New Songdo City, or, the Potentiality of Asian Urbanism(s)



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A thesis submitted to the
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Dedication

For my sister, who always believed I could.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the nexus between 'urban expressionism' and the potentiality of 'Asian urbanism(s)' by exploring ways that different planning paradigms have been located/dislocated in the case of New Songdo City, South Korea. By investigating four expressions of New Songdo City - as an 'Eco-City', a 'Smart City', an 'International City', and as the 'City of the Future' - this thesis argues that urban expressionism can make important contributions to the aims of Asian urbanism(s). Ultimately, this research demonstrates the ways that urban expressionism can be used to destabilize hegemonic Western-centric urban knowledge and city-building practices, and further point to new geographies of theory from which important contributions to urban research can be made.

Urban expressions are made evident by various entwined urban rhetorics and worlding practices that operationalize multiple mediums of communication. Consequently, New Songdo City is, first and foremost, a city of simultaneity. To investigate this simultaneity, this research utilizes an exploratory case study approach and multiple qualitative methods that include semi-structured interviewing, focus groups, and surveys to gather insights from residents of Songdo,

local experts, public and private sector actors, and other key stakeholder groups. Visual analysis is also used to explore mixed-mediums of data, including promotional videos, images, exhibition displays, magazines, and advertisements. The methods used to undertake this thesis provide a glimpse in to the development of New Songdo City and capture different urban expressions that are articulated by the city through various examples of urban rhetoric and worlding practices.

The urban expressions presented in the New Songdo City case are analysed through the lens of Asian urbanism(s) and investigate the ways that hegemonic Western and Euro-centric conceptualizations of 'the urban' and 'the city' have been deployed, articulated, experienced, challenged, and complicated. By extension, this thesis also contributes to a more nuanced conceptualization of Asian urbanism(s) as well as the relevance of New Songdo City for urban theory in South Korean, Asian, and more generalizable contexts.

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List of Abbreviations

3D Jobs -- Dangerous, dirty and demanding jobs
AMS -- Amsterdam Airport Schiphol
EAAFP -- East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership
FAB -- Foreigner's Advisory Board
FDI -- Foreign Direct Investment
FEZ -- Free Economic Zone
FIRE -- Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
GCF -- Green Climate Fund
IAAA -- Incheon Airport Aviation Academy
IBD -- International Business District
ICN -- Incheon International Airport
ICT -- Information and communication technology
IFEZ -- Incheon Free Economic Zone
IFEZA -- Incheon Free Economic Zone Authority
IIAC -- Incheon International Airport Commission
IMC -- Incheon Metropolitan City
IMF -- International Monetary Fund
IoT -- the Internet of things
IT -- Information Technology
KoSis -- Korean Statistical Information Service
KoStat -- Statistics Korea
KPF -- Kohn Pederson Fox
KRW -- South Korean Won
KTX -- Korea Train Express

LED -- Light Emitting Diode

LEED -- Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design

NIC -- Newly Industrialized Country

NSIC -- New Songdo International City Development Limited Liability Company

OECD -- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PPP (P3) -- Public-Private Partnership

RFID -- Radio Frequency Identification

SMA -- Seoul Metropolitan Area

U-City -- Ubiquitous City

UIM -- Urban-Integrated Mega-project

UN -- United Nations

Glossary of Korean terms

Ajumma --아줌마 -- a respectful Korean word for a married, or marriage aged woman; sometimes translated as 'aunt'

Chaebol -- 재벌 -- large family-based business conglomerates that hold immense political and economic power within South Korea.

Daiso -- 다이소 -- a Japanese version of Poundland or a dollar store.

Danji -- 단지 -- large-scale high-density housing estates.

Dongpo -- 동포 -- brethren; connoting a direct tie to the Korean nation state.

Gochu -- 고추 -- a type of Korean chili pepper used in many Korean dishes.

Gyopo -- 교포 -- those who were born outside South Korea and/or have 'lost touch' with their Korean roots.

Hanok --한옥 -- a traditional Korean House from the Joseon period.

Hwangsa -- 황사 -- Yellow Dust; a weather phenomenon where winds pick up fine dust particles in China and Mongolia, that are then blown into the Korean peninsula. As Hwangsa moves over industrial areas, the dust accumulates pollutants and becomes even more detrimental to respiratory health.

Joseon-Jok -- 조선족 -- ethnically Korean return migrants from China.

Koryo-Saram -- 고려사람 -- ethnically Korean return migrants from the former USSR.

Ondol -- 온돌 -- an under-floor heating system commonly found in South Korea.

Ppali Ppali -- 빨리 빨리 -- ‘quick, quick’; ideologically linked to Korean labour and diligence immediately following Japanese occupation and the Korean Civil War.

Salgosipeundosi --살고싶은도시 -- a national policy that aims to facilitate voluntary democratic citizen engagement at the city level.

1

Chapter One
Prelude

1.0 The Three Cities

The Emerald City – One by one, they flock to the glistening glass towers that rise triumphantly around the edges of a beautifully landscaped park. Young tree saplings cling to wooden stakes for support while the freshly planted shrubs add colour and texture to the scene. 'They' – the director from the nearby International School, the project manager of an international development firm, the 'pioneers' hailing from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand – arrive in South Korea's newest International City. They are filled with hope, excitement, and anticipation. Every day, it seems that as one new building is completed, new cranes are erected over a freshly dug site, foundations budding from below.

Constructed as a public-private partnership (PPP) between Incheon Metropolitan City (IMC) where the new land has sprouted, POSCO Engineering and Construction (a multi-national Korean steel company), and Gale International (an American real estate developer), New Songdo City (Figure 1.1) is a hot topic among urbanists, scholars, governments, and developers. Its grandeur in terms of its size and ambitious completion targets are celebrated alongside the spectacular visions that underlie the mega-project. An excerpt from *Aerotropolis: the way we'll live next* (Kasarda and Lindsay, 2011, p. 4) uses New Songdo City as its opening narrative bait, reeling in its audience and enticing them to read on:

> It has been hailed since conception as the experimental prototype community of tomorrow. A green city, it was LEED certified from the get-go, designed to emit a third of the greenhouse gases of a typical metropolis its size. It's supposed to be a 'Smart City' studded with chips talking to one another,



Figure 1.1 New Songdo City IBD at Night.
Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by Kohn Pederson Fox

> running the place by remote control. Its architects borrowed blueprints from Paris, Sydney, Venice, and London, sketching what might become the prettiest square mile in Korea. (Nearby Seoul is a forest of colossally ugly apartment blocks.)
>
> New Songdo City isn't so much a Korean city as a Western one floating offshore. Smart, green credentials aside, it was chartered as an "international business district" – a hub for companies working in China. Worried about being squeezed by its neighbours, New Songdo is Korea's earnest attempt to build an answer to Hong Kong. To make expatriates feel at home, its malls are modelled on Beverly Hills', and Jack Nicklaus designed the golf course. But its most salient feature is shrouded in perpetual haze opposite a twelve-mile-long bridge that is one of the world's longest. On the far side is Incheon International Airport, which opened in 2001 on another man-made island and instantly became one of the world's busiest hubs.

Using direct references to other 'world-class' cities with every turn of phrase, Kasarda and Lindsay paint a picture of an Emerald City straight out of a fantastic picture book. The proclamations are nothing short of extraordinary as the city is filled with promise for both South Korea and China, its direct competitor:

> There's a pattern here, repeatable …We start from here and then we are going to build twenty new cities like this one, using this blueprint. Green! Growth! Export! ...China alone needs five hundred cities the size of New Songdo. (Stan Gale as cited in Kasarda and Lindsay, 2011, p. 5)

Conjuring an image of great waves of migration from China's rural areas to cities, the pressures of urbanization are tinged with a sense of urgency. In Kasarda and Lindsay's (ibid.) account of New Songdo City, the development is presented as ground-breaking, promising to influence the way cities are conceived, built, and lived in beyond the shores of South Korea. "Each one will be built faster, better, and more cheaply than the ones that came before", proclaims Greg Lindsay (as cited in ibid.,

p. 5). New Songdo City is presented as a model city, to be exported and emulated – an urban utopia, pre-made and ready to be rolled out by the hundreds…

The Contradictory City – One by one, they leave their homes and the familiar shores where they gathered shells among the black-faced spoonbills and black-tailed godwits. Soon, the tidal flats will be filled with boulders, sand and clay – infill – and the muddy ground turned to concrete. After years of promises and jockeying by political candidates, and, after fisherfolk are arrested for protesting against the reclamation project, plans are confirmed: the mudflats will soon be transformed into a glittering collection of towers and carefully sculpted parks called New Songdo City. While some of the fisherfolk leave for new towns and cities, others take the money and land offered to them by the Incheon Free Economic Zone Authority (IFEZA) as reparation measures to offset the loss of their homes, livelihoods, and culture (IFEZA, 2011).

As the sheets of metal cladding and iridescent glass grow taller and taller, their shadows grow longer over the mud, brick, and scrap metal homes that are dotted on the other side of the bridge that connects Songdo to the rest of Incheon. The make-shift homes sit along an ageing construction wall that is branded with Paramount's familiar logo; the construction of the movie production company's Asian theme park is indefinitely delayed with the expanse of levelled turf remaining

idle for the foreseeable future. The scrap metal yards slowly give way, from winding roads to a small bustling city that glows with neon lights every night. Small low-rise apartments line narrow streets, both crumbling a little more as time passes, year after year. Old Songdo, as it is colloquially known, bustles with life while its new successor on the other side of the bridge lays silent and sleeps through the night.

Some of the fisherfolk open shops on the land they were given by IFEZA, but many businesses struggle to attract customers and close while the nascent city begins to grow. Soon, the fisherfolk are replaced by foreign businessmen, North American English teachers, white-collar managers, consultants, and the ultra-rich families from elsewhere in Incheon. There are no factories, no 'dirty' industrial parks. A few families are from Seoul while others are part of Incheon's growing urban elite who live in the new city with the hopes that some of its lustre will rub off on their family's social status and grant their children access to some of the best schools in the metropolitan area. The livelihoods of the fisherfolk and the habitats of numerous wetland birds of varying endangerment are traded for corporate managers and a man-made canal that winds its way through a pristine park where 'wild' deer and rabbits live. Song-do, the 'island of pine trees', is certainly not named for its pre-development landscape.

Occasionally, a black-faced spoonbill is spotted on the shoreline from a nearby viewing platform. Tourists peer through binoculars at the endangered bird, feeding

in the rock pools that have been protected from the infill that creeps further and further around them and out into the Yellow Sea. The area is now protected by the Ramsar Convention, an inter-governmental treaty that aims to conserve and manage wetlands. Its status as an official Ramsar site helps boost the popularity of the eco-tours that are starting to pop up in the proclaimed Eco-City. Only a few of the visitors reflect on the irony of their experience: the very development that has brought them to this natural oasis to see what most other people will never see, exists only because it has destroyed most of what it now celebrates – the wetlands, the birds, shellfish, and the livelihoods of fisherfolk…

The Tangible City – One by one, the tops of high-rises appear in the distance. As the horizon breaks over the long bridge into New Songdo City, towers begin to gleam in the cold, crisp, and biting winter air. I gaze out the bus window on my way to the centre of the city, the International Business District (IBD), and notice the rust and chipped paint along the suspended railings of 'Bridge 2'. When the bus pulls in to its stop in Dream City (Figure 1.2), I hop off just after scanning my T-money transit card on the sensor in front of the door. A few others get off with me before the bus is filled with students who crowd around the stop for warmth. The wind cuts through my coat and instantly turns the apples of my cheeks red. I shiver, pull



Figure 1.2 Dream City, New Songdo City
Source: Author, 2014

my scarf over my nose and shove my hands into my pockets trying to keep warm as I make my way to my meeting.

As soon as I leave the busier streets that are lined with already-weathered shopfronts, I brace myself for the walk along the edge of Central Park. Though my meeting at the far end of the park is not that far away, the cold whipping wind makes the short walk seem miles long. There is no tree cover, no cover from buildings, only the unrelenting icy wind. When I arrive at the coffee shop, my face feels frozen. As my body begins to thaw, my hands and cheeks begin to burn as my nose awakens from its frozen sleep to the smell of coffee. I look around hastily for some indication from the stranger who I am there to meet. I look fleetingly at the

faces of other patrons, scanning the coffee shop with a hopeful expression that might indicate that it is in fact them I am looking for. From the corner of my eye, I see a friendly albeit tentative wave that beckons me over.

My days seem to pulse like a wave – some days are intensely stressful, moving from one interview to the next; others are filled with the empty lull of waiting. The winter weather is relentless and the cough I've had for weeks persists. At least the weather proves to be an easy ice breaker whenever I meet someone new in Songdo. Despite being a stranger, I am continually surprised by people's willingness to talk with me about their experiences living in the new city. The foreign residents I meet are eager to meet new people – their community is small, albeit growing, and roughly grouped according to workplace; all the teachers at Chadwick International School seem to form the largest group, while those working for Samsung form another cluster; other biotech companies who work on secretive projects tend to keep to themselves while the private English teachers gather after school to chat at their favourite local bar.

Few of the foreign residents speak fluent Korean. Few of them have ties to their surrounding Korean communities. Few of them plan to live in Songdo for more than a few years. I talk to some of them one-on-one, others in small groups. Many of them talk of their hopeful excitement before moving to Songdo – a new adventure in their lives – while others focus on their disappointment after arriving. One of them



Figure 1.3 View of New Songdo City, looking northwest from the rooftop of Central Park II
Source: Author, 2015

takes me to the rooftop of one of the Central Park II apartment towers to show me the city still under construction (Figure 1.3). He explains that the new towers going up behind the blue shards of glass built by POSCO, the ones with white concrete creeping up their sides, are indicative of all the new construction in the city. While the buildings around Central Park are mostly blue and green glass with distinguishing architectural features, the new buildings are more like the older apartments found elsewhere in Incheon: concrete, anonymous clusters of towers. Central Park III, the buildings immediately to our left (southeast), were originally envisioned as twin glass spirals, twisting upwards and complimenting their siblings that border the rest of the park's edge, Central Park I and II. Instead, the new

developers are building as quickly and cheaply as possible, much like the ones we are looking at in the distance.

The view from high above the city immediately reminds me of Michel de Certeau's opening narrative to *Walking in the City* (1980 [1984]). The vantage allows me to take in the city in a different way. Instead of picking my way through apartment buildings that form twisting pathways at their interstices, or the rubble in the grass that sits in the middle of the city, or as I jog across the four-lane roadways trying to avoid the long and desperately cold walk along the perimeter of Central Park to the nearest traffic light, I gaze into the distance over patches of flat brown dirt that extend outwards. The POSCO Towers in the distance gleam, though they remain mostly unoccupied. And yet, the city is growing, exponentially they say, but I struggle to find signs of life on the ground below…

The three cities – the Emerald City, the Contradictory City, and the Tangible City – are all iterations of New Songdo City, South Korea (*Appendix A: Map of New Songdo City and surrounding region* and *Appendix B: Aerial diagram of New Songdo City*). In this thesis, I aim to explore the different iterations of this urban development through the framework of Asian urbanism(s) and the worlding practices that shape New Songdo City. More specifically, I conceptualize these iterations as indicative of what I term 'urban expressionism', and as interlinked, mutually

dependent, and co-constitutive. As a collection of ideas as well as material infrastructures, urban expressions help shape and are shaped by complex socio-spatial urban processes. These processes include the visioning, planning, construction, and lived experience of New Songdo City. I elaborate on this concept, and its relationship to Asian urbanism(s) as well as worlding practices in *Chapter 2*.

Walking through New Songdo City for the first time, I found myself asking and intriguing yet simple question, *what is this place?* Though this question could be posed about any given place, I struggled to find a theoretical and analytical framework that made sense of what I was seeing in Songdo. To answer this question, I thus turned to what I call urban expressionism to examine its relationship to 'Asian urbanism(s)' (again, see *Chapter 2*). To do this, I explore some of the possible ways that different planning paradigms are located/dislocated through this framework throughout this thesis. Importantly, this thesis also aims to better understand urban development politics, dynamics, and relationships that are central to the ways that the 'urban' and 'the city' are conceived in the context of New Songdo City, South Korea.

Hence, this thesis is about three things:

(1) the potentiality and significance of Asian urbanism(s) where Songdo is an example case;
(2) the conceptual development of urban expressionism and the relationship between competing and complimentary expressions;
(3) the relevance of New Songdo City for urban theory in South Korean, Asian, and more generalizable contexts.

In the pursuit of these research aims, however, it remains invaluable to maintain a critical approach. Thus, when asking, *what is this place*? I also implicitly ask, *is this a good place, and for whom?* Each of the four empirical chapters presented in this thesis (*Chapters 4 to 7*) seek to grapple with these important questions as they are envisioned and articulated by developers, planners and the state, as well as how they are experienced by various groups in and around New Songdo City.

The answers to these questions are not straightforward. I do not undertake this thesis with the aim of finding a single, true, concise answer. Rather, this work is theoretically experimental and exploratory. I approach the urban question presented here as an open question with many paths that also have twists, turns, and intersections along the way (Massey, 2005). These paths are refined into four urban expressions that are used to explore New Songdo City as an example of contemporary city building in Asia: the 'Eco-City'; the 'Smart Ubiquitous City'; the 'International City'; and the 'City of the Future'. These four themes are taken up in four empirical chapters (*Chapters 4 to 7*) that do not aim to present four expressions of the city as if they were independent of one another, but are intended to be read together to highlight the ways that these urban facets create both synergies and uneasy tensions between them. Before delving into these four facets of the city, I outline my theoretical and conceptual framework in *Chapter 2*. The conceptual challenges of defining 'the urban', 'the city', and 'Asian urbanism(s)' are also

addressed through the exploration of recent debates in urban geography. These debates span literature on planetary urbanization, post-colonial urban theory, new comparative urban studies, Lefebvrian spatial theory, feminist urban theory, and worlding practices. Though these fields of research are distinct, they speak to each other in complex ways that have generated a lively debate in recent years. I hope that this thesis will further contribute to these debates through the development of urban expressionism. I do not aim to resolve the tensions that exist between approaches to the urban, however, but to explore their intersections and possible new avenues for theory-development. To achieve these aims, therefore, this thesis poses a series of research questions that are outlined in the following section.

1.1 Research Aims, research Questions, and Significance to Urban Geography

Using New Songdo City as a conceptual and theoretical proposition, I am to explore the relationship between Asian urbanism(s) and what I term 'urban expressionism'. As previously stated, the most fundamental question of this thesis is, simply, '*what is this place?'* when trying to make sense of New Songdo City. To narrow this inquiry further I ask the following research questions:

> *1. If New Songdo City is conceptualized as an example of Asian urbanism(s), how does the development, expression and lived experience of this city transform and dis-/locate, relationships between different conceptualizations of 'the urban'?*

2. What is the relevance of New Songdo City to urban geography? What kind of city is this and for whom?

1.2 Thesis Structure

To answer my research questions, I begin by outlining urban expressionism and its relationship to current debates in urban geography in *Chapter 2*. More specifically, I explore the intersections between planetary urbanization, worlding (and related urban development practices such as inter-referencing and policy mobilities), post-colonial urban research, and last, feminist urban theory. These debates are on-going, and in recent years, have yielded challenging and interesting insights into the central concerns of urban geography, namely the production of space and the transformation of the urban question in present contexts. The exploration of these literatures sets the foundation for my own concept development and emergent definition of urban expressionism. I conclude *Chapter 2* by discussing this concept and its relevance to Asian urbanism(s) and urban geography more broadly.

In addition to my own interpretation and analysis of theoretical debates in urban geography, I also outline my own epistemological position in *Chapter 3, Methods, or, a story of cross-cultural navigation in New Songdo City.* In this methodology-oriented chapter, I briefly outline the evolution of the research questions before presenting a discussion of my positionality. Next, I narrate my experiences and practical considerations while 'in the field', discussing a variety of

methods that were deployed throughout the course of this research alongside their justifications. These are also met with critical discussions of methodological limitations. I also provide a brief overview of visual methodologies and their relevance to this research. Last, I discuss my analytical approach to the data gathered.

Following this discussion of methodology, I begin to explore the four aforementioned facets of the New Songdo City development to better understand the relationship between urban expressionism and Asian urbanism(s). First, in *Chapter 4, The South Korean Urban Dream and the Eco-City,* I approach the problematique of New Songdo City through a discussion of what I call urban rhetoric and Roy and Ong's (2011) worlding practices. In this chapter, the representation and material construction of the city as an Eco-City raises complex tensions between multiple scales of action and impact. As such, the way that New Songdo City is conceptualized by planners and proponents as 'a city' and as 'urban' is explored. Uneasy tensions, especially between rhetorical claims and substantive outcomes, are highlighted to demonstrate the power of neoliberal urban imaginaries in the form of the 'South Korean Urban Dream'. This expression of Songdo – as a middle- and upper-class urban oasis - is shown to be intimately tangled with varying conceptualizations of 'nature', 'sustainability', and what constitutes the 'Eco-City' in ways that both reveal and obscure uneven socio-spatial effects. Consequently, this

disjuncture between conceptual definitions, especially as they vary across Korean and International residents and actors, challenge dominant Western and Euro-centric hegemony over who and what is understood as 'urban' in this context.

Chapter 5, *Labour, Gender and the Smart City,* examines New Songdo City's expression as a Smart City and Ubiquitous City (U-City). This analysis combines the Smart City planning paradigm with feminist urban scholarship to explore the ways that the city's digital infrastructure reinforces, subverts, and/or challenges gendered divisions of urban space. The twin constructions of the public-private space binary and gendered divisions of labour are highlighted by the experiences of foreign and South Korean women living in New Songdo City. I show that, in the case of New Songdo City, the material and symbolic construction of the city as a Smart City conforms to, as well as subverts normative divisions of gender and labour in the city. Again, the power of urban rhetorics to shape expectations, experiences, and imaginaries is demonstrated; however, resulting urban expressions are not always coherent or re-affirm the rhetorics that help to constitute them. Again, urban rhetorics and expressionism help to demonstrate the ways that Western conceptualizations of smart urbanism are awkwardly transferred to places 'beyond the West' (Edensor and Jayne, 2012). This further decentres the dominance of Western and Euro-centric urban theory while also pointing to new geographies of theory (Roy, 2009) that emerge, in this case, from South Korea.

The third expression of New Songdo City deals with the ways that 'international-ness' is conceptualized and the ways that it is constructed through the material and socio-cultural development of the city. In *Chapter Six*, *The International City: planning, building, and living in the New Songdo City*, I examine three instances where city proponents, planners, or local community groups have attempted to become international. Focusing on socio-cultural conceptualizations and expectations of international-ness shaped by urban rhetoric, I explore the relationship between infrastructure, labour, and socio-cultural diversity. In this chapter, notions of cultural difference are problematized, as well as developmentalist conceptualizations of 'East' and 'West'.

Finally, in *Chapter 7, Spatio-temporality in New Songdo City: a spectro-geographical analysis,* I take spectro-geographic approach to my analysis of Songdo. Here, I focus on the ways that proponents have constructed the temporality of the city, especially its futurity. Using spectral geographies, I narrate the city's presences and absences to better understand the complex non-linearity of its development. Ultimately, rather than being a *fait compli* as some proponents argue, the speculative aspects of the city – both in material and conceptual terms – are emphasized. By doing so, the specific context of South Korean urban development politics help to destabilize urban rhetorics that frame New Songdo City as a 'city-in-a-box' (Kasarda and Lindsay, 2011).

In *Chapter 8*, I conclude by arguing that urban expressionism produces Asian urbanism(s) that are variegated, illusory, and internally contradictory. These features give Asian urbanism(s) potentiality for theoretical ingenuity. By highlighting the different ways that international actors and South Korean actors interpret urban life and urban forms, the hegemonic hold of Western and Eurocentric urban theory is both revealed and destabilized. Rather than being subservient to Western networks of power, capital, and knowledge, New Songdo City exemplifies the importance of Asian urbanism(s): to decentre Western-centric knowledge production and create pathways for new, situated, and diverse ways of conceptualizing 'the urban' and 'the urban question'. I conclude this thesis with a section on potential future directions.

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2

Chapter Two
Urban Expressionism and the Pursuit of Asian Urbanism(s)

2.0 Introduction

To understand Asian urbanism(s), its theoretical relevance, and potentiality to contribute to the discipline of urban geography - methodologically, ontologically, and epistemologically - I develop a new framework I term 'urban expressionism'. As an eclectic understanding of urbanism, I conceptualize urban expressionism as being, fundamentally, embedded within the current debates in urban geography. Most simply, urban expressionism attempts to account for the (seeming) incommensurability between 'the general' and 'the specific' within urban studies, grappling with the tension between conceptualizing 'the urban' and 'the city' in places

'beyond the West' (Edensor and Jayne, 2011). Hence, I argue that urban expressionism yields simultaneously diverse, internally fractured, disjunctured, and even contradictory urbanisms.

Taken within the context of East Asian urban development, I draw heavily on Roy and Ong's *Worlding Cities* (2011); however, I also place this work in conversation with Lefebvre's *The Urban Revolution* (2003 [1970]), Brenner and Schmid's provocative work on planetary urbanization (2015a, b) and its responses (see Walker, 2015; Peake 2016; Buckley and Strauss, 2016; Rickards et al, 2016; Davidson and Iveson, 2015 for a sample of responses), and Robinson's *Ordinary Cities* (2016, 2011, 2015). While Roy and Ong (2011) introduce Asian urbanism as a practice/art, I aim to expand on this further through the New Songdo City case and by exploring the relationship between Asian urbanism(s) and urban expressionism. As a result, I posit that urban expressionism produced via urban rhetorics and worlding practices is an important component of Asian urbanism(s) as demonstrated through the example of New Songdo City.

This chapter teases out the conceptual lens of urban expressionism through which I explore New Songdo City as an example of Asian urbanism(s). By placing the aforementioned theoretical work in conversation with one another, I identify points of convergence and divergence where the analysis of New Songdo City sheds light on,

and contributes to, an expanded understanding of Asian urbanism(s). As such, this chapter begins with a broad definition of urban expressionism. This is supplemented by a discussion of urban rhetorics, worlding practices, planetary urbanization, ordinary

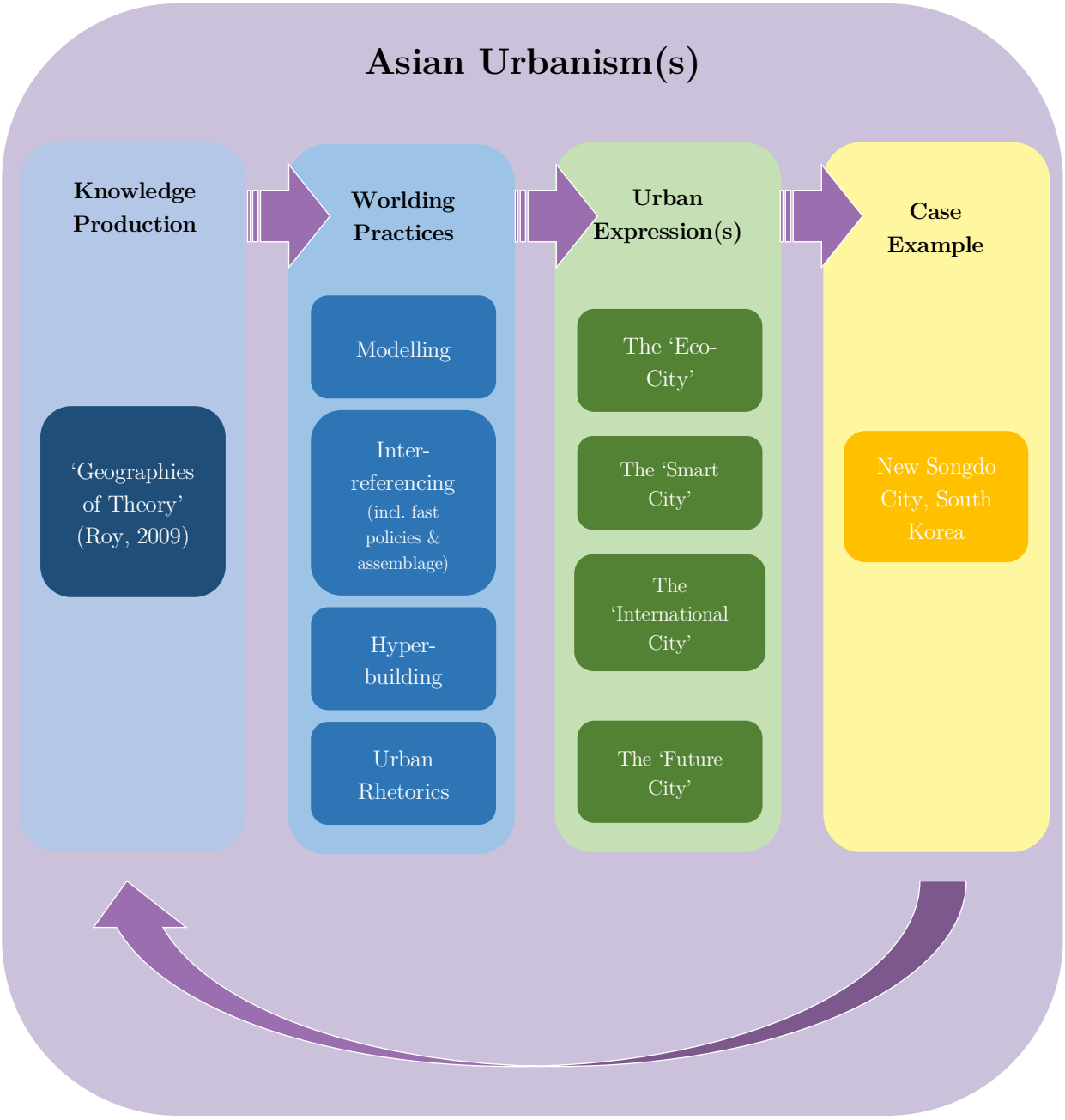


Figure 2.1 Diagram of the relationship between theoretical concepts and New Songdo City

Source: Author. 2017

cities and the ways that these theoretical approaches impact the ways that the urban is conceptualized. By placing these theories in conversation with one another, I explore the potential of Asian urbanism(s) within urban geography. Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship between theoretical concepts which are further discussed throughout this chapter.

2.1 Urban Expressionism

Urban expressionism, as it is developed and operationalized in this research, is inspired by the art historical movement that was popular through the late 19th and early 20th century. As a style, expressionism aims to communicate the artist's inner psychical space rather than attempting to objectively represent an external reality. Applied to this research, I utilize the term to highlight the emphasis placed on qualitative aspects - an ambience or an impression - of an urban setting. This, however, manifests as various multi-scalar and multi-faceted urban processes both materially on the ground and through the production and circulation of ideas about what constitutes 'the urban' in a given example. Along with urban expressionism, I also develop the concept of 'urban rhetoric' as an umbrella concept that brings together the different ways that a given urban expression is constructed. As a multi-media and multi-sensual tool, urban rhetoric orchestrates the repetitious application of development narratives, images,

marketing materials, exhibition halls, popular media, and events produced by public and private actors in the pursuit of Asian urbanism(s) as is the case, I argue, with New Songdo City (discussed next in *Section 2.1.1*).

In conjunction with the development of New Songdo City's urban rhetoric, specific policy interventions have also been made to further construct the city's importance, especially within global networks of capital. Inter-referencing, fast policies, and assemblage practices are used within the 'worlding toolkit' and inform urban design, planning, and broader spatially-selective (Park, 2005) policy development. Entwined together, urban rhetoric and such policy tools frame New Songdo City's rise as a seemingly natural outcome of three related narratives: the rise of Asian nations and a continental shift in global networks of power; the urban age thesis and the perceived crises of rapid urbanization; and neoliberalization pressures that privilege world and global city development. These contexts and their relationship to Asian urbanism(s) are discussed further in throughout this chapter.

In this thesis, each urban expression and the rhetorics used to construct them articulates the tension between 'the urban' and 'the city' - the general and the specific - and how these terms are conceptualized in the context of South Korean urban development. Turning to Merrifield's (2013) interpretation of Lefebvre's original hypothesis of planetary urbanization (1970 [2003]), 'the urban' is defined as:

> A single, indivisible substance whose attributes — the built environment, transport infrastructure, population densities, topographical features, social mixes, political governance — are all the formal expressions of what pervades it ontologically. These attributes, in short, are how the urban looks and how it can be seen and known.

That is, ontologically, we may know 'the urban' through its expression - as a city - and it is this expression which forms its epistemological foundations. Moreover, I argue in the empirical sections of this thesis that cities, such as New Songdo City, have multiple 'faces' (i.e. expressions) that each speak to aspects of the 'urban', but an ontological excess always remains – the gap between theory, research, practice, and lived experiences and what researchers see and experience 'on the ground' persists (Amin and Thrift, 2002), allowing 'the urban' to resist ontological closure. One of the processes that influence the urban expression of a given city is through urban rhetoric, discussed next.

2.1.1 Urban rhetoric

The use of rhetoric as a theoretical framework for analysis within the discipline of geography is sparse. While there are two common definitions of rhetoric, neither is explicitly or robustly defined within urban studies. The first usage pertains to Aristotelian rhetoric. This type of rhetoric is often utilized in political science, linguistics, and philosophy (see Crines, 2015 or Dorey, 2015 for example), and contains three inter-connected devices: ethos (related to the character and credibility of the

communicator), pathos (appeals to the imagination and emotions of the audience), and logos (focusing on the rationality or reasoning of the audience). These formal aspects that draw from Aristotle's modes of persuasion are deployed, in all or some combination, to increase the appeal of the speaker and their arguments to their audience. This type of analysis is often used to dissect political speeches, for example.

This research does not seek to undertake an Aristotelian analysis of South Korean urban development rhetorics; however, the current deployment of rhetoric as an analytical lens within geography (see next paragraph) does not adequately address its complexity and importance in urban development processes. Thus, the second definition and usage is preferred. In this instance, rhetoric is more broadly understood as "the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques", and, "language designed to have a persuasive or impressive effect, but which is often regarded as lacking in sincerity or meaningful content" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2016). Like the Aristotelian conceptualization of rhetoric, this more generally defined usage is concerned primarily with persuasion through a stylization of language through carefully crafted meanings. Moreover, this definition also directs attention to fallacious qualities of this type of speech, colloquially described as 'empty rhetoric' (as in a critique of a politician's

campaign speech, for example). Deception and lingual aestheticization are thereby combined to persuade audiences.

While Aristotelian rhetoric is well-defined and theorized, it is rarely used in such a manner within urban geography. Rhetoric does appear in geographic literature, however, alongside or often conflated with, other related concepts such as 'discourse', 'narrative', or 'representation' (Atkinson & Cosgrove, 1998). Where rhetoric is central to geographic analysis, it is deployed within the context of knowledge production. For Bishop (1992), rhetoric is a key part of post-modern geographies that are interested in aesthetic rather than abstract conceptualizations of knowledge. Alternatively, Sayer (1989) explores the operationalization of rhetoric as important to dualistic thinking and the construction of meta-narratives. In these limited examples, rhetoric remains highly theoretical and its application to empirical research is limited. Even so, it is not well defined and differentiated from discourse, narrative, and representation.

In this research, I conceptualize urban rhetoric as a powerful and therefore important component of urban development. Further, urban rhetorics straddle Marxist and Foucauldian approaches to discourse, where both capitalist structures and networks of power/knowledge shape urban processes. Instead, a middle ground that is both enacted and constrained by political, economic, social, and cultural forces produces an amenable and situated space for theoretical exploration. Applied to urban

research, rhetoric attends to the power of multi-modal and multi-sensory representation in the production of urban knowledge and consequently, the production of socio-spatial relationships. As a component of urban expressionism, urban rhetoric is an artful form that aims to appeal to the target audiences' senses, emotions, and rationality. As a result, modes of representation – images, slogans, signage, advertisements, and so on – are important tools that construct interconnected rhetorics that then help to produce, but also validate, a given urban expressions.

While rhetorical analysis of speech or text is by no means new, its application in urban research is novel, and in this case, is used to explore the theoretical potentiality of Asian urbanism(s). In the case of New Songdo City, urban rhetoric is deployed as a tool that seeks to form a conceptual nexus between multiple meanings, articulations, experiences, and valuations that then shape conceptualizations of 'the urban' by multiple actors and groups. In this case, references to global and world city networks, national economic growth projects, and/or model or prototypical developments are prevalent. Moreover, urban rhetorics are deployed within the broader context-of-context (Brenner, 2013) of neoliberal globalization as well as continental shifts that increasingly identify Asian countries and cities as loci of global power and as the sites of some of the most intense urbanization pressures.

Encapsulated by the Asian Miracle, three broad processes construct the context-of-context (Brenner, 2013) of the urban rhetoric used in the New Songdo City case. The rapid development of newly industrialized countries (NICs) between the 1950s and 1990s in Asia is situated within a period characterized by deepening globalization in both reach and density of connections, and the rapid – perhaps exponential – development of communication technologies (ICTs). In conjunction with developmental states pressured to internationalize their economies following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, and the impetus towards neoliberalization with an emphasis on creating a competitive advantage, a series of mega-urban projects (Douglass 2000; Olds, 1995) and global urban projects (Marshall, 2003) were initiated in the region. The focus of this research, New Songdo City, is situated within the specific context of South Korean urban development politics, but also these larger economic, political, and ideological dynamics that shape the ways that new urban environments are conceived and built, and the roles that they are intended to play at the local, regional, national, and supra-national levels. As a result, much of the rhetoric that permeates the Songdo narrative is couched in these broader processes, creating a tension between the particularisms of the city's development and wider regional and global dynamics.

The context-of-context (Brenner, 2013) is used in this research to attend to powerful though malleable structures that operate across various scales of action. As

such, broader narratives of neoliberalism are important when situating the urban rhetorics that have been developed and deployed in the instance of New Songdo City. Without resorting to economic reductionism, neoliberal narratives are important to consider because of their powerful influence on both the beliefs and actions of key actors and institutions. Like Foucault's 'regimes of truth' (1977), urban rhetorics not only shape the ways that solutions are deemed acceptable for a given problem, but also the problem-setting itself. Through this rhetorical process, actors, as well as the relations between them, are constructed.

While Marxist approaches to economic and urban processes are also important, they differ in some key respects. First, Marxist analyses of neoliberalization are assessed through the epistemological lens of political economy and where universal explanatory mechanisms are used to critique hegemony and ideology that are applied in a top-down structure. This hegemonic ideology works to conceal the power of dominant actors and produce consent from the dominated to their own domination (van Dijk as cited in Lees, 2004). For example, Harvey (2004, p.3) contends:

> Neoliberalism has, in short, become hegemonic as a mode of discourse. It has pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world.

The hegemony of neoliberalism is thus a powerful mechanism through which we understand everyday life and the wider world. This 'false consciousness' operates with the assumption that the power of the political class is pre-given.

Alternatively, a Foucauldian approach might posit that actors and the relations between them are enacted, making them powerful agents through existing webs of power/knowledge (1980). In discussions of neoliberalism, Foucauldian interpretations further differ from Marxist analyses by deploying neoliberal governmentality (1977) as an important disciplining mechanism. In this case, neoliberalism does not exist *a priori*, but is enacted by actors – individuals, organizations, governments – to produce and discipline subjects, including selves. Neoliberal governmentality thus entails a continuous series of reflexive actions that work to construct government, governance, and governable subjects.

In sum, though Foucauldian and Marxist theories of neoliberalism vary in some key regards, they nonetheless demonstrate important ways that the broader context-of-context shapes structures and subject, as well as the relations between them. On one hand, Harvey (2004) suggests that utopian rhetorics work to construct actors and markets as operating in an altruistic albeit competitive fashion, this is merely to justify and legitimate the top-down political project of neoliberalism. The state is understood as being at the mercy of the market. On the other hand, a Foucauldian analysis would

suggest a reversal where neoliberal governmentality is enacted to produce self-governed subjects. Distinctions between state, economy, and society are shuffled in this instance, highlighting performative processes that (re)produce socio-economic, spatial, and power relationships. Here, divisions between such categories are produced by governmentality, rather than being pre-given or structured by abstract external market forces.

In this research, a middle ground between Foucauldian and Marxist approaches conceptualizes neoliberalism as powerful but not inherently all encompassing. It remains an important component – implicit or explicit – of urban rhetoric as it provides an influential context-of-context that directly and indirectly informs relationships between people, places, ideas, and processes. It appears as a seemingly unquestionable global process that necessitates urban mega-projects and thereby legitimates both the projects and the rhetorics. The following section explores one urban rhetoric that is central to the popular legitimization of New Songdo City - the 'South Korean Urban Dream'. This narrative draws on aforementioned contexts-of-contexts to frame the construction of Songdo as axiomatic while also informing the multiple expressions that the city makes and that are explored throughout this thesis.

The South Korean Urban Dream

Urban rhetoric is used to frame the development of New Songdo City as a logical outcome of local, regional, and national processes, as necessary, and on the whole, for the greater good of South Korea. In this instance, inter-textuality facilitates the weaving together of different though interlinked strands of rhetorics to help construct a meta-narrative that situates the city as an inevitable necessity under neoliberalizing urbanization, a public good achieved through the formation of an international public-private partnership, and an example of avant-garde urban planning, policy, and design for the world to emulate. Together, these inter-woven rhetorics bring the South Korean Urban Dream in to focus (Park, interview, 4 August 2014).

