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I, Yunoh Kim, hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in Architecture.

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Empowering Individuals:
Morphological Transition of the Kim Il-Sung Square from Formal Control to Formal Exchange

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EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

Morphological Transition of the Kim Il-Sung Square from Formal Control to Formal Exchange

A thesis submitted to the Graduate school of the University of Cincinnati in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture in the School of Architecture and Interior Design of the College of Design, Architecture, Art, Planning

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Fig.0.1. An officer of the Korean People’s Army, concealed individuality under the collectivism in North Korea.
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Fig. 1. A rally in the Kim Il-Sung square, Pyongyang, against the US & South Korea.
Abstract

Since the Korean war armistice in 1953, North Korea has been a totalitarian state, governed by three generations of the Kim’s dictatorship. With the ‘Juche’ ideology, a variant of Marxism-Leninism, the Kim regime ruled the country by fear and oppression with strong military force. Under the Juche doctrine, only collectivism should be manifested whereas individualism is absolutely prohibited. Power and privilege only exist for the elite class and the rest of the citizens have been repressed by the extremely strict regulations which have eliminated basic human rights and freedoms of expression, belief, personal ownership, and individual trading. The state prevents popular unrest by isolating its citizens from the rest of the world and by relentlessly punishing would-be defectors with banishment in prison camps. The thesis starts by questioning “what would happen if the Korean Peninsula is reunified after the autocratic regime of North Korea collapsed? How would the erased human rights and the individual characters of North Koreans be recovered? Is there a role for architecture to play in transition from absolute government power to empowered individuals?”

After the reunification, as the market economy rapidly make inroads into North Korea, appearance of street markets is anticipated as a resultant of the great migration and the following job scarcity. The thesis studies how architecture can intervene in the emergence of markets, particularly in the Kim Il-Sung square, to empower individuals and uses the market as an opportunity of regaining their lost human rights and liberties. The architectural intervention in the market will encourage a transition of the square’s property from formal control to formal exchange from the bottom-up level.

“Leaving North Korea is not like leaving any other country. It is more like leaving another universe. I will never truly be free of its gravity, no matter how far I journey.”

- Hyeonseo Lee, a North Korean defector
Fig. 2. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un waves during a military parade in the Kim Il-Sung Square.
North Korea, officially the ‘Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’ (DPRK), is very unique, yet politically and diplomatically isolated from the rest of the world. Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, contains a distinctive urban structure that was planned for the realization of a utopian communist city based on the theory of ‘Communist City Planning’ originated from the Soviet Union.

In the light of the recent international pressure and isolation that North Korea has confronted, as well as the unstable state of the current regime, the collapse of the North Korean dictatorship in the near future is carefully predicted. A question emerges from this insight; how the transition in politics and market system will bring radical socio-economic and cultural changes to Pyongyang? And what forces will put Pyongyang to transformation of its urban fabric and architecture?

Since the era of the first dictator ‘Kim Il-Sung’, the Juche (self-reliance) ideology has been a central theme in the domestic political process of building and consolidating the North Korean regime of a one-man rule. (Fig.2.1.) Within the Juche ideology, the Military First (the ‘Songun’) policy has dominated the political system; ‘a line of military-first economic construction’ acts as an economic system. Under the Kim family’s dictatorship, North Koreans are oppressed through limitations and denials of basic human rights, including the right to food, bodily integrity, free movement, freedom from violence, privacy, and free thought. (Fig.2.2.)

In order to prevent social unrest, a series of secretive prison camps are operated where perceived opponents of the government are sent to face torture and abuse, starvation rations, and forced labor.\(^2\) Fear of collective punishment is used to silence dissent. (Fig.2.3.) Citizens are isolated from the rest of the world by not allowing independent media, functioning civil society, or religious freedom. In this totalitarian political structure, the government holds supreme power to control everything and, as a result, the elite class (party and state officials, high ranking officers in the Army) have privileges while working class (90% of population) struggles from the horrifying life condition. Due to the restriction of private trade and ownership, market economy system is, technically, never allowed and only the government-controlled markets are being operated. (In fact, although the government strictly restricts trades between individuals, black markets have formed secretly and have been dramatically increased in number since the famines in 1990’s and the failure of currency reform in 2009.)

