income and poor living condition, which ends up hurting the vitality of the suburbs.

The project I am proposing will analyze the problems that cause people to move out of big cities as well as the reasons why they decide to return after having relocated to the suburbs. Also, I will examine the urban spatial patterns within the big cities as well as the suburbs in order to investigate how the big cities and suburbs are related or connected with each other. Next, I will study the present potentially harmful issues if this phenomenon keeps continuing; this will be one of the main components of my argument. I will then argue that designing a new type of architecture dedicated to fulfilling the real needs of the people who move out of big cities into the suburbs and move back to the cities is the key to prevent social and political problems such as elderly society within suburbs and urban sprawl.

For the precedent project, in 1898, Ebenezer Howard initiated a method of urban planning in the United Kingdom called The Garden City Movement. The design was to theoretically serve as an economically independent city with short commute times but still with a preserved countryside atmosphere. The project of Letchworth became the first project that succeeded for middle class workers to provide affordable spaces to live and work. Also, its influence has reached all over the world, and even in South Korea now, there is a special self-governing city called Sejong City that the South Korea government recently created as its own special administrative district. Still under construction, the site of this new city is located two hours away from Seoul, the capital of Korea, and the plan is for 36 government agencies to fully relocate to this specialized area by 2015.

The other precedent project is Linked Hybrid, Beijing, by Steven Holl. The concept of the project is “city within a city” showing the idea of an independent city that is located in the city. Steven Holl saw Beijing before 1980s as a horizontal city that objects in the city seemed to be all related and connected each other. However, after 1980s, Beijing has become fragmented and focused on the vertical movement. At this point, he tried to have a new type of contemporary architecture that links these two different historical conditions. Overall, this project offers an alternative model of residential developments with the idea of mixing the old urban patterns and the programs of shopping, dining, education, entertainment and residential areas.
The new intervention that I will propose will take into account the importance of not only preserving the nature surrounding the suburbs for a peaceful relationship with the environment and a clean safe area for people to move but also bringing the benefits from the big cities. Because it is becoming clear that sustainability is one of the most important aspects of contemporary architecture, the project will take full advantage from the countryside atmosphere. On the other hand, within the intervention that I am proposing, it will also maximize the cultural and social benefits, which the suburbs do not have, from the big cities.

The second phase of the new intervention is about the programs. Architecture should respond to what is positive or negative within the existing architectural or non-architectural issue. One of the ways that architecture could answer is through the programs. For instance, being able to sustain higher education and job systems is equivalent to what a big city can provide are required within the suburb. It is becoming clear that one of the primary reasons people move back to the city is due to the unsatisfactory level of education available in the suburbs. Also, because so many people choose to return to the city upon finding their prospective future unsuccessful in the suburbs, as a result, the suburban population is quickly becoming an aged one. In this case, architecture could respond by providing new places for education and retail.

In the last phase of my proposal architectural idea, I will consider a self-sufficient system that is also one of the main reasons why city people keep moving into the suburbs nowadays. In fact, the self-sufficient life, in a suburban area, is a special aspect that cannot be found within a city life. By farming or gardening, it allows not only for people to be familiar with nature but also for new architecture to become more and more sustainable within a city.

My project proposal is to produce a new type of contemporary self-sufficient architectural place to deal not only with the economic and education issues that the rurals are lacking in but also with environmental and unemployment issues that the big cities are lacking in. While it is important to retain the countryside feel in the current suburbs, some issues to improve on for the new city area are to cater towards a younger generation’s needs. As opposed to those who are retired and are looking for a quiet place to settle down for the rest of their life in the suburbs, those moving out of the cities are looking for jobs, education for their children, and an affordable but satisfying quality of life.
Incheon
North Korea
Daejeon
Cheongju
Jeonju
Gwangju
Jeju
0 25 50km
Daegu
Busan
Changwon
Ulsan
Chuncheon
Suwon
Seoul
returning people from suburbs
people moving from big cities to suburbs
metropolitan city
potential site
capital of South Korea
abstract index background information concept
Background information