New Songdo City both produces and activates the South Korean Urban Dream - an ambition to gain socio-cultural capital through the consumption of the city in the form of elite educational opportunities (both public and private and/or Korean or international), luxury housing, and a high quality of life. Through the orchestration of multiple interrelated urban rhetorics, New Songdo City (re)produces the South Korean Urban Dream through the fabric of the city. As a material and ideological product, New Songdo City is wrapped up in a sense of desire, upward mobility, futurity, and by extension, legitimacy. As an aspirational urban rhetoric, I argue that the South Korean Urban Dream helps to shape, reflect, and legitimate Songdo's

multiple urban expressions as an Eco-City (*Chapter 4*), a Smart Ubiquitous City (*Chapter 5*), an International City (*Chapter 6*), and the City of the Future (*Chapter 7*). Urban rhetorics produce (to some extent) a consumer demand for urban infrastructure located in Songdo, creating a sense that the city is needed to fill a void in the market. The rhetorics, thus, self-legitimate New Songdo City's existence.

Participation in Songdo's articulation of the South Korean Urban Dream is also a symbolic enactment of citizenship in an internationalizing South Korean economy and culture. As a form of governmentality, urban rhetoric forms the backdrop for urban imaginaries such as the South Korean Urban Dream that mediate technocratic approaches to urban design and planning and the everyday experiences of the city (see *Section 2.1.2* for more on subject-making within the context of hyper-building). The urban rhetorics surrounding New Songdo City thus transcend scalar categories and help shape socio-spatial relationships between individuals, households, cities, nations, regions, and global networks of capital and power. However, because of their fluidity and malleability, urban rhetorics depend on a continual process of (re)making and reaffirming.

As an example of urban rhetorics, the South Korean Urban Dream aims to appeal to its target audience - international and Korean business entities (KPF, 2008), and by extension, their employees. The glittering and glamourous renderings in

apartment advertisements, the glossy pages of the IFEZ Journal that chronicles the developments within the Incheon Free Economic Zone, and the futuristic, high-tech virtual and experiential displays in city exhibition halls, clearly attempt to appeal to the imagination and desires of the audience and arguably express the inner logics of a neoliberalizing South Korean state. These images and crafted experiences of New Songdo City as a glowing example of the Korean Urban Dream are met with policies, plans, and designs that materialize – though perhaps only partially as this thesis explores - the city. This is discussed further in *Section 2.1.2.*

The cultivation of the South Korean Urban Dream by key actors uses place-marketing practices to make this urban imaginary attractive and desirable. Here, place-marketing practices, according to Haines (2011), are about more than merely producing images or representations of places, but also power. To produce and circulate representations of place asserts the power of those in command of these processes, as they simultaneously and selectively erase or marginalize competing representations. Drawing from Foucauldian discourse analysis, place-marketing materials produce a regime of truth that shape the depicted urban settings as solutions to implicit urban problems (ibid.). Urban rhetorics are, in effect, strands of a larger regime of truth that are woven together and work to reinforce the axiomatic status of a given process or thing. In this case, urban rhetorics legitimate urban development

processes and the ways that these are articulated by multiple yet simultaneously present urban expressions. That is, urban rhetorics in whatever medium they may take, aim to convince audiences that, not only does New Songdo City need to be actualized, but that it is also inevitable and desirable.

Place-marketing and city branding are powerful tools by which urban rhetorics are deployed, taken up, and (re)circulated. According to Haines (2011), place-marketing is dual-faceted, comprised of the surface image including the branding, logo, and advertisements, as well as its material infrastructure that includes the facilities, resources, and expertise required to fulfil the brand image. In this research, the former relates most closely to urban rhetorics while the latter is achieved through various worlding practices; however, infrastructural components of a place-brand may not always fulfil the expectations generated by representations, leading to interesting and important dissonances between expectations and experiences of urban space as discussed in *Chapters 4* through *7*.

Urban imaginaries projected by large-scale for-profit urban development projects make several assumptions. First, economic supremacy is given as an unquestionable primary motivation and is entwined with the South Korean Urban Dream. Economic and social internationalization and globalization are also perceived as appropriate mechanisms through which this can be achieved. Alternatively, the

ever-changing dynamics of globalization and global inter-city competition produce a fear that, by failing to participate adequately, nations vis-à-vis cities will not only fail to capture the benefits of global capitalism, but that they will also be left behind – a far worse state (Roy and Ong, 2011). The race to create a competitive advantage through carefully master planned and marketed mega-urban projects becomes analogous to the Red Queen hypothesis where "it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place" (Carrol, 1871). That is, mega-urban projects must continually be perceived as being at the forefront of development trends, or even be trendsetters themselves, to 'stay in the race'. Rhetoric that fosters a sense of fear and/or crisis are particularly potent as they often offer a solution for the problem(s) while simultaneously problem-setting. In sum, the problem and its solution are co-created by powerful rhetorics that thereby become self-legitimizing. In this case, the fear of 'falling behind' prompts action – and in this case, prompts the development of a new luxury city on infilled land off the West coast of Incheon.

Urban rhetorics are not benign but are used to harness and recalibrate power through different socio-spatial narratives such as the South Korean Urban Dream. In this research, urban rhetorics are further bolstered by the materialization of 'solutions' to various social and economic 'problems' at the urban scale. Thus, New Songdo City is presented as the solution to urban crisis(es) in Incheon, the Seoul Metropolitan

Area, and South Korea more broadly that include housing shortages for the growing urban middle class, skyrocketing house prices in major city centres, and decaying infrastructure (*Chapter 6.1.1*). To achieve this, worlding practices are strategically deployed and give shape to urban expressions, as discussed next.

2.1.2 Worlding and the art of being global

Drawing from the work of Ananya Roy and Aihwa Ong (2011), worlding practices are described as attempts to break, establish, or transform urban standards in and beyond a particular city in order to symbolically re-situate that city in the world (Ong, 2011b). Though the (constructed) hierarchy of world and global cities presents a didactic model of urban development that is largely predicated on Western cities (Figure 2.2), this is complicated by material and symbolic articulations by cities and states in Asia. Roy and Ong (2011) suggest that features of dominant urban development paradigms

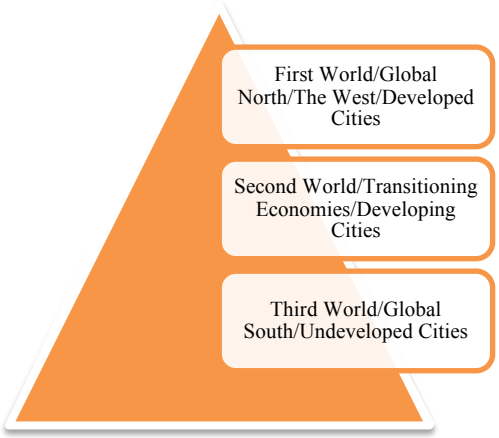


Figure 2.2 Developmental model of cities
There is a linear progression where 'the West' is understood as the end state of development that all cities should strive to achieve.
Source: Author, 2016

morph and adapt to meet the specific needs of the context in which they are being deployed. Path-dependency and other historical, political, and institutional dynamics are not replaced or dominated by broad forces of globalization and neoliberalization, nor are urban development processes. Rather, they are transformed, mutating as they travel across contexts and 'land' in various places and in various ways.

Within this postcolonial framework, the use of worlding tactics in Asian cities does not merely imitate dominant urbanisms in the West, but rather, deploys more nuanced strategies. Here, dominant tropes of global and world city-building established in the West, such as dramatic skylines or waterfront redevelopments, are co-opted by city-builders in 'the East', producing hybrid forms that are uniquely situated in different political, social, and economic contexts. Characterized here as an act of mimesis (Bhabha, 1994), worlding cities are simultaneously complicit in, and subversive to, dominant global and world city discourses. Consequently, "a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite" performs a double articulation, producing a resemblance but with constant slippage, and therefore poses a threat to "normalized" knowledges (ibid. p. 153-154). The 'West', as well as monolithic conceptualizations of 'Capitalism' and 'Neoliberalism', do not dominate the 'East', but are instead transformed and reconstituted in their new spatial contexts.

Explicitly working to destabilize Western hegemony in urban studies and urban knowledge production, worlding practices flatten developmentalist hierarchies. Ontologically, worlding practices speak to Robinson's call for new comparative geographies and ordinary cities (2006, 2011), as well as Roy's new geographies of theory (2009), asserting that cities 'off the map' (Robinson, 2008) and beyond those antecedent (Bunnell, 2015) few situated in the global north (i.e. New York and London, which are situated at the top of the global city hierarchy) have much to contribute to urban studies. This project is a post-colonial endeavour, with significant affinities with post-structuralist and feminist approaches to the urban, aiming to disrupt categories that implicitly and explicitly shape urban research. Many of these categories are rooted in colonial logics of domination. Of central importance, the 'global north -- global south' binary, 'developed/undeveloped/developing' categories, and the First World --Third World dichotomy, are politicized as colonial categories that subjugate peoples and places beyond 'the West'.

Here, policy mobilities (McCann & Ward, 2010; Peck & Theodore, 2010; Healy, 2011) are also relevant, uncovering the ways that cities of all sorts are intricately interwoven with one another (Bunnell, 2015; McFarlane, 2011; McCann, Roy & Ward, 2013; Huat, 2014; Phelps et al., 2014) and where the origins of particular urban imaginaries and policies cannot be definitively traced (Figure 2.3). Crucially,

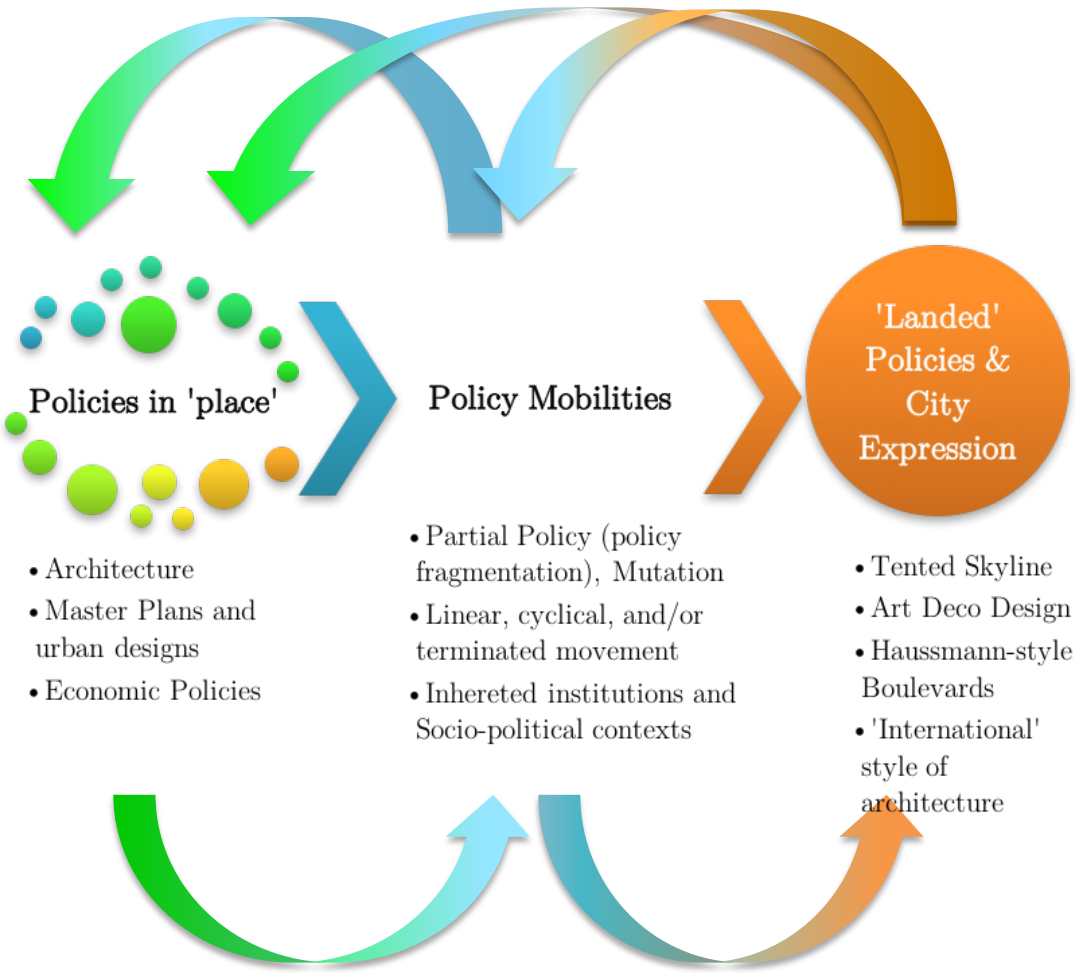


Figure 2.3 Diagram of policy mobilities

Blue/Green Arrows: some policies and ideas travel while others do not. Some may 'land' and find expression in cities, while others are recycled back 'in to the mix' and may mobilize again in the future. *Orange/Blue Arrows*: landed policies and their expressions may cycle back to (re)influence other policies in motion or 'in place', included those from which they originated from. Policies 'in place' often do not travel in their whole form, but in select pieces to suit changing contexts and perceived needs. Policies are mobilized by actors, actor communities, institutions, and media, but also interact with inherited socio-political and spatial contexts.

Source: Author, 2016

antecedent cities of the West are reframed as patchworks of ideas, forms, and styles that do not solely emerge from the West. By examining these trajectories and shared urban forms and ideas, Euro-centric and Western hegemonic categories of the urban are disrupted. The vertical hierarchies of global and world cities are thereby flattened, also challenging Western-centric power geometries and hegemonic geographies of knowledge production.

Moreover, post-colonial, post-structuralist, and feminist approaches do not aim to simply be additive to the canon of urban theory, nor do they attempt to invert the global north-south binary. Rather, this scholarship aims to decentre Western hegemony by attending to important power geometries at the most fundamental ontological and epistemological levels of urban research. Most notably, these include the legacies of the colonial imaginary, primarily developmentalism (Robinson, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2013; Sheppard, Leitner & Maringanti, 2013; Parnell & Robinson, 2012; Robinson & Roy, 2015; Roy, 2009, 2015, 2016) and the masculinist theorization of urban space (Peake, 2015; McDowell, 1983, 1992).

For Ong (2011b), the destabilization of Western urban theory is achieved through three inter-linked strategies – modelling, inter-referencing, and hyper-building. Modelling is conceptualized as "a global technology that is dis-embedded from its hometown and adopted in other sites" and that "sets a symbolic watermark

of urban aspirations on the one hand and provides achievable blueprints for urban renovations on the other" (ibid., p. 14). As both a material and discursive practice, modelling looks to examples of urban 'success' in other cities as a guide, but rather than trying to become an exact copy, attempts to capture some aspect, essence, or style of that original (ibid., p 14-15). Modelling may also include the incorporation of governance norms and subject-making such that, "what is being emulated goes beyond concrete, glass, and steel; urban modelling also involves the mimicry of the neoliberal packaging of international glamour, talent, and entrepreneurialism that promises to animate a moribund metropolis" (ibid., p.16). Modelling is therefore a transformative strategy that materially and ideologically unsettles dominant tropes of urban development while also posing as a blueprint for other future developments with similar ambitions. Modelling thus constructs cities from other models to create spaces that become models themselves.

Inter-referencing is a spatializing practice that continually forms new inter-city relationships through, "practices of citation, allusion, aspiration, comparison, and competition" that intensify inter-city rivalries while simultaneously legitimating worlding projects at home (Ong, 2011b, p. 17). Inter-referencing is a dynamic process that requires 'models' to constantly transform or reinvent themselves to remain at the forefront. As Ong (ibid., p. 18) explains:

> Inter-referencing practices are thus inseparable from and in fact constitutive of an emerging system for the judgement of urban value. Through the favourable mention, allusion, and even endorsement of another city, actors and institutions position their own projects in a language of explicit comparison and ranking, thus voraciously participating in the symbolic values of particular cities. The idiom of inter-referencing pits cities in relation to one another, by invoking desirable icons of "world class" amenities … as symbols of desirable urban attributes … By tweaking urban desires and aspirations in emerging countries, citational practices put into circulation a symbolic language of globally significant urban style that has travelled beyond Asia.

Inter-referencing is therefore heavily dependent on (re)presentations of hegemonic urban forms and the symbolic economy. Like modelling, inter-referencing is a material and ideological practice that redefines the relationship between cities. In the case of Songdo, I argue that the method of inter-referencing of Western urban models is not done to compete with the West and the 'originals', but with other cities in the East such as Shanghai, Singapore, Beijing, and others. Emulation of Western prototypes is actually an emulation of other Eastern inter-referencing and modelling practices, blurring the distinction between 'East' and 'West' and fundamentally challenging the linear model of developmentalist urban theory.

Similarly, policy mobilities examine the shared trajectories of urban forms/ideas, thereby challenging Western hegemony over urban theory and knowledge production. Policy mobilities, as mechanisms through which inter-referencing take place, work to trace the ways that cities are implicated and imbricated in each other's making. For example, Bunnell (2015) draws lines of connection between Singapore,

Liverpool, New York, and Glasgow as each is inter-referenced by the others through processes of colonization, the slave trade, and empire-building, across many places and periods of time. By identifying affinities and congruencies between cities typically thought to be incommensurable across time and space, inter-referencing and mobile policies flatten the hierarchy of global and world cities. Lived experiences of cities further muddle inter-referencing paths as ideas mutate, transform, and are cobbled together in different places by various actors and actor-communities that differently interpret policy and socio-material landscapes at local, national, and regional levels.

Last, hyper-building is a term used by Ong (2011a, p. 209) to denote the dual-faceted process that uses the technology of the spectacle for promoting future values and new political orientations. Hyper-building is a practice that produces a material landscape in competition with other 'successful' cities, but also produces a sovereign national space within the city (or in the instance of Songdo, the city itself) that is global in its outlook and orientation. It is a practice that uses the "neoliberal logic of maximization, the mobilization of political exceptions, and impressive development to prompt urban development and influence urban futures" (ibid., p.209). Spectacular city-building is at once associated with global capitalism, and in the Asian-urban context, also associated with the sovereign developmental state. For Ong (ibid., p. 210), "The skyscraper megalomania of Asian cities is never only about attracting

foreign investments, but fundamentally also about the intense political desire for world recognition", which it hopes to achieve by projecting a visual representation and infrastructural landscape to signify that the prowess of the state that can mobilize its resources in such an effort.

Additionally, Lash & Lury (as cited in Ong, 2011a) identify zones of spectacle as methods of value-making through symbolic differentiation and branding, allowing these spaces to stand apart from others. Within the framework of worlding practices, branding often involves the intensification of association with various indices of globality, including perceived standards of international architecture and the importing of urban design and planning paradigms from canonized world cities. This then symbolically suggests that the worlding city has the "capacity to mobilize and mediate among things and actors" (ibid., p. 208), and therefore be an indicator of power. While in the West, the spectacle is theorized as maintaining capitalist hegemony as Debord (1967 [1994]) suggests, current transformations in Asia deploy the spectacle as a means of reasserting the power of the state.

Alongside the material and economic development managed by the state to achieve world city status, visions of urban development deployed in hyper-building practices also embark on a project of subject-making, shaping socio-cultural imaginaries of both desirable urban spaces and desirable urban subjects (Hoffman,

2011). Modelling and inter-referencing tactics deployed by key actors are similarly concerned with both policy and people's behaviours through self-governance (ibid.). In particular, Hoffman outlines an example of this in Dalian, China, facilitated by Eco-City branding that helps to produce self-educated and self-governing citizen-subjects. In the Chinese context, the characterization of individuals as 'model citizens' was frequently used to set an example for wider publics according to Confucian social values. In the contemporary moment, this traditional practice is transformed and applied to urban environments where place-making becomes a state goal and is intimately tied to subject-making. Thus, these mega urban projects are frequently and unapologetically future-oriented and are concerned with not only present market conditions and the technical development involved in city-building, but also the development of long term social governing goals. In the case of Songdo, the Eco-City paradigm (*Chapter 4*) is also combined with the Ubiquitous City concept (*Chapter 5)* that uses high-tech surveillance (and disciplining) networks to achieve this. Thus, while Songdo is rhetorically presented as a project aimed at achieving national economic growth goals, it is also interested in the cultivation of particular subjects – in this case, cosmopolitan citizens with a sense of national obligation, social responsibility, and desirable skill sets in the global knowledge economy (*see also Chapter 6*).

The urban landscape is also consumed symbolically through the medium of monumental, iconic, or flagship architecture. Spectacular buildings often act as synecdoches for an entire city where they are situated and are frequently used as focal points for publicity material. Working in concert, multiple representations are choreographed to create the image of the city (Zukin, 1995). In the case of emerging nations in the East, the assembling of glass and steel towers is a projection of a particular kind of vision of the world (Ong, 2011a); tented skylines become a testament to modernity and power through the iconization of high-rise architecture (Haines, 2011). In this context, flagship architecture symbolizes a "technological sublime" that marks the arrival of a new city on to the world stage (Ong, 2011a).

Worlding practices are given form by architecture and urban design. Iconic representations of buildings and streetscapes are then circulated in the global marketplace to attract foreign capital investment, highly skilled foreign labour, and further promote a particular image of the city. The urban dreamscapes that are produced in part by the privatization of urban planning and increasingly important roles played by private interests in public planning policy, are developed into marketable commodities in the form of pre-packaged landscapes 'imagineered' to satisfy fantasies for a particular mode of living or quality of life (Dear, 2000). In the case of Songdo, the fantasy of the South Korean Urban Dream is partly articulated

through the global language of an 'international style' of architecture and to create a competitive advantage in the symbolic economy of global cities (Marshall, 2003) and within the Asian context.

Worlding practices fundamentally challenge the hierarchy of world and global cities by reframing them as processes rather than static categories, thereby allowing cities 'off the map' (Robinson, 2002) to intervene in processes of dominant Western-centric urban theory and knowledge production. By extension, the value-laden developmental lens that characterizes cities beyond the West as lacking 'city-ness' and that requires them to 'catch up' by means of ascribing to pre-given economic and ideological imperatives set by the 'First World', is fundamentally challenged. Rather than emphasizing static categories of world and global cities, Robinson (ibid.) instead advocates a process-oriented approach as further discussed in *Section 2.2.3*. Developing this further, Roy & Ong (2011) theorize worlding practices as ways to conceptualize the strategies that achieve this destabilization in the context of contemporary Asian city-building. For Ong (2011b), worlding practices refer to, "Spatializing, and signifying gestures that variously conjure up worlds beyond current conditions of urban living. They articulate disparate elements from near and far" (p. 13) and thus symbolically re-situate a city in the world, and chip away at normative distinctions between 'East' and 'West'. Worlding cities are emergent, though processes

are uneven and rhizomatic in their connections, aligning with an open conceptualization of space (Massey, 2005). These processes, however, do not open inside a uniform vacuum, but are situated within existing power geometries and path-dependencies that structure this openness to some extent. Like urban rhetorics, the tension between openness and structurally-dependent processes - of both knowledge production and urban development - challenges theories of 'the urban' and complicates developmental approaches to city-building.

Thus, cities previously thought to be incommensurable and incomparable can be drawn together to contribute to urban theory production (Roy, 2009; Robinson 2006). With this in mind, cities previously categorized as being situated in the global south are no longer understood as lagging behind or lacking 'global north-ness'. Instead, they can contribute to new theoretical and policy imaginations that other cities – in both the (formerly) global north and south - can draw from. The teleological path of developmentalism is exploded open, allowing for new and potentially important comparisons and conceptualizations of the urban to develop. As such, I conceptualize urban expressions and the worlding practices that help to shape them, including urban rhetorics, are not imitations of dominant Western and Eurocentric urban tropes, but transformations of them. Urban expressions produced through worlding practices further contribute to the theoretical development of Asian

urbanism(s) by acting as the articulations of complex processes of city building that move beyond linear development frameworks and Western-centric hierarchies of global and world cities.

2.2 Asian urbanism(s) and current debates in urban geography

Before delving into the potentiality of Asian urbanism(s) to contribute to current debates in urban geography, I will first briefly outline the main strands of argumentation that have arisen from Brenner and Schmid's (2015a) provocative interpretation of planetary urbanization. Their work has sparked lively and ongoing debate in urban geography in recent years and engages with scholars from a wide range of theoretical communities. This summary of the planetary urbanization debate further combines analyses of the radical potentiality of Merrifield's (2013) interpretation, Henri Lefebvre's (1991 [1974]) original hypothesis, feminist, post-colonial, and post-structuralist urban theory, as outlined next.

2.2.1 Eight Provocations, or: Lefebvre through Brenner & Schmid's seven theses on planetary urbanization

In 1970, Henri Lefebvre provocatively wrote:

> I'll begin with the following hypothesis: Society has been completely urbanized. This hypothesis implies a definition: An *urban society* is a society that results from a process of complete urbanization. This urbanization is virtual today, but will become real in the future. (2003 [1970] p. 1; original emphasis)

Expanding on Lefebvre's hypothesis, Brenner and Schmid (2015a) argue that in the 'urban age' and in the context of increasingly globalized flows of people, capital, and information, the very epistemological core of urban studies – how 'the urban' is understood – must be radically reconceptualized. With the assumption that "the urban has become a privileged lens through which to interpret, to map and, indeed, to attempt to influence contemporary social, economic, political and environmental trends" (ibid., p. 155), the very question of what constitutes 'the urban' in the first instance must first be re-theorized in this planetary moment. Engaging in a process of epistemological reflexivity, and with much affinity with postcolonial urban theory's ambitions to develop new geographies of theory (Roy, 2009) in response to the Western-Euro-American-centric hegemonic hold on urban scholarship, Brenner and Schmid present planetary urbanization as a point of departure for this 'new epistemology of the urban', opening the doors to a meta-theoretical discussion (and debate) of the urban question.

Moving away from sociological definitions and universal(izing) theories of 'the urban', Brenner and Schmid (2015a) question the very meaning of the urban question and, by extension, they also question the very legitimacy of the discipline of 'urban' studies itself. To provoke such a fundamental paradigm shift, Brenner and Schmid put forth the following seven theses, summarized below (ibid.):

1. The urban and urbanization are theoretical categories, not empirical objects; the urban, and the closely associated concept of urbanization, are theoretical abstractions that are essentially contested.

2. The urban is a process, not a universal form, settlement type or bounded unit;

3. Urbanization involves three mutually constitutive moments – concentrated urbanization, extended urbanization and differential urbanization; processes/conditions of agglomeration are important for conceptualizing the urban, but are not the only processes included. Concentrated urbanization entails processes of agglomeration while extended urbanization beyond these clusters are operationalized to support the everyday activities of urban life. Differential urbanization involves the continuous and dynamic creative destruction of inherited socio-spatial configurations. These three moments constantly interact to produce historically specific forms of socio-spatial organization and uneven development.

4. The fabric of urbanization is multidimensional; spatial practices (land uses), territorial regulation (collectively binding rules that mediate urbanization processes) and everyday life (which is mediated and transformed by urbanization) co-constitute the three moments of urbanization to produce a constantly mutating urban fabric.

5. Urbanization has become planetary; the urban has become a worldwide condition in which all aspects of social, economic, political and environmental relations are enmeshed. The urban can no longer be defined in opposition to an ontological Other located beyond or 'outside' it (ex. 'rural', hinterland, non-urban).

6. Urbanization unfolds through variegated patterns and pathways of uneven spatial development;

7. The urban is a collective project in which the potentials generated through urbanization are appropriated and contested; the urban cannot be completely subsumed under the abstract logics of capitalist industrialization or state domination, allowing for powerful potentials for radical social transformation through contestation and everyday use. These potentials are both the product of, and what is at stake in, urbanization. The urban is essentially political and thus not solely theoretical.

Some important linkages to Lefebvre's original (2003 [1970]) work on planetary urbanization are also highlighted by other scholars to add additional depth and complexity to Brenner and Schmid's (2015a) seven theses. In their interpretation of Lefebvre's work, Buckley and Strauss (2016) contend that, 'the urban' is a virtual and processual concrete abstraction – a theoretical object and a 'possible object', or simultaneously 'an actual reality' and a 'concept of reality' (Merrifield, 2013, p. 913). Again, emphasis is placed on the tension between theory and practice, or in other words, 'the urban' and 'the city'. Moreover, the urban is also described by Lefebvre (2003 [1970], p. 3-4) as a 'fabric' – a kind of tissue that grows and stretches to bring near and distant places in relation to one another. Rather than a smooth blanket that uniformly smothers the whole surface of the earth, the urban fabric is woven with different densities, thicknesses, and activities. Akin to Brenner and Schmid's extended urbanization, Lefebvre's urban fabric highlights the interconnectivity and relationality of its constituent parts rather than representing global-local hierarchies – the fabric is woven together, albeit unevenly, placing all points in potential relation to any other.

Lefebvre's urban fabric is a totality, but not in a classically Marxist sense. For Lefebvre, planetary urbanization does not have an end state though it may create new and diverse connections. The urban fabric is inherently incomplete and infinitely approaches greater complexity. Instead, what is becoming planetary is the urban

question itself, as it permeates all corners of the earth and becomes a conceptual object of struggle. Thus, Lefebvre's urban fabric is a totality, but one that moves *away* from unitary, absolute, or universal definitions of what constitutes the urban (Buckley & Strauss, 2016). As a result of this relentless change and always-unevenness, spaces of rupture remain (Lefebvre, 1991 [1974]) despite the powerful forces of capitalism over social and economic life. Here, despite the pervasiveness of capitalism within the urban fabric – as the "clothes [of] our daily lives" (Merrifield, 2013, p. 913) – a critical space for radical urban politics remains embedded at the very heart of Lefebvre's original hypothesis. The 'urban revolution' is not snuffed out as Lefebvre advocates not for a return to the city, but the creation of new spaces, institutional forms and political frames as part of 'the right to the city' (Madden, 2012). Planetary urbanization, for Lefebvre and as reiterated by Brenner and Schmid (2015a), is a moment of potentiality and medium through which socio-spatial relations can be re-imagined.

Lefebvre's work, however, differs from classical Marxist theory in pertinent ways, demonstrating multi-theoretical possibilities for conceptualizing the urban (as discussed in *Section 2.2.2*). Buckley and Strauss' (2016) nuanced reading of Lefebvre's original hypothesis of planetary urbanization provides some key insights. Importantly, they note that Lefebvre saw the urban phenomenon (and planetary urbanization) as an ongoing process, one which was not "…unitary, overdetermined, or fully graspable

through any single approach to urban theory and analysis operating within existing disciplinary traditions" (p. 4). As such, Lefebvre departs from classical Marxist conceptualizations of totality, as he also does with urbanization – instead of seeing the urban as "an outcome of industrial capitalist processes of accumulation, it is the very process that enables accumulation to take place" (ibid. p. 3). That is, industrialization is conceptualized as a stage of urbanization, a moment, an intermediary, and instrument. Urbanization, not industrialization, therefore creates the conditions for capitalism. Moreover, Madden's (2012) interpretation of 'the urban' through the work of Lefebvre also points to this conceptual indeterminacy, arguing that, "nowhere does [Lefebvre] mention any complete end state" (p. 780) in the context of planetary urbanization – "urbanization links the world together, but it continues to change and develop" (ibid.). In his reading of Lefebvre, Madden aims "…not to make a claim about the totalization of any particular urban form. Rather, it is to say that what becomes planetary is the urban as a question, as a theoretical framework, as a conceptual object of struggle" (ibid. p. 781).

Brenner & Schmid (2015a), as I interpret their seminal paper, never advocate for totalizing accounts of urbanism in the classical Marxist sense within the context of the planetary urbanization debate. However, two entwined mis-readings of their work, I believe, spark much of the debate. To begin, 'planetary' urbanization is

sometimes interpreted as an "all-encompassing ubiquity" (Peake, 2015), rather than momentary materializations of ongoing socio-spatial transformations that actively produce, unsettle, and rework 'the urban' and thus constantly engender new urban configurations (Brenner & Schmid, 2015a). The 'urban' is dynamic, in-process, multi-dimensional, historically and geographically variegated, polymorphic, multi-scalar, emergent, profoundly uneven, and complex (ibid.). Planetary urbanization is not simply a process of producing more cities in a homogenous fashion across the entirely of the earth. Instead, it is a meta-theoretical exercise to reflexively attend to this multiplicity, contextuality, and complexity. Peck (2015) explores this further, outlining the debate between postcolonial urban theorists and political-economic geographers, suggesting that there is a, "… tendency to equate abstraction with totalizing essentialism, political economy with structuralist economism, and both with universalism, often [foreclosing] what might otherwise be potential points of connection debate, and dialogue" (p. 169) between theoretical communities.

To borrow from Sheppard et al.'s (2013) use of Spivak, 'planetarity' does not equate to global and Euro-centric regimes of truth. Planetarity instead denotes alterity. Echoed by Radhakrishnan (2007), globality and worldliness are not the same, globality again denoting processes of globalization as a *fait accompli*. Alternatively, worldliness is phenomenological, irreducible, hermeneutical, and perceptual. While I

recognize that 'planetarity' differs from the 'planetary', I argue that both denote an ontological excess and help point to the fragility of the urban as a theoretical, empirical, and conceptual object. For Spivak (as cited in Roy and Ong, 2011), the global denotes Eurocentric regimes of truth. These readings emphasize the multiplicity embedded within planetarity and worldliness, but also the importance of reading different urbanisms together and in conversation with one another regardless if they are situated 'on' or 'off the map'. In sum, in critiques of Brenner & Schmid's planetary urbanization theses, 'planetary' is mis-read as both a homogenizing or totalizing explanatory mechanism.

2.2.2 Fuel to the Fire: responses to Brenner and Schmid

Brenner and Schmid's (2015a) theses on planetary urbanization have prompted fiery opposition, namely from Walker (2015) in his paper published in the same issue of *City*. Walker's response is heated and unsympathetic (to put it nicely), sparking a pointed reply from Brenner and Schmid (2015b). Walker accuses Brenner and Schmid's (2015a) paper of being "misguided, confused, unoriginal, ahistorical, hypertheoretical, idealist, metaphysical and undialectical" (Brenner & Schmid, 2015b). Instead, Walker (2015) suggests that the authors remove their heads 'from the clouds' and join Walker with his 'feet on the ground' where 'real' urban research is taking place. More substantively, Walker takes issue with Brenner and Schmid's

"'overstretching' the concept of the urban to the point of meaninglessness" (ibid., p. 10), affirming that the urban-rural binary should remain intact, and that 'the urban' and 'the city' can, and should, be conceptualized as the same object of research. In a later issue of City, Davidson and Iveson (2015) chime in on the debate, though with a very different tactical (and political) approach than Walker. Davidson and Iveson defend the concept of 'the city' because of its importance to emancipatory politics (i.e. the right to the city); however, they openly concede that this should not be understood as a defence of a bounded or universal conceptualization of the city. Ultimately, as Brenner and Schmid (2015b, p.1) articulate, the disagreements that have been sparked by their theses on planetary urbanization are indicative of the different epistemologies that are attempting to find their footings on the "rapidly shifting terrain of urban theory and research under contemporary conditions".

Peck (2015) articulates this struggle between differing positions within urban research by outlining some of the assumptions that are used to justify various epistemological positions. In particular, political economic geography is often set up as a strawman for post-colonial urban theory (and Actor-Network Theory), where neoliberal urban theories are used as conceptual/analytical foils. In these instances, political economic approaches are critiqued such that political economy is equated with structuralist and econo-centric approaches that rely on universalism,

determinism, and essentialism (ibid., p.169) despite literature that points away from such convergence models and explanatory hegemony. This effectively closes the dialogue/debate between political economic and post-structuralist/post-colonial/feminist scholars, or at the very least, hinders the production of a vibrant 'urban theory-culture'. Peck (ibid.) defines this theory culture as "[a sustained range] of critical interrogations across cases marked by a plurality of methods and modes of analysis", and thus concludes by asserting that "urban political economy and postcolonial urbanism do not occupy incommensurable spaces of zero-sum explanatory competition" (p. 179). Thus, it is possible to engage in critical, lively, and productive debate about urban theory without resorting to the creation and use of theoretical caricatures of competing theoretical positions. This strategy that engages with multiple theoretical pathways of inquiry is central to the exploratory approach of this thesis as discussed previously.

Alternatively, Peake's (2015) feminist critique highlights both lived and institutional and epistemological violence within the "… ethnocentric and Eurocentric cultural underpinnings of modernity [that have] dominated urban studies in the 20th century and beyond" (p. 221). While she ascribes Brenner & Schmid's (2015a) planetary urbanization theses to this Euro-centric and masculinist hegemony, this should not preclude possibilities to engage feminist urban theory in a fruitful

conversation with on-going debates in planetary urbanization. Likewise, the aggressive attacks sustained by Walker (2015) from what might be considered as an anti-feminist perspective, advocates for situated empirical research from an approach that brushes aside meta-theory and the power geometries/geographies of knowledge production. Planetary urbanization is thus criticized from multiple onto-epistemological positions that are sometimes in conflict with one another as well. Rather than reflecting or even reproducing fractures within urban studies, I argue that this multi-sided attack on planetary urbanization can be reoriented as an onto-epistemological bridge, a productive tool of theory development, and prompt a paradigm shift in urban studies that does not co-opt, subsume, or dominate different onto-epistemological communities.

2.2.3 'The urban' from the (region formerly categorized as the) Global South: post-colonial and feminist responses to planetary urbanization

In their paper, Brenner and Schmid (2015a) identify the work of postcolonial theorists as commendable, especially as it pertains to their critique of inherited urban epistemologies that stem from Euro-American experiences of capitalist urbanization. In their reading of postcolonial urban theory, Brenner and Schmid (ibid.) identify four key orientations and commitments, including: (a) scepticism of authoritative, universalizing knowledge claims about the urban experience; (b) attention to

contextual particularities and local experiences; (c) inter-place relations or worlding processes; and (d) and an exploration of parochial prototype urbanisms that circulate and are reconstituted elsewhere. That is, postcolonial urban theorists seek to produce new geographies of theory (Roy, 2009) that take power geometries of knowledge production into account when placing diverse yet 'ordinary' cities (Robinson, 2006) in conversation with one another. To achieve this, a revival of comparative urban research is upheld as a key way through which theoretical interventions can be made, led by Jenny Robinson (2002, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2013).

Though this research is not explicitly comparative in its methodology, the current development of New Songdo City speaks to Robinson's (2006) related work on 'ordinary cities' in a number of ways. In Robinson's research (2002, 2005, 2011), global and worldly discourses are destabilized to understand how they have produced 'regulating fictions' that often limit the ways that academics, policy-makers, and city-builders imagine the future possibilities of cities. The regulating fictions of dominant global and world city discourses work to create a hierarchy that reifies canonical cites as "the only visible nodes in the global imaginary" (Yeoh, 2006, p. 150), while erasing other cities on the margin 'off the map' (Robinson, 2002). The 'metrocentricity' (Bunnell & Maringanti, 2010) of the dominant global and world city discourses (Sassen, 2001; Taylor, 1997, 2004; Beaverstock, Smith & Taylor, 1999; Godfrey &

Zhou, 1999) privileges the West as the measure by which all other examples are compared, often limiting analysis to specific areas of a city or parts of the economy. Additionally, for Vaiou (2010), there is always a 'city in the back of your mind' when theorizing urban processes based on the researcher's own experiences and conceptual bias. All urban research, therefore, can be understood as implicitly or explicitly comparative, since no city exists – real, historic, fictional, or in the process of being built – in true isolation. Consequently, Robinson (2002, 2011) and Edensor and Jayne (2012) call for a new comparative approach that is more cosmopolitan and that looks 'beyond the West' to examine the various ways that multiple places, contexts, and actors are implicated in current urban development processes. Consequently, it is important to reorient urban research beyond the West and the regulating fictions it produces to approach a more nuanced understanding of how these dominant ideas are taken up, relocated, and transformed in divergent contexts. Thus, 'the city in the back of your mind' need not be, or resemble, metrocentric examples at the top of global and world city hierarchies.

Limitations to Robinson's work exist, as they do with all approaches. It is difficult to ascertain, for example, the limits that regulating fictions put on key actors and the development frameworks within which they are situated. While it might be more evident where and how global and world city narratives are used to legitimate

mega-urban projects like Songdo, it is not clear as to how these same regulating fictions implicitly or explicitly limit the range of urban imaginaries at play. Moreover, framing Songdo as simultaneously exceptional (Sheldon, Zook & Wiig, 2014) and ordinary (Robinson, 2006; Amin & Graham, 1997) also poses important epistemological questions, discussed next.

The call to imagine all cities as 'ordinary' aims to take into full account of the many ways of being urban, as well as making new kinds of urban futures (Robinson, 2006) in an effort to move beyond developmentalism and towards a more critical post-colonial theory of cities. Through the lens of ordinary cities, hierarchies of urban forms, experiences, and economic organization are destabilized, opening new theoretical possibilities for all cities and the relationships between them. On the other hand, it is also impossible to ignore the specificity of the New Songdo City case – while it may be theorized as ordinary, it is marketed and promoted as exceptional, constructing an ideological and symbolic presence that cannot be easily erased, overwritten, or ignored. It is also situated within the specific context of South Korean urban development history, politics, and economics where path-dependencies are important to consider. In this instance, Songdo's status as a case straddles tensions between the ordinary and exceptional. This paradoxical status as both ordinary and exceptional (*exceptionary*?), however, is not a simple failure of theory or city building. Rather, I argue that this

liminal position emphasizes the vast range of theories that might be applied to generate new urban knowledge and allow places 'off the map' to make important contributions to urban research.