Architecture in North Korea plays a part in propagating the nation’s socio-political doctrine and serving all aspects of everyday life of the collective. The Kim Il-Sung square (Fig. 2.4.), the most symbolic place in North Korea, is where the dictatorship, state power, collectivism, and social oppression are concurrently manifested. The Kim Il-Sung square was priorly planned for the master plan of reconstructing the post-war Pyongyang and it is physically and symbolically the heart of present Pyongyang (government and public buildings were built around the square). Significant parades and rallies have been held to commemorate many events and also to show the

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world the military capabilities of the DPRK. This symbolic square will inevitably undergo a dramatic transformation of its properties after the reunification as the city will experience a radical transition accompanied by the influx of capital investments and commercialization/commodification of lands. The thesis looks at an opportunity if the square can be reborn as a place where the symbolic image of the square shifts from the power of the government and privileged classes towards the power of the common (the majorities).

Most post-socialist cities, during and after the transition, have undergone fast transformation in physicality/mechanism of the cities by the invasion of the capitalist development. On the bright side, the transition has brought rapid economic development but on the other hand, has caused diverse urban related issues. Looking at other post-socialist cities in China and Eastern Europe, vitalization in the market economy has been brought by the radical transformation of the cities accompanied with capitalist development. Streets have been filled with small to medium scale commercial/retail businesses and large numbers of new office/residential buildings have been built in and around the city. The quality of people’s life, however, did not improve much (except few cases). Concentrated developments in the urban areas caused migrations to cities and yielded high unemployment rate. Moreover, this unbalanced money driven development created a social stratification which leaded to the emergence of ghettos (ghetto of wealth and ghetto of poverty), informality (informal growth), and illegality (prostitution, black market, and etc.).

Pyongyang will apparently experience the similar physical and systematic transformation as other post socialist cities have undergone; spreads of political democratization, shift of the economic system to free market, state owned property to private owned property, great migration, and informal growth. However, the requirements of democracy (human rights, freedom and participation) should take priority before any types of reforms so that the money-driven developments do not disrupt and overwhelm the process of recovering their lost freedom and rights of citizens. The thesis will carefully look into the street markets formed spontaneously by the minorities in Pyongyang, particularly in the Kim Il-Sung square, for the reason that (a) the market will be a form of expression for the economic liberty in North Korea and (b) it will be an evidence of the autonomous involvement of the citizens in transforming the city. The Kim Il-Sung square as a potential ground for the emerging market, the thesis seeks for an opportunity to interfere in the reforming process of the square and its formal properties in order to foster a successful transition from the formal control to formal exchange while supporting the markets from the bottom-up level.
Fig. 3. The Fall of the Berlin Wall, November 9, 1989
Literary Research

Sonia A. Hirt, in “The Iron Curtains”, explores the post-transition phenomena occurred in Eastern European cities and Reinhard Wießner, in “Urban development in East Germany”, discusses about population movement and residential developments in East Germany after the reunification. Nan Ellin points out the important elements in modern urban condition and suggests directions for new type of urbanism called “integral urbanism”. Dongwoo Yim, in his book “Pyongyang, and after Pyongyang” investigates how Pyongyang has been planned and developed over the last 60 years and talks about the potentials of future Pyongyang and proposes a direction towards the new urbanism in the future Pyongyang.

In the book “Iron Curtains: Gates, Suburbs and Privatizations of Space in the Post-Socialist City” by Sonia A. Hirt, the author makes a statement on issues of urbanism in post-socialist cities in Europe and other parts of the world while highlighting the complex connections between cultures and cities. Socialist cities had vast mass housing districts erected from pre-made panels in accordance with the tenets of the modernist urban design. As a result, socialist cities were significantly denser and more compact than capitalist cities. Those cities were also over-supplied with public and industrial functions but under-supplied with retail. Downtown in particular, were rich in public as well as residential uses, but lacked the variety of commercial. Another important characteristic of socialist cities is they exhibited less social.

