

Nayon Sung

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Nayon Sung is an architectural researcher with a strong foundation in engineering, design, and technology-driven innovation. Her interdisciplinary work bridges the fields of architectural history, urban planning, and environmental studies, with a regional focus on East Asia during the Cold War and postwar periods. She has explored how transnational circulation of architectural and planning knowledge, foreign aid programs, and ideological shifts shaped the transformation of cities and landscapes in Korea, Japan, and beyond.

Her research investigates the entanglements of environment, politics, and space—from the symbolic use of natural landscapes in North Korea to the modernization of Seoul's riverside development under political regimes.

With over a decade of experience connecting practice and research, she continues to build a multi-scalar, historically grounded understanding of urban development in East Asia, aiming to reinterpret Korean architecture as part of world architectural history.

EDUCATION

- 2024 Ph.D. in Architecture and Architectural Engineering, Seoul National University
- 2006 Master of Science in Engineering, Seoul National University
- 2004 Bachelor of Science in Architectural Engineering, Seoul National University

EMPLOYMENT

- 2025- Assistant Professor, Department of Architectural Engineering, Hongik University
- 2012-2015 President, Seoul Social Standard
- 2008-2011 Director, NHN Japan Corporation(Currently, Line Corporation)
- 2006-2007 Junior Designer, KYWC Architects

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2025 Grand Prize, 2025 KSDS(Korean Society of Design Science) International Spring Invitational Exhibition
- 2019 Excellent Research Award, 2019 KAAH(Korea Associate for Architectural History) Spring Annual Conference
- 2018 Excellent Research Award, The 12th International Symposium on Architectural Interchanges in Asia(ISAIA) 2018

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

Sung, Nayon & Jeon, BongHee. 2023. "The New Seoul Plan and Development of the Han River and Yeouido Under Kim Hyun-ok's Mayoralty, 1966-1970." *Journal of the Architectural Institute of Korea*, Vol.39, No 1, 145-156.

This study aims to comprehend the significance of the New Seoul Plan and the Han River development under Kim Hyun-ok's mayoralty in the late 1960s. As a result of reconstructing the Han River development process in detail, focusing on the interaction between related parties, some notable meanings were found. The Han River development was the fruit of transferring the exploitation system of national land and resources in the Japanese colonial period into the American one. As the full flood control of the Han River became possible through technical aid from America, the Seoul Metropolitan Government(SMG) began to dream of changing its riverside into an urban space. With the fast development of New Seoul, the development authority of the Han River was transferred from the ROK's Ministry of Construction to the SMG, and then the Han River began to be 'Seoulized'. As president Park Chung-hee and the administrative officers of the SMG imagined Seoul's new figure modeled after American cities, the areas around the Han River were reinterpreted as the proper environment to develop a modern riverside city such as Manhattan, New York. The planners proposed the new city center around the Han River in order to overturn the old Seoul's mono-centric structures, and tried to realize their ideal linear city model between Seoul and Incheon. Their challenge failed, however, because the Kyoung-In axis developed from the Japanese colonial period began to decline and the previous geographic cognition on the center and periphery was so strong. The fundamental change the Han River development brought was the emergence of the new city axis along the Han River. It was handled as a minor part of the river development plan, but fully implemented because of its compatibility with reality. That axis became the most important component of new Seoul's space structure. Finally, the Han River development was an attempt to transfer the defense space during wartime to the living space during peacetime, though the special status of the Han River as a militarily strategic location left its traces in the new city.

Sung, Nayon & Jeon, BongHee. 2022. "Reorganization of Political Representation of Prominent Mountains and Its Influence on Mount Geumgang in North Korea, 1945-1998." *Journal of the Architectural Institute of Korea*, Vol.38, No 2, 93-104.