By positioning Songdo between the ordinary and exceptional (though perhaps all cities should be framed this way), it is possible to move beyond a developmentalist framework that understands the worlding practices at work in places 'off the map' as shallow replications of the West. Instead, complexity, relationality, and contextuality are prioritized to better understand the ways that the urban is imagined and experienced, to blur the socially constructed hierarchies between East and West, as well as 'developed' and 'developing', and ultimately, engage in research that is attentive to complex processes of urbanization regardless of where they are located geographically or theoretically.

2.3 Asian Urbanism(s)? convergence, divergence, inversion

Brenner and Schmid (2015a) turn to planetary urbanization to unify urban theory, which they see as is increasingly pressing given the multiplication of approaches and the widening fractures between them. Consequently, Asian urbanism(s) might be interpreted as appealing to arguments for Asian-centred specificity and a return to particularism. Moreover, the use of 'Asian' theoretical and analytical approaches to

'the urban' poses significant challenges to Asian urbanism(s)'s potentiality. Whether this entails the de-stabilization of Western hegemony over urban theory, an inversion of East-West developmentalist binaries, or a call for ever-more fragmentation within urban studies, the substance of Asian urbanism(s)'s potentiality remains difficult to ascertain without a more detailed discussion of what Asian urbanism(s) is, and perhaps what it can be.

To begin, the extent to which urban research in China, India, 'southeast Asia', 'East Asia', and in other categories of geographic classification varies is also debatable, throwing the very concept of 'Asia' as a world region in question. This differentiation of spaces, and thus also the socio-spatial relationships between them, are both the object of destabilization for the project of Asian urbanism(s), and also a foil for 'the West'. In both cases, I argue that the double role that the 'Asian' classification plays works to expose socio-political processes of knowledge production, geographies of theory, and thus, begin to chip away at the hegemonic hold of Western and Euro-centric theory in urban research.

Nonetheless, some scholars contend that the development processes taking place in Asia in recent years, and which continue presently, do retain some marked differences from dominant trajectories of urban development situated in the West. Here, difference and the politics of difference need not be understood as negative,

lesser, or Other. Instead, difference is both inherent in, and a necessity of 'the urban', and importantly, do not inherently require hierarchies of valuation (especially Western and Euro-centric ones) to make sense of them. These differences have been described as a number of different categories of large-scale urban development – as mega-urban projects (Douglass 2000; Olds, 1995), global urban projects (Marshall, 2003), or urban-integrated mega projects (UIMs) (Shatkin, 2011). For example, Marshall (2003, p. 24) identifies several common features pertaining to new cities within the Pacific Rim region:

- Being instigated in response to perceptions of global competition;
- Attempting to secure a competitive advantage for the host city in this competition;
- Attracting, and retaining, the global elite;
- Existing at a radically different scale and as a radically different articulation of urbanism compared to the environments immediately surrounding them;
- Attempting to secure celebrity status by projecting an image that can be marketed in the global marketplace;
- Encapsulating a narrow and specific definition of urban life and culture;
- Placing precedence on an urban vision, which becomes the dominant urban vision by which all other urban visions must relate.

Of notable importance is the role of representation in the meaning-making of the city. Expanded upon further by Shatkin (2011) in his discussion of UIMs, the central role of the private sector in the visioning, planning, development, and regulation of new cities is highlighted. Enacted through the private sector, these profit-oriented and large-scale developments conjure and project an idealized urban vision through the

commodification of the city as is the case with worlding practices identified by Roy and Ong (2011). While the development of new cities in Asia is not a new phenomenon, the profit-oriented mandate and the heavy involvement of the private sector in all aspects of development signal a departure from previous development processes. Propelling these developments are visions for a new global-urban order: overseen by central governments in Asia where such projects are increasingly established, these projects represent ambitions for new and presumably better urban futures. These improved urban futures are supposedly achieved through these projects that are understood as "a means of mobilizing corporate entrepreneurship and technology to create urban spaces that attract investment, create efficiencies, and enable residents to realize their potential as actors in the global economy" (ibid., p. 77). In this body of research, inherently neoliberal logics that propel large-scale urban development projects in the Asian context meld global economic processes with the socio-cultural and ideological visions of the developmental states that produce them.

The degree to which these attributes are exclusive to urban development processes in Asia is debatable. Beyond these accounts of urban development and city-building in Asia, the epistemological differences that exist between Asian and other urbanisms is explored by Roy (2016, 2015b). At an intersection between post-colonial and feminist theories, Roy argues that in developing 'new geographies of theory'

(2009), some degree of empirical uniqueness of cities in the global south is assumed; however, adding empirical variation to existing urban theory does little to decentre the existing canon. Thus, Roy questions what is at stake in denying the existence of many urbanism*s* and a plurality of concepts of the urban against existing epistemological impulses for a singular and unified theory (hence the use of Asian urbanism(*s*)). This leads to her argument that a unified and universal concept of the urban impedes present understandings of history, global capitalism, and its futures. An embrace of theoretical plurality would thus allow these futures to remain open since the process of 'becoming urban' is always incomplete (Roy, 2015b).

Diverging from Marxist theory that interprets historical difference as variations of some basic form that is assumed to be both universal and implicitly Western-centric, Roy (2016) identifies some additional mis-readings within recent urban theory: an analytical confusion between globalization and universalization; between generalization and universalization; and the valorisation of Eurocentrism. Thus, Roy writes, "While urbanization may indeed take a global form, while capitalism is undeniably global, the universality of such processes is another matter (ibid., p. 203). The urban is therefore a historical process, not a universal form, and postcolonial theory, including Asian urbanism(s), becomes a means by which the epistemological hegemony of Euro-centricity is inhabited rather than discarded. To do this, the

relationships between place, power, and knowledge production are given the utmost importance. Ultimately, "what is at stake in 'new geographies of theory' is not the empirical diversity of Southern cities, but instead the stories the West most often tells about itself" (ibid., p. 207). Consequently, the urban question remains a *question* – a plurality – rather than a search for a single unifying and universal truth.

Roy's extensive body of work makes significant contributions to post-colonial and subaltern urban studies. Her collaborations with both Aihwa Ong (Roy and Ong, 2011) and Jenny Robinson (Robinson and Roy, 2015) explore important issues in global urbanisms in contemporary urban studies, especially as they pertain to places and peoples 'off the map' (Robinson, 2002). Most importantly, the intersections of Roy's research with others mentioned throughout this chapter focus on processes, politics, and geographies of knowledge production. Through this approach and using New Songdo City as an example, I aim to extend Roy's work by exploring the ways that Western and Euro-centric urban development narratives travel, are taken up, transformed, articulated, and experienced in the South Korean case.

Theorizing New Songdo City through the lens of Asian urbanism(s) and its theoretical and epistemological potentiality, however, also must be done with a critical approach. Despite the affinities between Roy and Ong's worlding (2011) and Robinson's ordinary cities (2006), Robinson keenly identifies several apparent risks

with their approach. In her 2013 paper, *The Urban Now: theorizing cities beyond the new*, Robinson is sceptical of the theorization of 'Asian urbanism' (Roy, 2011a; Ong, 2011a) as the assertion of this new category, albeit a critical post-colonial one, may work to form new parochial hegemonization within urban studies. This could then potentially (re)territorialize knowledge and sites of knowledge production even while it decentres Euro-American urban research. That is, a focus on Asian urbanism(s) and on cities 'off the map' in general run the risk of developing an 'Eastern hegemony' in urban theory, a mere inversion of the 'geographies of theory' (Roy, 2009; Robinson, 2013). While Robinson does not suggest that Roy and Ong actually do this, the dangers of (mis)interpretation of their work nonetheless exists and is reiterated by critics of such approaches (see Storper & Scott, 2016 for example). The risk of hegemonic inversion remains, though this should not deter further forays and experiments within urban studies; to abandon this path would only work to reaffirm colonial urban imaginaries of global-regional hierarchies.

This research does not intend to assert the existence of a universal understanding of 'the urban' by way of Asian urbanism(s). It does, however, explore facets of urban development in East Asia. Through this theoretically exploratory investigation, this research attempts to give shape to urbanization processes – material and immaterial – taking place in South Korea, and considers how this might contribute to both Asian

urbanism(s) and urban theory more broadly. Through the conceptual development of urban expressionism as a facet of urban processes presently taking place in the Asian context, I propose that the further concretization of Asian urbanism(s) works first and foremost to destabilize and re-configure 'the urban' and the urban question. Through tools such as urban rhetoric and worlding practices, the potentiality of Asian urbanism(s) to achieve these aims is made ever-more palpable.

2.4 Conclusion: New Songdo City and the pursuit of Asian Urbanism(s)

In the age of planetary urbanization, the urban question itself is now under scrutiny. What do scholars mean by 'the urban' in the first place? How might we differently understand the urban question, and what are the ontological, epistemological, methodological, and indeed political consequences that result?

The ontological crisis sparked by Brenner and Schmid's *Towards a new epistemology of the urban?* (2015a) and their theses on planetary urbanization has led to a heated debate that strikes the foundational core of urban research. In response to their call for a paradigm shift that collapses simple categorical and universalizing conceptualizations of 'the urban', epistemological and methodological propositions have been offered up by scholars of many divergent (and sometimes convergent) theoretical communities within urban studies. Notably, post-colonial, post-

structuralist, and feminist urban theorists have offered responses to Brenner and Schmid's provocative paper. This debate provides the important theoretical context of this thesis.

To answer this question, this theoretical and conceptual framework has engaged with the planetary urbanization debate and its responses, combining these broader debates with the concept of urban expressionism to make sense of the complexity of New Songdo City - one city which I propose as a rich example of Asian urbanism(s). Urban rhetoric, worlding practices, and the experiences of city residents each explore moments of expression of the urban phenomenon but cannot paint a complete picture – the urban always retains some excess and indeterminacy, allowing it to remain open and maintain its potential for new urban paradigms. This potentiality, then, lies at the heart of Asian urbanism(s)' objective to inhabit spaces of hegemonic theoretical closure and thereby destabilize Western and Euro-centric conceptualizations of the urban.

In conjunction with the bodies of literature outlined above, the methodological framework that I have used to conduct this research structures the type of urban knowledge produced. As a result, an examination of the research's inspiration, my own positionality, as well as the data collection methods that I utilized are crucial to discuss. Broadly, I take the position that processes of knowledge production that take

first-hand, qualitative, tacit, affective, and/or situated knowledges as its starting point provide unique yet generalizable insights into the development of New Songdo City. These important insights explore various facets of urban development and its expression that are not always immediately present in master plans or technical reports of city building. The immaterial geographies and urban imaginaries at play in the development of the city, thus, are highlighted by first-hand accounts of Songdo and are described in the following methods chapter.

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3

Chapter Three
Methods, or, a story of cross-cultural navigation in New Songdo City

3.0 Introduction

The multi-faceted attributes of urban expressionism and the aforementioned plurality inherent in Asian urbanism(s) inspired a variety of qualitative methods in a modified case study approach. This chapter outlines my epistemological and methodological rationales for prioritising qualitative investigation methods, an exploratory case study approach, and analytical strategies for this thesis. The evolution of the research question is briefly discussed first and includes an outline of the pilot study, its limitations, and opportunities. The final research questions that

this thesis seeks to answer are reviewed before a detailed discussion of my own positionality and the implications of this on my research practice and results. I then discuss my chosen methods that include semi-structured interviewing, focus groups, and surveys with residents of Songdo as well as local experts, public and private actors, and other key stakeholder groups. Importantly, recruitment methods and their various opportunities as well as limitations are also discussed in detail. Finally, a brief rationale for the incorporation of visual methodologies is also outlined. Ultimately, the methods used to undertake this thesis provide a glimpse in to the development of New Songdo City. These snapshots, however, are not objective windows through which urban processes are known, but capture different situated urban expressions that are articulated through the city and that demonstrate the multiplicity of Asian urbanism(s).

3.1 Qualitative Methodologies & the Exploratory Case Study Approach

This research is grounded in the assertion that "Qualitative methodologies enable us to understand the richness and complexity of human experience, the central meanings and ongoing processes that structure socio-spatial life" (Herbert, 2010, p. 79). To examine these intricately intertwined socio-spatial urban processes, I engaged with Songdo residents and key actors both in public and private sectors. Other site-relevant materials such as the IFEZ Journal, advertisements, promotional videos and

exhibition displays, along with existing research on the city, were placed in iterative conversation with one another allowing research questions and theoretical frameworks to co-evolve. Through this emergent strategy, the plurality and potentiality of Asian urbanism(s) is thus held open; however, this should not then imply that analytical generalizations cannot be made. On the contrary, the always-contestable nature of generalizations (Herbert, 2010) means that acute attention must be paid to contextuality – both with regards to the specificity (or 'exceptionary' status) of New Songdo City as an example of Asian urbanism(s) as well as my own positionality.

The relationship between the generalizable and the situated knowledges that can be produced through an engagement with New Songdo City highlights the inherent tensions in processes of knowledge production. The rich qualitative data that was collected speaks to specific and/or individual experiences, and is pertinent for understanding socio-spatial patterns and the complexity of the urban experience. Moreover, since this research is, at the broadest theoretical level, concerned with 'the urban question' in contemporary debates in urban research, choosing a 'case study' is highly questionable considering the ontological crisis at hand – how can I choose to conduct a case study on a city if the very concept of 'the urban' (and by extension, 'the city') has been exploded, namely by the planetary urbanization debate outlined in *Chapter 2.2*? Moreover, a geographic analysis of New Songdo City

entails, to some greater or lesser extent, parameters that delimit the case from 'everything-not-the-case', spatially, temporally, and relationally. If planetary urbanization, as theorized by Brenner and Schmid (2015), lies at the heart of this rationale, how might the case study be reinterpreted if there is no ontological Other to 'the urban' and the urban-rural binary is dissolved?

My research of New Songdo City was not, at the onset, intended as a case study (at least in traditional social science terminology). However, as the research progressed both 'at home' and 'in the field', it became difficult to conceptualize this as anything but a 'case study'. As I read on and as I write, this has proven to be an even more difficult choice to justify. Nonetheless, I will maintain that this is in fact a case study, though with some alterations in my approach. Presently, I conceptualize New Songdo City as a paradigmatic case that explores the potentiality of Asian urbanism(s) as evidenced through urban development processes currently taking place in South Korea. As an 'exceptionary' example, no standard or baseline of urban theory exists to explain the Songdo phenomenon; however, this is not deemed a failure of theory or my own research design. By taking an exploratory approach, I aimed to let the case reveals itself, not as an object but as an event that unfolds (Berlant, 2007). This emergent quality makes this type of case approach akin to the criminal case or medical case where a situation is presented and it is the investigator's task to understand the crime or condition. I do not expect that urban

theory 'makes itself visible to me', or that explanatory mechanisms exist 'out there' and are waiting for me to 'discover' them, but that there is a critical need to continuously reflect on why this work has assumed this form given the data at hand. That is, critical reflection on the case as a collection of narratives, abstractions, generalizations, hypotheses, theories, and particularisms, as well as something 'important enough to merit attention', is needed at all stages. The research, then, is not self-evident and cannot conform to disciplinary pedagogical norms, especially given the ontological crisis brought on by the planetary urbanization debate discussed in *Chapter 2*.

Therefore, this research began with several plausible explanations that could explain the development of New Songdo City – the neoliberalization of the Korean economy, uneven development, global and world city development, the bifurcation of labour – but once in the city, experiences and data quickly troubled many of these theories. Consequently, this case speaks directly to many of these theoretical starting points, but departs from them through the course of the thesis.

Despite the novelty of this case study approach, some key case study principles remain as methodological signposts. To start, I take the position that geographic knowledge can be developed by tacit and context-dependent learning that is not necessarily solely interested in proving a theory, but primarily is interested in *in situ* learning (Flyvbjerg, 2006). As a result of the emphasis I place on being able

to ‘be there’, the research design was limited to a single case for several practical reasons, including lack of financial and time resources to complete a multi-site study. However, despite these limitations, this single-case is nonetheless multiple in its numerous linkages between evidence and data in many different places, times, and ways. That is, there is an inherent elsewhere-ness of single-case study research. This echoes *Chapter 2.2.3* and the assertion that all urban research is, to some greater or lesser extent, comparative.

Additionally, I must also consider that I am making analytical generalisations after returning from South Korea. Prior to leaving for my research trips there, I had only loose hypotheses of what I might find and expected that these would invariably change. While ‘in the field’, new research themes and issues arose as I spoke to various participants, prompting theoretical and methodological shifts. Even now, it is sometimes still unclear as to what this ‘case’ is a case of given exploratory objectives and assertions of a plurality of urbanisms. Nonetheless, I aim to obtain a better understanding of Asian urbanism(s) through expressions of the urban phenomenon. I now continue this discussion of emergent research methods through a brief overview of the project’s evolution between 2013 and 2017.

3.2 Project Evolution

The initial proposal for this research aimed to explore the relationship of airport-led urban development and issues of mobility, precarity, and labour. At first, this research was proposed as a comparative study between the 'aerotropolis' (Kasarda, 2000, 2008) of New Songdo City International Business District (IBD), South Korea, and Haarlemmermeer, The Netherlands. After identifying research questions and key actors, a pilot study was designed and conducted. I spent two weeks at each site from July to August 2014. First arriving at Schiphol International Airport (AMS) in the Netherlands, I interviewed several key developers and planners responsible for what is widely recognized as the prototype aerotropolis surrounding the airport. However, after only a few discussions, it became clear that Kasarda's theory of the aerotropolis was applied well after the Schiphol area had developed its plans. While some aspects of Schiphol and Haarlemmermeer are explained by Kasarda's theory, his aerotropolis theory is poorly translated from a sprawling American urban context where it was conceived, to the Dutch context where development is much more compact, restricted, and where national and municipal governments maintain a relatively strong social welfare role. It was determined at this point that the Airport City theory (Schaafsma, Amkreutz & Güller, 2008) was more applicable to the Schiphol context than Kasarda's aerotropolis.

Immediately after this trip to the Netherlands, I travelled to Incheon, South Korea to study New Songdo City and the aerotropolis that had supposedly emerged there. Again, much like the Dutch case, it was quickly determined that the development of the Incheon International Airport (ICN) was not done with the explicit intention of creating an aerotropolis. Rather, Kasarda's theory was again added to the city's rhetorical repertoire and was quickly taken up by development proponents due to its trendy appeal at the time. The aerotropolis, it seemed, gained traction in South Korea as a marketing device rather than a guiding development principle. Consequently, it could not be determined if New Songdo City's economy is primarily dependent on the proximity of the international airport as premised by Kasarda. Instead, if I could theorize that an aerotropolis did in fact exist in South Korea, I would posit that it is embodied by Airport City located on Yeongjong Island, adjacent to Incheon International Airport (see *Chapter 6*).

With both Haarlemmermeer and New Songdo City being ruled out as aerotropoli, and with the acknowledgement that the aerotropolis theory could not explain much of the urban development happening at either site, I decided to select only one of the sites to explore the complexity of its development – complexity that the aerotropolis theory could not come close to explaining or conceptualizing. After much deliberation, I decided to study New Songdo City for several reasons. First, I felt that the rapid development of new cities around the world, which is particularly

prevalent in Asia, made Songdo especially pressing to study. Proclaiming to be a model city for future urban developments, the development of Songdo has potentially far-reaching implications, not only for the built environments of cities, but also the social, cultural, and political lives of those who inhabit them (and those who are excluded from them). With an overwhelming emphasis on the multi-scalar economic impacts of New Songdo City, I felt that socio-cultural analyses that I am especially interested in exploring were lacking, and thus was even more pertinent to research.

Alternatively, urban development in the Schiphol area has been extensively researched. As a notable benchmark for similar airport-led urban development projects, the relationship between the airport and adjacent cities is thoroughly explored from a wide range of theoretical and methodological positions (see Freestone, 2009; Van Wijk et al., 2011; Charles et al., 2007; Schaafsma, 2003 for examples). Ultimately, though, these justifications to study New Songdo City over Haarlemmermeer remain inadequate. When the decision had to be made, I gravitated towards New Songdo City[1] because, quite frankly, it fascinated and captivated me more. Little work had yet been done (and published) despite the significant outpour of marketing materials by Gale International, KPF, IFEZA, and others on the world

[1] New Songdo City is the larger development that the IFEZA controls, while the Songdo IBD is the international business centre developed by NSIC LLC at its core.

stage. Here, the possibilities of this vast unknown swayed me. Perhaps it was an emotion-driven decision, but what would be the point otherwise?[2]

In addition to my own research interests, I also considered some practical challenges when choosing to study Songdo. Language was a key factor – though many people speak fluent English across the Netherlands, English in South Korea is far less common in everyday interactions despite a heavy emphasis on the subject in Korean society and education. It was not feasible to learn either Dutch or Korean, realistically, in the short period leading up to my fieldwork trip. However, New Songdo City is widely advertised by Gale International (one of the development partners) as an international city where English is the *lingua franca*; thus, I anticipated that the language barriers I might encounter in other Korean cities might not be as pronounced here. Moreover, my family's origin in South Korea also meant that I had a (very) limited familiarity with the Korean language, and also had access to a few resources I might be able to use to at least aid in preliminary networking with key contacts, and more generally, provide some degree of safety as a lone researcher in a country where I had not spent much time in before. These aspects of

[2] Taking cues from Donna Haraway (1988), I approach this research with the position that all knowledge is situated. More than this though, I argue that research that captivates, relates, or reaches beyond the researcher's cognitive logic - that is, research that effects and affects - is worthy of investigation and can produce rich, critical, and robust knowledges. If it didn't matter to the researcher, why bother?

my own positionality, as well as other key identifiers, are discussed in greater detail in *Section 3.3* and further help to frame my research in New Songdo City.

3.2.1 Research Questions: revisited

Following the pilot study and the subsequent decision to focus my research efforts on of New Songdo City, I began to refine my research questions. After several preliminary interviews with residents and key public and private actors, I took note of themes that repeatedly emerged, guided by the broad initial research question, '*what is this place*? Over time, this question and themes were narrowed and further focused so that the research continued to address issues that were, and continue to be, relevant to those I spoke to.

New Songdo City, it seems, was a fruitful example of several pertinent theoretical tensions and complex urban processes, raising further questions that I hope can contribute to a dynamic and constructive urban theory-culture (Peck, 2015). However, the exact composition of the tensions and the processes that produce them in the Songdo example remains, to some degree, uncertain. This uncertainty - an ontological excess - is not a shortcoming of this research, but is instead its primary impetus that drives it forward. Thus, I undertake a theoretically exploratory approach to New Songdo City that aims to answer the following (revised) research questions:

1. If New Songdo City is conceptualized as an example of Asian urbanism(s), how does the development, expression and lived experience of this city transform and dis-/locate, relationships between different conceptualizations of 'the urban'?

2. What is the relevance of New Songdo City to urban geography? What kind of city is this and for whom?

To explore these questions, I engage with four urban expressions of New Songdo City to better understand the potentiality of Asian urbanism(s). These are:

(Chapter 4) The South Korean Urban Dream and the Eco-City;

(Chapter 5) The Smart and Ubiquitous City;

(Chapter 6) The 'International City';

(Chapter 7) The 'City of Tomorrow'.

These four lines of analysis were chosen in a heuristic manner. With the case study approach discussed previously, I returned to Songdo in the winter of 2015 with an open theoretical and analytical framework, looking for themes, issues, and experiences to emerge from conversations with city residents and key public and private sector actors, as well as my own observations. These were also prominent in 'official' literature produced by key actors in the public and private sectors, as well as other urban scholars. Eventually, four over-arching expressions were distilled from these various data sources, forming the basis of the following four chapters in this thesis. In each instance, I aim to explore the different expressions of the city and their implications for the potentiality of Asian urbanism(s) as well as urban research more broadly. Before delving in to the specific methods used to explore Songdo's

urban expressionism, I first outline important aspects of my positionality that have shaped my decisions to explore the city in this way.

3.3 Positionality: 'Korean', inside and out

The exploration of Asian urbanism(s) necessitates, as all research practice does, a critical discussion of positionality. In this research, my positionality frames my decisions, experiences, and therefore, the knowledge that is produced. Moreover, I also believe that the complexities of Asian urbanism(s) and my own identity politics speak volumes to each other, mirroring the ways that pre-defined categories of 'East', 'West', and otherwise crumble under careful and critical analysis. As a young, second generation Korean-Canadian native English-speaking female Oxford student and lone researcher in a (relatively) homogenous ethnic context that places extraordinarily high value on education and that is structured by Confucian social hierarchies, my positionality is of the utmost importance. It was apparent from the start of this research that my ethnic heritage would play a large role in the way my research would be conducted, perceived, as well as the type of data it would allow me to collect. Extending further, this invariably also impacts the way data is interpreted and (re)presented. Additionally, within the specific context of South Korea but also in the 'international city' of Songdo where education and English language skills are among the top draws for Korean residents, my positionality as

both ‘Korean’ and ‘Western’ was especially pertinent when communicating with different community groups and actors. Consequently, a discussion of identity performance, politics, and meaning in the South Korean context follows.

To give further context to my positionality in relationship to this research, a brief discussion of my family’s relationship to South Korea and South Korean culture is relevant. Unlike many Korean families, we lived in Scarborough, Toronto, Canada from the mid 1990s onwards where few other Koreans settled after immigration to North America in the 1960s slowly but steadily grew. Much of the Korean diaspora in Toronto settled downtown in the Christie and Bloor area, while wealthier Koreans may have chosen to settle in (or later moved to) the new suburbs outside the Greater Toronto Area such as Markham, especially from the 1990s onwards. Consequently, our family had little contact with other Korean families apart from a few extended family members who also managed to immigrate to different parts of the city. Unlike many Korean families, our family also did not speak Korean at home. Instead, my family members spoke English to each other except my parents who occasionally spoke Korean to each other, especially early in my life when my father’s English was still developing. Members of my extended family also spoke a mixture of Korean and English to varying degrees of proficiency. This is largely a consequence of my mother’s uncommonly early migration to Canada at the age of twelve (1960s) and her subsequent education in the English-Canadian school system.

Unlike most Korean families in Canada, none of the Choi children attended Korean language or cultural classes, much to the dismay of other Korean relatives and Korean friends. This is not to say, however, that we as a family had become 'Canadian'. My parents struggled with the challenges of immigrating to a new and very different place, even my mother who settled in Toronto at a much younger age. Consequently, the inter-generational challenges of being Canadian-born children to immigrant parents were instrumental in shaping my experiences, understanding of both Korean and Canadian cultures, and my position within, between, and forever outside both of them. As a family, we occasionally participated in important Korean traditions, maintained ties with extended family living in the Toronto area, and perhaps most importantly, participated in the preparation and consumption of Korean food on a nearly daily basis. While this last point may seem banal, Korean cuisine is an essential part of Korean culture. Along with the Korean language, the development of a distinctly Korean style of cooking was culturally and politically significant to firmly differentiate Koreans from the Chinese and Japanese. Daily Korean cultural practices, including the cooking of distinctly Korean foods and the use of the Korean language are thus enactments of the sovereign Korean state and expressions of nationhood. Viewed this way, my immediate family has maintained a somewhat ambivalent position within our extended family and Korean culture more broadly because of our selective engagement with South Korean cultural practices.

This narrative is just a small snippet of the complexities involved in my position both 'inside' and 'outside' of the Korean community. While the Korean diaspora is large, there is a relatively short history of this diaspora at the global scale beginning in the 1960s. Furthermore, there are significant numbers of Korean-Canadians who were born in Korea and maintain closer ties with the culture and community while living abroad. Consequently, as a second (and a half[3]) generation Korean-Canadian, born and raised in Toronto, I occupy what some Koreans refer to as a *gyopo* (교포) identity. This is thoroughly discussed in *Chapter 6*.

While I have identified myself as Canadian (not Korean-Canadian[4]) for most my life, researching in South Korea broadened this perspective. For one research informant who was born and raised in California and who is presently living in Songdo, she identifies herself as both a *gyopo* and an 'invisible foreigner'. Being a *gyopo* in Songdo does grant a privileged position to some degree, but it can be extremely difficult to read *in situ* for both Koreans and foreigners alike (again, see *Chapter 6* for a more detailed analysis). It is often not immediately apparent that an individual is a *gyopo* as one of the key attributes is that they have full Korean

[3] My mother can be counted as either first or second generation. I consider this because she arrived in Canada at the young age of twelve. Due to the ambiguity of this situation, I have characterized her as 1.5 generation, making me, her daughter, 2.5 generation Korean-Canadian.

[4] This was, and still is, a very conscious choice and an exercise in identity politics, specifically as it relates to Canadian multicultural policies and personal experiences of racism.

ethnic heritage on both sides of the parentage. Thus, *gyopos* 'look Korean' but do not always 'act Korean' – those with more in depth knowledge of Korean customs and language are better able to 'blend in' to Korean society at will. In this case, my limited knowledge of the Korean language and culture meant that I could be quickly 'found out' and often felt like an imposter while living in South Korea.

On the other hand, my middle position was somewhat helpful when speaking to international residents in Songdo. While many of them had encountered others like myself who were born and/or raised in North America but who are ethnically Korean on both sides of their parentage, many were curious about my experiences and perspectives on Korean culture and society. This proved to be an icebreaker or point of departure for a broader conversation about the meaning of Songdo as an 'international city'. Additionally, when meeting me for the first time, many remarked that they were surprised or even relieved to hear me speak English in a '(North) American' accent, worried that they might have to use their limited knowledge of Korean to converse. Some additional reflections on the interactions are found in the following subsection.

Alternatively, when speaking to ethnic Koreans who were born and raised in Korea, my *gyopo* identity was received in a mixed manner. In some cases, my name (written in English though a very common Korean family name (최)) alone would, I believe, grant me some leeway and access to interviewees, especially within the IFEZA

and other Korean offices. Often (if not always), the first question I was asked was whether I spoke Korean. When I would reply, "no", I was sometimes met with disbelief or perhaps disappointment. In many cases, however, it is also very likely that this situation meant that the interview would be conducted in English (all my correspondences have always been in English, even when arranging interviews) and thus cause some hesitation among interviewees whose first language is Korean. The amount of importance placed on fluent, 'accent-free' (i.e. North American) English is such that being able to speak fluent English is a symbol of class, education, power, and thus status in Korean society; imperfect English is perceived as a negative indicator of an individual's status, intelligence, and more broadly, their character. Native Korean-speakers would often apologise profusely for their perceived lack of proficiency of the English language, though in most cases, I found that they were able to communicate effectively.

Age and gender, moreover, are valued according to a Confucian social hierarchy in South Korea. Generally, the very old and the very young are most valued, while men have a more powerful position than women. Thus, as a young woman born and raised in Canada, I am located on one of the lowest rungs of the Korean social hierarchy (of ethnic Koreans). Conversely, old men and first born sons are most praised, valued, and respected. As alluded to earlier, my educational background also contributed immensely to my positionality in this research. As a

DPhil student at the University of Oxford, I also hold a privileged position in the Korean social hierarchy since education attainment is, again, a key marker of success and social status. In Korean society, achieving a prestigious international (i.e. Western) education is indicative of personal virtues and reflects positively on both the individual and their family. Those who acquire degrees from schools in North America or Europe are especially well looked upon, with top-ranked institutions carrying the most prestige. The University of Oxford is very much one of these notable institutions.

For many Korean residents living in Songdo, a significant part of their housing choice was dependent on the proximity of good schools. The presence of top local Korean schools in addition to Chadwick International – a private American school – makes Songdo is an especially desirable place to live in. The presence of Chadwick is especially important to parents who believe that their child will benefit more from an international English education and are thus willing to pay the very steep fees to attend this private school. With American exam testing at the conclusion of their high school education, many parents and students at Chadwick hope to achieve scores high enough to gain acceptance into top universities in the United States. This is also true of top universities in Europe, though there are fewer pathways to gain admittance to these institutions. Still, as one of the top post-secondary institutions in the world, Oxford University and its students are looked

upon quite favourably by many Koreans. As a result, many Korean respondents with young children would begin or end interviews by asking how I was able to become a student at Oxford University, and if there was anything they needed to know to help their child to do the same. In some cases, I felt that parents were willing to answer my questions in exchange for some insights on the Oxford admissions process, though I also felt I disappointed many of them when I responded by saying that I did not believe that there was any special 'trick' or strategy that I used to make it through the selection process.

In sum, my family's cultural and ethnic heritage, the specific immigration histories of my parents, my own upbringing and knowledge of Korean culture, language, and practices, my ethnic heritage, my gender, my age, and my educational status all are crucial aspects of my identity that positioned me uniquely to do research in South Korea, and even more specifically, in the Songdo context. It would be too simplistic to say that my positionality granted me more or less access to interviewees, or to say that it improved or compromised the type or quality of data gathered. At different times, certain aspects of my identity were more or less relevant or visible than others. Taking these aspects of my identity into consideration, I made methodological decisions that aimed to best limit bias while generating to most connections possible with potential respondents. This is further discussed in *Sections*

3.4 and *3.5*, organized according to the different methods and stakeholder groups I engaged with.

3.3.1 Reflections

Reflections on select interview experiences that are not explored in the remainder of this thesis but that are indicative of both the pertinence of my positionality and the hegemony of Western and Euro-centric urbanisms, are discussed here. These experiences impacted my interpretation of research materials, both primary and secondary, but are not directly related to the arguments made in the proceeding chapters. First and foremost, I noted that five international residents had troubling perspectives that implicitly and explicitly characterized the Korean nation, state, and people as 'developing', 'Third World', or 'catching up'. In particular, three of the five respondents were white, North American, married heterosexual men with comfortable jobs and reasonable financial security. Even more troubling, they were often the most vocal residents I spoke to and held positions of importance either within their workplaces as upper management or within the community as executive members of the Foreigner's Advisory Board (FAB). In conversations with these individuals (who I will refrain from naming, even by pseudonym), they repeatedly referred to South Korea and its society as lesser, implicitly framing themselves as 'First World' experts. On many occasions, they passed judgements on various urban development process and social practices in New Songdo City and in South Korea more generally. Their

opinions on how an 'international city' ought to work, and how Koreans should conduct themselves in a city made for foreigners were both fascinating and disheartening.

In another instance, one respondent from South America and one from the United States referred to themselves as 'pioneers', alluding to American mythologies of Western expansion tinged with colonial rhetoric. Their standards, opinions, needs, and observations were presented authoritatively and often with heated dismay at what they perceived as an inferior Korean society and state. Set in their ways, there seems to be little room for alternative conceptualizations of urban life beyond their own narrow Western-centric frames.

In two instances, I was even cast as a mediator - an academic 'on their side' who could tell Korean residents and city officials 'how to behave' as 'one of their own'. In one case, the foreign resident I spoke to insisted that I visit the Chadwick School where he worked as a principal to speak to the students about my educational experiences in exchange for introductions to some of his colleagues in the school. While this offer seemed reasonable at the time, I quickly realized that something much more sinister was being proposed. After exchanging contact information for a follow-up, the resident proceeded to explain that my presence and my ability to speak English 'without an accent' even though I 'look like them', would somehow inspire (Korean) students; they would be 'in awe', further reinforcing the supposed dominance of Anglo-

Western society over their own. In the second instance, I was requested to return to Songdo and present my findings to IFEZA, who would listen to me, again, because 'I looked like them'. In both instances, respondents assumed that because I was from North America, I held the same beliefs that they did, and that I was better positioned to 'tell them how it should be'. Though South Korea was not colonized by Western nations (though some argue that South Korea is a neo-colony of the United States), such colonial sentiments that place these foreigners, primarily from Western nations, at the top of the developmental hierarchy are unquestionable. In these cases, there seemed to be no room for hybridity, immigration experiences, or critical reflections on prejudice or racial discrimination for these residents.

While continual comparisons were made based on 'cultural differences' and hierarchies of social organization, many foreign residents also conceded that their opinions were just that - opinions - and should not hold greater sway than any others. Recognizing the difficulties they faced was also complemented by conversations about the challenges faced by South Koreans as a direct or indirect result of their individual or collective presence in New Songdo City. Reflecting on various scales of impact, geometries of power, and socio-spatial complexities within and beyond Songdo was, interestingly, noted more frequently among non-Korean women living in the city.

These reflections, however, should not be read as binary interpretations of Songdo or of its residents according to gendered or national categories. Instead, the

broader patterns of the ways that interviewees interpret themselves within Korean social and spatial hierarchies points to the complexity of Asian urbanism(s) and the important task of destabilizing Western urban hegemony. These accounts highlight the pervasive discrimination that is evident in New Songdo City and within developmental theory, and that structures the rhetoric produced by city proponents, the perceptions of residents, and the socio-spatial inequalities - both big and small - that permeate the life of the city.

3.4 Methods

The following section explores the rationales for the various data-collection methods I used. Broadly, the connection between lived experiences, the 'everyday', qualitative methods, and semi-structured interviews is discussed. More specifically, the use of focus groups explores issues of consensus and disagreement in processes of knowledge production among participants. Surveys are also explored as tools used to gather data from Korean-speaking residents given language barriers. The use of a translator is also discussed, examining the benefits and limitations that resulted. Moreover, a detailed discussion of recruitment for each method will also outline limitations of chosen approaches, especially relating to communication mediums and tools. Gatekeepers to Korean and international residents of Songdo, as well as key public and private actors involved in the city's development, were also vital to this research

and led to varying degrees of snowball sampling among different social groups. Last, visual methodologies were also deployed in this research and are discussed in *Section 3.5*.

3.4.1 Making Choices: To Speak, To See, To Be Seen

An iterative approach to methods was used throughout this research, negotiating changes in both research objectives as well as the contextual circumstances that arose as a result of being (dis)located in both South Korea and the United Kingdom. As a result of the international nature of this research, locational aspects, language, and cultural expectations played a significant role in the ways that data collection was pursued (as discussed in *Section 3.3*). Since Songdo has been developed and widely advertised as an international city where English is the *lingua franca*, I entered the city with the expectation that the English language would be commonly used in daily exchanges. Additionally, because this research was initially focused on international labour migration experiences in airport-led urban developments, I was especially interested in speaking to the international residents of Songdo. With marketing materials and urban rhetoric aimed at attracting highly skilled knowledge workers from the West, emphasizing Songdo as a key node for the creative economy in East Asia, I also expected that the international city of Songdo would boast a relatively sizeable international population.

These initial assumptions would prove to be problematic, requiring the research plan to be modified on numerous occasions. The chosen research methods and the rationales for their application to different situations will each be discussed below. Though the chosen data collection methods will be discussed as somewhat discrete practices, they are not conceptualized as being mutually exclusive. Instead, the data collected and my subsequent reflections on each stage of the research process informed decisions for future encounters with research participants. In the end, I developed a multi-method approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and surveys alongside the analysis of policy documents, supranational, national, district and IFEZA statistics, and official publications by key public and private sector stakeholders.

3.4.2 Decisions from the Desk: researching from Oxford

First and foremost, the 'desk' in this research is theorized as being a part of 'the field', and the research done from Oxford is not regarded as separate from research conducted in South Korea. Rather than being bound in place and time, as being 'there' rather than 'here' (Hyndman, 2001), my desk in Oxford was as much a part of my fieldwork as my desk in Incheon. Additionally, given the global nature of this research that included interviews with people located on three different continents, several interviews took place online via Skype or other digital communication platforms. Further to this, my experience as a Korean-Canadian studying a South

Korean city while based in a university in the United Kingdom meant that, to some extent, most days of the last four years have been 'in the field'.

Studying an international city where members of the Korean diaspora are playing an increasingly important role in the (social) (re)production of the city also meant that I simultaneously occupied an insider and outsider position while researching in Songdo. To add to this complexity, I did not lodge in New Songdo City. Rather, due to the high rent prices in the city, I instead opted to rent a bedroom in a four-bedroom family apartment in *Hagik il-dong*, a nearby neighbourhood in Incheon. Though I was only a twenty-minute bus ride (depending on the route and traffic conditions) away and spent most days commuting to Songdo, I was sometimes interpreted as an 'outsider' among residents for this reason (see *Section 3.4.4* for an example of this). My brief physical presence in Incheon and Songdo further contributed to this 'outside-ness', even though many of the people I spoke to also resided in Songdo for only short periods of time.

Thus, the research done at my desk in Oxford, before and after both research trips made to South Korea, is every bit apart of my fieldwork as the research done in the field. Much of the coordinating, corresponding, analyzing, and general 'thinking through' of the research problem I had set out was done from any number of desks, in multiple countries, throughout this research process. Due to my inability, both in terms of financial resources and time, to travel to various cities around the

world to speak to key actors and/or their representatives in person, and due to the prevalent role of multi-national companies in the visioning, development, and marketing of Songdo, digitally mediated interviews were essential. This also speaks to the high degree of mobility and the international scope of these actors/institutions. In the case of both Kohn Pederson Fox (KPF) and Gale International, interviews with representatives at their Korean offices were refused. Instead, I was rerouted to their American offices since staff was limited in the Songdo location and because they were continually bombarded with interview requests from other academics and journalists.