diversity, marginality, and informality of people, places, and behaviors than the capitalist counterparts. They were safer and less segregated. Socialist cities were more dominated in aesthetics than capitalist cities by a rigorous branch of modernism. The visual result was an environment which was marked by such grayness, uniformity, and anonymity that it evoked outright boredom. Socialist cities, then, lacked the diversity and spontaneity of spaces, styles, and people that make the soul of urbanity. (Fig.3.3)

During the transition in post-socialist cities, the fundamental socio-economic and political transformation that followed by the collapse of socialist regimes inevitably altered the chief mechanisms of city/building. The post-socialist urban change entailed key features of socialist urbanism: (1) the end of visual uniformity and the advent of a free mixing of styles, (2) a tilting of the land-use balance away from public (and industrial) and toward commercial uses, (3) an emergence of stark social contrasts, informality and marginality, and (4) the end of compact spatial form (Pyongyang would not possibly be the same case). Today’s East European cities are neither compact nor defined by a clear edge. Low-density urban decentralization may have been the most notable process of post-socialist urban change. Cities in many East European countries are currently sprawling at rates far exceeding those in Western Europe. The decline in public and residential uses was accompanied by a much sharper reduction in industrial uses: vast chunks of old industrial enterprises in central urban areas became derelict. Commercial uses, in contrast, skyrocketed. The scale of retail has shifted over time: from small, informal spaces during the 1990s (Fig.3.4) (kiosks,

5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
remodeled garages) to much larger premises such as Western-style suburban malls and hypermarkets. Along with poverty and marginality, urban informality, spontaneity, and illegality became the hallmarks of the transition. (Fig. 3.5) In the poorer nations of the Balkans, informality took the form not only of self-styled building additions, renovations, and individual homes, but also of whole new neighborhoods. It provides an idea of how the Eastern European countries are great precedents to grasp about what are the main issues, how post-socialist cities have suffered, and how they plan to deal with it in the future. This would be an important clue to anticipate future issues/conditions will occur after the transition in Pyongyang, North Korea.

In the ‘Integral Urbanism’, Nan Ellin highlights that important qualities for places to be in flow include hybridity, connectivity, porosity, authenticity, and vulnerability. Together, these qualities describe a shift from emphasizing isolated objects and separating functions to considering larger contexts and multifunctional places. The values expressed by these qualities veer away from master planning which, in its focus on mastery, control, and efficiency, tends to generate fragmented cities without soul or character. Instead, integral urbanism proposes more punctual interventions that contribute to activating places (enhancing flow) by making connections and caring for neglected or abandoned “in-between” spaces or “no-man’s lands.” (Fig. 3.6) Nan believes, in the best-case scenarios, these interventions have a tentacular or domino effect, catalyzing other interventions in an ongoing and never-ending process.

Integral urbanism might be regarded as a form of acupuncture on a city. She inserts that by opening up blockages along ‘urban meridians’, just as acupuncture opens blockages along the energy meridians of our bodies, this approach can liberate the life force of a city and its dynamic communities. (Fig.3.7 & 3.8) Opening urban meridians may be applied to existing built environments as well as new development, and it can take various forms, depending on the context. It may call for the creation of vital hubs of activity, a quality civic space and green space, easing movement and facilitating connections, or other appropriate responses. Because integral urbanism is not aiming for producing master plans, it is not obsessed with controlling and determining outcomes. Instead, it aims to allow things to happen, things that may be unforeseen. It will be produced by people for people and these interventions will be arrived at intuitively as well as rationally. They are inspired by physical context as well as the social and historical contexts. As a result, integral urbanism offers a “live theory” for enhancing the places we live in. It is very important for my thesis that, even though the influx of capitalistic development into the future Pyongyang cannot be stopped, integral urbanism can be an alternative against incremental developing which suggests a new scenario considering deeply about values in variety aspects of the city as an inspiration of new developments.

In the book, “Pyongyang and after Pyongyang”, Dongwoo Yim predicts the fall of Kim Jong Un’s regime in the near future and talks about the two most possible areas which will be confronted with radical transformation. First, symbolic buildings, monumental squares, and administration facilities

9. Ibid.
concentrated in the city center, allowed by the lack of land value, will start being encroached by capitalistic development whenever land starts to have value on it. Second, green infrastructure which includes urban agriculture and leisure parks will also be another area for future development. Since Pyongyang designated many areas for green infrastructure in the city, it will likely be transformed into new development areas due to low land price.¹⁰ (Fig.3.9. & 3.10.)