This study aims to examine the changes in status, meaning, and role of Mt. Geumgang from 1945 to 1998 as it relates to Mt. Myohyang and Mt. Baekdu. After liberation, North Korea established a socialist state with support from the Soviet Union. In 1967, when Kim Il-sung came into power, he purged his political rivals, who were supportive of establishing a socialist state, to politically transition into an autocracy. Originally, Mt. Geumgang was designated to display North Korean socialist ideas, however, its status and plan to use for propaganda purposes shifted to Mt. Myohyang and Mt. Baekdu; gradually it became marginalized as Kim's Juche ideology was emphasized. Mt. Geumgang instead converted into a space to recall memories of the Korean War, embody anti-American sentiment and to symbolize Kim Jeong-sook's loyalty to Kim Il-sung. Inevitably making Mt. Geumgang no longer a priority place to visit. In the process of being marginalized, Mt. Geumgang took center stage in attracting international tourists as North Korea grappled with overcoming economic difficulty in the 1980s. This process of shifting the focus and significance of Mt. Geumgang reflected North Korea's deviation from the shadow of the Soviet Union and restructuring the country based on its independent political ideology.

Sung, Nayon & Jeon, BongHee. 2021. "The Progress of Mount Geumgang National Park Preparation Plan and Its Significance during the 1930s." *Journal of the Architectural Institute of Korea*, Vol.37, No 8, 101-112.

The purpose of this study is to examine how the Mount Geumgang National Park Preparation Plan changed the landscape of Mt. Geumgang during the 1930s. In the early 1930s, the Japanese Government-General of Joseon sought to conserve the landscape of Mt. Geumgang, which had been damaged by increasing tourists and reckless development, by executing a national park plan. Uehara and Tamura, invited Japanese landscape architecture authorities, had contrasting viewpoints for national parks, thereby suggested two different national park preparation plans. Uehara emphasized Inner Geumgang's traditional scenic spots with old buildings and stories, while Tamura did Outer Geumgang's modern natural landscape. The final plan adopted both of their plans by applying each to separate zones. This plan was partially implemented and changed the landscape of mountains, although Mt. Geumgang was not designated as a national park as planned. Mt. Geumgang was reorganized by the plan as follows. First, the territory of Mt. Geumgang, which had been ambiguous, was confirmed and expanded as a 'great landscape of granite mountains'. Second, the area of Mt. Geumgang were divided into multiple zones for different purposes. Newly added areas were developed as the zone for physical training of alpinists while highlighting a Mt. Geumgang's attribute as "unexplored nature." On the other hand, existing Inner Geumgang and Outer Geumgang areas were developed as the zone for tourists, which had facilities for groups of tourists and motoring roads for the short period sightseeing. New Geumgang was to be developed as a midpoint destination for the upper-class; however, this plan was abandoned as the whole plan was scaled down after 1933. Third, the landscapes of each zones were characterized by the building styles in it. Through this strategy, Outer Geumgang and newly added areas, the base of alpinists, were portrayed as modern and western, whereas Inner

Geumgang, the base of tourists, was portrayed as traditional and oriental. These changes are important in that it has an influence on today's understanding and experience of Mt. Geumgang.

Sung, Nayon & Jeon, BongHee. 2020. "The Centralization of Seoul National University by Campus Planning, 1946-1975." *Journal of the Architectural Institute of Korea*, Vol.36, No 6, 107-118.

To create a new nation and society, Seoul National University(SNU) was established by combining former Kyungseong Imperial University with ten public colleges in 1946 under the United States Army Military Government in Korea. However, the SNU failed to successfully carry out the reform because the human resource and the space of the former system remained unchanged. After the Korean War, the 'Minnesota Project', an American education aid has led SNU to be rebuilt and turned into an American-oriented education system. The SNU Centralization Plan was promoted to complete this transformation. This plan required a specific spatial format called the campus, which emerged from the American cultural background. Under the U.S. influence over South Korea during the Cold War, several planners made proposals to create an American-style campus. The first campus plan in 1958 was proposed by Yoon Chang-sup, an architecture professor at SNU, who has studied abroad in the U.S. His initial plan to pursue the well-organized outer space with proper scale, which was influenced by post-WWII urban planning strategy, was not accepted by the realistic conditions of SNU and the perspectives of local architects. But his ideas were eventually implemented during a final campus plan proposed by an American planner DPUA in 1971. The final plan was developed with the idea of the locality elements of Korea. SNU's campus planning process was an important event that established the foundation of modern Korean university space as it began to organize outer space rather than to use just building. This suggested modern Korean universities a new view that life in outer space is as important as the life in the classroom.