After developing the first iteration of my research questions, a list of key actors and stakeholders was developed. Emails and letters marked with an Oxford University School of Geography & the Environment header were sent to public relations personnel or people of interest requesting an interview (A list of stakeholders and representatives is provided in *Appendix C*). To understand the complexity of the New Songdo development, particularly the rationales for its guiding vision, specific design decisions, and marketing, semi-structured interviews were used. This format allowed for guided conversations to take place that ensured the discussion remained 'on topic' (which was only loosely defined given the exploratory aims of this research), while also leaving opportunities for elaboration, (relevant) tangents, themes, and other issues to emerge. With my list of contacts, as

well as a list of popular gathering places, with residents, key actors, and local experts, I went to Songdo with the intention of conducting a series of semi-structured interviews, but also with the expectation that improvisation, troubleshooting, and create problem-solving would be needed at all stages and require flexibility in my fieldwork plans.

3.4.3 'In the Field': Parts I & II

Two trips were made to New Songdo City, South Korea, the first in August of 2014, and the second from January-March 2015. During this period, local experts highlighted the rapid growth of the city's population and the quick construction of apartments alongside other commercial and institutional buildings. Since the city had experienced significant social and material landscape changes in the short six-month period between my two trips, the material gathered from each trip differed somewhat as described next.

Part I: Dreamscape or Nightmare? First impressions of New Songdo City

During my initial pilot trip to South Korea in August 2014, I spent the majority of my time on Yeongjong Island where the Incheon International Airport is located since I had initially intended to study airport-led urbanization in the area. I spoke to several representatives of the Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC) as well as a representative from IFEZA during this two-week visit. I also arranged a meeting with Prof. Bae Gyoon Park at Seoul National University, who is a

geographer specializing in urban development politics in South Korea. I also spent time walking around different new towns on the island, as well as a few days exploring New Songdo City.

Despite acknowledging quite early on that a study of the aerotropolis was unlikely to be as fruitful as I had initially hoped, I continued to explore some of the development dynamics in and around the Incheon International Airport, paying particular attention to New Songdo City since it was, and continues to be, prevalent in academic and popular literature. To begin my foray into this new place, I began by commuting to the International Business District subway stop. This seemed (at the time) to be a natural choice since it was the Songdo IBD that was developed by Gale International and that receives the most press and academic attention. Though it was a hot summer Sunday, I nonetheless expected to find people out and about. To my surprise, the immediate area by the subway entrance/exit was completely empty without another person on foot or otherwise in sight (Figure 3.1). Upon exiting the brand-new subway station, I was confronted with a large elevated roadway to my left and empty shop fronts to my right, their windows covered with newspaper and with 'for lease' signs.

During this initial visit to Songdo, a sense of the uncanny struck me continuously. The city was at once familiar with its wide sidewalks, English street names, manicured boulevards, and glassy blue towers. But the city was also inescapably bizarre. Typical urban design tropes including long straight boulevards jutted up against aged concrete and empty fields. Crowds of people were suddenly gone just as soon as they appeared. Every corner seemed to show a different face of this city. It felt overwhelmingly fragmented and unpredictable. I left the city feeling unsure – could my experience of New Songdo City be attributed to the South Korean urban context that I was relatively unfamiliar with? Was the strangeness I experienced specific to Songdo? Was the sensation of bewilderment a result of the projections of the city differing from this first impression? I left the city excited to



Figure 3.1 Entrance to Songdo IBD Subway Station, Incheon Line 1
Source: Author, 2014

learn more about what I had just seen (and not seen). *Chapter 7* further details these expectations, experiences, and reflections.

Part II: Return to Songdo: opening the gates

This first captivating visit of Songdo in August 2014 was central to my decision to continue to study the new city six months later. I returned to Oxford following my initial pilot study and revised my research questions to focus on Songdo and the role of rhetoric in its social and material production. With new research questions, I then revised my list of key stakeholders and actors, and again, went about contacting different offices to secure interviews in the upcoming months. In the lead up to my return trip to Songdo, I managed to speak to representatives from Gale International (American development partner) and KPF (Master Plan and flagship building architects) who were surprisingly receptive to my research despite anecdotes from other junior researchers studying the city who found these firms difficult to access. I also interviewed a journalist via Skype who had done a series on Songdo and arranged to meet contacts at IFEZA and Seoul National University. A part from these pre-established links, I compiled a list of key organizations, groups, community spaces, and actors who, through web searches and word-of-mouth, were identified as potential gatekeepers. Of these, The IFEZ Global Centre – "a comprehensive support centre for foreign residents in Songdo" (IFEZA, 2017), and the Cinder Bar, and active social spot frequented by foreign residents, were slated as starting points.

Before venturing into Songdo, I settled myself in nearby *Hagik il-dong* in Incheon. I rented a single room in a four-bedroom family apartment and was hosted by a Korean mother of two who had been running a homestay program since the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon. With a lack of tourist accommodations in the city, the homestay program was used to pair visitors with hosts as part of a national cultural exchange and tourism initiative during the international sporting event. Looking to expand on this experience, my host family listed a room in their apartment on Air BnB where I was able to book my accommodation. I ultimately chose to stay outside of Songdo and with this family for a few key reasons. First, other advertised listings in Songdo were double to triple the price making it financially unfeasible. Despite the added bus fare required to make the trip to and from Songdo, staying in *Hagik il-dong* was significantly cheaper. Second, the family I stayed with was managed by 'Ginny', an outgoing Korean mum who spoke fluent English and who had been living in the area for some time. This was extremely helpful as she proved to be a vital resource for daily life. My accommodation also included the use of the kitchen, meals with the family, and general company. This was tremendously helpful as this new experience was filled with plenty of challenges and was an intellectual, emotional, and physical rollercoaster at times.

While living outside of Songdo meant that I was not immersed in the city at all times, it did offer other unique experiences that may not have been accessed

otherwise. Most importantly, living just outside of Songdo meant that public transit infrastructure was essential. I could therefore test Songdo's claims to being an 'Eco' (*Chapter* 4) and 'Smart' City (*Chapter 5*) that reduces car-dependency first hand. Living in *Hagik il-Dong* put me at the intersection of a number of bus routes and within easy access to the newly built subway line to Songdo, Incheon Line 1. I was thus able to test the various routes into the city for both time and cost, and assess the ease of access to public transit. Surprisingly, I quickly learned that the subway took the most amount of time (contrary to my experiences in many other cities) and was the most inconvenient for most places I needed to go since the stations are all located in areas that are relatively far from key intersections. Conversely, local buses were the cheapest route, faster than the subway, and had more conveniently placed stops. Express buses were also available for an addition fare, were conveniently located, and took the least amount of time. (See *Appendix D* for transit connections to and from New Songdo City.)

Taking the bus to and from Songdo also meant that I passed through several neighbourhoods in Incheon that separated the new city from older developments. The stark contrast of these areas was particularly interesting to me. Just northeast of Songdo and beyond the new freeway leading into the city, *Namdong Industrial Complex* and the other industrial areas buffer between *Hagik-dong* and what is known as 'Old Songdo' (*Ongnyeon-dong*). These industrial areas are on-going

evidence of Incheon's history as a heavy manufacturing industrial centre and port city in South Korea. Alongside these areas, an all-girls' high school adjacent to scrap yards lies about fifteen minutes from the city. Small shacks and partially completed homes are also scattered amongst the metal debris on the uneven slopes of this semi-developed fringe area. Before crossing the bridge into New Songdo City, Old Songdo's concentration of apartments, shops, hotels, and restaurants are the final stops for the bus before it makes its final approach over the bridge and to New Songdo City. The tightly clustered buildings quickly give way to a thin band of trees before a series of ramps form a border between New and Old Songdo. Elevated bridges over the channelized canal below makes a clear cut in the urban fabric.

Entering New Songdo, the vast and straight streets look relatively strange. The empty streets and open expanses of park areas tend to look desolate or peaceful, depending on one's point of view. The flatness of the land creates a long vista down Convensia-daero while tall glass towers create vertical focal points. Entering the city by bus, the social and material contrast that New Songdo provides relative to the rest of Incheon is striking.

My initial visit to Songdo led me to the Global Centre where I inquired about interviewing staff members who could elaborate on the services they provide. I specifically asked about interviewing one of the real estate agents who specializes in helping new foreign residents who are looking to access the rental housing market

and get a better understanding of the city's different neighbourhoods. To my surprise, I was informed that none of the agents spoke English (which turned out to be untrue). I took a pamphlet from the counter with the hopes that a direct email to one of these realtors might prove more fruitful. I further inquired about the language classes that are offered for free to foreign residents who wish to learn Korean. In an effort to recruit residents for interviews, I asked if it might be possible to put up an information poster on their notice board or perhaps even come by some of the classes, either at the beginning or end, to give people some information about the research. I was firmly denied both requests without explanation. I left feeling as though the receptionists were particularly unhelpful, guarded, and unwilling to engage despite the Global Centre's aims to be a resource hub.

Leaving the Global Centre, I wandered across Central Park and took note of the architecture and shops. Few people were outside at this time, unsurprisingly, as the cold winter air whipped against my face. I walked to one of the city's main avenues, Convensia-daero, and slowly made my way towards the Cinder Bar. With my smartphone handy, I navigated my way towards 'Bridge 2' where the bar was located. Unsure of its exact location due to very little information online, vague descriptions, and stylized maps that did not indicate landmarks or scale, I wandered lost for quite some time. As was the case on my initial visit to Songdo, it became obvious that the technologies I relied upon in my daily life elsewhere, Google Maps

most notably, were not helpful here.[5] Street grids on the application represented street systems using the standardized Google Maps colours, scales, and symbols; however, on the ground, many of these locations were difficult to interpret – roads that appeared to be main arterials on the application were not as large or as developed as I expected, while other areas remained completely unmapped or unnamed.

I bobbed in and out of the laneways between the apartment towers that lined the walkways with small shop fronts looking for some helpful signage. Unsure, I circled between the buildings, hoping for a Wi-Fi signal to refresh the map on my phone. Relieved to have finally found one, this proved to be utterly unhelpful since the small network of streets I was lost in was not visible on the map. Exhausted and cold, I found myself at the rear of an apartment and spotted the main road ahead of me. Ready to give up and try again the next day, I accidentally stumbled on the Cinder Bar.

The bar had just opened for the evening when I arrived just after 17:30. As the only person inside, I sat at the bar and chatted with the barman. The friendly New Zealander quickly offered me a beer, on the house, though my cold stopped me from obliging. Instead, I ordered a hot tea to warm up. He began to ask me questions

[5] That is, Western applications such as Google maps. In hindsight, I should have familiarized myself with the Korean equivalent, Naver.

about where I was from and what brought me to the city. He himself had lived in South Korea for more than a decade, though he does not live in Songdo. Rather, he recently purchased the bar from the previous owner, a friend, running it alongside his other businesses as a professional translator and private tutor coordinator. The barman asked what I hoped to do while in Songdo for research, and after mentioning that I aimed to conduct interviews with residents, he directed me to the Songdo Community Facebook group page. He also directed me to a few other local bars and restaurants that are frequented by foreign residents and that hold regular networking events.

Eventually, a few others entered the bar – three North Americans, two brothers and their Canadian friend – who I was promptly introduced to. While none of them live in Songdo, all of them work there as private English teachers. I was struck by their generosity as they all offered to show me around the area and introduce me to some of the people they knew. I left that evening to catch my bus feeling as though I had made a few solid connections and had more direction on what to do next to connect with other residents of the city.

As suggested, I had a look at the Songdo Community Facebook group. At the time, there were just over 1800 members – many of which were current residents though a number of them were previous and future residents. This is a significant number considering that as of December 2014, Songdo had 1,812 foreigners living in

the city and roughly half of all foreigners living in the three combined IFEZ areas (IFEZ, 2014). I was granted permission to join and post in the group, which was moderated by members of the Foreign Advisory Board (FAB). Here, I made my first group introduction and invited people to contact me for a 'coffee chat' about their experiences living in Songdo. To my surprise, about twenty residents expressed interest via Facebook or email within only a few days. I then began arranging meetings with those who responded.

For each meeting, I invited Songdo residents to have a cup of coffee/tea/etc. and chat informally about their experiences living in the city at one of their favourite cafés. For their time, I bought them their drink, though on occasion some insisted that they actually buy mine. Before beginning, I briefly introduced myself and my research, and obtained their oral consent. Following this, I asked a series of semi-structured questions (*Appendix E*) that broadly explored their reasons for moving to Songdo and some of the everyday experiences they had relating the city's 'smart', 'eco' and 'international' features. I noted their responses in my notebook, adding thoughts and reflections where possible. Before each interview, I wrote out each question on a separate page in my notebook to ensure that I addressed each point and so that I did not have to continuously refer to a separate question sheet. I found that this facilitated a smoother flow in the conversation; moreover, it prevented me from losing my place in the series of questions and helped to ensure that a consistent

set of themes were addressed, albeit in an open and conversational manner. This strategy also provided me with cues for consistent wording and phrasing of topics, while also leaving space for flexibility, modifications, tangents, and follow-up questions.

Initial contacts often offered to extend interview invitations to friends and co-workers, resulting in small groups of three to four persons who reflected on similar yet distinct experiences. In one case, a single contact aided me in conducting two small group interviews – one drawn from his neighbours and friends, the other comprised of co-workers. Of particular note, the co-workers were some of the few people I spoke to who work in Songdo IBD but do not live in the city. For these two colleagues, neither had the financial means to support the high cost of living in the city and thus live elsewhere in Incheon or in a distant new town a two and a half hour drive away. The data gathered from these small group sessions were rich and quite variable from lone interviews since they included valuable moments of comparison, disagreement, and collective brainstorming. Thus, I decided to conduct a small series of focus groups to more formally capitalize on this dynamic.

I put an invitation to participate in focus groups on the local Facebook page for English-speaking Songdo residents (most of whom are foreigners), as well as made in-person invitations at the end of individual interviews. Enough people showed interest in these larger focus group discussions to hold three sessions, each lasting

about two hours. Focus group discussions were particularly valuable as the conversation was directed towards other participants rather than myself, allowing a range of relevant experiences to be explored in great depth and from multiple points of view. Speaking to each other, residents often went into greater detail about experiences in the city since they did not have to continually premise their thoughts with contextual information as was the case when speaking to me. Since residents in focus groups had a somewhat mutual understanding of everyday life in Songdo, they were thus able to explore finer details of their experiences with each other.

Additionally, residents were asked for, or actively suggested fellow residents whom they felt might like to also participate. Using this snowball method, a second round of participants was obtained with little overlap. Since a single resident could identify a number of other residents to participate, the formation of three focus groups was relatively easily and quickly achieved. During these referral discussions that often concluded each interview, it became progressively easier to identify key actors in the community as their names continually emerged. This is, however, also indicative of snowball sampling which tends to identify members of the same or similar social groups (see *Section 3.4.4*). Nonetheless, members of the foreign community who are, and continue to be, active organizers and advocates were identified and interviewed.

In total, twenty interviews with key actors, stakeholders, or 'experts' were conducted, most of which were done via Skype. Twenty-seven interviews were conducted with Songdo residents, nineteen with individual or small groups of foreign residents, six with Korean residents, and two with non-residents (Table 3.1) (see also *Appendix F* for a summary chart of residents). Twelve people, of which seven also participated in individual interviews, took part in a focus group. Eight Korean-speaking Korean residents were surveyed using an online survey platform. Due to significant language limitations, gathering data on the everyday experiences of Korean-speaking residents was difficult. The use of a translator and a standardized multiple choice survey were used to augment semi-structured interviews with bilingual residents, or resident interviews that were conducted with a translator present. Nonetheless, I do acknowledge the obvious imbalance between Korean and foreign interviewees as discussed further in *Section 3.4.4* and *Chapter 8.1.*

	Interviews	Focus Groups	Surveys
Korean Residents**	5	1	9
Foreign Residents***	19	12*	0
Non-Residents	2	0	0

Table 3.1 Research Participants, July 2014 and March 2015

*Of the twelve focus group participants, seven also participated in interviews and are thus represented in both columns.

**Korean residents are self-identifying Koreans who also hold Korean citizenship

***Foreign residents are self-identifying foreigners or those who do not hold Korean citizenship

Source: Author, 2016

In total, data was collected in sixty-seven instances. Moreover, interviews with key actors, such as those on the executive of the FAB, spoke in both in their capacity as community organizers and also as residents in the city. Therefore, the quantification of interviews or interviewees alone is problematic and does not give a clear indication of the data collected. Furthermore, interviews varied in length depending on the willingness of participants to offer their time and thoughts in addition to how long they had lived in the city. Over time, interview questions were also refined and clarified with practice, requiring less explication in later interviews. And, while few surveys were conducted, a clear pattern of responses that broadly correlated to interview data also emerged among Korean residents.

Despite this, however, the use of multiple forms of data collection methods produced different ways through which residents could engage with this research. Individual, small group, and focus group sessions could cater to various comfort levels for residents to discuss some of their experiences and expectations. Moreover, it is also possible that the method of engagement that some used was not as interesting or comfortable as others. For example, some may have preferred to speak to me individually, perhaps to maintain their confidentiality and allow them to speak more openly. Alternatively, this may have also caused interviewees to feel less at ease since I had varying amounts of time to develop a rapport with residents. Thus, it is also possible that lone interviews led to some residents feeling more pressured

to come up with responses that they believed I was looking for, or that they believed were 'correct'. Similarly, group sessions with known friends and family members could have facilitated increased openness among participants since they 'outnumbered' me and were in the presence of those they already trust. Conversely, the presence of family members and friends could have also deterred individuals from voicing disagreement or other opinions that did not reaffirm those belonging to others present. In particular, I noted several occasions where husbands spoke on behalf of their wives, sometimes when they were present and in other instances, when they were absent. In an effort to counteract the apparent dominance of male voices in group conversations, I created opportunities for women to participate in women-only focus groups. The types of topics covered in these conversations, in some cases, varied greatly from others, focusing on important issues related to reproductive and women's health, women's employment, and experiences of discrimination, for example. Alternatively, other focus group invitations did not specify gender but were dominated by men who spoke primarily about Smart City, Eco-City and International City expectations and experiences.

The availability of different platforms for communication, thus, allowed people to choose different mediums, times, and ways of participating in this research. Though I acknowledge that it would be impossible to reach all residents and attend to their needs and/or interests, I believe that my multi-method approach sufficiently

counteracted this since, at various points in the research process, the data being collected formed clear patterns and points of convergence that I could draw conclusions from.

3.4.4 Accessing public and private sector actors

At the time of my second fieldwork trip, the IFEZA was under fire. The Commissioner, Lee Jong-cheol, had been accused of corruption by the Mayor, Yoo Jeong-bok (elected 2014). According to rumours, Mayor Yoo disliked former Commissioner Lee and was looking for a way to oust him in favour of a new Commissioner that he could appoint.[6] As a result of this political tension, I believe that it was especially difficult to access IFEZA and Incheon City officials for interviews, who are already difficult to access especially so for those who do not speak Korean. Despite numerous attempts – phone calls, emails, and in-person visits – I was only able to secure one additional interview. This interview was scheduled to take place between my contact Dr. William Lee, IFEZ Director of Tourism, and myself; however, an impromptu meeting prevented him from being able to attend. Instead, Mr. Park, the Deputy Director of the Infrastructure Service Industry Division, was sent to answer my questions.

[6] The Commissioner of IFEZA is an appointed position selected by the Mayor. All other IFEZA positions are appointed by Incheon Metropolitan City.

Throughout the course of the interview, several questions could not be answered by Mr. Park. He frequently directed me to the appropriate divisions within IFEZA and to individuals who were both knowledgeable and who spoke English. I was especially keen to speak to someone in the Planning and Policy Division and was given a contact. Unfortunately, I was not able to arrange a meeting with them. Despite leaving phone messages, visiting offices in-person on multiple occasions, and numerous emails, I received no response from any of the individuals I was forwarded to. Consequently, despite my initial success at accessing IFEZA officials, I soon found myself at a dead end.

Similarly, it was also not possible to access a representative at Cisco. Despite multiple emails and visits to their Experience Centre located in Songdo's POSCO Towers, I received no response. Though I was directed to a secretary to arrange an interview, they did not reply to any of my emails. Though the Experience Centre's contact information is readily available on Cisco's website, Cisco was particularly guarded, it seemed. Attempting to make an appointment at Cisco's reception desk rather than the building's concierge, I made my way up to the twenty-fourth floor of POSCO Tower I where the experience centre is located. When I exited the elevator, I was not especially surprised to see that the doors were locked, the lights off, and that no one was inside.

Accessing the Incheon Metropolitan City government would be equally difficult. Acknowledging my own language limitations, I tasked my research assistant with translating an email, soliciting responses to a few policy questions regarding housing in the metropolitan area. Once again, emails were not answered, or if they were, replies redirected me to individuals who had already forwarded me on. I ultimately was sent in circles with no one willing to speak to me. I also attempted to reach out to the Korean Land & Housing Corporation to discuss affordable housing issues, but again, did not receive a response. In desperation to have at least some of my policy questions answered, I sent follow up emails to my initial contact at IFEZA, Dr. Lee. Though he was not able to answer all of my questions, he was able to forward me some recent statistics on the IFEZ development and provided me with some additional insights. Since much of the data regarding housing dynamics in Songdo was developed from conversations with representatives of Gale International and KPF, and were only applicable to the IBD area, this IFEZ-wide data was essential. Additionally, the broader city's housing dynamics were discussed with a real estate agent specializing in housing for foreigners. Oddly enough, this was the real estate agent who is affiliated with the Global Centre that I had tried to contact during the first few days of my 2015 trip. He does speak English contrary to what I was told by the Global Centre's secretaries, and was very happy to speak to me. Rather than connecting with him through the IFEZA centre, I was introduced

to him through Ginny who attends the same church and is a good friend of his. This instance also demonstrates the incredibly unhelpful stance of those staffed at the IFEZA Global Centre as well as the serendipitous nature of fieldwork.

While frustrated foreign residents and community actors claim that IFEZA and municipal officials are notoriously opaque and difficult to access, I believe that this was further compounded by the political tension between Incheon Metropolitan City and IFEZA at the time of my research. Moreover, several community actors and representatives of NGOs discussed challenges caused by the rapid turnover of civil servants in South Korea. To reduce corruption, individuals are frequently moved from position to position; however, this also has the secondary effect of stymieing the efforts of community groups and NGOs that liaise with the city in order achieve their aims. Each time their municipal contact changes, they must re-establish a working relationship and brief them with project specifics. For every two steps made, it seemed, one would be made backward every time the city or IFEZA staff member changed. It was also suggested by community actors that the rapid turnover of civil servants also meant that accountability was limited – city employees would only have to do the minimum for a few years before moving on, and were generally averse to long-term initiatives and projects that moved beyond the status quo. This, however, is not an uncommon critique of bureaucracies more generally in and beyond South Korea.

Consequently, while my specific positionality as an Oxford researcher may have helped gain some initial traction with municipal officials and key stakeholders in this politically wrought context, it ultimately proved to be somewhat inconsequential. Moreover, despite attempting to overcome language barriers with the help of a bilingual research assistant, access to municipal actors was still blocked. Thus, obtaining access to important actors was very difficult. Despite efforts, I was not able to speak to representatives of all stakeholders involved in the visioning, planning, and construction of Songdo. Recruitment bias and the representativeness of the fieldwork data are discussed further in the next section.

3.4.5 Recruitment bias and representativeness of research data

Recruitment methods and the inherent bias embedded within my chosen strategies need further elaboration. As previously mentioned, I was able to obtain varying degrees of access to key public and private stakeholders and/or their representatives. The recruitment of resident participants, however, used different strategies with markedly different results. Importantly, gatekeepers were accessed through word-of-mouth and Facebook. Joining the Songdo Community Facebook Group allowed access to the largest forum of international residents in the city, along with several bi-lingual Korean residents. I also managed to gain permission to join the Songdo/Incheon Facebook group and the Songdo IBD page, which are oriented towards all residents regardless of their origin or language(s) spoken. In particular,

the Songdo IBD page has a significant number of Korean followers (roughly nine hundred at the time of use in 2015). On each page, I posted calls for participants and links to other online materials – a website with more detailed information and the online survey in the case of Korean residents – in both Korean and English. Private emails were also used to correspond with participants who had heard about the research from a friend, neighbour, or spouse but who do not use Facebook.

Alongside social media and electronic means of communication, I also attended a few networking events held at a popular local restaurant (now closed). Every month, the restaurant proprietor holds a pizza and drinks party to facilitate community connections, especially for new residents. The owner of the restaurant, David Moore, is one of the original twenty-two foreign residents to move into the city and was once a Gale International employee working as a project manager for the Songdo IBD development. As a local expert, Mr. Moore is noted among residents and researchers as the go-to person for all things related to the development history of the city. I had attended his events without the intension of recruiting participants but to meet people more generally as I was, after all, working alone.[7] I went with the hopes of meeting other people and to fill the social void that accompanies lone research.

[7] My research assistant was not hired until late February, 2015.

Generally, I found those who attended these networking events to be quite welcoming and warm. I asked to sit with a table of strangers who all seemed to know each other already. I was asked the routine questions of: 'Where are you from?', 'Where are you living?' and, 'How long are you in Songdo'. I was surprised when, upon learning that I was not a resident of the city and that I was the researcher who had recently been posting messages on the Facebook group, I was met with some hostility from one resident of the four sat at the table. I was chided for conducting 'the same research as everyone else' and was actively excluded by this person despite others at the table still trying to initiate in friendly conversation with me. In this moment, it was clear that my presence in Songdo would always be tied to my identity as a researcher despite this attempt to exist in the city as simply another 'foreigner'. The residents suggested that I stop asking others to help with research and instead speak to the researchers who have been in the city before since all our work was the same. I tried to explain in more detail what I was working on, but was also very conscious that I sounded as though I was attempting to recruit others at the event when trying to defend my research. I felt that this was their leisure and social time and I did not want to intervene in their personal lives without their knowledge or permission. After a somewhat hostile exchange, I decided it would be best to leave the table and gather more food from the buffet.

At the counter, David Moore emerged from the back kitchen and was pleased to see me. He and some of his friends, along with their colleagues, were seated at the next table and were engaged in a cheerful conversation. I was quickly introduced to his friend, Mr. Millington, also known as Spike, and was invited to the table to chat. I quickly learned that Spike was the chief of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) – an international inter-governmental organization dedicated to the protection of avian species in Asia. The warm conversation with Spike and his colleagues at the EAAFP further facilitated connections with other Korean and international employees working for NGOs and international organizations in the area. Ironically, despite not actually trying to make research connections, I was happily accommodated at Spike's table and was very much encouraged to talk about my work.

The nature of the political, social, and cultural landscape of Songdo created specific pathways through which I could access potential participants. Limited resident data was gathered from municipal or national sources, in part because limited recent and publicly accessible census data at the metropolitan, district, and city levels was available at the time of my trips to South Korea. Much of the data is, instead, aggregated by larger parameters that do not allow data for New Songdo City to be isolated even if it was available. Hence, only national-level and metropolitan data were drawn from the Korean Statistical Information Service

(KoSis) or Statistics Korea (KoStat), and were supplemented by additional data produced by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Though some sub-city data was available, no Songdo-specific data was gathered from KoSis or KoStat and only limited data aggregated by *-gu* (i.e. city district, in this case, Yeonsu-gu) was available. Once I had returned to Oxford, this absence of data prompted me to follow up with my contact at the IFEZA, where I was forwarded a report of recent statistics (as of December 2014) of the three IFEZ cities as mentioned previously. Official state-produced data was therefore difficult to come by, with Songdo absent from many publicly available databases due to its newness and its administration by IFEZA which exists somewhat independently from the Incheon Metropolitan City. City-specific data was thus most often gathered from additional secondary sources that are not under the direct remit of the South Korean state.

With regards to data collection from city residents about their everyday experiences of Songdo, the role of social media was critical. Not only was this the primary medium through which I could make contact with large numbers of residents at once but digital tools and the help of my research assistant allowed research information to be disseminated in both Korean and English as discussed previously. However, the use of a snowball recruitment strategy and my dependence on online communities had many limitations. First, the premise that the Songdo Community Facebook Group contains a large number of international residents is flawed for a

number of reasons. Many members of this group are past residents or even future residents. The high turnover of international labour accounts for this. With a rapid turnover of international residents due to their contractual employment (typically one to three years long), the group tends to accumulate members who are no longer residents. Moreover, each individual has a different understanding and usage pattern of social media platforms such as Facebook. Thus, though my posts had the potential to be seen by roughly two thousand foreign residents, the actual number of people who engaged with it and to what degree is unknown. In general, a cursory inspection of the Songdo Community page reveals around twenty to thirty very active members while the rest are quite passive. Their passivity, however, also cannot be discounted – it is unclear if they see the posts and actively choose not to engage or do not access the group regularly in the first place. The nature of Facebook also enables private conversations between member(s) that I cannot see, in addition to face-to-face conversations that are not logged online at all. Though the group is aimed primarily at English-speaking foreign residents, several Korean residents are also a part of the group and their exact numbers are unknown. Additionally, categorizing residents as 'foreign' and 'Korean' is problematic because several individuals identify as both or either at a given time. Last, not all residents are on Facebook or are a part of the group.

The 'digital divide' is another important consideration. While a number of those who are not on the Songdo Community Group are of a stable enough socio-economic position to access the internet and use social media on a regular basis, there are those who simply cannot. The invisible poor in and around New Songdo City, and on the fringes of Songdo, are marginalized – socially and economically – from city life due to the extremely high cost of living. Notably, this includes the fisherfolk residing on the wetland areas prior to their reclamation, the urban poor on the fringes of the city, and other legal, illegal and semi-legal labourers in the area. Consequently, very little is known about these groups and their engagement with these digital platforms is unknown and undocumented by those I met with.

Snowballing was ultimately the primary means of connecting with interested individuals. This strategy, however, has inherent bias as it tends to reach individuals belonging to the same social groups and thus often hold similar beliefs and opinions. Many individuals that were referred to me, however, also did not reply to messages and emails sent. In the end, while community gatekeepers could connect me to several different residents belonging to various friendship, kin, and colleague groups, both foreign and Korean, the group of participants in this research is not representative of all Songdo residents nor all foreign Songdo residents. Many individuals we clustered according to residential location (i.e. neighbours) or by employer. Consequently, three dominant groups emerged. The first consisted of

teachers, administrators, or their partners at Chadwick International School; the second are employees of Samsung Biologics; and the third were members of a local yoga group. In each case, residents had a similarly high and stable socio-economic status within Songdo, though not necessarily in their previous place(s) of residence. While this demonstrates the relative wealth of the city, the identification of naturally existing participant groups can only allow a partial glimpse into the lives of residents along these socio-economic lines.

Last, a small number of interviews were conducted with individuals who work in Songdo but do not live there. While I wish I could have spoken to more such individuals, I did find that all six of them corroborated and shared similar stories. For them, living in Songdo was unaffordable and financially impossible despite being recognized as a place that they would like to live in. Instead, they lived at varying distances from the city – from just twenty minutes for a restaurant hostess, to an hour for a UN employee living in Incheon, and two-and-a-half hours for her colleague who also works at one of the many UN offices in Songdo. A small number of interviews were also conducted with former foreign residents of the city to gain an understanding of people's experiences before the more recent developments and subsequent population growth, as well as reasons why some were keen to leave. Again, the small number of individuals for these cases can, in no way, be representative of all of those who once lived in the city.

In addition to the dissemination of research information, calls for recruitment, and day-to-day correspondences, visual methodologies were also deployed to supplement the oral- and text-centred data gathered from interviews, focus groups, and surveys. In many interviews, the visuality of the city, its marketing, and other visual media were frequently referenced by participants. Moreover, the presence of a multitude of urban place-making tactics – branding, visioning, interactive exhibitions and displays, and other mixed-media promotional materials – helped to develop a clearer picture of the development vision, plans, and execution of the Songdo project. Thus, visuality is also instrumental to the worlding practices and rhetorics deployed in the Songdo case by both public and private actors. This is discussed in the next section.

3.5 Visual Methodologies

Official images, texts, exhibits, and materials produced by municipal bodies or key stakeholders were analysed to understand the relationship between Asian urbanism(s), urban expressionism, and worlding practices. In this research, official images were useful for understanding the phenomena they depict, as well as their producers and intended audiences (Pauwels, 2011). More broadly, images are particularly important as they have the ability to shape ways of seeing (Berger, 1972), and establish relationships between objects, people, and places (Rose, 2016).

Images are thus framed as political and ideological, with the ability to prompt affective responses that further contribute to processes of knowledge production (Degen, DeSilvey & Rose, 2008).

The analysis of various media – beyond text and speech – is important as these too are sites of knowledge production. These media create frameworks for not only what can be known, but also how it can be known. With regards to visual data more specifically, Wright (2011) explains, "Visual rhetoric is concerned with understanding how images communicate, how they function in a social and cultural environment, and how they embody meaning" (p. 317). The city, and the idea of the city, are thereby codified by these visual rhetorics that aim to sell real estate, services, institutions, lifestyles, and above all, ideas. Rather than being transparent windows onto the world (Rose, 2016; Pauwels, 2011), the production, consumption, and audiencing of visual materials is thus explored to better understand Asian urbanism(s) in the New Songdo City context, alongside the situated processes and practices that give the city expression.

The materials and sources used in this research were selected in a heuristic manner that focused primarily on media (of different formats) that were prominent in the marketing repertoires of key actors. In the case of the *IFEZ Journal*, online links featured on the IFEZA website, as well as hardcopies in the G-Tower (IFEZA headquarters), were easily found and readily available. Inside the G-Tower, display

racks featured current and recent back issues of the magazine and were located at the main entrances of the building. An issue was also (unexpectedly) received by post at the apartment where I was staying in *Hagik-il dong*.

Similarly, websites belonging to key private sector actors, including Gale International, Kohn Pederson Fox, and Cisco, also featured many of the frequently circulated images (renderings, urban design plans, photographs, and info-grams) found in various popular and academic pieces about the city. In this case, this collection of media composes the 'official' representation of New Songdo City, backed by the state and carefully vetted by marketing experts. Video sources were also accessed online and were located through broad searches of 'New Songdo City' in conjunction with other keywords (for example, 'smart city', 'eco-city', or 'international') using Google's search engines. As with the popularly circulated images of the city, video segments were also found cross-linked between the websites of key stakeholders and various digital mass media outlets, such as YouTube as was the case with Cisco. *Chapter 5* highlights some of the language developed and deployed by Cisco in their promotional video series *Cities of the Future: Songdo, South Korea*. Collectively, this inter-linked pool of various mixed-media sources form a broad narrative of New Songdo City whereby the creators of these materials give shape to their products (i.e. the city) and develop a multi-sensory language through which they are given meaning and value. To do this, these narratives utilize multi-

dimensional rhetorics that communicate the city as necessary, virtuous, and/or utopian place to target audiences within South Korea and globally.

3.6 Analysis

The analysis of the data collected from this research was done in an iterative process. First, all interview notes were transcribed and annotated. Next, I re-read each piece of primary data and, using the rudimentary method of highlighters, coloured pens, and page markers, I began to identify reoccurring themes in the texts. Colour-coding each theme, I eventually divided excerpts of transcripts into eighteen topics: the aerotropolis, civil society and the political landscape of South Korea, the Eco-City, Fisherfolk, gender-based issues, housing, socio-spatial inequality, international-ness, labour and migration, language, marketing, quality of life, the Smart City, social and cultural issues, development timeline, transportation, urban theory, and a broad 'miscellaneous' topic for important or interesting excerpts that did not fit into these other categories.

Many interview, focus group, and survey excerpts were coded as pertaining to multiple topics, highlighting (quite literally) intersectionality and the interdisciplinary nature of this research. Slowly, through re-reading and refining my coding frameworks, I was eventually able to collate comments from different sources on the same topic in to a single document for further analysis. Using these master-

theme documents, I was then able to identify keywords, key lines of argumentation or broad opinions on a particular matter, as well as points of tension or disagreement. This material is highlighted in *Chapters 4-7*. Pseudonyms are used for all residents to maintain their confidentiality.

Last, methods of visual analysis utilized a combination of approaches. Drawing from the work of John Berger and other post-structuralist theorists, I aimed to examine a given image's contents, as well as its production, producer, audience, and impact on broad socio-spatial relationships. As mentioned previously, the work of Gillian Rose (2016) provides an excellent guide for critical visual analysis with special focus on spatial relationships, though other intersections with structures of power such as gender, economic organization, and semiotic systems of language are also explored. Different mediums warranted different analytical approaches. In general, materials were subjected to content analysis where recurring images, texts, themes, tropes, and narratives were identified as important examples of both the content and form of New Songdo City's urban rhetorics and urban expressions.

3.7 Conclusion

Reflexivity and analytical openness are the central tenets of my methodological approach to this research. As an exploratory thesis, I aim to be as open as possible to different lines of critical inquiry as they arose over the course of several years. At

the same time, it was also difficult to apply the 'right' amount of structure to my research practice to ensure that analytical generalizations could be made along the way and at the conclusion of this thesis. Thus, just as the urban as a theoretical concept grapples with tendencies towards both generality and specificity, this research design has as well.

Further, I argue that it is not possible to have an objective stance in any research practice and that all knowledge is situated. An extensive overview of my positionality and the details that I believe were most important when shaping knowledge production in this thesis were thus given. Of course, I also must emphasize and recognize the limits to this, as the intersections of identity are vastly complex, difficult if not impossible to communicate across broad audiences, and their effects on knowledge production not fully known. Nevertheless, I hope that this chapter has provided an adequate framework to now proceed to the empirical chapters of this thesis.

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4

Chapter Four
The South Korean Urban Dream and the Eco-City

4.0 New Songdo Eco-City

…New Songdo City will have 515 acres of landscaped and open space, equal to 34 percent of the development's total land area. The centrepiece of New Songdo City is Central Park, a landscaped zone dense with activities such as outdoor concerts, exhibitions, sports, and recreational facilities. The city's orthogonal street pattern is interrupted by its dynamic spaces, open vistas, and pathways. Central Park will rival New York's Central Park and London's Hyde Park as a public amenity, providing the residents of New Songdo City with a place to reflect, meditate, play, and be entertained. The park, along with the vibrant commercial, retail, cultural, and educational projects, provides incentives for residents to live and work within the city limits, instead of driving to a job, store, or park some distance away. The relationship between land use and travel demand is fundamental to any sustainable development. By minimizing car trips and maximizing public transportation usage and walkability, New Songdo City reduces its ecological footprint.

--Kohn Pederson Fox (2008) New Songdo Green City*, p.41*

In 2006, the developers of New Songdo City at Gale International asked themselves how they could make New Songdo City better. They decided to embrace 'green' design principles to turn Songdo into an Eco-City that, "… [would] set a new standard for green design for large-scale development projects across the globe" (Gale International, 2015). Though the city's master plan had already been developed and was in the process of being built, a new commitment to sustainable design was established. To measure, assess and certify their new designs, the project team recommended the use of the U.S. Green Buildings Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) program. Using these certification guidelines, Gale International and its partners in the New Songdo City development became the first to LEED certify buildings in South Korea. In total, Gale International identified six aspects of the city's development that could further enhance its new Eco-City status (ibid.): (1) open and green space; (2) transportation; (3) water consumption, storage and re-use; (4) carbon emissions and energy use; (5) material flows and recycling; and (6) sustainable city operation. This chapter investigates the urban rhetoric that shapes New Songdo City as an Eco-City, the ways that this is articulated in the built environment, and how it is taken up by Songdo residents.

Ultimately, I argue that the urban expression of New Songdo City as an Eco-City is an example of worlding practices that model and inter-reference existing Eco-Cities in Asia, especially in China, rather than imitating antecedent cities (Bunnell,

2015) in the West. Through worlding practices and like Chinese Eco-Cities, Songdo was also constructed through speculative real estate development where joint public-private partnerships (P3s) between local land and investment corporations and foreign development corporations were established to carry out the project (Wu, 2012). As in Chinese cases, international (that is, Western) developers, architects, and planners, "… play a significant role in boosting the potential by packaging and landscaping these projects, just as many land developments have adopted alien landscapes such as an English town or an authentic German-style town outside Shanghai. 'Eco-cities' are often presented as a kind of new green paradise" (ibid., p. 169). In the case of the New Songdo Eco-City, references to New York, especially revolving around the design and function of Central Park and street layouts, are especially prominent in literature produced by Gale International and KPF.

Moreover, I also argue that the Eco-City is an example of neoliberal urbanization in the South Korean context. Consequently, the Songdo Eco-City is an elitist space where middle- and upper-class urban imaginaries - the South Korean Urban Dream - are facilitated, (re)produced, and self-legitimated. To demonstrate the relationship between neoliberal urbanization, Eco-City development, the South Korean Urban Dream, and New Songdo City, I first outline the work of Korean scholars working on spatially-selective liberalisation (Park, 2005) and private urbanism (Shin, 2016; Shin, Park and Sonn, 2015). This is placed in conversation with

the urban rhetoric of the South Korean Urban Dream, highlighting the intersections, assumptions, and socio-spatial relationships that it both (re)presents and (re)produces. Before a brief overview of methods, I conclude this section by outlining worlding practices that are utilized in the New Songdo Eco-City.