Anticipated realistic scale of development in the future Pyongyang is also studied by Yim in this book. Yim believes that integral growth model from ‘Integral Urbanism’ (Nan Ellin) should be suggested for the future development of Pyongyang. Although radical growth model with a completely new master plan can also be a possibility for a former socialist city, a consideration of the economic scale and existing idealistic socialist urban structure of Pyongyang suggests that the integral growth model is more likely to be adopted. As Ellin has observed, this integral growth model generates new development at “greyfield”, which is defined as underutilized area, and activates those dead spaces in the city. Yim asserts that unlike ad-hoc master plan type of development, the model focused on catalytic urban projects can influence and generate other developments in the city. It would be more dynamic and flexible model than the rigid master plans.¹¹

In the book, Yim makes a critical point about the Kim Il-Sung square. He predicts that the Kim Il-Sung square, the most symbolic place for the state power and the Juche ideology, will undergo a dramatic transformation after the collapse of the

¹¹ Ibid.
autocratic regime. Because of its central location, ease of accessibility, and well developed public transportation system around the square, street vendors will appear in/around the square. Meanwhile, increasing land value of the central Pyongyang will bring money driven developments around the square. As a result, the Kim Il-Sung square can possibly be a place where the top-down and the bottom-up developments may conflict. (Fig.3.11. & 3.12.)

Fig.3.11. Teheran road in Seoul, South Korea.

Fig.3.12. Black market in Anju, North Korea.
Fig. 4. Socialist communal housing (flats) in Bucharest, Romania
1. Redevelopment of Leipzig, Germany

During the research in precedents for redevelopment in post-socialist city, one project stood out because of its huge success in transforming declined industrial area into an area with positive image where people start new businesses and seek for cultural interactions. Between 1990 and 1992, about 80% of the businesses in Plagwitz, in Leipzig in Germany, discontinued their operations due to the drastic decline of outlets in eastern and central European markets. (Fig.4.1.) One by one, the sites and buildings of the industrial location in the west of the city fell into disuse. The industrial and commercial complexes located in the district’s southern parts were in as bad a structural condition as the late 19th century, densely populated residential structures north of Heinrich-Heine-Canal. The preservation, change of use and integration of the historically important architecture was one of the guiding principles of the urban design measure right from the start.\(^\text{12}\)

In order to address the economic structural change, restore the area’s attractiveness and preserve the building stock of outstanding quality, Leipzig council integrated the planning area in a comprehensive urban development concept for the entire city. For its intensive planning activities, the council had formulated the guiding idea for a successful realization very early on: preserving the valuable basic urban structure and integrating listed industrial buildings as well as achieving a

Precedents - Redevelopment of Leipzig, Germany

Fig. 4.3. Abandoned Old tapestry industrial site, Leipzig, Germany

Fig. 4.4. Redevelopment of the old tapestry factory into a residential block, Leipzig, Germany
mixed use along with the corresponding upgrade of the environment.\textsuperscript{13} A district and service center, a hotel, an office park, as well as retail and catering establishments were housed in the buildings of a former yarn factory. Various residential and commercial buildings were newly built. (Fig.4.3. & 4.4.) The mainly residential area north of Heinrich-Heine-Canal became a redevelopment area and has largely been renewed and upgraded by measures targeted at the residential environment. Numerous individual projects had an immediate motivation effect for private investors and were hence able to contribute to the acceleration and success of the realization. The redevelopment of the Heinrich-Heine-Canal and the construction of the corresponding footpaths and bicycle lanes (Fig.4.5.), the refurbishment of the fire station “Feuerwache West”, the conversion of the former “Konsum” bakery into an office building, the new construction of the “Elster” housing estate on the site of the former yarn mill and the realization of the “Elster” business park serve as examples for many other such subprojects. Due to the central location and popularity of the area along the Karl-Heine-Canal in the eastern section of Plagwitz, larger projects developed with relative speed, for example via transforming commercial plots into residential plots.\textsuperscript{14} The image change thus created brought about many smaller projects and increasingly gained its own momentum. Today, the “business start-up district” Plagwitz projects an increasingly positive image and is consciously perceived by the population.\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
2. Zaryadye Park, Moscow, Russia