**movement of people** | general information
the issue of finding a place to live

Today, big cities offer a living environment enviable by people everywhere for their wealth, resources, and convenience. Indeed, in a big city, its citizens have the best chance to get a good job as well as easy access to practically anything else they could ask for, which is why it is so popular for people to want to move into these areas. However, in South Korea, there are a significant number of people doing just the opposite; moving from the big cities to the rurals, and the number of these people have been rapidly increasing since 1997, when the IMF (International Monetary Fund) Korea bailout occurred. Some reasons for this big moving trend include the problems of living in big cities such as the current unemployment crisis, the high living costs, and availability of education for their children. However, a large number of people decide to return to the city where they came from due to the difficulties in the suburbs such as low income and poor living condition, which ends up hurting the vitality of the rurals.
The rate of people moving into suburbs from a big city is increasing rapidly because of:

- the nature
- the self-sufficient life
- the independent life
- low living cost
- unemployment crisis in the cities
- education for their children
- traffic congestion

20-30% of people return to the big cities because of:

- lack of living condition
- low income
- educational problem

Korean baby boomers
In order to find a better place to live, people move back and forth between the cities and rural areas for different reasons, including social, environmental, financial, political and educational issues.

different age - different reason

The group of people, age of 50-59, called korean baby boomers have been in trouble the most to find where to live for their lives left.
North Korea

- **Kang-Won Do**: area: 16,874 km² (6,515 sq mi), 2nd large province, population: 1,471,513, landscape: dominated mountain.
- **Kyung-Ki Do**: area: 19,028 km² (7,347 sq mi), 1st large province, population: 2,600,032, landscape: surrounded by mountain.
- **Chung-Cheong Buk Do**: area: 10,533 km² (4,067 sq mi), 4th large province, population: 3,160,154, landscape: plain area.
- **Chung-Cheong Nam Do**: area: 1,849 km² (714 sq mi), 9th large province, population: 583,284, landscape: island and mountain.
- **Jeon-La Buk Do**: area: 10,183 km² (3,932 sq mi), 5th large province, population: 11,920,340, landscape: mountain and plain area.
- **Jeon-La Nam Do**: area: 7,433 km² (2,870 sq mi), 8th large province, population: 1,512,157, landscape: plain area.
- **Kyung-Sang Buk Do**: area: 8,628 km² (3,331 sq mi), 6th large province, population: 2,028,002, landscape: plain area.
- **Kyung-Sang Nam Do**: area: 8,067 km² (3,115 sq mi), 7th large province, population: 1,777,220, landscape: mountain and plain area.
- **JeJu Do**: area: 12,247 km² (4,729 sq mi), 3rd large province, population: 1,741,499, landscape: plain area.
Background information

movement of people | within provinces and cities

people choose to move to the rural areas because of some important aspects; distance from the cities, the level of education, nature around the site, variety of jobs, infrastructure (transportation) and living cost.
Korean emigrants in Japan and Manchuria were repatriated on a massive scale.

1950
- Korean War
- 25 million people per 62,000 square miles
- GNP-$80
- Economic growth start
- Demographic transition
- Korean emigrants in Japan and Manchuria were repatriated on a massive scale
- Baby boomers (7 million people) born

1960
- Industrialization
- Modernization
- Proportion of urban population - 28%
- The government became more involved in family planning

1970
- Urbanization start
- Economic miracle
- 31,000 registered vehicles
- Proportion of urban population - 41%
- Highway development
- Elementary school
- Middle school

1980
- Summer Olympics
- GNP-$1,600
- Getting children marriage
- Proportion of urban population - 80%
- 11,134,000 registered vehicles
- GNP-$6,740
- High technology age

1990
- Soccer World Cup
- GNP-$10,000
- Proportion of urban population - 82%
- 11,134,000 registered vehicles
- GNP-$20,870
- Children get married
- Their children go to college

2000
- Most construction area
- Simple work
- About 30% - College
- Employed

2010
- Being retired

2020
- Proportion of urban population - 80%
- 11,134,000 registered vehicles
- GNP-$20,870