Following this overview of concepts and theories, I proceed to explore three different but intersecting facets if the city's eco-expression. In each case, visions and representations of Songdo that lean on Western-centric rhetorics are complicated or subverted by their material articulation in city-building processes or by the experiences of city residents. In the first example, urban rhetoric frames New Songdo City as an Eco-City 'built from scratch' (BBC, 2013; Carvalho, 2014; Kasarda, 2008) and as the first 'new' city built as a sustainable international business district (KPF, 2008). These narratives work to privilege certain landscapes and people over others, and ultimately obscure the negative impacts of the city's development for Incheon's wetlands and fisherfolk.

In the second example, Songdo's Central Park and rhetoric centred on open green spaces are critically interrogated and shown to be elite spaces that (re)produce socio-spatial inequalities. Last, transportation networks are discussed. In several examples, modes of transportation give unequal access to Songdo residents despite transit infrastructure designed to limit personal car usage. Together, these examples demonstrate the selectivity of worlding practices, particularly through Eco-City

rhetoric and modelling, allowing problematic representations and realities of the city to be obscured by its eco-expression. On the ground, however, the specific historical, political, and social histories of the Incheon area are not fully buried by the Songdo Eco-City. Approached instead as an example of Asian urbanism(s), the Songdo Eco-City and its urban expression exemplifies the ways that hegemonic urbanisms are transformed in cases 'beyond the west'. Rather than being conceived of as failures, such transformations instead attest to the construction of multiple urban hierarchies and defy developmentalist explanations of urbanization in non-Western urban examples.

4.1 Dreaming of the Eco-City

This section draws together existing literature on spatially-selective liberalisation in South Korea through Free Economic Zone (FEZ) development, privatized urbanization, and the (re)production and dissemination of the South Korean Urban Dream. These urban processes and imaginaries are actualized by worlding practices and are central to the expression of New Songdo City as an Eco-City.

4.1.1 The Eco-City as the neoliberal city

Following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, South Korea was offered a rescue loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In exchange, the IMF required policy reforms to be made, including economic restructuring that accelerated

neoliberalization and facilitated increases in foreign direct investment (FDI) (Park, 2005). This was counter to previous protectionist policies where large domestic corporations called *chaebols* (재벌) maintained monopolistic control through partnerships with the state in strategic industries. To facilitate the internationalization and neoliberalization of the economy, the Korean state developed a series of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) (Figure 4.1) beginning with the IFEZ in 2003, adding seven additional zones over a ten-year period. Tightly controlled by the national government, SEZs allow for the spatially-selective liberalization of the Korean economy – an explicitly spatial strategy that allows liberal policies to enter the Korean economy without posing serious threats to



Figure 4.1 Free Economic Zones of South Korea
Source: Free Economic Zone Planning Office, 2015

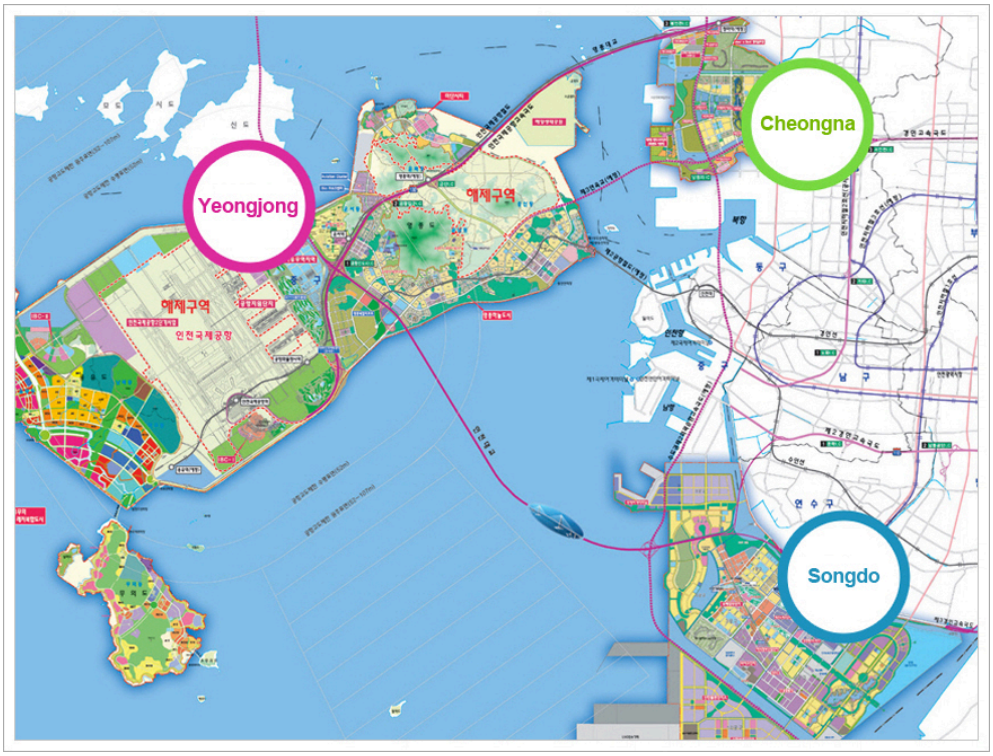


Figure 4.2 Incheon Free Economic Zone, comprised of three cities: Songdo, Cheongna, and Yeongjong
Source: Incheon Free Economic Zone, 2014

existing power holders, namely *chaebols* (Park, 2005). Through the development of SEZs, international capital and skilled labour are localized in cities such as Songdo, situated within the Incheon Free Economic Zone (IFEZ, 2014) (Figure 4.2), while established *chaebols* maintain their hold on industries outside the FEZs. In the context of this research, urban development within FEZs is framed as one mechanism through which neoliberalism may operate, expand, and bolster its axiomatic status.

In addition to spatially-selective liberalisation, the state has also used the development of new towns as a powerful tool to resolve issues of overpopulation and housing shortages due to the rapidly growing middle- and upper-classes in the Seoul

Metropolitan Area (SMA) (Bae & Sellers, 2007; KPF, 2008). The rapidly growing urban population [1] coupled with the under-allocation of land designated for residential development ultimately resulted in skyrocketing housing prices around the time of the 1988 Seoul Olympics (Bae & Sellers, 2007; Hannah, Kim and Mills, 1993). New satellite cities such as Il-san and Hwa-jeong outside of Seoul were thus modelled after the United Kingdom's post-war new town policies (1946) and aimed to alleviate the housing crisis by building millions of housing units for owner-occupation. Consequently, new towns around the periphery of Seoul were developed by the authoritarian central government beginning in the late 1980s, catering to the growing urban middle-class who preferred their 'greener' surroundings, the absence of traffic congestion, cleanliness, and safe neighbourhoods (Munhwa Il-bo SMA Satisfaction Survey, 1999 as cited in Bae & Sellers, 2007). American city centres also inspired much of this planning as new cities also aimed to be 'global'. Thus, an existing market demand for internationally-inspired 'greener' cities sets the foundation for the prevalence of the South Korean Urban Dream and the development of New Songdo Eco-City, discussed in *Section 4.1.2.*

[1] The urban population in South Korea more than doubled between 1973-1988 (Hannah, Kim and Mills, 1993).

In addition to the on-going practice of new town development in the SMA, the process of land reclamation, especially along the Incheon coast, has a longer history dating back to the end of Japanese occupation in Korea (1910-1945). In this context, land reclamation held important economic and ideological values for the Korean state - increasing land area was, and continues to be seen, as a demonstration of power and sovereignty. Late in the 1990s, the South Korean state characterized the Incheon coast as 'underutilized', prompting its redevelopment as 'business-oriented urban expansion' (KPF, 2008). In the case of New Songdo City, business-oriented development is combined with IMF mandates for internationalization by enclosing the reclaimed land within an FEZ. Thus, investment and development focused on transforming wetland 'wastelands' (Korean Free Economic Zones, 2015) into FEZs creates a link between reclamation, internationalization, and urbanization.

The presence of *chaebols* and other institutionalized path-dependencies mean that Western conceptualizations of neocapitalism cannot be simply transferred or translated to the South Korean context. Historical differences between relations of (re)production, as well varied trajectories of neoliberalization that tend towards spatially-selective zones are key differences. According to Park (2005), the spatially-selective application of neoliberal policies within the South Korean context is a contested process whereby inherited path-dependent institutional forms of the Korean developmental state coincide with forces of economic liberalization at supra-

and sub-national scales. While the move towards liberalization and the internationalization of the South Korean economy has emerged more recently, the use of spatially-selective strategies for development and investment by the Korean state has not. Most notably, the developmental South Korean state deployed spatially-selective strategies to facilitate Korea's rapid industrialization from the 1960s to the 1980s. Focused on export-led industrialization, more urbanized and already-industrialized regions were favoured by the central government, especially in and around Seoul (Park, 2005). As a result of the concentration of capital and state investment in Seoul, de-centralization of the economy was the focus of political-economic reforms in the 1990s as state-led development began to falter (Bae & Sellers, 2007). In this research, I conceptualize the establishment of the Incheon Free Economic Zone (among other special economic zones in Korea) as an example of spatially-selective liberalism used to relieve economic liberalization pressures from both internal and external interest groups. Spatially-limited economic deregulation is thus operationalized to subdue competing interests between key actors given the highly contentious status of neoliberal reforms in the South Korean context.

4.1.2 The South Korean Urban Dream

The spatially-selective liberalization of the South Korean economy through new city construction is also articulated by the growing importance of the 'South Korean Urban Dream' (Park, interview, 4 August 2014). Driven by the growing middle- and upper-

classes, the South Korean Urban Dream, in its contemporary form, entails a three-fold combination of elements: (1) luxury apartment living; (2) a neighbourhood, district, or town with (reasonably) guaranteed increases in property values; and (3) excellent schools and educational services. In the South Korean context, the Urban Dream is often associated with Gangnam, made famous through the 2012 viral hit by Psy, *Gangnam Style* (Park, J-s. and Yoo, G-h., 2012).[2] The ultra-rich elite residents of Seoul are concentrated here, alongside high-end services and amenities. While Incheon is among the largest Metropolitan areas in South Korea, it is not nearly as wealthy as Seoul.[3] New Songdo City, for many however, represents the 'Gangnam of Incheon', though it targets the elite of Incheon and rising/upper-middle classes of the Seoul Metropolitan Area who are priced out of the capital and elite areas such as Gangnam.[4]

As a middle- and upper-class urban imaginary in an increasingly diverse society (see *Chapter 6* for an analysis of New Songdo City as an 'international city'), New

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[2] *Gangnam Style* refers to the *nouveau riche* lifestyle associated with the Gangnam District of Seoul which is known for its heavy concentration of wealth and high standards of living. Real estate in Gangnam is extremely high with apartments costing more than double the average of Seoul and 3.5 times the national average (Jeong, (2011, March 23).

[3] The Gross Regional Domestic Product of Seoul is 25% of the national total while Incheon accounts for only 5% (KoStat, 2016)

[4] Further adding to the conflation between Gangnam and Songdo, many scenes in the video for Gangnam Style feature locations in Songdo. The popularity of other 'K-culture' televisions shows filmed in Songdo, namely Superman Returns, has helped to fuel tourism as fans flock to the city to visit filming sites or catch a glimpse of television stars.

Songdo City represents an opportunity for a different and improved quality of life and lifestyle. The high-rise lifestyle within luxury apartment complexes outfitted with amenities such as gyms, pools, theatres, libraries, and cafes, promises a gated, convenient, and exclusive day-to-day for its residents. Moreover, as a family-oriented development (there are few apartments in the city for singles), parents send their children to prestigious private international schools, namely the American and fully English-taught Chadwick International, or the high-ranked public schools that have been established in the city. With children receiving a privileged education, the socio-cultural and economic status of the Incheon elites in Songdo is further reinforced and separates them from others within Incheon and from South Koreans more broadly.

Moreover, the production of the Songdo Eco-City attempts to reconcile multiple and diverse development challenges. As a forward-looking, technological and market-based materialization of aspirational urban lifestyles, the Eco-City combines economic, social, and environmental goals (Caprotti, Springer and Harmer, 2015). As is the case of a similar development - Tianjin, China - the Eco-city is a mechanism through which green capitalism is enacted as the state transitions towards neoliberal models of urban governance and management. Further, environmental management transforms 'unproductive' swathes of wetlands into 'productive' urban interventions that take an economic-technological approach to climate change. Through 'green' rhetorics, elite urbanisms are justified, apparently

combining without conflicts wealthy, high-tech, and comfortable urban living with eco-sensitive urban planning (Caprotti, 2014a). However, as Caprotti, Springer and Harmer (2015) argue, Eco-City rhetoric often overlooks social sustainability such that the eco-enclaves become beneficial solely to their residents rather than the broader socio-environmental landscape that helps to legitimate its construction. Thus, Eco-City developments rarely pay equal attention to all aspects of sustainable development, favouring economic objectives over environmental and social aims (Rapoport, 2014). The Eco-City, then, is primarily concerned with the consumption of real estate and privileged urban lifestyles rather than the utopian aims that are frequently used to justify its development in the first place.

This chapter thus explores several dominant urban rhetorics and worlding practices that are deployed by New Songdo City proponents. As both a product and producer of the South Korean Urban Dream, representations of Songdo appeal to an idealized and imaginary urban landscape. Critically analysing literature published by Gale International, KPF, and IFEZA, in conjunction with interviews with city residents and key public and private actors carried out between August 2014 and March 2015, I explore the ways that the Songdo Eco-City has been envisioned, articulated, and experienced in the following sections. Ultimately, the Songdo Eco-City is an urban expression that connects liberalization, land reclamation, urbanization, and the South Korean Urban Dream to act as an example of Asian

urbanism(s). Here, larger 'forces' that are conceived of as universal (*viz.* Western-centric) such as globalization and neoliberalization, are demonstrated to be situated processes that must be enacted by people situated in specific places and contexts that pose challenges to the universality of these processes.

4.2 An Eco-City built from scratch?

New Songdo City -- a 1,415-acre, master-planned city under construction on the Incheon, Korea, waterfront, is a model of environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable design. It is truly the city of tomorrow. This claim is only half boasting. With each new report of the United Nations' International Panel on Climate Change, the argument for sustainable strategies grows sharper: Unless we make radical changes in the way human development occurs, unless we inject sustainability into every aspect of economic and human activity, we risk a very bleak future.

-- Christine Todd Whitman, Member International Advisory Board, Whitman Strategy Group (KPF, 2008, p. 3)

I begin with another quote from KPF's New Songdo Green City book (2008). In the foreword, Songdo is presented as a model city that can, ostensibly, help save the world from global climate change and all its terrifying impacts. Verging on having a saviour-complex, rhetoric like this gives the development of New Songdo City a moral undertone. This section highlights some of the multi-scalar impacts that directly contradict rhetorics of sustainability, 'green morality,' and the expression of Songdo as an Eco-City.

Within South Korea, the presidency of Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) further bolstered Eco-City development as a strategy to save the nation from economic trauma and from the increasing risks of global warming following the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. As an avid advocate for low-carbon green-growth, President Lee announced a new paradigm for economic, urban, and social development. Rather than seeing climate change as a barrier to development, President Lee saw it as an opportunity for growth and implemented 'green' policies at the core of his national strategy (Ministry of Government Legislation of the Republic of Korea, 2010). Under this paradigm, green technology could stimulate the economy, mitigate climate change, and be a 'blue ocean' (Kim & Mauborgne, 2004) for South Korea's future development. As a machine for both 'green' research and development industries and as a model eco-city itself, Songdo Eco-City enacts Lee Myung-bak's low-carbon green-growth policies while simultaneously facilitating the development of other Eco-Cities that can do the same. Songdo was thus developed as a local solution at the urban scale, for the national economic crisis and the global problem of climate change (Shwayri, 2013; Kamal-Chaoui et al., 2011). Working together, these urban rhetorics highlight the ways that New Songdo City is positioned as 'exceptionary' (*Chapter 2.2.3*) - it is offered as a model city for future urban development worldwide, but is nonetheless rooted in specific goals that benefit the South Korean economy. New

Songdo City thereby occupies local, national, and global space through the rhetoric of the Eco-City.

Since South Korea's mountainous landscape poses challenges to urban and economic development, concentrating it on thirty percent of the nation's land, the process of coastal infill is presented as a more sustainable alternative to levelling sites on mountainsides. Despite this, the Eco-City constructed on wetlands is represented as a positive and productive response to the climate crises through the application of green technologies and neoliberal market policies (Caprotti, Springer, Harmer, 2015). Though 'green' economic and technological strategies aim to reduce environmental impacts, these justifications do not address the great environmental damage that arises from the infilling of wetlands, which are significant global carbon sinks (ibid.). Moreover, the construction of the New Songdo Eco-City arguably pushes the 'dirty' industries that are clustered in Incheon's industrial areas, such as the manufacturing of machinery, electrics and electronics, and petrochemicals, to other regions where environmental and labour protections are weaker. Thus, the foundations on which the city are built, literally and figuratively, contradict some of the most fundamental aims of the Eco-City.

These contradictions were not lost on environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as interest in environmental issues arose in the 1990s, though this was mostly concerned with pollution and water quality issues at the time (Moores,

N. (Birds Korea), Interview, 5-Feb-2015). With growing concern over reclamation projects, South Korea formally acknowledged to the Ramsar Convention in 1999, obligating the state to protect and manage their wetlands wisely and sustainably. Within Korea, however, the Ramsar Convention is interpreted as 'soft law' unless supported by national courts. Consequently, when the Songdo development went forward, environmental opposition was deflected as the state argued that the lands were slated for development in the 1970s before the Ramsar Convention came into effect. Therefore, it was argued that the convention should not be applied in the case of New Songdo City which was developed into its current form from 2003 onwards.[5]

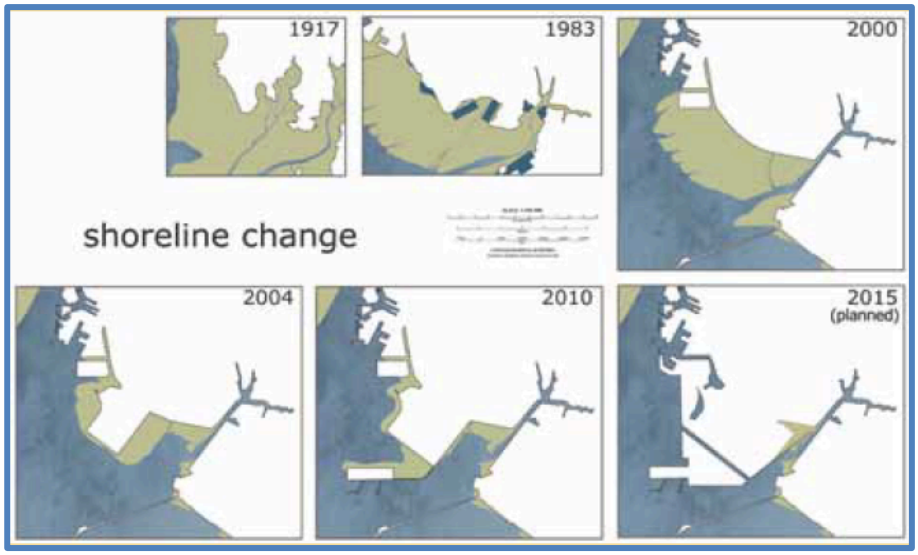


Figure 4.3 Map of Shoreline change on the Incheon Coast
The inter-tidal habitat was called, Meoneohgeum, meaning 'endlessly far'.
Source: MacKinnon, J., Verkuil, Y. I., & Murray, N., 2012

[5] Parts of Songdo were designated as Ramsar protected sites in 2014. That is, a small portion of the remaining tidal flat at Songdo was designated as an internationally important wetland, which may be developed as an eco- tourism site in the future. What little remains of the wetlands is absorbed by tourism as the only means by which it is considered 'useful'.

Nonetheless, environmental NGOs identified the negative implications of the wetland infill that would form the foundations of the New Songdo Eco-City (Figure 4.3). Birds Korea (2009) identified more than ten percent of the nation's shorebirds in Songdo, including more than one percent of the world's total population of the Nordmann's Greenshank (*Tringa guttifer*). More recently, the Songdo tidal flats have been identified as, "the most important site nationwide for the Near-threatened Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*, while 584 Saunders's Gull (or almost 8% of the species' global population based on Wetlands International, 2006) were counted at the Songdo tidal flats by the Birds Korea winter survey in January 2009" (ibid, no pg.). The on-going reclamation of the Songdo tidal flats, and wetland areas in the Yellow Sea more generally, will unquestionably lead to a further decline in these species and their habitats.

In addition to the loss of wetland habitats, the infill of the Incheon coast has also been critically received due to its impacts on the local fisherfolk in the area. Despite claims that Yeonsu-gu, the district which contains Songdo, is working towards a more participatory, more welfare-oriented, and healthy city with a high quality of life (Yeonsu District, 2016), these benefits are not equally distributed to all of those residing in and around Yeonsu. Most obviously, those displaced to New Songdo City on infilled wetlands, are perhaps those left furthest behind. Though

negotiations eventually led to reparation measures offered to the fisherfolk by IFEZA, these provisions are inadequate for several reasons.

First, at the beginning of the reclamation of the Songdo Tidal Flats in the 1980s, the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs declared that new fishing facilities could no longer be built on the famously rich wetlands (Do, n.d.). Moreover, the Ministry denied the renewal of fishing rights for existing fisheries thereby phasing out the fishing industry on the Incheon coast. As of 2004, the construction of New Songdo City and the IFEZ had resulted in 1,264 people within the Incheon Bay fishing industry becoming jobless (ibid.). To compensate for their loss of employment, the IFEZA allowed the fisherfolk to have priority purchasing for the newly constructed parcels of New Songdo City through the 2006 Fishermen's Living Land Policy (IFEZA, 2011; Shwayri, 2013); however, these reparation measures arguably result in the further marginalization of the Songdo fisherfolk and benefit wealthy speculative investors.

Many of the fisherfolk who lost their livelihoods were also elderly persons with few economic resources to purchase land (Shwayri, 2013). Consequently, only approximately 20% of fisherfolk purchased land from IFEZA. Moreover, for many, purchasing land was not of interest to them as they wanted to simply remain on the mudflats to continue their lives as fisherfolk (ibid.). According to Do (n.d.), Some of those elderly fisherfolk who did have the economic resources to take advantage of

their priority purchasing position passed away shortly after purchasing but before they were able to profit from it. Additional conflicts between family members and inheritance rights make the reparation measures even more problematic. Moreover, the rising cost of living in the city makes ownership nearly untenable in the long-term (Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice, 2010). The cost of living in Songdo is high for even working class and lower-middle class citizens (McNeil, 2009), [6] let alone fisherfolk who remain among the poorest in South Korea. Though some fisherfolk were awarded land (165 m^2) through the 2006 Policy, some of it was, and continues to be, used for subsistence farming as residents struggle to acquire affordable food in a city with notoriously exorbitant costs of living (see *Chapter 7* for a discussion of urban gardens in the city). Finally, the remaining 80% of fisherfolk who did not make land purchases from IFEZA instead sold their priority buying position to private speculative investors. As a direct result, speculative real estate investment was further facilitated, benefiting the wealthy rather than supporting the fisherfolk as the Fishermen's Living Land Policy aimed to do.[7]

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[6] The average cost of housing in the Songdo IBD is $500,000 USD, with some being sold for two or three times this price. This is more than twenty-five times the average household net-adjusted disposable income per capita (OECD, 2016).

[7] In addition to the conflicts that resulted from the initial reclamation project of the Songdo Tidal Flats, more controversy has arisen over a more recent expansion that has identified more wetland for infill to build a tidal generation power plant. Though this is presented as an ideal 'green' renewable energy

Little information about the protests and fates of the fisherfolk who previously resided on the Songdo Tidal Flats is given in the South Korean media (Benedikt, 2016), which was heavily controlled by the state. However, only 82% of those residing on the tidal flats received (arguably insufficient) benefits from the reparation measures. Additionally, in an interview with a director of an environmental NGO who requested to remain unnamed, it is alleged that the fisherfolk were heavily pressured by government officials to accept the provisions even though they would likely fail to meet their long-term needs (Anonymous, Interview, 5-Feb-2015). Essentially, this is an instance of accumulation by dispossession or 'green grabbing' (Caprotti, 2014b) where a powerful few have further concentrated their wealth through the expropriation of public land that is then sold for private profit (Harvey, 2004). In this case, the public lands of the Songdo tidal flats were infilled, parcelled, privatized, and developed for the financial gain of public and private, domestic and international, stakeholders (Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice, 2010). This model city and urban dream space thereby come at a much steeper price for some relative to others.

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source, environmental NGOs at the local, national and international levels fear the deep and lasting destruction of the tidal flat ecosystem, fisheries, local culture, and the landscape (Ko, Schubert, and Hester, 2011).

The Brundtland Report (1987) is quoted by KPF (2008, p. 5) as the source for their guiding definition of sustainability to ensure that the goals of the Songdo development were "rigorous enough to stand up to public scrutiny. However, their adherence to its values is questionable. The Brundtland Report (1987) defines sustainability as:

> … development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:
>
> - the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
> - the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

In this definition, social justice approaches to sustainability that prioritize the world's poor are emphasized. The destruction of the Songdo tidal flats, however, has caused profound negative impacts on the fisherfolk previously residing there and their livelihoods, in addition to the diverse habitats of birds and shellfish on the shore. Thus, the construction of the Songdo Eco-City on sensitive and invaluable wetland habitats is not only contradictory, but city proponents seem to only pay lip service to principles of sustainability without adhering to them in practice. In this case, the urban rhetoric of the Eco-City proves to be powerful, persisting despite these obvious contradictions and shortcomings. Moreover, the destruction of the Songdo tidal flats arguably contributes further to global climate change. As reports continue to outline the increasingly devastating impacts of global climate change and press for more action

to deter further environmental damage, the Eco-City appears even more attractive. Ultimately, the development of New Songdo City as an Eco-City produces its own need and legitimation.

The appeal of the Eco-City and sustainable development in South Korea is further augmented by the application of national and international standards for 'green' building. Participating in the US Green Building Council's LEED Certification Program and Neighbourhood Development pilot program, New Songdo City IBD has become "one of the most ambitious LEED developments" (Gale International, 2012). Additionally, select parcels of the IBD also adhere to Korean Green Building Certification criteria, setting the framework for Songdo to become a 'Sustainable Green and Eco City' (IFEZA, 2011) (Figure 4.4). Working together, these rhetorics and accreditations reinforce Songdo's Eco-City status, which aims to attract investment, make the city more competitive, and make the city an attractive place wealthy Koreans and internationals to live in.

The Eco-City is explicitly used to attract international and domestic capital and residents. However, the extent to which the Songdo Eco-City - in name or by design - succeeds is not easily measured as discussed in the next section. Attempting to intervene in the South Korean Urban Dream, the Eco-City combines luxury urbanism with trends in 'green' consumerism. In this case, the consumption of a 'green lifestyle' allows residents to feel better about their ecological footprints without having

Figure 4.4 IFEZA Journal spread, featuring Green and Eco City building (Text detail on next page)

Source: IFEZA, 2011, p. 6-7



Figure 4.4 Continued (detail of text)
Source: IFEZA, 2011, p. 6-7

to change their behavior. Catering to upper- and elite lifestyles of consumption, the Songdo Eco-City permits a 'guilt-free' 'green' urbanism for those who can afford it. The perception, expectation, and experience of the Eco-City by its residents, nonetheless, remains unexplored. To address these aspects of Songdo, I move away

from city-wide articulations of the Eco-City addressed here. Narrowing focus on specific planning and design aspects of New Songdo City, I now turn to the city's park spaces and transportation infrastructure to explore the Eco-City further.

4.3 Green £iving

New Songdo City's Eco-City status is, in part, produced by its central design feature: Central Park. The seventy-three-acre park was designed into the first phase of the Songdo project to increase the chances of the city's success by providing 'projects of clear benefit to the public' (KPF, 2008, p. 29). As a result, city proponents were and are still able to emphasize the city's green and open spaces as contributing to an 'enhanced quality of life' in an attempt to attract residents and workers from both South Korea and abroad (ibid.). Central Park, however, is only a small portion of the total green space in the city (Figure 4.5). In total, New Songdo City boasts 520 acres of green space, although nearly forty percent of this is accounted for by Jack Nicklaus Golf Course Korea. Opened in 2010, the private golf course also includes luxury villas - some of the only fully detached 'American style' homes in the IFEZ. Green fees range from approximately £15 for members and upwards of £300 for foreigners. Memberships, however, are more than $1,000,000 USD (£777, 300) with lengthy waiting lists. Thus, though the golf course does contribute to the city's green spaces,

Figure 4.5 Rendering of New Songdo City, IBD

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it is highly inaccessible, exclusive, and aimed at Korean and international business elites.

As the centrepiece of the IBD, Central Park highlights Gale International's 'commitment to providing open and green space" (Gale International, 2015). Running through the heart of the park, a salt-water canal meanders through the gently rolling landscape. New Songdo City's Central Park, KPF claim, rivals New York City's park of the same name. In a conversation with Tom Murcott (Interview, 22-Aug-2014), Executive Vice President of Gale International, he suggested that the canal and Central Park area were designed to reference specific urbanisms not only in Manhattan but also in Venice. He describes the relationship as follows:

> What is it that makes the canals if Venice great? Well you can get within the city, it's very efficient at moving people around but the canals of Venice, if you've ever been to Venice, they're a little dirty, right? What we did was we put sea water in our canals which refreshes itself every three to five days, naturally … We took that Venice Canal aspect and we put it right in our Central Park. I mentioned Central Park and that feeling of release. When you're in your office environment, when a POSCO employee comes out of that building, he's been in a pressure cooker all day. [He] walks. By the time he gets to his apartment, he or she will probably feel a little different about themselves, hopefully, much like I used to when I worked in Manhattan and walked home.

Modelling practices are clearly at work here, aiming to replicate the function of the Venice canals and the affective experiences of New York's Central Park, as well as a belief in the connections between the environment and residents' well-being.

Western urban imaginaries permeate this rhetoric and are relayed through textual and visual descriptions of the Central Park. The park also includes a deer farm

(enclosure) and an island inhabited by rabbits that both attract tourists and local residents. Together, the carefully manicured grass and gardens, along with the 'wildlife' in the park, create a sanitized 'natural' landscape in the heart of the city. These features contribute to the South Korean Urban Dream by appealing to middle- and upper-class desires for 'tamed' natural urban areas (Cronon, 1996) that stand in direct contrast with Seoul and Incheon. For Korean residents of New Songdo City, wide streets, open park spaces, high-end amenities, and its perceived anti-Korean urbanism (Kim, 2013) bear direct resemblance to idealized aspects of American (sub)urbanisms.

Sitting in a Starbucks coffee shop with two Korean women living in New Songdo City (Interview, 25-Feb-15), one, wearing a fur vest, smiles as she says that she and her husband find the city 'more exotic' than downtown Seoul. Moving to Songdo from Seoul for this young married couple was in part due to her husband's job which requires him to travel to his Tokyo offices several times a week (see *Chapter 6* for more on the relationship between New Songdo City and the Incheon International Airport). Additionally, she makes several direct comparisons to Seoul: Songdo is brand new, it is clean, there are fewer people; Seoul, on the other hand, is very crowded and dirty. She goes on, adding that she drives every day and that the wide-open streets make it easy to drop her children off at school, do the groceries, meet her friends, and so on. Ironically, the orthogonal street pattern that was

supposed to encourage walking and decrease dependency on personal vehicles actually facilitates this respondent's daily driving (see *Section 4.4* for a more focused discussion of transportation in the Songdo Eco-City).

In survey responses, other Koreans note similar preferences for wide streets, open green space, the newness of the city, and relatively low population density compared to Incheon and Seoul. Alternatively, international residents have varying opinions. For Angela (Interview, 16-Jan-2015), she notes that her friends believe that Songdo is a 'like a dream' and envy where she lives. She is quick to rebut this characterization of the city, noting that, "it seems clean and has lots of parks and is good for families, but the dirty part of city life is missing" (ibid.). While Songdo might be a "magical city" for Korean couples with kids, Angela remains skeptical due to the lack of social, cultural, and economic diversity. Furthermore, focus group (Focus Group 3, 31-Jan-2015) participants also note the apparent gap between different conceptualizations of 'nature' and 'Eco-':

> *Daniel: Have you seen anything other than magpies and sparrows in Songdo? There are no squirrels. There's bunny island, there's a few deer over there as well.*
>
> *Spencer: There's nothing natural about Songdo, no.*
>
> *Steven: Someone asked me yesterday, 'what are the local animals?' and I said, 'there are no birds [Ben: pets] I don't know'.*
>
> *Spencer: Well that's an opportunity missed because all of these parts are totally artificial. All of these species are non-native, they've all been introduced. Every time something natural comes up, like you know some of the original vegetation, it's all hacked down. So, I mean it's green and I think actually, to be fair, I think*

that it's what people want. They want to have a very manicured green environment. They don't really want to have –

Daniel: – wildlife.

Ben: Koreans or foreigners?

Spencer: Koreans. Oh no, foreigners of course have a very different perspective.

Daniel: Yeah absolutely, there's no engagement with nature.

Here, varying conceptualizations of 'nature' are transfigured according to an individual's cultural background, but also their position within, and perception of, the South Korean Urban Dream. The rabbits, deer, and manicured parks fulfill this urban imaginary while 'dirty' aspects of city life - natural, material, and social - are de-valued and banished from this urban-scaled enclave. Nonetheless, it remains clear that Songdo is an elite Eco-City, tightly intertwining these distinctions between conceptualisations of the 'natural' and the 'artificial' to further facilitate the actualization of the South Korean Urban Dream in New Songdo City.

In an interview with Spike Millington (6-Feb-2015), Chief Executive of the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership Secretariat, differing conceptualizations of nature and the Eco-City are further teased out:

> Well, you know we just had our big meeting in Japan. And uh, I wanted to see this bird because I'm a bird watcher ... It's a very rare bird, hard to find, and lives in secluded areas. And so, I was telling our Japanese host I want to see this bird. He says, "Ah, it's really hard to see actually, I don't know where to find it". And then they came back and said, "Look, we've solved your problem! We've got a pair of them in the zoo here next door". For them, there's no difference between the bird in a cage in a zoo and a bird living wild in nature. No, it's "You want to see the bird? We have the bird here". I find it very strange. I think that's how it is with the deer. "Deer? You want to see the deer?" People

> don't actually see the cages; they don't see the rabbits and things being constricted. They say, "Oh, that's a deer, that's cool. I always wanted to see a deer, you know? I saw Bambi and …" [[laughing]] Yeah, but they love it. And that's the thing you see, if you're appealing to what people want, then give them what they want. Don't give them smelly tidal flats, give them the cherry blossoms and the deer in an enclosure. And who's to say [anything against] that? Who's to say that you shouldn't do that, that's not what people want. So, that's why it's a bit of an uphill struggle for us because people don't really value it so much. The struggle is get people to want to conserve mudflats and wild nature. You need to teach them to love and want these, you need to build a constituency, create a demand that's not there currently for mudflats but is there for recreational parks.

Again, though some perceive Central Park's animal enclosures as wildlife attractions, others remain skeptical. On an artificial landmass, in sculpted parks and in the Songdo Eco-City, the rigorous criteria for sustainability quickly melt away. This is not to say, though, that nature and the city exist in opposition to each other. Rather, the Eco-City exemplifies the ways that both are socially and culturally constructed. In the case of the Songdo Eco-City, a significant part of this construction relies on rhetorics and urban design 'gestures' that allude to multiple interpretations of 'being green'.

Last, as mentioned at the conclusion of *Section 4.2*, the success of Songdo as an Eco-City is not easily measured. However, some data does exist, comparing metrics for water consumption, sewage generation, electricity consumption, and solid waste generation. Unfortunately, data for greenhouse gas emissions is not readily available. Baek's (2015) analysis of Songdo's sustainable infrastructure is summarized in the table below (Table 4.1), and demonstrates that, actually, New Songdo City fairs poorly relative to the nation, Seoul, and Incheon for several 'green' indicators. In particular,

Unit: per capita

City	Year	Water	Sewage	Electricity	Waste	LNG	CO_2
		kilolitre/year	kilolitre/year	kWh/year	ton/year	m^3/year	ton/year
Seoul	2011	110.49	176	4,455	0.327	0.396	Not available
	2012	110.42	181	4,523	Not available	0.407	Not available
Incheon	2011	123.26	Not available	7,769	0.279	0.356	Not available
	2012	Not available	117	7,813	0.261	0.336	Not available
Songdo	2013	146.55	131	14,179	0.110	0.396	Not available

Table 4.1 Summary of material consumption in South Korean cities
*'LNG' is liquefied natural gas.
Source: Baek, 2015, p. 89

Songdo's water and electricity consumption are significantly higher than in both Seoul and Incheon.

The national daily per capita consumption of water is 388 liters while Songdo's is 402 liters. Per day, Songdo produces 359 liters of sewage per person while Incheon produces only 320. Moreover, only 3% of Songdo's wastewater is recycled due to the lack of desalination infrastructure. The small amount that is recycled is used primarily for road cleaning and is not suitable for agricultural use. Moreover, many public buildings are reluctant to use the water due to increased risks of pipe corrosion from the salt. The desalination technology is not in place within the central wastewater facility due to its extremely high cost, which is more than double the cost of the entire facility.

In terms of electricity consumption, the national average is measured at 9285 kilowatts per year per capita. Alternatively, Songdo's per capita consumption is 14,443 kilowatts per year, a 155% increase. Songdo's relatively large electricity consumption has been attributed to on-going construction which is energy intensive, the pneumatic waste collection system that operates twenty-four hours a day, and the presence of many high-income households which are correlated to high rates of energy consumption (Baek, 2015).

Additionally, the pneumatic waste collection system is also a featured technology that claims to make Songdo 'greener' by eliminating the need for garbage collection trucks since household waste is sucked directly from homes to a central processes facility. As previously mentioned, the pneumatic system consumes large amounts of energy to operate. However, it is also costly, costing nearly double per household compared to traditional collection systems (6,100 KRW versus 11,500 KRW). Moreover, though food waste and general waste are collected separately, they are transported to the central waste facility through the same pipes, making further separation and the recycling of the food waste impossible.

Finally, though greenhouse gas emissions have not been recorded for New Songdo City, Gale International's claim that the Eco-City will have 25% less than the national average is questionable. Given the positive correlation between high-income

households and greenhouse gas emissions, Baek (2015) argues that Songdo's emissions may actually increase despite the application of LEED principles.

The ambiguity of the Eco-City is also exemplified by transportation infrastructure in New Songdo City, as discussed in the final section of this analysis. Here, the intentions of transportation plans reference mobility patterns in Western cities but are taken up in diverse ways.

4.4 Songdo on the move

As mentioned in the previous section, KPF implemented an orthogonal street pattern, which was assumed to be easily legible, in the Songdo IBD in an effort to encourage walking and public transit and discourage car-use. Additionally, other mass and low-carbon transportation infrastructure has been built specifically to further mitigate car-use (Figure 4.6). The Incheon Line 1 Subway, which extends

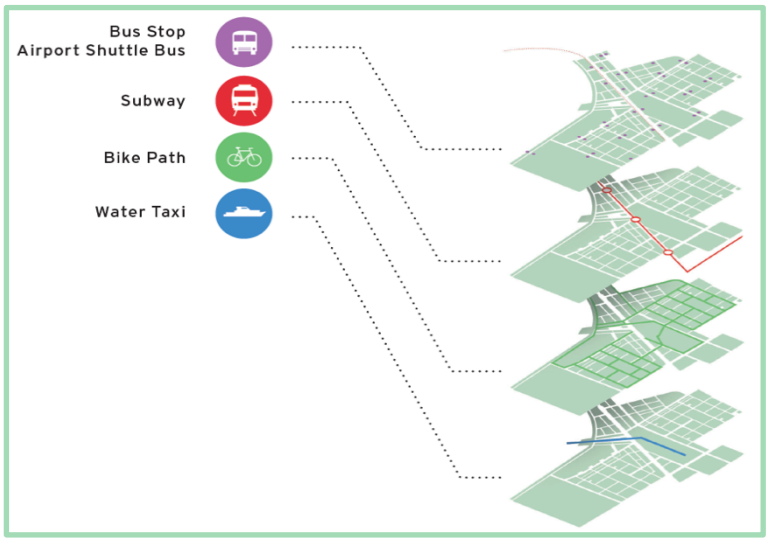


Figure 4.6 Transportation networks in New Songdo City IBD
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from an existing route that begins at one of Incheon's busiest areas, also passes through the city, making five stops within the IBD before reaching its terminus at the International Business District Station in the north end of the city. Local, express, and regional buses also provide transit options in the city, as do the twenty-four kilometres of bicycle lanes that share the wide sidewalks with pedestrians. Ample private underground parking for residents and paid underground parking for short-stay visitors to the city also aim to get cars off the street, making roads more pedestrian-friendly.