Zaryadye Park in Moscow, Russia, by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, is another interesting precedent to look at. During the 1960s, the Hotel Rossiya with more than 3,000 rooms was built; it was the largest hotel in the world and also the ugliest. (Fig. 4.7.) Its hulking facade dominated views of the Kremlin and Red Square. It was torn down in 2006, but while other Soviet behemoths were replaced with western five-star hotels, the site of the Rossiya remained a derelict wasteland in the heart of the Russian capital for almost 10 years. Diller Scofidio + Renfro came up with a proposal that transforming the territory into four zones typical of different parts of Russia: tundra, steppe, forest, and marsh which will have a different feel and offer a different view on to the nearby Kremlin. The project involves artificial microclimates, and is designed according to the principles of “wild urbanism”, creating “a clear system of interaction between nature and the city”. This park forms an important link between the city’s famous monuments and the neighboring urban districts, representing a new commitment to providing modern civic spaces. Muscovites welcome the fact that (a) such a prime spot in central Moscow is to be opened for the public and (b) it is a park, not another office complex or luxury hotel.

Fig. 4.10. Overlooking the Zaryadye park, Moscow’s first park in over 50 years.

Fig. 4.11. The park will house the artificial micro-climates that will allow for year-round use of the park.
In post socialist cities, punctual interventions and reuse of the existing buildings/sites have been tested and successfully drew positive impacts in the cities. However, most of the interventions have been done after undergoing all the difficult problems from fast reforms of the city, because the city and government were not prepared with a specific plan for the radical transformation of the city. In order to lead Pyongyang towards a healthily developed city, specific planned initiatives which will provide clear directions of future development are absolutely necessary. Considering about future alteration of Pyongyang’s urban DNA, a new urban morphology can be suggested. It is a synthesized urban form combined with existing structure that is based on socialist ideology, instead of building something completely new to the city which can be easily seen in Chinese megacities.

OMA presents a great example of how a socialist obsolete relic can be re-recognized and presented once more by the modern architectural intervention. OMA redesigned the ‘Garage Gorky Park’, a prefabricated concrete restaurant which has been derelict for more than two decades, turned it into a building with exhibition galleries on two levels, a creative center for children, shop, cafe, auditorium and offices. OMA preserves original Soviet-era elements including a large mosaic, tiles, and brick while incorporating a range of innovative architectural and curatorial devices.17

Fig. 4.15. The existing concrete structure is enclosed with polycarbonate façade.

Fig. 4.16. Renovated into a seating area at the staircase. (Fig. 4.14.)

Fig. 4.17. Exhibition area on the ground floor.
While there are successful examples of rebirthing the abandoned socialist relics, there are also situations that socialist architecture became a place adding inactiveness and emptiness to the city. Most socialist squares in the Eastern European countries already existed as social / economical hubs before the beginning of the socialist era and changed its usage for the political / ideological purposes. Piața Constituției and Piața Unirii in Bucharest, Romania, however, were created during the communist era merely for the ideological purpose, for the realization of the true communism in the city.

Piața Constituției (Fig.4.18.), also known as Palace Square, is one of the largest squares in the centre of Bucharest and the square is standing face-to-face with the Palace of the Parliament. The government failed to find an appropriate usage for this gigantic square and it is currently being used as a on-ground parking space. The square is used to organize concerts and parades (Fig.4.19.) but it usually being as an inactive (almost dead) space for the most of the time.

Piața Unirii (Fig.4.20.) is also one of the largest squares in central Bucharest constructed in the communist era as the Boulevard of the Victory of Socialism. This square is a major traffic hub of the city nowadays and the most part of the square is being used for automobiles. There is a massive green space in the square which is not actively used by citizens.

Fig. 4.21. Piața Constituției being used as a parking lot.