PUBLICATIONS

Sung, Nayon. 2024. "*Building Post-War Seoul, 1952-1986: Civil Engineers, Urban Planners, Architects, and Recreating an Ideal City.*" PhD diss., Seoul National University.

The Korean War was a transformative event that not only brought destruction to Seoul but also played a vital role in resurrecting the city as the ideal capital for a new independent nation. In the subsequent three decades, planners, fueled by hope and enthusiasm for development, envisioned and built the framework of post-war Seoul in diverse ways.

This study sheds light on the 'actors' and 'processes,' revealing the conflicts and competitive dynamics among planners who pursued different goals and methods for the ideal city from the 1950s to the mid-1980s in Seoul. It aims to illustrate how the direction of urban planning and development in post-war Seoul underwent repeated changes based on the competitive dynamics they encountered in their struggle for influence.

This study has taken notice of the fact that the history of modern urban planning has been predominantly described with a focus on 'outcomes' such as plans, regulations, and the physical appearance of cities. Consequently, it has not adequately explained the reasons behind the actual urban development showing tendencies of changing in a specific direction or lacking consistency. From this, it was discovered that the group labeled as 'urban planners' has, through their perspective and criteria, excluded other planners with differing views from the narrative of urban planning history. Additionally, the periodization and perceptions within urban planning history seem to revolve around the activities of these urban planners. In line with this, planners such as civil engineers and architects were reinstated, and the period from 1952, when discussions on the reconstruction of the capital began through their participation, to 1986 when the development of the expanded Seoul city area and the Han River was completed, is recognized as a crucial era in shaping and completing the framework of post-war Seoul.

During this period, it was divided into three distinct phases based on the patterns of conflicts and reconciliation among planners. The research findings, examining the urban planning discussions, implementation processes, and changes in the city for each period, are as follows.

From 1952 to 1965, there was a period during which technical bureaucrats from the colonial era and urban planners engaged with the Korean Planners Association formulated decentralized urban plans under the influence of the existing city planning. The civil engineers, following the colonial-era urban planning, pursued a low-density urban landscape through systematic land use classification and securing systematic open spaces. Additionally, they aimed to disperse the population by creating suburban residential areas along the east-west axis and sought continuous urban development between Gyeongin regions. On the other hand, urban planners, aiming to overcome this, pursued balanced national development based on economic geography and sought to create suburban residential areas through concentric city expansion. The divergent urban planning logics were partially reconciled in the mid-1960s, emphasizing a linear city structure within the concentric city structure. However, this plan proved to be ineffective, leading to subsequent criticism.

From 1966 to 1974, a dynamic period unfolded where not only the existing group of planners but also a new group emerged, including overseas-educated architects and their followers, foreign urban planning consultants. This diverse group critiqued and transformed established urban planning during this dynamic era. They sought to change the city by concretely designing the manipulation of the physical environment through 'urban design.' They proposed the concept of 'megastructures,' which densely incorporated various urban functions, seeking to transform existing plans and establish new urban centers. They supported the

construction of elevated highways that traversed the city, contributing to the shift to a linear city structure. Rather than constructing suburban residential areas, they aimed for a high-density mixed-use 'new city center', applying this concept to the development of Yeouido. In the early 1970s, with the establishment of the Comprehensive National Development Plan and the installation of green belts, urban planners regained control of concentric city planning. Consequently, residential areas were developed in suburban areas, but in Yeouido, a new urban residential type, 'high-rise apartment complexes,' emerged, sustaining the trend towards a new city center. During this period, the landscape and structure of Seoul began to change through the innovative attempts of architects.