Though these features aim to attract the city's target market - international and Korean business entities - the experiences of city residents pose challenges to this strategy. Despite being given the opportunity to design and place infrastructure in any number of locations because of the 'blank slate' afforded by infill development, some key oversights are identified by international residents during the interviews and focus groups. First, most of the six subway stops are five-hundred metres to a kilometre away from popular and busy areas. While this does not seem like much of a distance, consider that the stop of Incheon National University is more than a kilometre away from the campus, requiring regular shuttle buses to run between the subway station and campus bus bay to service students, staff, and others in the area. Rather than placing the station and the campus in closer proximity, eliminating the need for buses entirely, the two sites were planned at this distance apart. Taking the

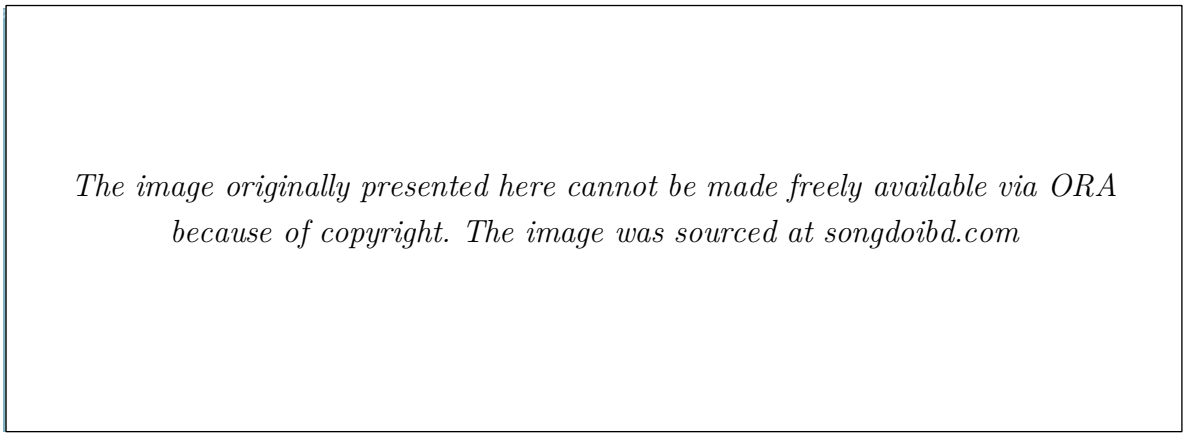


Figure 4.7 Commuting times from Songdo to Seoul by car
Source: Gale International, 2015

subway to Seoul – a frequent destination of many Songdo residents – takes between one and a half to two hours, although express coach buses provide a direct connection to Gangnam in forty-five minutes. Songdo, generally, is better connected to Seoul and its satellite cities by car (Gale International, Interview 3, 2015) (Figure 4.7) than other forms of transportation. This is especially relevant considering that many people travel between Songdo and Seoul on a regular basis, in some cases, daily for their work commute.

Additionally, though the grid-iron street system resembling Manhattan's and as highlighted in KPF's master plan aims to create a 'vibrant and walkable core', the number of streets proposed in the master plan was reduced by half and made doubly wide to accommodate Korean driving preferences at the request of the Incheon planning department (Nemeth, R. (KPF), Interview, 30-Dec-2014). Walkability was thereby decreased while car dependence was further facilitated by this altered design. Areas that have only thus far been partially developed with apartment towers but no

other amenities near-by including mass public transportation infrastructure - 'highly-inconvenient areas' (Figure 4.8) - also mean that those residing there are at present more likely to use personal vehicles, if only because of the lack of alternatives.

Nonetheless, the cycling networks in the city are positively received by some international residents. For example, Anthony cycles his children to school in the morning before cycling to his office in Central Park (Interview, 14-Feb-2015). Anthony further adds that he does not ever feel the need to cycle on the road and that the safety he feels on his bike and on the bike paths is a 'blessing'. Similarly, Jack and Cathy (Interview, 8-Feb-2015) are also pleased with the cycling infrastructure in the city, especially because Cathy, his wife, does not have access to a car when he is at



Figure 4.8 Highly inconvenient residential area in New Songdo City IBD
Source: Author, 2014

work. As a result, she often cycles, noting that the traffic conditions are very good relative to other parts of Korea because the roads are wider and have less traffic.

Positive responses like these were significantly less common among the Korean residents I spoke to (though some certainly do commute regularly by bike), in part because many of them were instead dependent on their personal vehicles. Negative remarks about cycling, were much more common on the other hand. Though cycling infrastructure is well developed in the city, many of these networks remain isolated in New Songdo City. That is, few cycle paths connect to pre-existing routes in Incheon, making it difficult for cyclists like Emma (Focus Group 2, 7-Feb-2015) to use their bicycles for inter-city travel.

Another common complaint among international residents further highlights the dissonance between rhetoric, planning, and usage patterns: though the cycle paths are well marked, they are constantly obstructed by people ignoring cyclists. In one account, Rachel speaks animatedly about one recent close call while she was riding her bicycle:

> I hit a guy actually. He was walking and he was on the bike path and I was like, "ding, ding, ding, ding!" [[gestures as though she is ringing a bell on her bike]] He was on his phone and I was going quite fast and I was trying to swerve to the side but there was a wall, so I bashed him in the back, obviously not on purpose with my handlebar and I was just like, "what are you doing?!". It just makes me really upset and angry when people put me and them in danger [because they are] not paying any attention. (Focus Group 2, 7-Feb-2015)

Unfortunately, pedestrians and parked cars often block cycle paths in cities all around the world; furthermore, the delivery scooters in Songdo that whiz through traffic on the streets *and on the sidewalks,* are another major grievance for residents. These scooters are used by restaurants to deliver food and are extremely common in South Korean cities; however, drivers frequently make illegal traffic manoeuvres to avoid lights and stoppages, sometimes pushing them on to the sidewalks and cycle lanes. Traffic infractions[8] in general, are high among the list of complaints by foreign residents in the city, in part because relatively few of them own cars. While they appreciate the infrastructure, many find cycling in the city hazardous. Summing up their disappointment, Emma remarks, "it's a great city to ride your bike in. You can get anywhere; it's flat, it's small, right? They just don't put enough emphasis on caring about safety" (ibid.). Though the transportation infrastructure in New Songdo City aims to adhere to sustainability principles, the build-out and subsequent experiences of some residents highlights the ways that Western planning logics overlook the contexts in which they are being applied. In the Songdo Eco-City, the behaviors of residents using varying modes of transportation are not easily predicted, and by

[8] Presently, the main issue of focus relates to traffic infractions and is a matter led by the 'Songdo Traffic Trolls' – a community group formed by concerned foreign residents. Their work exists primarily online and consists of a Facebook page and website that document traffic infractions to publicly shame drivers who break traffic laws.



Figure 4.9 Illegally parked cars in the IBD
The black Mercedes Benz pictured in the foreground is parked illegally on double yellow lines, as are the two cars behind it. The driver of the vehicle to its left (with its lights on) is not able to also park illegally adjacent to the curb and has left the engine running while they stop into the café (not pictured).
Source: Songdo Traffic Trolls, 2015

extension, are not molded to produce 'eco-citizens' that conform to the models that underlie the design of the city and its infrastructure. Though underground parking exists throughout the IBD illegal parking on the streets (Figure 4.9) and on bike lanes is commonplace due to the cost and inconvenience of the paid underground parking, limiting the master plan's efficacy.

For some residents, the city's wide roads, open spaces, and relatively low traffic congestion are attractive features, allowing them to get around by car easily. The South Korean Urban Dream, much like the America Dream, appears in part to be centered on personal extensibility (Graham and Marvin, 2001) and autonomy. Personal vehicles that allow wealthy residents to shuttle between their children's private schools, the designer shops, and American cafés help to support a privileged lifestyle and actualize this urban imaginary.

4.5 Conclusion

Green growth policies aim to attract foreign capital and labour though they do not necessarily live up to the goals and expectations of eco-living, especially for international residents. When discussing the role and effectiveness of Songdo Eco-City with international residents, they report a sense of disappointment– residents were promised an eco-lifestyle with state-of-the-art energy-saving technologies and comprehensive transportation networks, but generally do not feel that the city has lived up to expectations. Many struggle to give examples of the ways that the city helps them to live a more eco-friendly lifestyle, instead, citing examples where certain designs or features actually hinder this. Ultimately, Songdo as an Eco-City has succeeded to some extent in attracting international businesses and their foreign employees. Once here, sadly, many foreign residents find themselves dissatisfied and even deceived by marketing rhetoric.

Presently, neither IFEZA nor other government bodies have released robust criteria to assess the success of the Songdo Eco-City, a much more ambiguous concept in contrast to various national and international certification standards. Nonetheless, collated data on common sustainability markers such as water and energy consumption for example, indicate that, at present, New Songdo City produces, on average, more negative environmental impacts per capita than other cities in South Korea and in comparison to national averages. In many cases, the

urban designs and technologies applied by Gale International, KPF, and other American firms borrow ideas from developed Western cities; however, when these are transplanted into New Songdo City, not enough consideration is given to the social, political, and infrastructural differences that make this translation difficult. Thus, more detailed studies of South Korean urban networks and their use - everything from public transportation infrastructure, energy production and consumption, water consumption and re-use, and so on - should be conducted to determine the most effective ways of reducing the city's negative environmental impacts. Moreover, comprehensive city-wide criteria for sustainability should also be developed since the LEED certifications that are presently in place deal primarily to individual buildings or developments. Last, transportation networks that further facilitate car-dependence should be studied and modified to instead promote mass public transit, walking, and cycling as originally intended in New Songdo City. As a city with several large employers in the tertiary sector, policies that also require these large employers to make provisions for its employees that facilitate car-pooling, cycling, mass transit use, and generally limit the use of personal vehicles could and should be developed. In these instances, partnerships between new developments and various branches of the local, regional and national governments would be required to work together to co-ordinate objectives, strategies, and the effective execution of such policies.

Regardless of their effects on the city's environmental impacts, 'green' rhetorics place the Songdo Eco-City at the centre of the South Korean Urban Dream. The Eco-City is made possible through partnerships with international development firms and the establishment of the IFEZ; and yet, the New Songdo Eco-City facilitates consumption above all else. The consumption of an eco-lifestyle is met with private, elitist, and gated golf courses, while the consumption of material goods is facilitated by the designer stores along picturesque canals. Orthogonal street patterns facilitate car-use in Songdo, ironically, rather than reduce it. Together, the South Korean Urban Dream is one of excess, and in this instance, is tinged 'green' allowing these consumption-oriented lifestyles to continue without sacrificing conveniences or luxuries. Thus, though the Eco-City aims to reduce global warming with the help of the state and Incheon Municipality, the benefits, which are not even necessarily ecologically or environmentally beneficial, are reserved for those who are privileged enough to buy in to them.

Though Songdo's developers, master planners, and architects aim to enact the Eco-City through planning rhetorics that present the city as a coherent urban laboratory that can be shaped with the right infrastructure and designs, the materialization of these ideas are complicated by their application and up-take. It would be unfair to suggest that international residents are more eco-minded than Korean residents of Songdo because they are more disappointed in the city's ability

to be 'truly green' (however they define this). Instead, examples in this chapter demonstrate the ways that the Eco-City's rhetoric and planning are legible to international residents as 'Eco'. Western tropes, largely from American precedents, set the baseline standards by which international residents measure and experience the city. However, this leaves little room for alternative conceptualizations of 'nature', 'being green' and, of course, the Eco-City. Thus, it is not that South Korea 'does not know how to be green yet', but that the Eco-City planning paradigm is rooted in hegemonic Western-centric conceptualizations of the urban, which also privilege middle and upper class lifestyles of consumption. There are many things that have been done in New Songdo City that have reduced negative environmental impacts - local rubble was used for infill, LEED certified buildings are more energy efficient, and Central Park is a popular place for residents. However, whether this amounts to being a 'Green and Eco City' remain up for debate.

These complexities, tensions, and even internal contradictions lie at the heart of Songdo's urban expression as an Eco-City. Combining urban rhetorics and worlding practices where competing visions result in infrastructures, policies, lifestyles, and urban processes that do not always amount to and internally coherent Eco-City, Songdo also highlights the ways that shortcoming to meet project aims are perceived by some as indicative of the superiority of Western urbanisms. Such assumptions also tend to overlook the ways that these same Western urbanisms

have, themselves, numerous shortcomings. In both cases, these difficulties are arguably in part a result of the multiple and vaguely defined conceptualizations of the Eco-City, what it should be, and how it should be measured. Shortcomings should not be attributed to South Korea's more recent transition to a 'developed' country. By understanding the Songdo Eco-City and the ways that the South Korean Urban Dream is reflected, produced, and transformed through it, as an example of urban expressionism, Western and Euro-centric conceptualizations and valuations of 'the urban' are destabilized, attending to the aims and potentiality of Asian urbanism(s).

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5

Chapter Five
Labour, Gender and the Smart City

5.0 Introduction

Celebrated as the first operational urban-scaled example of a Smart City, New Songdo City has been presented as a model of techno-utopian urban planning for its advanced and ubiquitous technological infrastructure in residential, commercial, and institutional settings city-wide. Labelled and developed as a Ubiquitous City (U-City), several aspects of Songdo's infrastructure, both 'hard' and 'soft', are highlighted in advertisements and promotional materials developed by IFEZA, Gale International, Cisco, LG, and city boosters. Broadly, the U-City is a technology-driven form of urban development that utilizes networks of digital sensors, extensive computing capabilities, widespread electronic networks, premium internet

connectivity, and a central command station from which various aspects of the city are monitored, analysed, and controlled (Kitchin, 2014, 2015). Further, the Songdo IBD U-City, according to Gale International, is the model for next generation cities through public-private partnerships with multinational technology companies, local service providers, and multiple government bodies at the district, metropolitan, and national levels (Figure 5.1). Telepresence, a central component of Songdo's rhetoric and this chapter, is arguably the most publicized U-City technology in the city. Developed by Cisco in partnership with New Songdo International City Development LLC (NSIC), Telepresence is an advanced form of video calling combined with subscription-based services. Moreover, academic interest in New Songdo City as a U-City has also added to this association even when researchers conduct a critique

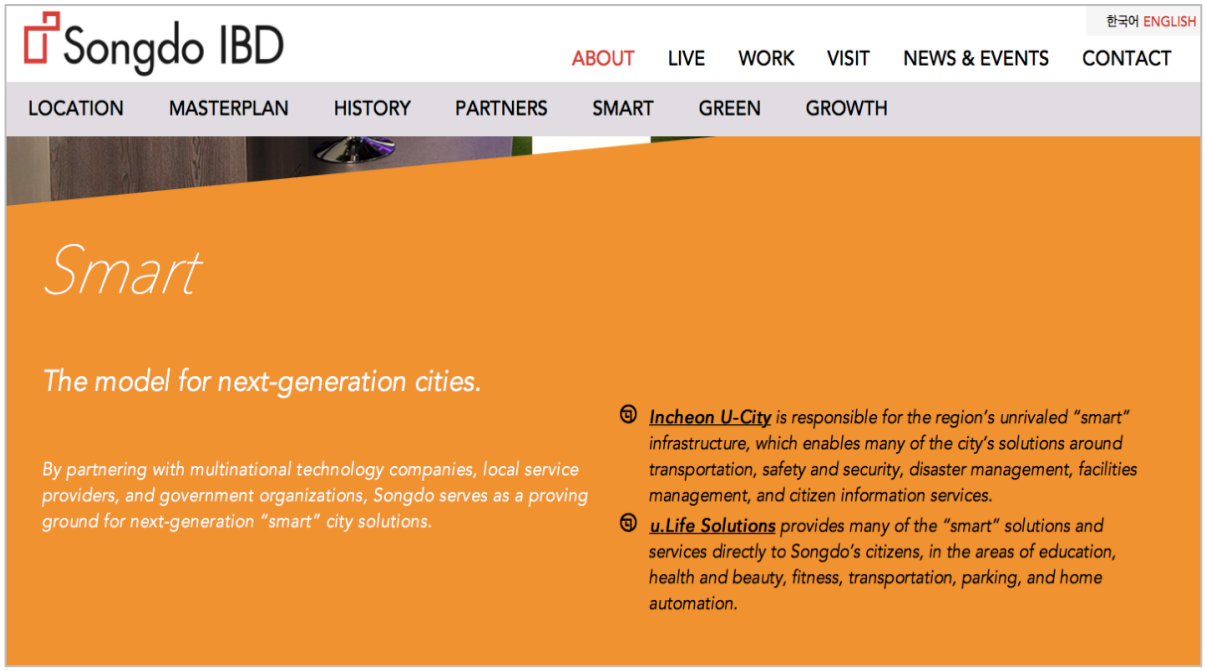


Figure 5.1 Screenshot of Songdo IBD's Smart City overview
Source: Songdo IBD, 2015

or critical analysis (Shwayri, 2013; Kshetri, Alcantara and Park, 2014; Lee et al., 2008; Cho, Cho and Park, 2007). Though it is still debatable whether Songdo is 'truly smart' (Shwayri, 2013), it remains that the urban expressionism deployed by the city's proponents nonetheless use Smart City and U-City rhetoric to bolster its reputation as a world(ing) city. In the case of New Songdo City, it seems that 'there is no such thing as bad publicity' as the city is repeatedly described using Smart and U-City rhetoric.

Despite the interest in Smart City and U-City technology in New Songdo City, few analyses of the city in urban literatures move beyond descriptions of plans and technologies that have yet to be rolled out, in part or in full. Consequently, I use interview and focus group materials from New Songdo City residents, as well as with representatives of IFEZA and u.Life Solutions (the sector of IFEZA charged with developing, maintaining, and managing U-City infrastructure), to explore the visioning, perception, application, and experience of the U-City. In particular, I explore the ways that Smart City technology reproduces and/or transforms normative socio-spatial binaries, especially with regards to gender and labour in the city. These digital geographies are inevitably intimately tied to gendered spaces of paid and unpaid labour. Ultimately, I argue that the Smart City functions to create both hegemonic and unexpected pathways for women in Songdo to navigate formal and informal employment opportunities in the city.

In the instance of New Songdo City, I draw on three related examples to explore the role of Smart City technologies in the everyday lives of different groups of Songdo residents. As an example of hyper-building (Ong, 2011) (see also *Chapter 2.1.2* and *Chapter 6*), I argue that U-City rhetoric aims to construct Songdo as both a spectacular 'techno-utopia', but also sets frameworks for the (re)production of gendered socio-spatial relations that frequently reaffirm the normative female-private/male-public binary. Thus, hyper-building by way of the Smart City has the capacity to discipline urban forms, urban life, and urban subjects. Moreover, urban rhetorics related to processes of civic engagement that would allow citizens and residents to negotiate or challenge the socio-spatial relations of the Songdo U-City may actually contribute to increasing tensions between representations, expectations, and experiences of the city. In the final section of this chapter, I argue that the Songdo U-City's claims about improving democratic governance processes are limited to vacant statements without policy frameworks to actualize them.

To explore these claims, I begin with an overview of Smart City and U-City literature. Here, I argue that Smart City development is another example of Songdo's urban expressions, articulated through worlding practices that emphasize its digital infrastructure. I then place this literature in conversation with feminist urban theory to explore the ways that Smart and U-City technologies (re)produce gender, labour, and spatial binaries. Next, I explore three experiences of the Smart and U-City from

the point of view of different resident groups. In the first instance, interviews with international residents reveal both the culturally-situated development of U-City technologies and assumptions about gendered socio-spatial relationships. Second, issues relating to job opportunities for women are investigated in the New Songdo City context. In this case, the U-City helps to facilitate access to skills development and employment, but for a premium price and again, within normative frameworks of gendered socio-spatial relationships that make various assumptions about women, work, and divisions of urban space. Third, I explore the role of the U-City in facilitating civic engagement and show how urban social and spatial structures are and are not challenged by city residents. The hetero-normativity of the U-City design paradigm, especially as it pertains to conceptualizations of 'home' and 'work', as well as 'public' and 'private' spaces, is highlighted. On the surface, it seems that the social construction of women as mothers, wives, and household managers is reproduced by the Smart City. However, when using Asian urbanism(s) as an analytical framework, gendered labour and socio-spatial binaries are complicated, as are notions of cultural difference. Hence, Asian urbanism(s) allows a re-interpretation of the Songdo U-City as an example of worlding practices that destabilize Western and Euro-centric hegemony over urban theory and urban knowledge production.

Gendered constructions of paid employment and unpaid domestic work, as well as public and private divisions of space are invariably embedded within the

Smart City's digital, social, and material architectures. Drawing on the lengthy repertoire of feminist literature that critiques urban planning paradigms from a feminist perspective, I aim to contribute to this research by analysing New Songdo City's gendered labour landscape within the specific context of the Smart City. Women's waged work (or lack thereof), their constructed roles and identities in a world(ing) city, and the tools – i.e. the U-City – through which these are reaffirmed, refracted, and challenged, are the focus of this chapter.

To approach the gendered U-City, I utilize interviews with foreign residents of New Songdo City, especially women. In the excerpts presented in this chapter, the expectations of foreign-born women, especially from developed Western cities, point to their own personal interpretations of the Smart City concept, the power and pervasiveness of NSIC's U-City rhetoric, and the ways that gender is overlooked in masculinist Western and Euro-centric urbanisms. In New Songdo City, some of these masculine urbanisms are replicated, and, by translating these spatial ideologies across socio-cultural contexts, their gender blindness is revealed. Moreover, social constructions of cultural difference are also exposed as Western-centric frameworks for conceptualizing U-City life and are destabilized in New Songdo City. Instead, New Songdo City highlights many of the challenges faced by women, both Korean and foreign, who struggle to find socio-economic security in the city. Thus, I argue that Asian urbanism(s)' value as an analytic framework lies in its ability to transcend

the particularities of socially constructed cultural differences that are centred on antecedent urbanisms which structure urban life and urban space. As a result, the supposed 'culture clash' (Huntington, 1996) between 'Eastern' and 'Western' urbanisms is revealed as a hegemonic tool that reiterates the dominance of Western-centric urbanisms.

5.1 Gender and the Smart City



Figure 7.2 Conceptual map linking world(ing) cities, Smart City development, and Western and other culturally inflected socio-spatial divisions. These different conceptualizations of socio-spatial relationships come into contact at New Songdo City.
Source: Author, 2017

This chapter explores the links between several related bodies of literature, though these linkages are often overlooked. Illustrated by Figure 5.2, I argue that the development of the Smart City, in this case New Songdo City, depends on culturally-inflected assumptions of socio-spatial relationships centred on gender and labour. In turn, the world(-ly/-ing) city becomes an arena where multiple and diverse visions of gendered space and labour in the city compete with one another. This section thereby explores the relationship between hegemonic assumptions embedded in Smart City formation, Western-centric urbanisms, and the potentiality of Asian urbanism(s) to destabilize them.

5.1.1 The Smart City as world city

Just 32 kilometres outside of Seoul, a new city is rising – a true, smart, connected community ... Everything is connected, intelligent and green, helping to realize environmental, economic and social sustainability.
–Cisco's Smart + Connected Community, 2010 promotional video

The ubiquitous technology in Songdo that is heavily promoted by Gale, Cisco and others aims to construct Songdo as a 'global' city (Kim, 2013). According to Sassen (1991), the global economy spatially disperses economic activities, in part because of rapid advancements in information communication technologies (ICT); however, these activities, especially global management functions, still need to come to a rest somewhere and are concentrated in global cities. Moreover, the growth of creative post-industrial economies further makes advanced digital infrastructure an

increasingly important component of economic development, resulting in agglomeration economies. As Goldman (2011) argues through his analysis of Smart Cities in India, IT sectors in Bangalore are set to become permanent urban growth machines that will, in turn, bestow the city with world-city status. ICT development is thereby tied to worlding practices and aims to give cities a competitive advantage when attracting globally mobile footloose capital.

With an emphasis on advanced producer services and FIRE sectors - finance, insurance, and real estate - global city rankings have been calculated according to a city's ability to attract and concentrate footloose capital (Sassen, 1991; Beaverstock, Smith and Taylor, 1999), which are heavily dependent on advanced ICTs focused in tertiary sectors of the economy. While many scholars (see for example, Robinson, 2002, 2011; Roy, 2009; Roy and Ong, 2011) have critiqued both the methodology and the epistemological foundations of Sassen's (1991) global city thesis and other established hierarchical classifications of cities (for example, Christaller's 1933 central place theory), the emphasis on tertiary sectors retains influence over policy frameworks for economic and urban development. Thus, the development of supporting infrastructure – both physical and digital – is therefore crucial for the world and/or global city to thrive and further support the advanced producer services it houses (Goldman, 2011). This is corroborated by Harvey (2005) who theorizes the crucial link between neoliberalism, IT, and by extension, world city

status where ICTs compress space-time to increase the density and geographic reach of market transactions that further lead to innovation and economic development. It could be argued, then, that the development of the Smart City exemplifies and concretizes the relationship between neoliberal economic growth regimes, advanced ICT development, and world/global city status in a single urban planning paradigm.

The Smart City is thus a lens through which the relationship between urban growth, neoliberalization, and worlding is conceptualized. However, as Hollands (2008) crucially notes, the intensification of inequality brought about by the development of Smart Cities must not be overlooked. The 'digital divide', splintering urbanism (Graham and Marvin, 2001), globalization and deepening socio-spatial inequality (Harvey, 2000, 2005), changes in urban labour markets in entrepreneurial cities (Peck, 2005), and increased gentrification (Smith, 1996), are all cited by Hollands as examples of the uneven effects of Smart City development. As an expression of urbanization that privileges wealthy, mobile, and highly-skilled knowledge workers through the construction of luxury infrastructure and premium services and amenities that cater specifically to them, the Smart City is an inherently elitist space. Moreover, Hollands (2008) also argues that the economic hierarchies facilitated by the digital divide impact gendered and ethnic groups differently, stating that "while the entrepreneurial Smart City might cater for the small number of professional and creative females working in the IT sector, many working women

are left to service the largely male business city — waiting on, cleaning and servicing its dominant male make-up" (Jarvis, 2005 as cited in Hollands, 2008, p. 316). Though Hollands notes the intersections between the Smart City, the bifurcation of labour, and gender, a more extensive analysis of the gendered Smart City remains open for further exploration. This inequality is discussed further in the following section.

By catering to international companies and skilled labourers within knowledge sectors of the economy through advanced digital infrastructure and elitist urban development, the Smart City aspires to maintain its status as, or become a, world city. The Smart City produces conceptual links between technology, urban development, skilled and/or creative labour, and economic development, while reaffirming global and world city hierarchies and overlooking gendered socio-spatial assumptions that underpin them. Thus, the Smart City is one of the ways that cities attempt to intervene in global networks of power and capital in the context of neoliberal globalization in an effort to attain global or world-city status.

5.1.2 The Ubiquitous City

As a subset of the Smart City, the Ubiquitous City (U-City) develops and utilizes specific aspects of ICT-oriented urban development. Technologies frequently marketed as components of the Songdo U-City include extensive fibre optic networks; Telepresence (discussed in greater detail in *Sections 5.4 and 5.5*); embedded street sensors to monitor traffic, road conditions, weather, fire and safety

risks, water level and quality in the canal; city-wide Wi-Fi coverage; pneumatic and automatic waste collection and disposal; grey water recycling systems; and automatically monitored energy use in homes (see *Chapter 4* for a more detailed discussion of some of these technologies and their application, use, and impacts on the Songdo Eco-City). These U-City technologies aim to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of various residential, commercial, and institutional systems through the collection, analysis and management of Big Data. In this sense, 'everyware' consists of:

> pervasive and ubiquitous computing and digitally instrumented devices built into the very fabric of urban environments (e.g., fixed and wireless telecom networks, digitally controlled utility services and transport infrastructure, sensor and camera networks, building management systems, and so on) that are used to monitor, manage and regulate city flows and processes, often in real-time, and mobile computing (e.g., smart phones) used by many urban citizens to engage with and navigate the city which themselves produce data about their users (such as location and activity). (Kitchin, 2015, p. 1-2)

Similar to everyware, code/space (Dodge and Kitchin, 2004; Kitchin and Dodge, 2011) speaks more specifically to the co-creation of space and software where code dominates the structuration of socio-spatial relationships. Martin Dodge and Rob Kitchin (2004, p. 198) argue:

> the relationship between code and space is dyadic - code and space are mutually constituted, wherein how the space is used and produced is predominantly mediated by code, and the code and its data exist in order to produce the space and its attendant spatiality… in code/space, code dominates the production of space, explicitly mediating sociospatial processes and experience.

Finally, the Internet of Things (IoT) further strengthens the connection between technology and the production of urban space. Designed specifically to support the development of Smart Cities, the IoT works by exploiting the most advanced ICTs that support value-added services, and "incorporate transparently and seamlessly a large number of different and heterogeneous end systems, while providing open access to selected subsets of data for the development of a plethora of digital services" (Zanella et al., 2014, p. 22). These digital-spatial connections ultimately aim to improve the efficiency and efficacy of resource management in Smart Cities (Perera et al., 2014).

Importantly, the Smart City has also been conceptualized as urban development centred on the knowledge economy (Kitchin, 2014, p. 2):

> A Smart City is one whose economy and governance is being driven by innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, enacted by smart people. Here, ICT is seen as being of central importance as the platform for mobilising and realising ideas and innovations, especially with respect to professional services.

With this perspective, the Smart City does not attribute its 'intelligence' to the mere presence of digital infrastructure, but includes the human and social capital to grow and manage economic growth within a city or city-region. Thus, as Kitchin (2014) succinctly outlines, the Smart City is in some instances, focused on ICT development, implementation, and Big Data management; in other cases, ICT infrastructure supports the growth of the knowledge economy, which emphasizes the development of human capital as smart citizens.

Further, Hollands (2008) and Deakin (2014) contend that the intelligence of Smart Cities is not inherent and must be defined by more than the use of ICTs since cities around the world are already branding themselves this way. In the race to become not just a Smart City, but a *smarter* city, the utilization of ubiquitous data by both public sector offices and private business managers is critical. The progression from having data to operationalizing it in an 'intelligent' way is not straightforward; limitations in processing power and analytical methods, as well as the physical and legislative practicalities of implementation, pose complex obstacles for ubiquitous Smart City development.

In the Songdo example, Cisco joined the project in 2009 to develop the IT 'backbone' of the city through their Smart + Connected Communities programme. Implemented to attract large multinational companies working in information technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and other knowledge sectors, Songdo's U-City is a localized strategy to capture global attention, capital, and labour. In Songdo, advanced citywide ICT networks promise to help businesses operate with 'extreme efficiency' (Cisco, 2012), while the U-City aims to enhance quality of life, especially for transnational elites (Kim, 2013). The Smart City of Songdo therefore attempts to become both types of smart-cities described by Kitchin (2014) – a city with advanced digital infrastructure that facilitates the efficient management of city

life, as well as city whose economy is driven by the knowledge economy and 'smart people'.

Thus, the U-City is especially concerned with ubiquitous everyware and its uses. Applied in the South Korean context, the 2007 national U-Korea initiative aims to "create a series of U-cities based on ubiquitous computing and ICTs by a means of providing ubiquitous (U-City) infrastructure and services in urban space" (Lee et al., 2008, p. 149). More specifically, the U-City aims to "create a built environment where any citizen can get any services anywhere and anytime through any ICT devices" (ibid.) to develop an E-City (a Big Data mine), which is then able to transition into an intelligent U-City. Ubiquity, in this instance, envelopes a wide range of services, including but not limited to banking, telecommuting, teleconferencing, healthcare, transportation, environmental management, garbage disposal, and other urban infrastructures. U-democracy, a supposed consequence of the E-City, is also presented as a tool that helps citizens to more easily participate in city politics and that makes city governance more transparent. This is discussed further in *Section 5.4*.

Through a vast network of sensors embedded directly into urban elements, constant communication between people, people and objects, and objects with other objects - both wired and/or wireless - automatically generate Big Data (Lee et al., 2008). This ubiquitous infrastructure network collects and communicates data

without user input and is often rendered invisible. The U-City must therefore predetermine a normative framework that acts as a benchmark or standard against which collected data is analysed. These assumptions about how a city should operate are deeply ideological, and therefore, the ways that various social groups are conceptualized within the U-City framework needs greater scrutiny. This is especially true given the absence of user-conscious interaction despite claims that the U-City can facilitate greater citizen participation in urban processes and politics. Arguably, the opposite may instead be true: due to the extensive, ubiquitous, invisible, and automated monitoring, analysis, and control of the city, people, places and activities are placed under surveillance. The U-City produces a panopticon effect that thereby disciplines citizens in both obvious and subtle ways. Moreover, 'more democracy' cannot be created by 'more transparency' alone since Big Data always includes its own biases and is never neutral (Kitchin, 2014). Thus, U-City technology can be, to some greater or lesser extent, a tool for social control.

In the case of New Songdo City, the development of the IBD led by Gale International, POSCO E&C, and the Incheon Metropolitan City has marketed the development as a Smart City since 2006 when infrastructure work began at the infill site. At this time, New Songdo City was envisioned as the first Ubiquitous City (Shwayri, 2013) just as the South Korea's central government launched a new policy called the U-Korea Master Plan. This national policy aimed to facilitate the

digitization of the entire country and the development of an e-government that could strategically foster innovation in government (Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs, 2007). In many ways, New Songdo City was a platform through which the government could enact this policy, as well as a prototypical model that could facilitate the future development of other smart cities nationwide. Presently, Smart City rhetoric explicitly positions Songdo as a "next-generation solution" (Gale International, 2015) – though for what, exactly, is unclear; it is actualized through 'innovative' public-private partnerships with multinational technology companies. U-City services are managed by u.Life Solutions, an arm of the IFEZA in public-private partnership with LG. Thus, through urban-scaled interventions, the imperative for increased competitiveness via ICT sectors as well as neoliberalized and entrepreneurial world cities, is reaffirmed.

Rob Kitchin's work on smart urbanism critiques proponents of the Smart City and U-City paradigm who represent this type of urbanism as non-ideological, axiomatic, and pragmatic (Kitchin, 2014, 2015). However, scholars of smart urbanism (Luque-Ayala and Marvin, 2015) and digital geographies (Ash, Kitchin and Leszczynski, 2016) also note that urban-level empirical case studies that examine the visioning, implementation, experience, and socio-spatial transformations facilitated by various smart urbanisms are sparse. Moreover, the 'one-size-fits-all' approach to Smart City development (Kitchin, 2014) also often results in a

disjuncture between what is envisioned by planners and what is experienced by residents. In particular, empirical work across different urban settings that examines the intersection of gender, urban planning, and digital geographies are still emerging (Rose, 2016, 2017; Leszczynski and Elwood, 2015). As discussed next, I examine the greenfield Smart City development of New Songdo City to explore the ideological assumptions embedded within its rhetoric and design, specifically as it pertains to gendered experiences of the city and of labour.

5.1.3 Gender and the Smart City

Though the Smart City often draws on Big Data that is represented as objective, neutral, and even inherently democratic, it is not evenly accessed, distributed, and developed neither across a given space nor across different social groups. While Graham and Marvin (2001) provide an excellent analysis of what they term 'splintering urbanism' – the fracturing of the urban experience in both social and material terms, deepening socio-spatial inequality through the unequal development of (increasingly privatized) urban infrastructure – the way that gender is intertwined is still fruitful ground for further exploration as it is largely ignored in critical analyses of the Smart City.

Modernist urban planning theory founded on masculinist conceptualisations of urban life assumes that urban infrastructure unfolds in an envelope where intersections of class, gender, ethnicity, and social mobility are erased (McDowell,

1983; Roberts, 1991). That is, individuals are abstracted into 'master subjects' (Haraway, 1988) that are assumed to be white, bourgeois, heterosexual, and masculine. Moreover, social constructions of scale (Marston, 2000) that conceptualize scale as bounded, hierarchical, discrete and contingent on processes of capitalism (Smith, 1984) neglect the home as a space of political mobilization in addition to social reproduction, and identity struggles over domestic ideology (Marston and Smith, 2001). Gendered socio-spatial relationships of the home, therefore, were often overlooked. Consequently, the modern infrastructural ideal is predicated on relatively rigid socio-spatial relationships that typically privilege masculine, technocratic, and 'rational' urban forms that systematically marginalize women (Rose, 1993; Fainstein and Servon, 2005). Women became associated with domestic space, and with the advent of mass suburbanization, this space became the locus of mass consumption in Western contexts. This assumption persists in many everyday spheres despite the extensive and important work of feminist scholars that critically explore the ways that women – with their many and diverse intersectionalities – transcend this over-simplification of socio-spatial and gendered relationships (McDowell, 1983, 1993; Massey, 2013; Rose, 1993; Roberts, 1991; Hayden, 2003; Wilson, 1992; Fainstein and Servon, 2005).

Alternatively, masculine notions of social and urban order also construct public space as 'Other' to the feminine domain of the nuclear family home, which is

also, unsurprisingly, a socially-constructed Euro-centric domestic arrangement (Rybczynski, 1987). Furthermore, the gendering of infrastructure networks is evidenced by commuting patterns and planning. For example, transit systems are constructed to facilitate the breadwinner's (who is implicitly male) commute to work (Hayden, 2003). Thus, the modernist infrastructural ideal (re)produces a patriarchal and binary division of urban space (McDowell, 1983, 1993; Fainstein and Servon, 2005; Roberts, 1991; Rose, 1991) in a Western urban context.

For Graham and Marvin (2001), splintering urbanism fuelled by shifts towards neoliberalization and advances in ICTs has spurred the uneven development of a variety of networks that are at the core of contemporary urban life and its organization. The increasing privatization of formerly public infrastructure often works to re-inscribe and/or intensify inequalities of social, economic, environmental, and cultural power. As a result, 'premium network spaces' concentrate higher-quality services in specific areas where the wealthy users who pay for these services live or work. These users are thereby able to extend their influence over space to access or connect with distance spaces and times. Socio-spatial inequalities are thereby (re)produced and/or intensified within and between places as ICTs become increasingly privileged.

Termed 'personal extensibility', Graham and Marvin (2001) further note that users' ranges of influence are variable according to their race, class, gender, and

social mobility, pulling the corners of existing power geometries further apart. However, 'strategic localism' and the 'global scalar fix' where the unbundling of territorial governance, public infrastructure, and spatial scale prompt distortions in geometries of infrastructural power, often also tend towards internationalization, liberalization, privatization, and consequently, splintered urbanisms (ibid.). As modern nation states turn to privatization or become increasingly spatially-selective, premium network spaces further target those with a larger personal extensibility, allowing each to augment the value, power, and importance of the other.

Many of the socio-spatial divisions of urban space according to gendered binaries are also strongly related to the ways that urban planners, urban designers, architects, and policy-makers envision global flows of capital and foreign labour, as demonstrated in this chapter. Yeoh, Huang and Willis (2000) explore the presumed gender-blindness of globalization and world city-making. They note that in Asia, "astonishingly little attention has been paid to gender relations" (ibid., p. 148) and yet that "representations of gender occupy a central place in the contests about meanings and identities accompanying [globalisation] processes" (ibid.). As a result, global and world cities are embroiled in tensions centred on differing ideas about gendered spatial divisions:

> Within the global city, then, there is a complex articulation of the gendered frameworks of actors caught in the *space of flows* with those belonging to the *space of place.* Such an articulation cannot be easily subsumed using notions of assimilation, incorporation or colonisation, but more usefully understood as

> co-presence in a 'contact zone' where the trajectories of subjects 'previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures' intersect, and where social relations are forged in terms of 'interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often within radically asymmetrical relations of power. (Yeoh, Huang and Willis, 2000, p. 150)

The gender-blindness of processes of globalization, expressed in global and world city formation, is evidenced by different experiences of work. Thus, gender, labour, globalization, and Smart City development are intertwined and re-produce urbanisms that are masculinist as well as Euro-centric.

In this chapter, experiences of employment, or lack thereof, are analyzed through a gender-oriented lens. As a central component of the global city, high-status skilled international labour migration policies tend to neglect women and families in general (ibid.). At best, women are often conceptualized as 'trailing spouses', 'accompanying wives' or 'dependents' to men who are brought to the city for employment as skilled labour. In this way, women are reduced to persons in 'excess' to the global business spaces that are implicitly masculine. Thus, women are often required to make significant changes in the public and private domains of their lives, frequently giving up paid employment to make migration possible (Yeoh and Khoo, 1998). Moreover, legal barriers such as visa type outright exclude women from participating in the formal labour market and thereby make them dependent on their partners' expatriate pay packages. Moreover, in places of significant socio-

cultural difference, childcare may also be difficult to access, further necessitating women to take on full-time domestic un-paid labour for the family.