Fig. 4.22. Aerial view of Piața Unirii, Bucharest, Romania.
Fig. 5. The funeral of Kim Jong-II at the Kim Il-Sung square, Pyongyang, 2011.
Site Analysis

The Kim Il-sung Square is located at the center of Pyongyang on the west bank of the Taedong River. (Fig 5.1.) It is the principal square of the country where political events, mass demonstration and meetings and parades have been held on official holidays and various occasions to show the world the military capabilities of the DPRK and the success of the Juche ideology. The Kim Il-sung Square is architecturally more refined with its dramatic riverside setting. If one stands in the square, the Tower of the Juche Idea on the opposite bank appears to sit at the other end of the square, although it is actually across the river. Surrounding the square are a number of government buildings, with the Great People’s Study House sitting at the “head” of the square. Portraits of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-Ill are displayed on the parade reviewing stand which is sitting on the central east-west axis.

Site Analysis

Fig. 5.2. A View towards the Grand People’s Study House, the west of the Kim Il-Sung square, Pyongyang.

Fig. 5.3. A View towards the Juche Tower, the east of the Kim Il-Sung square (across the Taedong river).
The Kim Il-sung Square is a place where the control of the government and the fear of the citizens are clearly manifested, especially during the events when performing goose stepping and synchronized movements by more than 100,000 people. The painted marks and numbers on the ground are the indicators of designated spots for each individual and it proves the restraints and controls prevalent in the square.
Fig. 5.2. Spatial composition, hierarchy, and usage of the Kim Il-Sung square.

Usable space of the square.

Architectural hierarchy of the contexts.

Visible proportion of the surroundings in the square.

Forced focus towards the People’s library and the portraits of the dictators.

Visible proportion of the surroundings in the square.

Forced focus towards the People’s library and the portraits of the dictators.
Rapid commercialization of the central Pyongyang is predicted as the land value will increase dramatically after the influx of the market economy system. The central Pyongyang will be filled with commercial / office buildings and the Kim Il-Sung square area will have a heavy pedestrian traffic due to the easy accessibility to the public transportation.

Fig.5.3. Central location of the square in Pyongyang.

Fig.5.4. Subway station (circled), pedestrian flow, expected emerging street vendors (red dots) around the square.
Fig. 6. A soldier with the military uniform, represents individuals forced to live in the extreme collectivism.
Part 6.

D\text{esign \textit{Approach}}

According to the research about post-socialist cities after the transition of ideology, most of the cities have suffered from radical transformation in its mechanism and physicality. The relics of socialism such as symbolic architecture, squares, industrial and residential (flats) buildings have become abandoned while causing unattractive city appearance, decentralization and desolation of the city. Many projects in post-socialist cities have tried to reproduce functions and liveliness in the obsolete areas. In those projects, many architects and planners have spoken few things in common; instead of master planning which tends to focus on control and mastery, the new urbanism for the future must focus on punctual intervention that uses existing places and activates those spaces by seeding catalysts and opportunities.

When looking at the two biggest squares in Bucharest, Romania, Piața Constituției and Piața Unirii, which were constructed during the communist era for the ideological purposes, the squares nowadays create a sense of emptiness and obsoleteness by being highly inactive spaces (or utilized as a parking lot). The Kim Il-Sung square, another vestige of the communist era, will also possibly confront with a gradual desolation and become an underutilized relic of the bygone era.

Another possibility, almost opposite of the former scenario, is if looking at the square and surrounding area as the central zone of Pyongyang in a bigger scale, there is a high potential for a rapid commercialization of the land and filling up the land with commercial (profitable) buildings. As the surrounding area is rapidly transformed, although the square itself would not be changed dramatically at the beginning, the square will inevitably undergo a change in its properties.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{cc}
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{pre-reunification.png} & \includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{post-reunification.png}
\end{tabular}
\caption{Pre-reunification, the square is a place where the control and collectivism are well manifested. Post-reunification, the square will undergo a rapid transformation by the money-driven development.}
\end{figure}
By shifting a focus towards the social/urban situation in Pyongyang, vast numbers of individuals including great numbers of migrants will suffer from socio-economical obstructions after the reunification. Majority of North Koreans who were oppressed under communism will most likely be socially/economically oppressed under capitalism as well by the economical disadvantages and the insuperable barriers of social hierarchy. Since Pyongyang will confront with dramatically increasing population and the following job scarcity, the economically disadvantaged individuals will have difficulty in maintaining their living. Emergence of street vendors, therefore, is anticipated at the major hubs of the city and one of the highly potential place is the Kim Il-Sung square because of its central location and anticipated heavy pedestrian traffic. (Fig.6.3. & 6.4.)