From 1975 to 1986, there was a period in which urban development conditions were constrained due to security crises, leading to adjustments in the visions of various groups and a shift in the direction of Seoul's urban planning. This period played a pivotal role in shaping the current landscape and structure of Seoul. In response to the depopulation policy, there was a departure from the single-nucleus concentric structure, and Seoul adopted the newly proposed concept of a 'three-core city' by overseas-educated architects. With the development of a new city center in Yeongdong, the rapid completion of a high-density mixed-use city through the transplantation of precedents like Megastructures and high-rise apartment complexes took place. After the older generation of planners stepped back, the new generation of urban planners began to align their visions with those of overseas-educated architects, aiming for 'multi-core city' planning by eliminating the central focus from existing concentric city planning. The architects and urban planners initiated the Han River Comprehensive Development with a shared understanding of nature, serving as a premise for restructuring the city's layout. Consequently, Seoul shifted away from the single nucleus and old east-west axis, adopting a city structure with three cores centered around the Han River.

This process of post-war Seoul's development reflects several significant aspects. Firstly, it marks the initiation of privatizing urban planning. Instead of being shaped by a centralized order led by the government, the city was formed in a multifaceted manner, with various parts of the extensively expanded city being shaped by various private planners. Moreover, it represents the encounter between international urban planning theories, with a time lag, and the unique context of Seoul as a third-world city amidst cultural generational shifts after the Korean War. On one hand, this was a process of determining whether the form of the city would be shaped by intangible philosophies, principles, and beliefs from the top, or if it would be decided based on the physical facility construction technology from the bottom. It was a kind of struggle between prescriptivism and descriptivism in finding urban planning methods. An important achievement during this period was not only the field of 'urban planning,' but also the emergence of 'urban design,' a new role for architects that corresponded to it. Finally, it illustrates a fundamental transformation in the city's structure, adapting to the post-war era's new political and economic demands. In this way, the various plans of the Seoul Metropolitan Government were formulated by diverse private planners, each with different perspectives, and this reveals the inherent tension stemming from the competitive dynamics among these actors.

Furthermore, this study is significant in examining architects' ideas that have not been adequately addressed as key contributors to the reshaping of Seoul's landscape and structure after the Korean War. However, this study has limitations as it selectively focuses on key events related to urban landscape and structural reshaping from a specific perspective. Future research is expected to delve more extensively into the ideas and practices of various planners not covered in this study, revealing a richer understanding of the forces that have shaped Seoul into the vast and intricate city it is today.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

2024 "Kim Hyung-man's International Experiences and the Formation of Urban Planning Perspective during the 1950-60s," Presented at the 14th International Symposium on Architectural Interchanges in Asia(ISAIA), Kyoto, Japan. (September)

2024 "The Invented Nature: the Development of the Han River in the 1980s," Presented at the spring annual conference of Korean Association for Architectural History(KAAH), Kwangju, South Korea. (May)

2021 "Reorganization of the Mountain Geumgang's Symbol in North Korea, 1945-1994," Presented at the autumn annual conference of Architectural Institute of Korea(AIK), Yeosu, South Korea. (October)

2019 "The Reorganization and Changes of Areas in the Diamond Mountains by the National Park Plan during the 1930s," Presented at the autumn annual conference Korean Association for Architectural History(KAAH), Seoul, South Korea. (November)

2019 "The Introduction of Campus Planning to Centralization of Seoul National University, 1946-1975," Presented at the spring annual conference of Korean Association for Architectural History(KAAH), Daegu, South Korea. (May)

2018 "The Times of 'Dongyang Choidae' : Trends in the National Facilities during the 1980s in Korea," Presented at the 12th International Symposium on Architectural Interchanges in Asia(ISAIA), Pyeongchang Alpensia, Gangwon, South Korea. (October)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Seoul National University (Graduate School)

Research Methodology for Modern Architectural History (Spring 2024)

Ajou University

History of Western Architecture (Fall 2024)

Catholic University

The Houses and Spatial Culture of Koreans (Fall 2020, Spring 2021)

LANGUAGES

English: Advanced reading, writing, and speaking

Japanese: Advanced reading, writing, and speaking

Korean: Native