As a result of the relegation of women to private spheres of the city, in conjunction with the numerical dominance of men in circuits of skilled international labour, the global city is an implicitly masculine space. Female, private, domestic space becomes the necessary Other to male capitalist business space (Weyland, 1997), which is further amplified by the propagation of a male-dominated knowledge economy. The labour, other than domestic work in their own home, of foreign women in the global city, then, is often relegated to unpaid community work. Existing within a third sphere separate from paid or domestic spheres of labour, community work becomes an essential space through which trailing spouses may find anchorage and extend the scope of their identities beyond their roles as mothers, wives and homemakers (Yeoh, Huang, and Willis, 2000, p. 152). This is often facilitated through community organizations and religious communities discussed in *Section 5.3.*

Last, particularly in Asia, expectations that women act as cultural 'upholders' for their families differs among foreigners and pre-existing populations. Existing cultural practices and identities are met with increasingly diverse socio-cultural practices and identities in the global(izing) city, placing the 'Asian family' in tension with processes of globalization (Yeoh, Huang and Willis, 2000). In Asia, women have

been framed by national rhetoric as cultural bearers who must defend the family from outside influences, as well as 'victims' of globalization (ibid.). As cities attain world city status, the tensions between 'the local' and 'the global' are amplified and frequently played out by the middle classes (specifically middle-class women) as they carve out identities in modernizing and globalizing spaces (ibid.). Alternatively, women of lower classes are often exploited by women and families in the middle classes for domestic labour and take on reproductive responsibilities. Moreover, Yeoh, Huang and Willis (2000, p. 154) argue that, "Such a 'genderised mode of labour substitution' serves to further entrench the patriarchal nature of gender roles in society because it replaces one women for another without challenging the assumption that such work is rightly a woman's". Consequently, in these examples of globalizing cities in Asia, the intersection of local and other diverse practices, beliefs, and social structures, often works to reinforce binary constructions of gender, labour, and space as explored in the following sections.

One of the main conversation themes that emerged time and time again revolved around the status of Songdo as a so-called Smart City and/or U-City, especially in the daily lives of women. The following three sections explore New Songdo City's status as a Smart and Ubiquitous city where Western-centric socio-spatial relationships between gender, work, and space are complicated by the city's urban expression and lived experiences.

5.2 Smart City or Stupid City?

The Smart City is like 'bling' because it looks great but you don't really use it.
– Victor

To begin, this section focuses on in-home touchscreen panels[1] inside apartment units that allow users to monitor their energy usage, automate household cycles such as heating, cooling, lights, and alarms, and record and disseminate certain information external to the home such as available parking spaces, fast-food orders, and mail deliveries. Most modern apartments in South Korea are outfitted with similar wall units and so they are not unique to Songdo; however, many international residents I spoke to encountered these wall pads for the first time in New Songdo City, and so they were new to them. Since the wall panels control many (if not all) of the essential utilities within apartments, they are an important part of everyday life. While such panels a are standard feature for Korean apartments, many international residents seem to be 'at war' with them, as discussed next.

Since virtually all the wall panel units communicate in Korean, many non-Korean speakers are met with daily challenges as they interact with some of the most basic controls in their home. In one narrative, Emma (Interview, 21 Jan. 2015), an English teacher at a University in Songdo, recounts an experience from her early

[1] These are *not* the Telepresence systems mentioned previously; the distinctions between the two technologies are explored throughout the rest of this chapter.

days living in the city when she unknowingly pressed an emergency button. On another day, she tried to set the clock in her kitchen and ended up calling security by accident instead. In both instances, she was surprised to find building security at her door, but struggled to explain the situation, again, because of the language barrier between English and Korean speakers in the city. In another story, Grace, a trailing spouse and mother of two from Uruguay, recalls a frustrating daily experience where her bedroom lights and alarm turn on in the middle of the night – every night (Focus Group 1, 28-Jan-2015):

> *Grace: I have an alarm every morning, '*beep beep!*', and I can't take it off.*
>
> *Angela: [[laughing]] It's true!*
>
> *Heather: Why don't you turn it off?*
>
> *Grace: Because I don't know how! I have it on in the bedroom --*
>
> *Heather: --didn't you go to [Korean language] class? [[laughing]]*
>
> *Grace: I read 'morning alarm'. Okay. And then I have the hour, 7:10. But I don't know 'deactivate'. And in my bedroom, the light is also an alarm clock and sometimes at 12 am, 'beep'!*

Without the ability to understand the wall panel, Grace cannot change the settings and so, resorts to simply turning off the lights and alarm every night instead. As the smart technologies inside apartments fail to function as intended, the "code/spaces" (Kitchin & Dodge, 2011) that they produce begin to transform the smart-home from a space of convenience and ease to a space of unpredictability and frustration.

When examining the specific functions of the wall pads, especially among international residents in Songdo, some interesting patterns emerge. First, residents

widely accept that the wall pads, in principle, are good – the pads control central heating, cooling and lights, for example, and give summaries of energy usage on weekly or monthly intervals. However, because virtually all the units are in Korean, foreign residents who do not have (enough) knowledge of the Korean language struggle to change settings, including language settings, and therefore do not use them to the same extent as Korean residents. Some international residents even explain that they are afraid to tamper with the panels since they control central functions of the home – the prospect of having to deal with the resulting chaos of pressing the wrong button is enough to deter users from engaging with it at all. Jack and Cathy (interview, 8-Feb-2015), a married couple who moved to Songdo in 2011 from the United States, explain:

> *Jack: In the apartment, everything is in Korean. All the apartment management staff speak only Korean. They should have just one person in the apartment who can speak English and explain what all the things are and how things work.*
>
> *Cathy: Everything [in the apartment] is in Korean. There seems to be a lot of features and controls but we don't use it except to turn on lights or check energy usage month-to-month. I'm afraid to fiddle with it or figure out what each button does because the consequences are too much of a headache. I could turn off the gas or heat or something essential, and because the apartment management doesn't speak English, it would be very difficult to correct.*

Here, despite having lived in Songdo for four years at the time of my interview, frustrations with their home technologies still remain. In this case, however, these challenges are attributed to the insufficiency of the apartment complex's staff. Though they live in one of the flagship 'international' apartments designed by KPF

that specifically target foreign residents, Jack and Cathy are disappointed by these perceived shortcomings.

Summing up the frustration of many international residents, Grace remarks, "I hate the part with the Smart City. You don't get to use it because you don't speak Korean" (Interview, 21 Jan. 2015). While international residents acknowledge that they could learn more Korean to avoid these everyday challenges, many of them do struggle with language classes for years. Many are especially frustrated by Smart City technology because they were told, implicitly and explicitly, that these services would be in English, would be easy to use, and make life more convenient rather than more difficult. As Victor (Focus Group 2, 31 Jan. 2015) explains, "the Smart City is like 'bling' because it looks great, but you don't really use it". In a conversation among focus group participants, international residents identify the dissonance between Smart City rhetoric and their everyday experiences:

> *Daniel: The way you could describe it, is if you bought a computer and all you did was play solitaire on it. There's a lot that computer can do but all you're doing is just playing solitaire. Songdo is playing – just doing the surface level stuff even though it's all here. But what I wanted to ask everybody else this and this is really a sincere question: what have you experienced in Songdo that's smart?*
>
> *Steve: That's – when you keep saying Smart City, I keep asking myself, how do I experience that?*
>
> *Daniel: …recording who comes to my door, on that little camera if I figure out how to work it.*
>
> *Steve: We have that in Brazil.*
>
> *Daniel: That's sort of smart but it's not revolutionary.*

Interestingly, the wall-panels are not even one of the technologies heavily featured in U-City and Smart City descriptions of New Songdo City, perhaps accounting for the dissonance between expectations of the technology and its everyday use. As previously mentioned, apartment wall-panels are standard in most modern high-rise apartment buildings in South Korea. These panels differ from Telepresence - the Songdo-specific U-City technology. The general confusion regarding which technologies are 'smart' and that exceed 'standard' infrastructure, as this conversation highlights, allows Smart City rhetoric to operate without necessarily corresponding to specific technologies or experiences of them. Based on conversations with foreign residents, it appears the Smart City manifests itself in two ways in their everyday lives. In the first instance, rhetoric and publicity materials identify examples of specific technologies but residents do not typically know how, why, or even where these examples function. Alternatively, foreign residents identify technologies and then attribute them to the Smart City, projecting the label onto any number of technologies that are used regardless if they are part of the U-City plan.

Though the U-City intends to produce attractive environments for international businesses and subsequently, international residents, the actual uptake of Smart City technology, especially by international residents, in Songdo is debatable. Hence, though technology may be integrated and implemented at the

urban scale to create more orderly space, these examples illustrate the ways that technocratic spaces are ruptured by other less predictable factors, for example, behaviours, motivations, and patterns of learning when trying to overcome language barriers.

Further analysis of interview and focus group data reveals a prominent divide along gendered lines. In many anecdotes, frustrations caused by various technologies had, in general, a strong normative correlation according to binaries that separate public/male/waged labour from private/female/domestic unpaid labour. Broadly, international women were those who had frustrating experiences with the in-home wall panels. While some of these experiences were reiterated by their husbands, most men instead spoke about difficulties in the office. In these instances, troubleshooting with office technology immersed in a Korean-speaking workplace were the focus of their frustrations. In these cases, however, paid and specialized support staff are available to employees. At home, international residents, especially women, often note that they are unable to connect adequately with others who can help sort out these seemingly small, banal, and yet omnipresent issues. In the first focus group comprised of foreign women, the residents describe a stressful situation (Focus Group 1, 28-Jan-2015):

> *Grace: The problem is that my husband's company has two Korean people who speak very good English and work in Korean, but they are technical support*
>
> *Angela: Oh, so they know nothing about the city*

Grace: No, they don't care. You have to ask them as a favour, "Please, help me to find an apartment". So he calls a real estate agent.

Angela: And sometimes it's a little bit difficult always asking [Grace: yeah, bothering] "please help me, help me with this, help me with that".

Grace: No I can't do that, no, and my husband hates it so he never asks for help.

Though the division between men and women and the frustrations revolving around various office, home, and city technologies they experience are not rigidly divided, broad patterns of experiences place in-home struggles with the Smart City at the forefront of conversation for these women. While many of these experiences are attributed to language barriers, I argue that broader socio-spatial divisions regarding the normative gendering of urban space disproportionately place women at home to handle these domestic issues alone. On the other hand, men at work face different problems and can overcome them with specialized and paid technical support staff (who are also often men).

Tensions between a mix of socio-cultural frameworks about gender and work also mediate experiences of New Songdo City as many trailing spouses are not legally able to find formal, paid work. As a result, they frequently give up their paid jobs in their previous places of residence and become managers of the household and family life once they move to Songdo. This is made even more challenging by various technologies that create inconveniences and frustrations in daily life rather than improving quality of life as this section has explored. Alternatively, others engage in

informal labour as private English teachers or are not paid at all and participate in various forms of volunteer work. These informal gendered labour landscapes in the Songdo Smart City are discussed next.

5.3 E-Moms, or, telepresence and women's identities in New Songdo City

Telepresence is a high-resolution video conferencing system that is accessible through televisions. Originally developed for business-to-business communication, the Telepresence network piloted in New Songdo City is now heavily marketed in educational and residential settings. Using a video interface, Telepresence allows users to access a variety of programming for a monthly premium. Popular programmes include private English tutors from North America aimed at school-aged children and courses for various hobbies such as flower arranging or painting aimed at mothers and wives. In institutional settings, Telepresence allows students attending a private school in the United States to interact with students at Chadwick International School, facilitating links between distant classrooms. In a commercial setting, Telepresence provides high-quality video conferencing. Generally, Telepresence aims to improve the quality of life for Korean and international residents, students, and business by creating technologically advanced links between people and places, near and far.

In the business setting, Telepresence is not especially novel since video conferencing systems are long-established. On the other hand, an analysis of the other applications of Telepresence in schools and homes highlights some of the technology's shortcomings as well as new and unintended uses. In the case of Chadwick International School, Victor, a teacher confirms that the Telepresence system is only sometimes used for meetings and is rarely used in the classroom for virtual exchanges as is frequently shown in promotional materials (for example, in Cisco's *Cities of the Future* series, 2012). In an interview with a representative of u.Life Solutions, I was somewhat surprised to learn that only 700 units were installed in apartments as of February 2015, though more than 1400 units had been purchased. Slow uptake was accounted for by Telepresence's cost (upfront as well as on a monthly basis), in addition to a lack of consumer demand. Of these residential users, the majority are Koreans, many of whom are mothers with school-aged children (Jung, J-W (u.Life Solutions, interview, 10-Feb-2015). Drawing again from the work of Yeoh, Huang, and Willis (2000), mothers are conceptualized here as defenders of the home, family, and cultural practices such that Telepresence supports these roles in the domestic sphere and within the contextually-specific framework for 'international' city life (*Chapter 6*). As a representative of u.Life Solutions (interview, 10 Feb. 2015) explains:

> Moms don't have time to do this [ex. paper flower bouquet-making or sewing] in the traditional way after dropping their kids off, doing the housework,

> etcetera… It's difficult for women, at first. Once they have experienced the free content, they are more willing to accept the device in their homes. Women are self-conscious about the way they appear to others, and the way their homes look. They only clean where the camera can see.

Telepresence becomes a panoptic window into the private, domestic sphere where some feel the need to stage homes and appearances to conform to social norms. Telepresence thus has a disciplining power, albeit only within the visible frame of the camera.

While the private subscription service requires a termly fee, u.Life Solutions has also partnered with a local volunteer organization, ComIn, to provide them with Telepresence services, free of charge. Described as a 'volun-sharing' organization, ComIn provides a series of workshops aimed at unemployed women in New Songdo City. It is also a larger umbrella organisation for the Songdo Supporters, a charity organization aimed at helping those in need within and around the city that are generally marginalized by the South Korean state and society. Both organizations were formed in, and are based out of, New Songdo City and are focused on fulfilling the needs of local and nearby residents that are not otherwise provisioned for by existing formal government services. Most of the participants in both non-profit organizations are women who also belong to the same or related church congregations in the city.

More specifically, ComIn is primarily a digital platform where members exchange their skills. For example, someone who knows Spanish may offer free

lessons to other members. Those who participate are not required to pay, but instead are obligated to contribute a class or session that shares one of their own talents or skills. As Ginny Kim, the founder of ComIn explains, there are many well-educated women in Songdo and in the larger Seoul-Incheon area more generally. Unfortunately, these women are not always able to find work or develop their professional skills for any number of reasons. ComIn was developed to build these individuals' skills while also filling in the gaps in the services and provisions that the city has yet to develop.

In partnership with IFEZA, ComIn has secured office space within the G-Tower (IFEZA headquarters) on the same floor as u.Life. In exchange, ComIn organizes community events and liaises with IFEZA with regards to community needs. More importantly, they promote and use the Telepresence network free-of-charge to hold virtual meetings and to deliver its programmes. ComIn and IFEZA thus have a reciprocal relationship where the volunteer efforts of local residents are used by IFEZA (via u.Life Solutions) to test and further develop their product while also helping to create a market for their technology and subscription services.

The relationship between ComIn and u.Life Solutions is an interesting and important example of some of the more organic aspects of Songdo's everyday life that have evolved in these nascent years. Notably, services and amenities are sub-par to the expectations of some residents, prompting the need for organizations like

ComIn. As middle- and upper-class women in New Songdo City who are full-time unpaid managers of their households and/or families, these highly educated, wealthy women are those who are most likely able to afford the private services offered by u.Life Solutions and have the time and resources to take up new hobbies. Alternatively, ComIn is not targeted at wealthy married women, but those with varying degrees of socio-economic security. If, for whatever reason, a woman wants or needs to enter the labour market after never have been employed previously, or employed some years ago, part-time opportunities are limited.[2] Further, as men are disproportionately represented in the workforce, unemployed women are doubly disadvantaged. As Angela, an architect from Portugal, astutely asks (Focus Group 1, 28-Jan-2015):

> Why don't they [the government] organize real jobs? It is one thing if you volunteer, another thing if you work. They have so many women here, why don't have a structure for finding jobs for women?

Though it does not directly employ women, organizations such as ComIn facilitate a network of people who share their knowledge, talents, and skills, but that also create a space for participants to explore, extend and develop their identities beyond their traditional roles as mothers, wives and/or homemakers.

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[2] According to the OECD (2016), women are concentrated in non-regular jobs (40.2%) while men are concentrated in regular employment (73.5%) nationwide. Of the 60% of women in regular jobs, 18.4% work part-time versus only 6.3% for the 73.5% of men. In regular jobs. Moreover, women who enter the formal labour sector are faced with the second highest wage inequality between genders of all OECD member countries, trailing behind only the USA.

On the other hand, internationally-mobile women face a different set of challenges. As Yeoh, Huang and Willis (2000) describe in the Singaporean case, trailing spouses in New Songdo City also frequently give up previous paid employment for their husbands to take up their new positions abroad.[3] The lack of English-speaking day-care centres and services in Songdo also justifies mothers' rationales to give up paid employment to become full-time household managers, as was the case for Denise (interview, 14-Feb-2015). Visa restrictions also mean that foreign women are not legally allowed to take up paid positions beyond a small limit. If they are able, that is, if they are from the top tiers of the Korean English-speaking hierarchy (See *Chapter 6*), many become private English tutors though this work is irregular, unpredictable, and often below their qualifications (Focus Group 2, 7-Feb-2015). Others choose to do this 'under the table', which is even more insecure and subject to an even higher turnover. Their lack of Korean language skills also means that other jobs are inaccessible to most foreign women.

To some extent, broader employment patterns, modernist urban planning paradigms, and the Smart International city work to reinforce the binary opposition of urban space – women at home doing unpaid domestic work, men at work doing

[3] According to a FAB executive member who was recently in charge of administering and analyzing an extensive foreigners' survey, very few trailing spouses are men. Male trailing spouses were most commonly identified as husbands of teachers at Chadwick International School. Stereotypes of gendered labour are thus also reproduced here, disproportionately placing women in classrooms as educators.

waged work. While organizations such as ComIn have appropriated U-City technologies to support their operations and to build skills among unemployed women who are overlooked in the Smart City, Telepresence also reinforces the link between women and labour within domestic realms. Not only do the programmes on offer via Telepresence reinforce forms of gendered domestic unpaid labour in the form of, say, sewing classes, the logic behind this programming is predicated on a number of assumptions. Though it aims to add convenience to the daily domestic lives of city residents who are presumed to be women, instead of having to travel to classes where they can learn skills to be better mothers and wives, Telepresence allows users to do it from the comfort of their own homes. Thus, though technologies like Telepresence exist in New Songdo City, this does not necessarily transform the city, its people, or ideological structures that work to govern social and spatial relationships. Rather, as many of these examples describe, the U-City appears to reinforce Western-centric *as well as traditional Confucian* divisions of labour, gender, and urban space.

I now turn to the last section of this chapter to investigate the role of the U-City in civic engagement processes in New Songdo City. For example, if city residents want to advocate policies that help facilitate employment uptake for women, as Angela mentions, there exist certain avenues of intervention. Some of the avenues are explicitly embedded in Smart and U-City planning and aim to improve

democracy, governance, and civic engagement by intervening in various policy decisions that impact city residents. This is discussed next.

5.4 U-City, whose city? Civic engagement in New Songdo City

Proponents of Ubiquitous Cities frequently argue that this urban planning paradigm can facilitate U-democracy by improving the transparency of governance processes, increasing the potential for democratic engagement among citizens, and therefore make a city inherently 'more democratic' (Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs, 2007; Lee, Yigitcanlar, Han and Leem, 2008). Big Data is presumed to become more widely accessible to citizens and government bodies, allowing governments to better respond to citizens' needs while also improving transparency and thus government accountability (Lee et al., 2008). Alternatively, critiques of the Smart City are plentiful. Kitchin (2015, 2014) is critical of the research on Smart Cities, highlighting several important shortcomings that have yet to be addressed by scholars. He echoes other critics' concerns (ex. Hollands, 2008; Allwinkle & Cruikshank, 2011; Angelidou, 2014) regarding the objectives of business-led Smart City development. Kitchin further raises other pertinent issues, "such as panoptic surveillance, technocratic and corporate forms of governance, technological lock-ins, profiling and social sorting, anticipatory governance, control creep, the hollowing out of state provided services, widening inequalities and dispossession of

land and livelihoods" (2015, p. 2). Consequently, it goes without saying that the relationship between people and their government is not as straightforward in the ubiquitous Smart City as many proponents suggest. Rather, benefits to society are met with important potential repercussions that merit critical investigation.

In New Songdo City, urban rhetoric suggests that the development of an exemplary U-City would increase civic engagement and improve democratic processes in the city. This section focuses on some of the ways that the U-City has been used by IFEZA to engage residents and represent different stakeholder groups. Ultimately, I conclude this section by arguing that the U-City is inherently apolitical in its design and actually runs counter to claims of increased democratic engagement between citizens and governments.

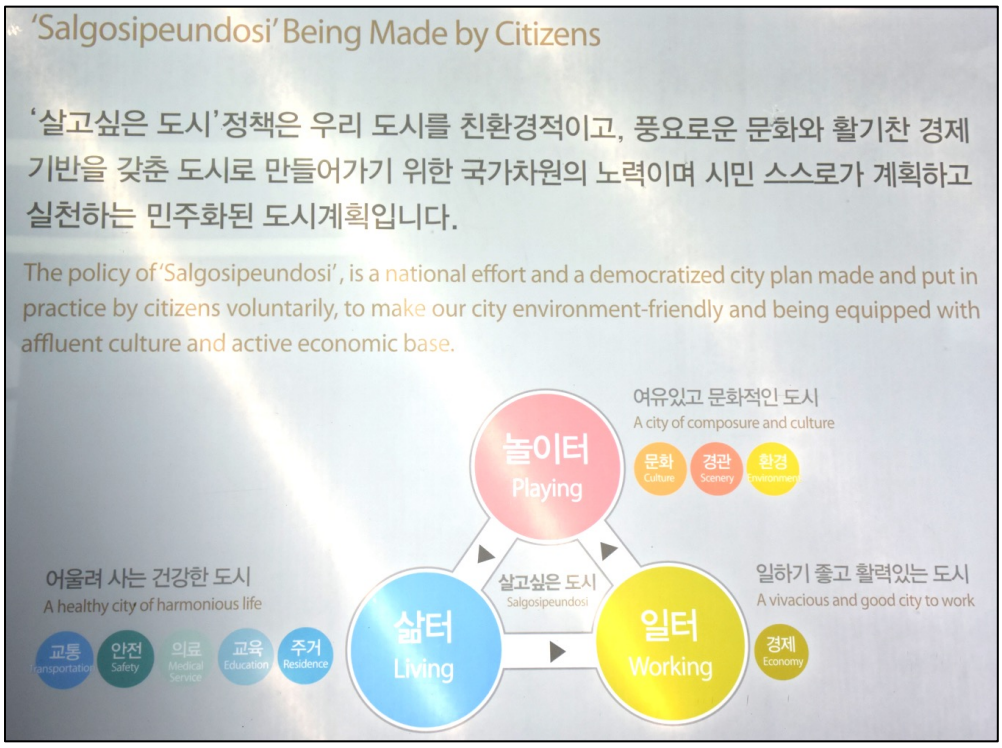


Figure 5.3 Smart + Connected City Panel about Salgosipeundosi
Source: Author, 2015

Inside the Smart + Connected City exhibition hall, a few displays give clues as to the intended uses of Smart City technology within processes of democratic civic engagement. In the entrance foyer, large panels outline the key developments within New Songdo City and its role as a model city. Part of this display includes a panel on *Salgosipeundosi* (살고싶은도시) (Figure 5.3) - a national policy that aims to facilitate voluntary democratic citizen engagement at the city level. This engagement is then directly related to global competitiveness (Figure 5.4) through five initiatives: public education, leadership development, modelling, events and infrastructure platforms, and policies that connect local organizations and city government. This

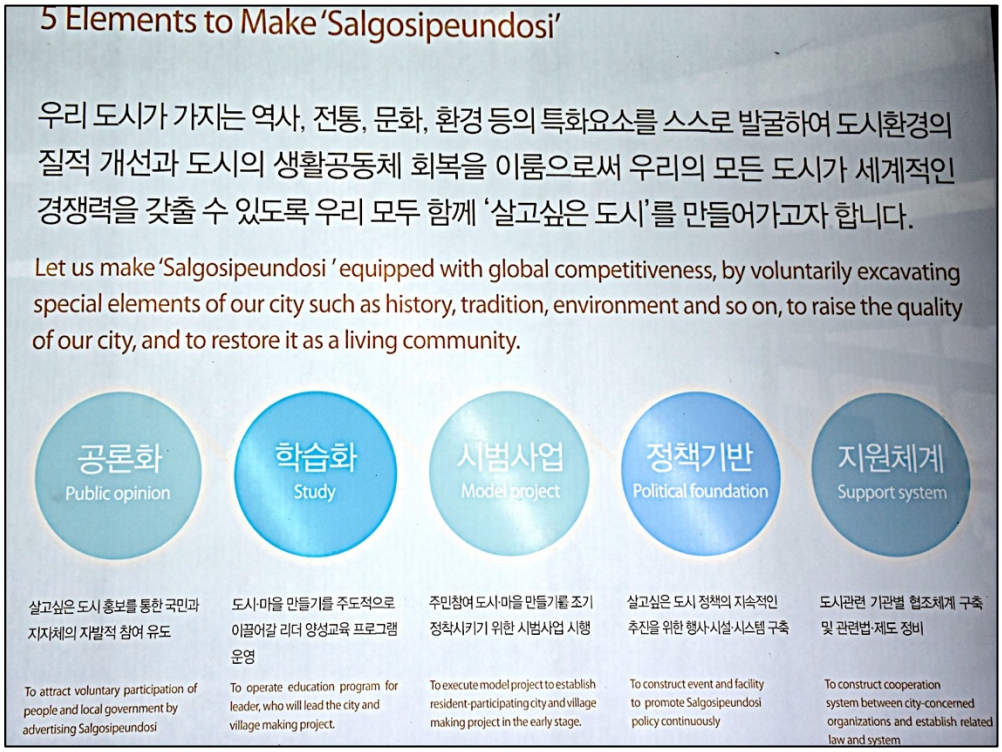


Figure 5.4 Smart + Connected City Panel about Salgosipeundosi
Source: Author, 2015

section will discuss the U-City as a facilitator of *Salgosipeundosi* using three brief examples of civic engagement.

Located inside the Smart + Connected City Exhibition Hall, a touchscreen display shows a map of Songdo International City (Figure 5.5). On the top right-hand corner, a simple 'How to' section lets the visitor know that the satellite maps are from 2005/6, that you can select and comment on different parts of the map, and thereby participate in the city plan. Two issues immediately strike me as I look down onto the map. First, the ability to comment on the City Plan appears to only

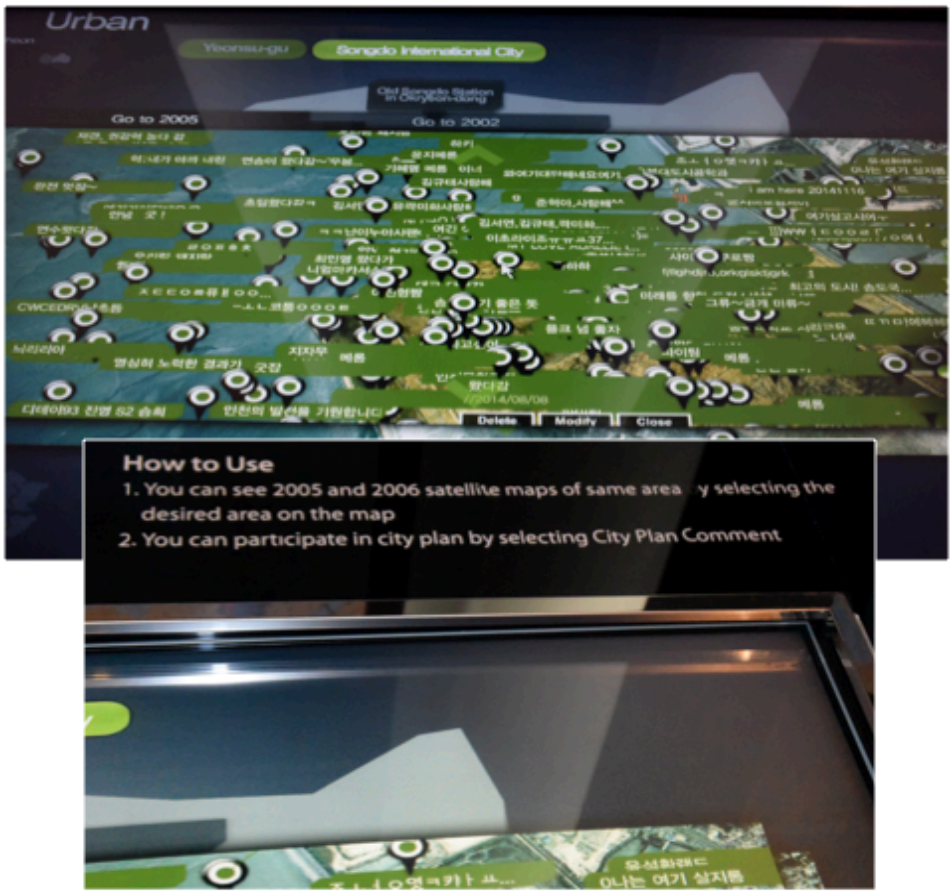


Figure 5.5 Smart + Connected City Interactive Map
Source: Author, 2015

exist after-the-fact. That is, comments are only made retrospectively, some nine to ten years after the image of Songdo was taken. Moreover, the link between the act of commenting and democratic citizen engagement is not pre-given. Using Susan Arnstein's (1969) well-known *Ladder of Citizen Participation*, the touchscreen display that supposedly allows participation in the planning of New Songdo City is a form of non-participation whose objective is not to enable people to impact decision-making processes, but to allow existing powerholders the opportunity to 'educate' participants on decisions that have already been made, officially or unofficially. One such form of non-participation is manipulation, which is placed on the lowest rung of Arnstein's ladder. As an illusory form of participation that aims only to inform (educate), and to engineer support for the projects of existing powerholders, participants in this framework are used simply to 'rubberstamp' projects with uni-directional information flowing from powerholders to participants. In this touchscreen example, interactive displays create a digital spectacle that distract from the tool's complete lack of impact on the city's planning and development processes. With manipulation, Arnstein also notes that the formation of local advisory groups is common, though they frequently lack any agency. This brings me to my next example, the Foreign Advisory Board (FAB).

The FAB was originally formed as a branch of IFEZA composed of a select group of foreign residents, mostly those who were among the original twenty-two

international residents of the city. These same residents were also quoted and pictured in various promotional materials, and were used as 'evidence' of the international city. Their mission was to liaise with IFEZA with regards to city planning and development, specifically to "facilitate integration between foreign communities and the host population", and to "advise the IFEZ Authority as a permanent forum" (FAB, 2017). In many ways, I argue that the FAB was a placation tool to manage the frustrations of international residents upon moving to the city. Representatives of FAB discussed the Board's disappointment in IFEZA, noting that they had dismissed the concerns that were discussed and raised by foreign residents on numerous occasions. Instead, the FAB was used as a tool to carry out other tasks, largely information dissemination. In the end, 'citizen engagement' was reduced to an essay contest about why residents loved the city, for example, or a photography contest. Consequently, the FAB seceded from IFEZA though they still maintain a governing board and actively research concerns from the international community. Unfortunately, the concerns of the FAB are still dismissed by municipal officials and the IFEZA, and are regarded simply as 'foreigners' problems'.

Presently, the re-incorporation of the FAB into the IFEZA organization is contentious. Though members want to re-join, serious scepticism remains because of previous tensions and distrust. This relationship varies dramatically from that of ComIn as the FAB receive no support from the IFEZA. Instead, significant power is

held by *chaebols* located in New Songdo City. In regular meetings with IFEZA, *chaebol* representatives and representatives of the other international corporations and organizations located in the city are routinely given a platform to discuss their needs and the needs of their employees. It is through these meetings that international residents are indirectly able to influence IFEZA's decision-making as mediated by Human Resources personnel. Foreign residents are thus given agency only as employees and are valued as skilled labour rather than residents.

Finally, engagement in the U-City is mediated by technologies that produce Big Data. Despite worlding practices that modify spatial planning and policies to attract international businesses and residents, and despite ambitions to further democratize urban life through digital and other means, the avenues available for civic engagement with New Songdo City's governance are poorly defined and, arguably, underdeveloped. Instead, Smart City technologies and U-City infrastructure facilitate communication between people and urban systems – both physical and digital infrastructures – without requiring the conscious intervention, activation, or agency of people. Thus, I ask, if data is automatically recorded, analysed, and processed, does this qualify as 'voluntary' or as 'engagement' at all? Arguably, the very nature of U-City technology counters the objective of *Salgosipeundosi* since the degree of both participation and voluntary action is highly questionable.

5.5 Conclusion

Songdo is a symbol of a well-built city, is an example of how to build a Smart City, and how things should be designed.
– Lydia (non-resident of Songdo)

As a self-proclaimed international model U-City, New Songdo City is an ambitious project that seeks to revolutionize urban life in South Korea. Despite material, social, and political pronouncements of cutting-edge planning by city proponents, this chapter has drawn out some important disjunctures between representations of the city and the everyday lived experiences of its residents. In the first example, the Smart City and its conceptualization by planners and city managers reveals a binary separation of space according to gender and labour. These socio-spatial assumptions become quite evident in the everyday lives of international women living in the city as they attempt to navigate and negotiate differences between socio-spatial frameworks and relationships. These expectations are sometimes (though not always) rooted in diverse cultural experiences and divergent ideologies about what is deemed an 'appropriate' use of space, and by whom. In particular, women's perceived roles in domestic settings and in the paid labour force is a point of tension between different groups in the city.

In the second example, the Smart City is used to augment the reach and role of community organizations. Korean women are often relegated to the private sphere while husbands take up paid employment in the city. As a result, women often

commit time to volunteer organizations in lieu of formal paid employment. Moreover, as in the case of ComIn, these organizations also focus on capacity and skills development for women who are struggling to find work. Thus, on one hand, the Smart City tends to reinforce the link between women, private domestic space and unpaid labour; however, grassroots initiatives have also found ways to use Smart City infrastructure to develop the skills, identities, and roles of women beyond simple binary divisions of space. Many of these skills, identities, and roles are related to domestic duties, which may also work to reproduce the limited extent to which women are perceived to be actors in the urban sphere.

Last, the ability for residents and citizens to affect changes in the city is questionable. Though the smart U-City is said to improve government transparency and accountability, the goal of achieving voluntary civic engagement is counter-posed to the ways that these technologies are designed to function. While the U-City is meant to facilitate the collection, analysis and accessibility of Big Data, the ubiquity of these technological urban processes is designed to be automatic. Coupled with the lack of avenues for meaningful civic engagement, the agency of foreign and Korean residents to impact IFEZA and Incheon Metropolitan City decision-making processes appears to be extremely limited. Moreover, even though many women experience everyday difficulties in the city as explored in *Sections 5.2* and 5.*3*, no targeted efforts were identified that engage with these residents as shown in *Section*

5.4. Instead, needs are communicated via channels located in the paid workplace where men are disproportionately represented in both Korean and foreign employee groups.

Thus, the extent to which New Songdo City as a Smart U-City achieves its goals to make everyday life easier and more convenient for its residents and workers while also improving democratic governance, is questionable. Moreover, its status as a 'successful' and fully-operational model city that other urban developments with similar ambitions should emulate, is also a contentious claim. By developing cutting edge ubiquitous urban technology to improve the quality of life for domestic and foreign enterprises and residents, the Songdo Smart City aims to structure urban processes, patterns, and enactments of citizenship. The extent to which it achieves this, in addition to the extent to which this can be considered 'success', is not easily assessed. Moreover, the data I presented in this chapter is not meant to be a representative sample of all city residents and their experiences of the Songdo Smart U-City. Instead, I have demonstrated the ways that Smart and U-City rhetorics have been articulated and experienced by a selection of resident groups in Songdo. These anecdotes of first-hand experiences and expectations add nuance to descriptions of Songdo as a model Smart U-City. This chapter has thus explored many of the challenges, complexities, and contradictions between urban rhetoric and everyday life that have thus far been omitted from scholarly literature on the city.

In particular, the ways that people of varying socio-cultural and economic groups utilize the U-City is demonstrated to exceed or undermine its digital architecture. Further research, however, can add to or challenge the claims in this chapter to give a better understanding of the U-City and the gendered socio-spatial relationship that it reflects, reproduces, and transforms.

Most importantly, I argue that challenging experiences or perceived shortcomings should not be read as a failure in this instance. Rather, this chapter has highlighted the ways that different conceptualizations of gender, labour, socio-spatial divisions, and civic engagement work to unsettle 'the urban'. In this instance, the 'East' as exemplified by New Songdo City is not simply a poor copy of Western techno-urbanisms and advanced urban society; socio-cultural differences are not symptomatic of a 'less developed' or inferior Korean society relative to foreigner communities living in the city; the challenges faced by foreign residents are not the result of inadequate provisions for these privileged groups. Instead this chapter has revealed the inherent bias of some international residents and developers and the ways that hegemonic Western urbanisms proliferate in city-building processes. Interestingly, many of the technological challenges presented in this chapter have been attributed - by foreign residents - to a deficiency in human resources. For them, the city and IFEZA do not employ adequate numbers of bilingual people who can assist non-Korean speakers with almost every aspect of their lives. Misrepresentation

by Gale International who claim that English is the *lingua franca,* structures foreign residents' expectations, where Western-centric urban rhetorics melded into the Smart City and U-City planning paradigm are directly challenged by their everyday experiences of the city. Here, the English-centric construction of global urban space, in conjunction with digital infrastructures that are couched in Western-centric urbanisms are not able to dominate the urban expression and experience of New Songdo City. Thus, Asian urbanism(s) helps to uncover the ways that seemingly axiomatic and highly rational planning paradigms are co-opted, operationalized, and complicated by world(ing) cities where multiple conceptualizations and expectations of 'the urban' and 'the city', clash. This 'clash' is not indicative of a polemic battle between 'Eastern' and 'Western' urbanisms, but a productive space where Asian urbanism(s) can unsettle Western and Euro-centric urban hegemony and begin to speak across cities and the diverse experiences of them that are both 'on' and 'off the map'.

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6

Chapter Six
The International City: planning, building, and living in New Songdo City

6.0 Introduction

New Songdo City has been presented by the South Korean state and private stakeholders as an emblem of a globalizing South Korea. A central tenet of this assertion is rooted in early visions of the city that emphasize the international inspiration for its master plan and a cosmopolitan projection of the city's social landscape. Following mandates to internationalize the South Korean economy after

the 1997 IMF bailout, the construction of New Songdo City as an international city is an example of the South Korean state's use of spatially-selective strategies to create new housing markets, employment opportunities for South Koreans, and to attract foreign investment (Park, 2005). This chapter examines the ways that Songdo's expression as 'international' city is articulated in terms of both its material and socio-cultural landscapes.

The expression of New Songdo City as an international city aims to produce urban spaces of an 'international standard' (Murcott, T. (Gale International), interview, 30-Dec-2014) and cosmopolitan urban subjects. To understand these urban processes, this chapter focuses on the ways that Songdo's international-ness is conceptualized and articulated through instances of urban rhetoric and worlding practices. Drawing on arguments about dominant urban hierarchies that privilege global and world cities, New Songdo City's proponents emphasize built forms that symbolize global connectivity to link urban and global networks of power and capital. Urban rhetorics and worlding practices centred on international mobility, global connectivity, and socio-cultural diversity are especially important to the city's international expression.

This chapter explores three examples of Songdo's internationalization to demonstrate a key paradox in the city's development: despite the rhetorical and material development of Songdo as an international city, this is done in a subversive

turn where Western urbanisms are not the end goal. Instead, urban rhetoric and worlding practices aim to reproduce a specifically Korean urban elite, and arguably, Asian urbanism(s) that are modelled on other Asian cities such as Hong Kong and Singapore.

First, the meticulously planned city-as-aerotropolis is examined. In this instance, Songdo's proximity to Incheon International Airport (ICN) and its marketing as a 'hub of Northeast Asia' aim to both symbolically and materially connect the city to the world. Second, the emerging development of the city as a magnet for *gyopos* (교포) – those who were born outside South Korea and/or have 'lost touch' with their Korean roots – is also explored. For ethnic Koreans born abroad or who migrated at a young age and have returned to the country for work or to (re)connect with their cultural heritage, Songdo acts as a contained zone of foreigners and returners within an otherwise homogenous ethnically Korean population. In turn, *gyopos* are beginning to attain a special, albeit an ambivalent, status – *gyopos* who are typically viewed negatively by popular Korean society become social ambassadors in Songdo and mediate between foreigner and Korean communities. In some instances, companies aim to hire *gyopos*, especially in positions that aid new foreign employees' transition into life in Songdo. Last, the city, especially within the International Business District (IBD), is demonstrated to be critical for the social reproduction of (Korean) labour and Asian urbanism(s) more

generally. Despite explicit attempts made by the Incheon Free Economic Zone Authority (IFEZA) to retain international knowledge workers in the medium and short terms through the provision of luxury urban services and generous welcome packages for foreign employees, this works to reproduce a homogenous labour force of Korean knowledge workers and urban elites in the long-term.

Ultimately, this chapter aims to unsettle global and world city hierarchies, and by extension, implicitly developmentalist urban paradigms. First, though diversity – social, cultural, and ethnic – is one of the key elements of the global and world city, this diversity is limited by both an elite sense of diversity (i.e. cosmopolitanism), as well as South Korean conceptualizations of nationhood in the age of globalization. I argue that highly-skilled workers are sought but are not 'kept' in the long-term visioning of the city. Likewise, a 'brain drain' of Korean talent is circumvented by spatially-selective policies that produce international urban spaces that facilitate the social (re)production of skilled Korean labour within South Korea. Thus, I argue that global processes and local particularity combine to produce a specific expression of Asian urbanism in New Songdo City, South Korea.