Two possible scenarios arise by considering the predicted situations; the Kim Il-Sung square will become a new symbol of (a) the extreme commercialization by the government and the money powers or (b) the bottom-up revolution by the oppressed / disadvantaged people in Pyongyang. The thesis looks at the emerging street market as an opportunity for a metamorphosis of the symbolic square from the bottom-up level. The project starts by looking at a possible role for architecture in the situation of the emerging market to encourage the growth / formation of the market. By the fact that the square will be recognized as a reminders of the absolute authority and individuals’ suppression, the objective of the thesis is to change the perception of the square from ‘formal control’ to ‘formal exchange’ by supporting the growth of the street market; because there is no greater formal exchange than a market.
Design Approach

Analysis of traditional street markets in South Korea

1. Hwa-Gae traditional market

2. An-Dong traditional market

3. Mo-Ran traditional market
Fig. 7.1. The primitive stage of the emerging street market in the Kim Il-Sung square. Entrance to the subway stations are located in the middle of the square by the Sungri Street.
Design Proposal

As Pyongyang will confront with the great migration and job scarcity, street markets will appear in and around the square by the socially / economically disadvantaged people to maintain their living. The emerging street markets, however, will appear in a very chaotic and orderless form while causing multiple scales of problems.

In order to help the situation and to support the growth of the market, the mobile market stall kit made of cardboard tubes is proposed. (Fig.7.2) This market stall kit is light, economical, and durable (⅜” thick and polyurethane coated) and is designed to be able to connect to other kits that allows to form a cooperative group if necessary. The mobile market stall kits allow the vendors to freely move and occupy a space and build the structure of the market on their own. Considering the fact that the Sungri Street will be the busiest corridor with the highest volume of the pedestrian traffic, the market will most likely start growing by the subway station entrances located in the center of the square. (Fig.7.1)

To realize this design idea of supporting the street market, it is important to investigate the actual cost of the project and the source of funding. After going through several budget estimates while considering about the local price of the materials (cardboard tubes + tarp) and cost of transportation from South Korea, the price range of each kits comes out to be about $55 (+/- 15%) (Fig.7.4). The expected numbers of the required kits is five hundreds and, therefore, the total project estimate is about $27,500. The project will be campaigned through the social network services such as Kickstarter and Indiego-go which support the design ideas to be realized by giving an opportunity for funding. (Fig.7.5) With the funds raised through the SNS, cardboard tubes will be purchased and cut from a factory in South Korea and transported to the Kim Il-Sung square by a local transportation company (one 18 ton truck is needed).
Fig. 7.3. Move, Occupy, Build and Join, a timelapse of the building process.
Drilling holes on the cardboard tubes will be executed on the site (square) using the cheap labors in Pyongyang to reduce the overall project budget. The market stall kits will be produced / packed on the site and will be stored in a temporary storage which is quickly built out of cardboard tubes and tarps. The kits will be distributed to the vendors from the storage by the architect as needed.

As the market stall kits are distributed and used by the vendors, the incremental building process will gradually attack the formal property of the square, as similar to how fungi eat away at a bread. (Fig.7.6.)

With the support of the market stall kits, the market will become more organized and obtain some degree of order and formality. During the building process, the vendors will go through self-decision making, cooperation and sometimes competition among the vendors. It will be a process of empowering the individuals, helping those socially / economically disadvantaged people to recover autonomy, democracy, and liberty of expression. As a result, as opposed to the top-down development, the street market will be a marketplace that is initiated and developed by the disadvantaged individuals who have been continuously repressed under both communism and capitalism. In a broader perspective, the rigidity, the inherent nature of the square, has been blurred and almost disappeared by the growing bottom-up revolution.
Fig. 7.6. A possible scenario for the formation of the market by the vendors using the market stall kits.
Fig. 8. A diction of the possible future development of the market by using permanent building materials with a support from the monopolists of the South Korean Economy.
Conclusion (What would happen after?)