Historical issues in Korea
- Korean Baby Boomer's Life average
Background information
korean baby boomers

Korean baby Boomers, over 7 million people born between 1955 and 1963, comprise about 15% of the total population. Boomers grew up while Korea was undergoing a rapid process of industrialization, modernization, and urbanization. More than half of Korean Baby Boomers who are currently living in cities have relocated from rural areas.
American baby Boomer

- born in 1946-64 during demographic boom after WWII (1945)
- about 78,000,000 people (26% of the population)
- own 63% of the whole stock in country
- major group of people who achieved economic development
- government economic support - strong
- average age of retirement - 67

Japanese baby Boomer

- born in 1929-38 during demographic boom after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5)
- about 6,800,000 people (5% of the population)
- own 34% of the whole stock in country
- major group of people who achieved economic development
- government economic support - strong
- average age of retirement - 65

Population: 78m ppl born in 1946-64 (47-65 year-old)
Wealthy: 63% $860,000 / person

Population: 6.8m ppl born in 1946-49 (62-65 year-old)
Wealthy: 34% $200,000 / person
Korean baby Boomer

born in 1955-63 during demographic boom after Korean War (1953)
about 7,120,000 people (15% of the population)

own 22% of the stock in Korea
major group of people who achieved economic miracle
government economic support - weak
average age of retirement - 55 years old
average monthly income - $3,446
expenses - $2,464
saving - $480

wealth - real estate - 82%
financial asset - 15%
etc - 3%

“sandwich generation” - a group of people who care for their elderly parents as well as having a duty to support dependent children

lack of education
new city within in a city

rural

lack of living condition
nature
low living cost
low income
affordable house
low level of education
education
low living cost
lack of transportation
communal living
self-sufficient life
lack of cultural or social life
calm and peace
limit of jobs
independent life
boring

environmental issue

social issue

gentrification
high living cost
cultural or social life
too competitive
unemployment crisis
traffic congestion
alive
urban sprawl
living condition
high level of education
many job choices
transportation system
polluted
living condition

political issue

educational issue

training
high level of education
transportation system
unemployment crisis
traffic congestion

financialal issue

entertainment
lack of affordable house
fragments
exciting
living condition

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Producing a new type of contemporary intervention to deal not only with the economic and education issues that the rural areas are lacking in but also with environmental and unemployment issues that the big cities are lacking in. While it is important to retain the countryside feel in the current suburbs, an issue to improve on for the new city area are to cater towards a younger generation’s needs. As opposed to those who are retired and are looking for a quiet place to settle down for the rest of their life in the suburbs, those moving out of the cities are looking for jobs, education for their children, and an affordable but satisfying quality of life.
The changing urban-rural interface:

**Before 1960**
- Urban
- Rural

**1960s**
- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

**Now**
- Urban
- Pre-urban
- Rural

**Future**
- Urban
- Pre-urban

**Key Points**
- Korean War
- Baby Boom
- Population: 25m
- GNP: $80
- Car: 31,000
- Population: 39m

**Economic Miracle**
- GNP: $1,600-10,000
- Car: 11,134,000
- Population: 50m

**Urbanization and Demographic Transition**
The changing urban/rural interface | shape and process of getting urbanized
In 1968, the first highway called kyungbu expressway was built that connected between Seoul and Busan which were the biggest cities in the country. After that, preexisting cities around the highway grew rapidly and new cities appeared as well. More and more highways have been designed and built to connect between the cities (big cities-small cities, small cities-small cities and big cities-big cities). As a result, these infrastructures helped the growth of the cities and made an urban system as well as the network between the urban and rural areas. However, for the future, this phenomenon (city growth) called urbanization will cause those rural areas to disappear.
quality of life perceived
50-59 old

CBD

INNER CITY

SUBURBS

URBAN FRINGE

RURAL
There is a study showing the quality of life that Korean baby boomers perceive when they move to rural from urban areas. This group of people feel that the quality of life increases when they go to countryside where greens are spread out as well as self-sufficient life is there.
Linked Hybrid | basic concept