The thesis studies how architectural intervention can support the emerging market in order to encourage the vendors to autonomously occupy, build, and develop the market on their own. As an outcome, the market becomes organized / ordered than the primitive stage of the emerging market and the inherent nature of the square is subverted by the continuous building process of the individuals; the square used to be fixed and controlled is now in a constant state of becoming.

The market, however, is still temporary due to the impermanent quality of the structural materials (cardboard tubes) and it is vulnerable to any drastic changes or future demolitions. It is necessary to think about the future of the market with any possible impacts by external / internal factors. Few scenarios can be predicted such as (a) because of the political pressure and the share interests between the government and developers, a new top-down development takes over the square and demolish the market to replace with highly profitable businesses, (b) due to the inevitable extreme conflicts between the government and the vendors, the square may become a place where individuals gather to fight against the government and the monopolists, and (c) the market finds a way to maintain itself by negotiating with the economic powers. Assuming that the later is the best scenario in terms of encouraging the growth of the small business economy and the ease of the job scarcity, architects/planners may take a role to find a solution for safely preserving the market. By looking at possible opportunities to use the economic power of the monopolists, and considering the fact that few conglomerates have confronted with a decline of sales and brand images, one potential opportunity is to strategically use the crisis of the conglomerate to help the situation of both the market and the company itself; improving the brand image by showing the social responsibility as a big corporate while supporting the disadvantaged class in an efficient way (by giving a portion of what they earned back to the society). For instance, economical building materials can be produced by recycling the waste from the affiliates of the conglomerate and used for upgrading the structure of the market; potentially, motor, ship and construction wastes. However, the building materials will not be given as a free support, it can either be purchased or rented out with an economical price range. This can possibly act as an adaptation process for the vendors to smoothly blend into the capitalist system. The vendors will still be able to preserve the spaces they have occupied and the upgrading operation will be another stage of autonomous / democratic building process for the individuals. The market, however, will inevitably be encroached by the law of capitalism and will be swayed by the government policy and the interest of the monopolists.
Appendix

Expanded Annotated Thesis Bibliography

Books


Series of essays by different authors discourse about radical change in social, public, economic system after the collapse of socialism in Central/Easter European cities. Also talks about failures in transition and potentials from legacy of socialist urban planning.


A theory of urbanism that offers a new model of urban life. The new model stands as an antidote to the pervasive problems engendered by modern and postmodern urban planning and architecture: sprawl, anomie, a pervasive culture - and architecture - of fear in cities, and a disregard for environmental issues. Instead of the reactive and escapist tendencies, this book comes up with an 'integral' approach that reverses the fragmentation of our landscapes and lives through proactive design solutions.


Explores a different perspective of looking at Pyongyang. The book is focusing on the history of urban planning/development, urban transformation, architectural typology, analysis of current urban fabric, and urban potentials in Pyongyang as a socialist urban infrastructure based city.


Comprised of 6 essays and 6 proposals which talk about current state of the cities, their informal/uneven growth, social inequality, and significance of tactical urbanism in which can become catalysts for changes in modern cities.

Analyzes with the significance of the post-socialist urban form transformations, the direction of spatial restructuring, and urban development trends beyond transition period.


Explores an ‘ordinary’ city in the post-socialist world, an area which has been largely overlooked by theorists of modernity and postmodernity, brings important and unexpected insights into the nature of contemporary urbanism and the post modern cultural condition.


Provides a grasp about transitioning economic and social spheres, urban labor market changes and social protection for urban informal workers: challenges for China and India, Transition to homeownership, and residential redevelopment and social impacts in Beijing.

Articles


Trajectory of urban change: urbanization and urban growth in post-socialist countries, the transition to decentralized forms of governance (changes in planning and service delivery), and the transition to democracy (political and institutional change).


Construction of Asia’s cities by private funding and private labor, so-called informal settlements. Rise of middle classes build their own urban spaces, with or without state intervention or support.


Looks at new, high-profile redevelopment projects in Tokyo and New York City and their surroundings for examples of trends in the design of urban public spaces and changing patterns in how they are used.


Reframe debates on the equity implications of spatial, socioeconomic, and political change in global cities in developing countries through a review of recent literature on this topic.
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3. Narrative


4. Literary Research

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6. Site Analysis


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7. Design Approach


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7. Ibid.

9. Conclusion

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