Space

- horizontality and connected
- verticality and fragments
- vertical horizontality and connected

Beijing before 1980s
Beijing after 1980s
proposed

city of fragments

city of spaces
“The 220,000 square meter pedestrian-oriented Linked Hybrid complex, sited adjacent to the site of old city wall of Beijing, aims to counter the current privatized urban developments in China by creating a new twenty-first century porous urban space, inviting and open to the public from every side. Filmic urban public space; around, over and through multifaceted spatial layers, as well as the many passages through the project, make the Linked Hybrid an “open city within a city”. The project promotes interactive relations and encourages encounters in the public spaces that vary from commercial, residential, and educational to recreational. The entire complex is a three-dimensional urban space in which buildings on the ground, under the ground and over the ground are fused together.”

-from Steven Hall Architects
http://www.stevenholl.com/project-detail.php?id=58
Seoul, Korea | general information

Seoul is the capital and largest metropolis of South Korea. Its population has become more than 10 million, it is the largest city proper in the OECD developed world. The Seoul National Capital Area, which includes the surrounding Incheon metropolis and Gyeonggi province, is the world’s second largest metropolitan area with over 25 million people, home to over half of South Koreans along with 366,000 international residents.

SITE
Urban-rural condition within actual site | Seoul - Seoungnam - Gwangju - Icheon
Gangnam District is one of the 25 gu (local government districts) which make up the city of Seoul, South Korea. Gangnam is literally “South of the (Han) River”. As of the 2010 census, Gangnam District had a population of 527,641, making it the 4th most populated district in Seoul. Gangnam District is the third largest district in Seoul with an area of 39.5 km². Gangnam is one of three gu that make up the Greater Gangnam Area along with neighboring Seocho District and Songpa District. Combined, these three gu cover approximately 120 km² land and had a population of 1,567,881 as of 2010, making up 20% of the area and 15% of the population of Seoul.
There are extremely different living conditions between two areas which are divided by Highway #1. Area A called Banpo dong is a well-known area where the rich people live in as well as that has a great living condition within Seoul city. Most buildings are the residential towers, and there are private green spaces in between the towers. However, Area B named Nonhyun dong is where the commercials are concentrated and where a lot of people go to enjoy as well. In terms of living condition, mostly it is in a bad shape because of the density of the buildings, lack of green spaces and density of people.
traffic congestion

green space
The site, Gangnam, has developed very fast and become a place where the commercialism and residentiality are concentrated since the highway#1 (kyungbu expressway) was built. Also, the district on the left side from the highway called Banpo dong is in a good shape in terms of living condition compared to Nonhyun dong (right side of the highway). There are different types of urban issues (traffic congestion, green spaces, infrastructures, typology and density of people and buildings) between these two districts.
What the potential of this site is the possibilities to connect between two different districts physically as well as conceptually with using the bridge idea above the highway #1. There is a large public green space in Banpo area that is also used as a buffering zone of the highway. The extension of the green space from the Banpo area to the Nonhyun area will allow itself to become a better living condition by creating a green space as well as open space in a dense area.
This site is where the Hotel is located now, however, the site would be more useful if it is used as a residential town that is related to nature (green). It is because this site is the starting point of separating the city into two different models. There is a possibility to deal with this fact.

“Sejong City was designed to be a model planned community with best-in-class communications infrastructure.”

Livesey, Graham. Arq: Architectural Research Quarterly 15. 3 (Sep 2011): 271-278

Like the Garden City, we can consider cities as either gardens, or complex ecologies, or as a tapestry of functions, only some of which are gardens and parks. Nevertheless, cities are ecologies of infrastructure, buildings, people and other organisms, social and political systems, biological and environmental factors.


the creation of limited-population, fixed-size (pedestrian-scale), self-sufficient and sustainable towns centered around well-planned transportation systems.


It is the idea of the “Garden City” movement to carry out the city attractions into the country, and yet not to destroy the country charm.