6.1 Situating the international city

The following section traces Songdo's evolution as an international city, contextualized by Incheon's historical occupation by Japanese forces and

development as an important industrial port city. This is followed by a discussion of Songdo's master plan where the visions of both public and private actors aim to create an international city. These are combined with elements of the new mobilities paradigm and worlding practices, specifically hyper-building, to frame the empirical evidence that follows.

6.1.1 The Old Story of New Songdo City

New Songdo City rises out of the coastal mudflats of west Incheon like a phoenix – celebrated by elaborate marketing that frames the city as the 'City of Tomorrow' (*Chapter 7)*, a techno-utopia (*Chapter 5*), and a materialization of the South Korean Urban Dream (*Chapter 4*). Developed at an ambitious scale and speed, Songdo's full build out is anticipated for 2020 when it is anticipated to be home to 250,000 residents, triple the population at the time of this research in December 2014. However, the sensationalization of its novel and rapid development obscures the long history of urban development politics in the area that precede it and that have helped to shape its urban expression as an international city.

Under Japanese rule, plans for a 'General Foreign Settlement' in *Jemulpo* (Incheon's historical name at the time of development as a port city) were made in 1888 to guarantee free trade and extraterritoriality to foreigners from China and Japan around the Incheon port (Compact Smart City, 2015). In-migration to South Korea since the 1980s has also concentrated a small but growing population of

foreigners[1] who gravitate towards major urban centres within the Seoul Metropolitan Area (SMA) (Seol and Skrentny, 2009; Kim, 2008). Additionally, since the Japanese occupation (1910-1945), land reclamation has been an economically and symbolically important act. Increasing the land area was, and still is, important to South Korea's strategy to advance specific industries and land uses (Shin, 2016). In recent history, such large-scale projects focus on developing land, infrastructure, and industries to attract international investment, especially in tertiary sectors of the economy. Thus, a link is made between land reclamation and internationalisation - where coastal wetland infill physically materializes space for international investment and fulfils an ideological reclamation of sovereignty from Japan.

The South Korean government has used Songdo to usher in spatially selective liberalization following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis (Park, 2005; Shin, 2016). Moving from an insular and export-based economy prior to the crisis, the post-1997 era brought in policies to transition the economy towards producer services and knowledge sectors (Cho, 1997). Following the election of President Kim in 1993 and imperatives to internationalize the Korean economy, spatially-selective liberalization (Park, 2005), the growth of the knowledge economy, and 'globalization' as a reform

[1] Of South Korea's current population of nearly 50.5 million, just over one million are registered foreigners. Just over 2% of the total population is foreign, making it the fourth lowest of all OECD countries (OECD, 2016).

policy co-evolved (Jung, 2013). New Town development was also mobilized within the SMA to resolve issues attributed to mass urbanization and to strengthen the economy through the construction industry. New Towns, including a number of other Smart- and Eco-cities, sprang up in the SMA throughout the 1980s, also setting a precedent for Songdo. The 'newness' of New Songdo City thus conceals this existing and on-going trend in urban development in South Korea.

In the case of Songdo, the Presidential candidate Roh Tae-woo (elected in 1988) announced in a visit to Incheon that a new international city for commerce and information technology would be built on reclaimed land (Shwayri, 2013). Reclamation efforts officially began in 1991, but due to the prioritisation of the Yeongjong Island reclamation project nearby where Incheon International Airport would soon be built, as well as other political and economic barriers, reclamation was stalled for nearly ten years. In 2000, Incheon's City Master Plan for 2020 was approved, focusing on the development of Incheon as a global hub for business, finance, and the knowledge economy. In 2001, the development of Songdo was re-launched when a public-private partnership between the American developer Gale International, the Korean steel giant POSCO Engineering and Construction, and Incheon City was made, forming the New Songdo International City Development Limited Liability Company (NSIC).

Initiated by President Roh and heavily supported by Incheon Mayor Ahn Sang-soo given increasing inter-urban competition, Songdo was envisioned as a solution to economic and social challenges at both the national and local levels. Producing an international city "from scratch" (BBC, 2013; Carvalho, 2014) was thought to help draw foreign direct investment (FDI) and highly skilled knowledge workers to a city that would then kick-start Korea's transition to a country worthy of 'global attention' (IFEZA, 2011, front cover). Songdo is thus the material result of co-ordinated, albeit contested,[2] national and local visions to create a beacon for international labour, residents, and capital.

Though the present pace at which Songdo is said to have been built is rapid, this rhetoric obscures the longer development histories and politics that have shaped its development over the course of several decades. Moreover, this rhetoric obfuscates the IFEZA's failure to attract the FDI and international companies they had promised (as discussed in *Chapter 7.1.1*). This also works to abstract Songdo from the political, economic, and social landscapes in which it is embedded. The next

[2] Opposition to the development of New Songdo City has emerged from the business community, primarily by *chaebols* who oppose the opening of the Korean market to international businesses (*Section 4.1.1*). Opposition has also come from environmental groups who oppose infill development, social justice groups advocating on behalf of the fisherfolk who previously lived on the Songdo Tidal Flat (*Section 4.2*), and political opponents of the Incheon mayor and South Korea's President who fear that the development of the IFEZ is a move towards re-centralization of investment after lengthy de-centralization efforts through the 1990s (Park, 2008).

sections extends this discussion by outlining the ways that the international city has been articulated by specific worlding practices and urban rhetorics.

6.1.2 The International City: planning, language, and the aerotropolis

Developed as a hub city, Songdo is a flagship development that seeks to "[legitimate] the space of the nation through the space of city" (Kim, 2013, p. 20) as South Korea jockeys for position in global and regional networks of power. The Incheon Free Economic Zone (IFEZ), of which Songdo is one of three constituent cities, adopted the slogan, "IFEZ attracting world attention" (IFEZ, 2011, front cover), alluding to its global aspirations. These aspirations are articulated through the IBD's master plans, flagship architecture, policies, and (presumed) socio-cultural diversity. Moreover, these strategies are examples of Roy and Ong's (2011) worlding practices as development actors appropriate and transform hegemonic urban tropes to suit their own visions of urban life in South Korea.

The master plan of Songdo aims to construct the city as 'international' through co-ordinated worlding practices. With the directive of the Incheon Metropolitan Government, NSIC set out to create an urban environment that could both lure and retain international capital and labour. Architectural firm Kohn Pederson Fox (KPF) were brought on board to develop the master plan for Songdo IBD and 'set the tone' for the wider city (KPF, Interview, 2014). In Songdo's case, a distinctly 'anti-Korean urbanism' (Kim, 2013; Shwayri, 2013) was developed to

make the city in the image of European and American cities, and in stark contrast to Seoul. Materially, this was manifested by the creation of a 'collage city' (Kim, 2013), with landmark buildings such as the convention centre modelled after the Sydney Opera House (Figure 6.1), a gridded street block system referencing Manhattan, Philadelphia, and other world cities (Figure 6.2), a tented skyline



Figure 6.1 Songdo Convensia Centre
Source: Arup, 2015

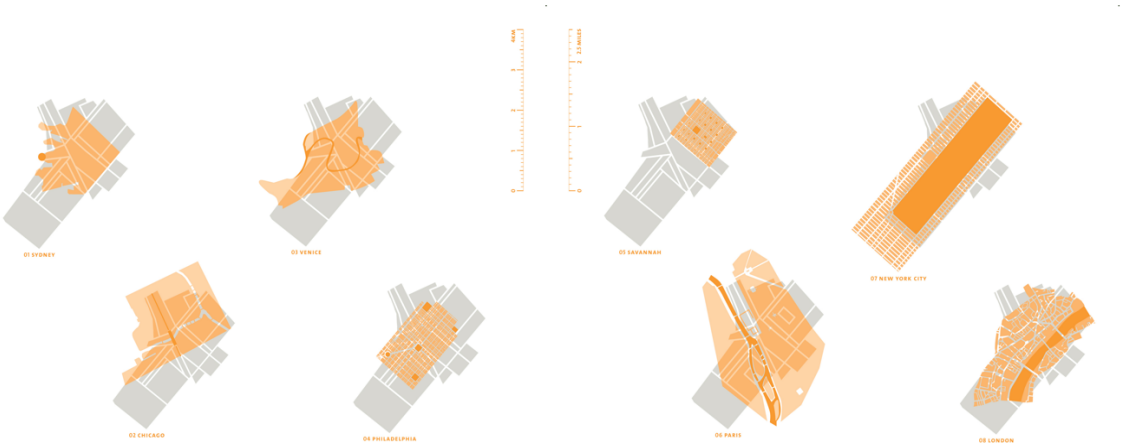


Figure 6.2 Urban Archetype Overlay
Overlays of urban designs from Sydney, Chicago, Venice, Philadelphia, Savannah, Paris, New York City, and London on top of Songdo IBD.
Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by Kohn Pederson Fox

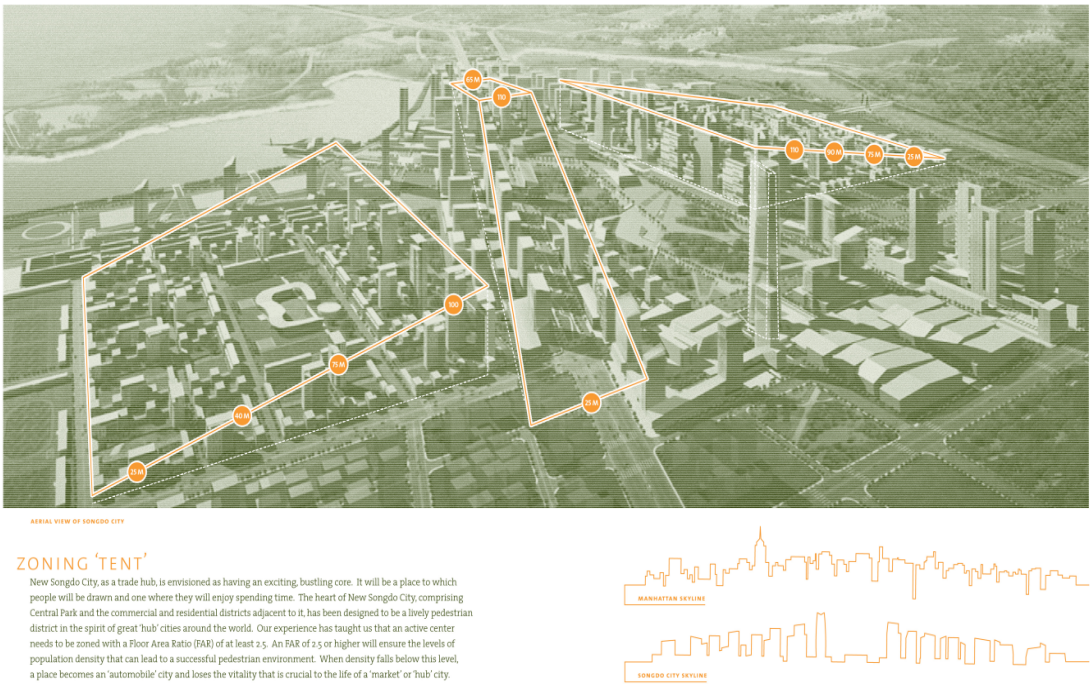


Figure 6.3 Tented Skyline

Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by Kohn Pederson Fox



Figure 6.4 Canal Walk

Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by Kohn Pederson Fox

reminiscent of Shanghai, New York, and other major urban centres (Figure 6.3), and a canal system that alludes to Venice (Figure 6.4). Buildings are generally built to an 'international standard' (Gale International, Interview, 2014) – that is, Western designs that are created and executed by the American architecture firm, Kohn



Figure 6.5 'International Standard' of Architecture
Source: Author, 2014

Pederson Fox (KPF), which are then legible and marketed to transnational elites (Figure 6.5). Modelling and inter-referencing practices at multiple scales – city-wide, block systems, neighbourhoods, and individual buildings – are the primary mediums through which proponents of New Songdo City seek to articulate its international status.

Socially and culturally, Songdo's international-ness is also promoted through language and amenities. The *lingua franca* of Songdo is designated by Gale International as English while 'foreigner-friendly' establishments are concentrated in the IBD. Additionally, the relaxation of policies granted by its membership in the IFEZ allows private international education and healthcare institutions to enter Songdo with more lenient regulations. Services and amenities targeted at (English-speaking) foreign residents have been established in the city, especially along Canal Walk where shops selling globally recognized designer brands have opened.

Presently, the development of Johns Hopkins Hospital (American) is still underway, though Chadwick International School (American) and the Global Campus (developed and operated by the central government and IFEZA) containing State University of New York (American), Ghent University (Belgian), George Mason University (American), and others, are open and operating, attracting students from both South Korea and abroad.

In addition to urban planning designs that co-opt the spatial forms of canonized global and world cities and the establishment of the IFEZ, the designation of New Songdo City as an 'aerotropolis' aims to further bolster the city's international status. Coined by John Kasarda (2000), the aerotropolis is defined as an airport-integrated region that leverages air commerce to become competitive in the global market. Represented as a 'gateway to the world' (ibid.), the aerotropolis aims to intervene in supply chains and network capital to achieve economic success (Lindsay and Kasarda, 2011; Kasarda, 2008). Under this rubric, the aerotropolis adopts a hub-and-spoke pattern that is dependent on connectivity rather than spatial proximity *per se*, and is presented as a rationally planned utopia in the context of globalization that captures footloose capital and transnational elites (Charles et al., 2007). Its form often resembles sprawling suburbs in the United States and is an inherently privileged space that both facilitates and produces the uneven mobilities of some over others.

The aerotropolis model is also premised on aggressive growth predictions that assume the air travel industry will continue to boom (Freestone, 2009) despite studies that show increasing volatility and reduced predictability year-over-year (Burghouwt, 2007). Additionally, aerotropolis proponents (Kasarda and Lindsay, 2011) who argue that technological innovation in city building and the aviation industry will triumph tend to dismiss environmental concerns (Charles et al. 2007). Such concerns, they argue, will be resolved through neoliberal competition that will propel the development of greener aviation technologies. The aerotropolis model is thus a neoliberal urbanism that identifies economic growth as the axiomatic solution to international, national and urban-scaled competition.

The Incheon International Airport (ICN) is South Korea's only hub airport and was constructed on a reclaimed island called *Yeongjong*.[3] ICN is located just fifteen minutes away from Songdo via car and private toll bridge. In turn, ICN is

The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The image was sourced at songdoibd.com

Figure 6.6 Travel time by plane from Incheon International Airport
Source: Gale International, 2015a

[3] Yongyu, Sammok, and Sinbul Islands were joined through infill development to form the single Yeongjong Island landmass that exists today.

within three and a half hours by air from a third of the world's population (Gale International, 2015b) (Figure 6.6), allowing IFEZA to proclaim that IFEZ is "the closest city to the world" (Songdo, 2014) (though conflating a FEZ with a city is also questionable). Songdo's international-ness is therefore co-produced by the airport which is used as both a symbol and facilitator of globalization. Indeed, as Crang has argued (2002, p. 571), "Of all of the spaces of a globalized world, airports may be the most emblematic". Likewise, in accordance with this rhetoric, Urry suggests that (2007, p.142):

> Airports are one of the key ways in which cities and societies seek to enter or develop their positioning within the global order, and increasingly cities seek to compete with other cities through building the largest, newest, most expensive, or most stylish airports.

The airport and its ability to facilitate distant flows of people and things transforms it into an iconic space of modernity and post-modernity (Cresswell, 2006). In this context, the airport itself, in addition to the state and nation, is a synecdoche for neoliberal globalization (McNeil, 2011). As a "bridge to the world" (IFEZAa, 2014), Songdo is represented as an international city through its aero-connectivity and is itself a representation of a globalized/globalizing South Korean nation through its presence within one of Korea's Free Economic Zones, the IFEZ.

Songdo's aerotropolis discourse co-opts the normative and dominant discourse of neoliberal urbanization. While the aerotropolis has achieved vogue status in recent years (DiNardo, *The Washington Post,* 2013; Heap, *Future Cities,* 2013; Kasarda,

The Huffington Post, 2015; DeVoss, *East-West News Service,* 2015), there is little evidence, especially at the Songdo site, to indicate that the presence of an international hub airport has generated novel urban forms and networks. While ICN's proximity may symbolically aid in Songdo's international status, its effects on the social and economic lives of residents is unmeasured and therefore unknown. This is discussed further in *Section 6.3*.

In each of these instances – urban planning, the adoption of English as the *lingua franca*, the establishment of the IFEZ, and the expression of New Songdo City as an aerotropolis – Songdo's proponents aim to produce and international city. However, these examples also illustrate the conceptual ambiguity of 'international-ness' as worlding practices and urban rhetorics make connections between global, regional, municipal, and urban networks, places, infrastructures, and policies.

Apart from the establishment of English as the *lingua franca*, each of the other instances makes the implicit assumption that the physical environment can shape socio-spatial relationships and is deterministic in its logic. Urban design, architecture, spatially-selective economic policies, and direct connectivity to an international airport co-create rhetorical synergies that symbolically construct Songdo as an important international city. However, as the empirical sections of this chapter show, this 'international-ness' is complicated by situated conceptualisations of 'the urban' in South Korea. As an example of Asian urbanism(s), the expression

of New Songdo City as an international city selectively appropriates and transforms dominant Western urbanisms.

6.1.3 Hyper-building the international city

In addition to luxury amenities, services, and premium infrastructure, New Songdo City's developers have also made attempts to produce an international socio-cultural landscape within the city. International premium services are coupled with foreign skilled labourers with the logic that, 'if you build it, they will come'. That is, by establishing services and infrastructure that are attractive to international knowledge workers and skilled labour, they will flock to the city and help to reaffirm its status as an international node in Incheon, South Korea, and more broadly, Asia. This logic relies heavily on the assumption that the world is increasingly mobile and international, thereby intensifying inter-urban competition and the need for mega-project developments. Capital and highly-skilled knowledge workers are assumed to be uniformly footloose and frictionless. Thus, it is assumed that they can be attracted with the right combination of infrastructure and policy. Moreover, the logics of environmental determinism are taken for granted and aim to foster urban citizens with particular lifestyles, values, and political orientations. As a mode of hyper-building (Ong, 2011), spectacular urban design and architecture are coupled with a (relatively) large concentration of foreign professionals to present an image of a modern, progressive, and diverse urban society. Hyper-building, therefore,

operationalizes processes of large-scale and spectacular forms of urban development in the service of state-making and subject-making.

As a worlding practice, hyper-building utilizes urban tropes that reference antecedent cities (Bunnell, 2015), predominantly located in Western contexts. Moreover, the intertwined worlding practices of modelling and inter-referencing are also operationalized to ensure that the spectacle of urban development can be located within an existing hierarchy and language of 'city-ness'. Both the urban forms produced and the speed at which they are constructed contribute to the spectacular character of hyper-building. However, hyper-building is not an evenly distributed urban process, privileging some spaces and groups over others (Ong, 2000). One clear example of the uneven privileges produced and facilitated by hyper-building is exemplified by aero(im)mobilities (Cwerner, Kesselring and Urry, 2009) that are privileged in the aerotropolis (further discussed on the next page).

A central component of New Songdo City's urban rhetoric that attempts to facilitate its expression as an international city is the propagation of the city as an 'aerotropolis' (Lindsay and Kasarda, 2011; Kasarda, 2008). The aerotropolis rhetoric entwines aeromobilities (Cwerner, Kesselring and Urry, 2009), urban mobilities (Yeoh, 2006; Urry, 2007; Cresswell, 2006; Sheller and Urry, 2006), as well as policy mobilities (McCann and Ward, 2010; Peck and Theodore, 2010; Healy, 2011; Lee et. al., 2012), especially for labour migrants who venture to the aerotropolis in search

of employment. Here, spatial mobility and social mobility are enmeshed (Hannam, Sheller, and Urry, 2006): labour migrants, for example, might gravitate towards an aerotropolis to take advantage of the high concentration of 3D (dangerous, dirty, demanding) jobs in and around the airport. Income earned through labour migration might then be repatriated to family elsewhere who are then able to enjoy a better quality of life or socio-economic position as a result of this income (Kasarda and Lindsay, 2011). Without these low-paid labour migrants, large international airports would not otherwise be able to operate as they do.

Low-skilled labour migrants, however, are not typically the focus of aerotropolis narratives. Instead, the passenger is highlighted – either as a member of the kinetic elite (Adey, Budd, and Hubbard, 2007), as a generic passenger (Dodge and Kitchin, 2004; Fuller and Harley, 2004), or as part of the kinetic underclass (passengers subjected to intensive forms of security within and beyond the airport) (Adey, Budd, and Hubbard, 2007). The transnational elite become synonymous with the kinetic elite and the aerotropolis is presented as a beacon for highly skilled foreign labourers. In the case of New Songdo City, the establishment of the IFEZ around ICN and the city aims to further facilitate this (uneven) flow of capital, things, and people.

Songdo's rhetoric privileges aeromobilities (Cwerner, Kesselring and Urry, 2009) – the movement of people, goods, services and ideas as they are sorted,

separated and sent off again at the airport. However, aeromobility is unequally accessed by individuals according to class, gender, ethnic origin and other identity categories as "air travel and its visible inequalities are a synecdoche of the increasingly global pattern of inequalities deriving from huge variations in network capital" (Urry 2007, p. 152). In other words, the aeromobilities that are facilitated by the aerotropolis are embedded within socio-economic systems that are unevenly distributed, creating different experiences of (im)mobility that further (re)produce uneven power relations (Adey, 2006).

Critically, mobilities are not frictionless – their rhythms, spacings, and moorings are unevenly accessed and, consequently, unevenly experienced by different social groups. While the kinetic elite are expected to gravitate towards the aerotropolis, to access luxury housing, elite urban amenities, and a superior quality of life, others are less privileged. Unskilled and semi-skilled labourers are also present in the aerotropolis, though with much less clout than their elite counterparts. The acute shortage of labour in 3D jobs in Korea, especially in Outer Seoul, has resulted in a steadily increasing flow of migrant labour from various Asian countries (Kim, 2008). For example, construction workers, both Korean and foreign temporary workers mostly from China, build the material city but are often excluded from residing there due to high costs of living and precarious legal statuses. Alternatively, construction workers are housed in temporary containers near their worksites, as is

the case on Yeongjong Island in addition to New Songdo City (see *Chapter 7.4*) (IIAC, 2014). In these instances, hypermobility is essential to their precarity, reflected in their inability to attain permanent residency or citizenship.

Additionally, it is also crucial to note that even the high-profile transnational elites residing in Songdo are almost entirely composed of temporary workers, with only thirty salaried businessmen (i.e. those hired indefinitely and without time-limited contracts) accounted for in 2010 (Kim and Ahn, 2011). Consequently, Kim and Ahn (ibid., p.667) conclude that "[Songdo is] a global city without global citizens".

Whether it is the movement of people, capital, ideas, or policies, the politics of mobility are embedded within experiences of the aerotropolis. Experiences of (im)mobility are differently represented or obscured as some groups are privileged over others in the hyper-built city. Following a brief overview of my methodological approach, I explore experiences of the so-called international city using New Songdo City as an example.

6.2 Sources

This chapter draws on data gathered from semi-structured interviews, surveys, and focus groups with Korean and foreign residents of Songdo. Additionally, statistical data collected and published by IFEZA, Statistics Korea (KoStat), the Korean

Statistical Information Service (KoSis), the OECD, as well as semi-structured interviews with representatives of IFEZA, Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC), Gale International, KPF, and local experts are used to better understand the relationship between visions and experiences of Songdo as an international city. Policy documents and the Smart + Compact City exhibit are also used to supplement and support the findings. A more detailed discussion on accessing, selecting, analysing, and representing these materials is found in *Chapter 3,* alongside important considerations with regards to positionality.

6.3 The aerotropolis: the way we'll live next?

According to Greg Lindsay and John Kasarda (2011), the future of cities is centred on the airport and the aviation industry. Just as the automobile was prioritized in the design and development of North American cities in the late 19th and 20th century, Kasarda (2008) asserts that the airport will be at the heart of the next wave of urbanization. Though Songdo has been represented as a prototype aerotropolis development, this label is questionable as few indicators have been developed to make any formal assessment easy.

First and foremost, New Songdo City was not planned as an aerotropolis from the outset of its development. Rather, the term was applied to the city by John Kasarda in 2005 after Gale International partnered with POSCO E&C and Incheon

City, and after the IFEZ was established. Moreover, according to the Deputy Director of the IIAC, the entirety of the IFEZ (including Cheongna, Yeongjong and Songdo) was promoted as a aerotropolis as ICN became increasingly successful after its opening in 2001 (IIAC, Interview, 28 July, 2014). The meticulous planning involved in the development of an aerotropolis was thus incidental (if it was there at all), and not necessarily coherent; the fragmented development of the broader Yeongjong Island, as well as inter- and intra-city transportation connections, is on-going as discussed later in this section and in *Chapter 4*.

The marketing of Songdo as an aerotropolis is, at best, misplaced. According to Maurits Schaafsma, the lead developer of the Airport City[4] concept at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (AMS), ICN is located too far from the capital city of Seoul to be considered as a true aerotropolis (Interview, 16 July, 2014). He remarks (ibid.):

> They have a problem here; it's too far out of the city. It's too much on its own and it's also a dead end… The governance is different, also in relation to the possibility of quality and value creation because the airport itself cannot play a very active role as a developer for commercial real estate because their government owns [it] and they say, 'we cannot be the commercial developer ourselves so we are relying on contracts with others from the outside'. What they do [is] they offer lots of land and invite developers to come with [plans]...The concept is too fragmented. All the developments are far away, not

[4] Much conflation exists between the Aerotropolis and Airport City concepts. The Airport City is the development of city-like infrastructure and services within the formal bounds of the airport, often led by the airport's own management body. Amsterdam Airport Schiphol is often presented as the first and most developed model of this sort. Alternatively, the aerotropolis is the production of a city space outside of the bounds of the formal bounds of the airport where the economic life of that urban space depends primarily on the functions and operation of the airport. Despite these differences, Kasarda identifies urban development around both ICN and AMS as aerotropoli.

> connected to each other, not connected to the terminal, not connected to the main office development, it's too far from the terminal. So I think that the operational translation from connectivity to intermodality into a landside development, they did not [do it well] … I don't know if there's a strong strategy to put the airport, enough, at the heart of the [economy]. And I think, here, Songdo, it's not a real attractive city. It is a – it is more about real estate than it is about urbanity or really living.

Moreover, the piecemeal way in which parcels of land are divided, bought, sold, and developed by both public and private actors means that Songdo lacks coherence and continuity (*Chapter 7*). Given the retrospective application of the aerotropolis title, it is not surprising that the status of New Songdo City as an aerotropolis is not easily assessed.

Upon visiting ICN and Yeongjong-do in the summer of 2014, I came across a development that may be considered an 'true aerotropolis' if there is one associated with Incheon International Airport. Located just twenty minutes east of ICN, Airport Town is directly connected to ICN via bus. Isolated among the salt flats and mountains of the island, few amenities exist outside the town. The town was developed in parallel with the airport and contains 55,000 housing units. Many of the apartments are occupied by employees of ICN and their families, or by young couples looking for affordable units. Some of those living on the island and who sold their land to the IIAC so that the infill development of Yeongjong Island could take place received homes in Airport Town in lieu of cash pay-outs. Staying in Yeongjong-dong, another small development on the eastern side of the island, I frequently took

the bus to the airport to conduct interviews and gather data. Bus stops were placed along empty corridors surrounded by dirt fields and the occasional block of development. On the bus, employees of ICN were easily identified by their uniforms or badges with the familiar ICN logo.

Thirty thousand people are employed at ICN and about half of the population of Airport Town is employed by the IIAC, airlines, or customs offices (Chung, *Korea JoongAng Daily,* 2006). Few others live on the island since discontinuous developments are poorly served, resulting in housing areas being labelled 'unpopular' despite heavy promotion in initial phases (Han, *The Korea Times,* 2009). Consequently, it makes limited sense for non-IIAC employees to live on Yeongjong Island. The shops, schools, and amenities, especially in Airport Town where most of the population are concentrated, cater to IIAC employees and their families. Thus, Airport Town is heavily economically and socially dependent on the functioning and success of the ICN, thereby fulfilling one of the fundamental aspects of the aerotropolis concept. Despite these clearer connections between ICN and urban development, Airport Town is not mentioned in aerotropolis literature. I speculate that this is due to its design as a more 'typical' new town in Korea containing clusters of *danjis* (단지; large-scale high-density housing estates) (Figure 6.7) rather than the

'spectacular jewel' that Songdo is presented as by way of its 'international' architectural style of apartments and lack of low-income housing.

Beyond Yeongjong Island, the other urban developments within IFEZ have



Figure 6.7 *Danji* apartments on Yeongjong Island
Source: Author, 2014

limited dependency on the airport. In the case of Songdo, few international and Korean interviewees mention using the airport in their everyday life, making the exact effect of the airport's connection to the city unclear. While it might have been appropriate to survey major international companies in Songdo to see if, and to what extent, their choice of location was influenced by the presence of ICN, I found over the course of numerous interviews and focus groups that individuals' experiences run counter to much of the aerotropolis literature. That is, while a company may ultimately decide to locate offices or labs in the city, this works on the assumption

that their employees, especially foreign skilled labourers, take up housing in the city or nearby. However, as evidence I gathered from my interviews demonstrates, this logic is met by several challenges that aerotropolis and aeromobility literature has not taken into full consideration. Importantly, it seems that though premium infrastructure and services might entice international businesses and residents to establish themselves in the city (though arguably in the case of Songdo, with limited success), the challenge is keeping them there. The longevity of such plans and the socio-cultural hurdles faced by individual international households or employees are not extensively investigated. Consequently, interview excerpts from several foreign Songdo residents explore some of these experiences that are often overlooked by planners, developers, and city proponents.

As Anthony, an international resident working for a UN organization, explains, being near to ICN is useful since he has used the airport around seventeen times in the last six months for business trips. He remarks, "For work, it's an advantage to be close to the airport … the Sheraton Hotel bus to the airport is a fantastic service" (Anthony, Interview, 14 Feb 2015). Another interviewee, Ellen, born in Korea but who spent several years living in the USA, also described her husband's business travel needs; with one office in Tokyo and the other in Seoul, the couple and their young daughter decided to move to Songdo because of its proximity to ICN (Ellen, Interview, 25 Feb. 2015). Her husband presently travels to his Tokyo

office at least three times a week, though at times he has needed to make the commute on a daily basis. As members of the kinetic elite, these respondents can afford the new and luxurious housing in Songdo, as well as an exclusive private international education for their children. Though Songdo is not actually the closest city to ICN (Airport Town is), it is the closest city that meets this family's socio-economic and lifestyle needs.

In addition to members of the kinetic elite, another highly mobile and privileged community resides in Songdo, though with a very rapid turnover of only a few days at a time. Established in 2015, the Incheon Airport Aviation Academy (IAAA), operated by Korean Air and Boeing, offers global training to some three thousand five hundred pilots a year. State of the art training infrastructure aims to develop Yeongjong Island as a 'Mecca of the global aviation industry' (IFEZA, 2014c). Four-day courses offered at the airport draw in pilots from around the world, as well as many of their partners who reside in Songdo's Sheraton Hotel during their stay. Garnering a reputation with local Songdo residents, the 'pilots' wives' as they are frequently referred to, make up a particular social group in the city. Largely exclusive and insular, the partners of the pilots often socialize together and are known for their boisterousness. Consequently, Anthony concludes that, "the link to the airport is not significant except for aircrews that stay here" (Anthony, Interview, 14 Feb 2015) despite his own frequent use of ICN.

In each of these instances, residents of Songdo who use the airport must still commute between the city and the airport. A dedicated, privately-operated toll bridge connects Songdo directly to ICN, though cheaper mass transit options are also available. From the centre of town, a private airport shuttle run by Korean Airlines transports passengers between the Sheraton Hotel in Songdo to the main bus bay of the airport in twenty-five minutes and for ₩7000 KRW - approximately £4, and more than double local bus fares. However, as Anthony further notes, "[Though the distance between Songdo and the airport] is only 30 minutes, psychologically and geographically, Seoul is just as close" (Anthony, Interview, 14 Feb 2015) (actual travel time on the express KTX train is 43 minutes). In a debate among participants in a focus group (Focus Group 3, 31 Jan. 2015), foreign residents discuss the transportation connections from Songdo to the airport:

> *Ben: It's hard to get here from the airport.*
>
> *Daniel: It is and it isn't. I mean, no, there shouldn't be – the bus is fine*
>
> *Steven: --hard to get here? What do you mean?*
>
> *Daniel: the bus is fine but –*
>
> *Steven: It's the easiest thing in the world!*
>
> *Daniel: It's not –*
>
> *Ben: It's not as convenient as it's sold to be … the bus is great but it's sold as this city that is built around the airport and it's convenient to [get to] the airport … the distance isn't a problem, I just don't think it's as convenient as it's marketed to be.*
>
> *Daniel: You take the Sheraton bus outside – you wait around, wait around, you buy your ticket, and wait around, you get it and you get there. Getting back*

from the airport, again, waiting in line to catch the bus – oh that one's full, won't let you on with luggage, wait for the next one. Plus you have to line up outside, right? Cold or hot, you have to line up outside or else everyone gets in line in front of you.

Spencer: Because it's nothing special, the relationship between the airport and Songdo. [Daniel: right] The 303 is a city bus, it's nothing different. And the limo is run by Korean Airlines. So what's that got to do with Songdo being a unique place?

Evidently, the transit links to the airport fail to meet the expectations of all but one participant in this focus group.

For those few members of the kinetic elite, access to the airport is essential on a regular basis, though for most residents of Songdo, its close proximity is less important or is difficult to access. In interviews and focus groups, most foreign residents gave no consideration to Songdo's proximity to ICN when deciding to locate in the city. For Korean residents who have chosen to relocate to Songdo, only two identified ICN as having an influence on their housing choices but cite employment and international and/or private education opportunities for their children as being far more important. Limited dedicated public transit infrastructure connects Songdo and ICN, though negotiations for an express rail link between ICN, Songdo, and Seoul are ongoing. Presently, the proximity of ICN to Songdo does not appear to shape the material fabric of the city in any unique way apart from obvious infrastructure required for an island airport (i.e. bridges), nor does Songdo's economy depend primarily on the airport. While the airport may symbolize a global space, it remains somewhat detached from Songdo and, moreover, Incheon Metropolitan City.

6.4 Bridging the gap: *gyopos* and socio-cultural transformation in New Songdo City

Through advances in transit infrastructure, mobilities have increased worldwide, allowing the 'mobilities turn' to permeate many disciplines (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Increasing mobilities worldwide has also facilitated the migration of many ethnic Koreans in and out of South Korea in recent years. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there were just over seven million 'overseas Koreans' in the world, residing primarily in Northeast Asia and North America (Statistics Korea, 2016, 2014). In a country with a population of nearly 50.5 million persons (KoSIS, 2016), the Korean diaspora amounts to nearly 14% of the national population residing at home. Those ethnic Koreans born and/or raised outside South Korea, and who have 'lost touch with their Korean roots' are colloquially referred to as *gyopos*. This label carries a negative connotation and differs from the term *dongpo* (동포), meaning 'brethren' and which connotes a direct tie to the nation state. To complicate things further, ethnic Koreans returning from China are referred to as *Joseon-jok* (조선족), the largest group of migrants in South Korea, while those returning from the former USSR are referred to as *Koryo-saram*, both terms also carrying negative connotations (고려사람)(Seol and Skrentny, 2009). Through the establishment of the *Industrial Technical Training Programme* (ITTP) (1993), later the Employment Permit Programme (EPP) (2007), and the *Act on the Immigration and Legal Status*

of Overseas Koreans (1998), different classifications of foreigners and ethnically-Korean migrants are placed in a vertical hierarchy of nationhood (Seol and Skrentny, 2009). This produces a state of graduated sovereignty (Ong, 2000) and further intensifies the hierarchical fragmentation of the population based on socio-cultural, legal, and ethnic factors.

To summarize, South Korea has historically been an ethnically insular nation with few entering and leaving. It was not until Japanese occupation in the early to mid-twentieth century that large numbers of Koreans began to migrate to Manchuria, Sakhalin, and Japan (Choi, 2003). Moreover, South Korea did not begin to receive large numbers of in-migrants until the late 1980s (Seol and Skrentny, 2009). Consequently, return migration is a relatively recent phenomenon, and those relocating to South Korea but who have never visited or lived there are more recent still.

Though this chapter does not focus on Seoul, Songdo's presence within the SMA is relevant to this discussion of Korean migration. City-level data on migration is not readily available; what does exist shows that the Seoul Metropolitan Area attracts the most foreigners in South Korea. As an "exceptional gateway", Seoul is considered a global city in economic terms but maintains highly restrictive immigration policies that limit its socio-cultural and ethnic diversity (Price and Benton-Short, 2008). Of the 2% of the country's population that is foreign-born,

nearly a quarter of these people live in Seoul, while 0.01% reside in Yeonsu, the district containing Songdo (KoSIS, 2014). Primarily resulting from the systematic admittance of foreign skilled and unskilled labour since the early 1990s, a small albeit rapidly growing foreign population has been established, concentrated primarily in the SMA (Kim, 2008). Of these foreigners, there were approximately 236,000 registered unskilled foreign labourers (classified as Short-Term Employment (C-4) or Non-professional Employment (E-9)) (Oh et al., 2011). However, migrants from these visa classes are only permitted to stay in South Korea for up to one year, with strict rules that make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for them to attain formal citizenship, even for ethnic Koreans (Kim, 2008).[5]

Labour migrants are permitted into the country through the ITTP/EPP, or the *Act on the Immigration and Legal Status of Overseas Koreans* (1998), though each policy is targeted towards specific groups. The ITTP/EPP targets unskilled labourers with special consideration given to *Jeseon-jok* whereas the *Overseas Koreans Act* favours Western skilled and educated ethnic Koreans (Seol and Skrentny, 2009). As a result, migrants in South Korea are placed in a subaltern position to formally recognized Korean citizens (ibid.). Even those with co-

[5] Ethnic citizenship in South Korea grants citizenship only to children of Korean parents, or at least a Korean father. Therefore, acquiring citizenship excludes migration or naturalization processes regardless of their birthplace (Kim, 2008) since dual citizenship is not permitted.

nationality, including ethnic return migrants, may be recognized and even placed relatively high on this hierarchy, but are not able to achieve full equality with ethnic Korean citizens.

For Seol and Skrentny (2009):

> Hierarchical nationhood can be characterized on two dimensions of subaltern status. First is a *legal* dimension, where the state draws lines between the core, top-tier members and other co-nationals by offering the latter varying opportunities for citizenship, residence visas and work permits. Second is a *social* dimension, where top-tier members draw lines informally, practising various types of discrimination against co-nationals even while recognizing their kinship. Together, these two dimensions may result in a distinctively difficult experience of integration for individuals who have expectations of full acceptance. (p.151; original emphasis)

Hierarchical nationhood produces an unequal distribution of rights, benefits, and opportunities to foreigners based on their position within the spectrum, effectively producing a system of graduated sovereignty. As Ong (2000) describes, "segments of the population are differently disciplined and given differential privileges and protections, in relation to their varying participation in globalized market activities" (p. 65). This is evidenced by the differential treatment and opportunities afforded to those admitted through the ITTP/EPP initiatives and those admitted through the *Overseas Koreans Act,* creating an intersection between economic and ethno-cultural positionality – the former are restricted to 3D jobs in specific industries while the latter are favoured for employment in knowledge and skilled-labour sectors of the economy. In particular, *gyopos* hold an ambivalent position as they are situated

below formal Korean citizens and above non-ethnic Korean foreigners. Within this group, however, the hierarchy again divides those from Anglo-Western nations, placing them above those who are from other parts of the world.

As South Korea becomes more diverse, the conceptualization of 'Korean-ness' based on the Japanese ideology of 'one language, one ethnicity, one nation' (Park and Abelmann, 2004) is complicated. Of crucial importance here is the emphasis on language in addition to ethnic origin. *Gyopos* who have grown up in Korean-English speaking homes are especially valued even if they are not fluent in Korean. Cultural values and language skills, even if limited, are recognized in New Songdo City as important and perceptions of *gyopos* are transformed - no longer stigmatized members of South Korean society, they are seen as into cultural bridges between Koreans and foreign residents in New Songdo City. While there are not many *gyopos* living in Songdo, their presence is seen as increasingly vital in order to mediate between Korean and English-speaking communities in the city. As a result, *gyopos* are also becoming increasingly common in New Songdo City.

Identifying herself as an 'invisible foreigner' (not unlike my own position), Alice narrates her experience of migration to South Korea (Interview, 6 Feb. 2015). Born and raised in California and ethnically Korean on both sides of her parentage, Alice talks about her first few years living in Korea with her husband and young children, also Korean-Americans. Initially when Alice met with other Korean-

Americans to socialize, she was very self-conscious of her actions in public, especially with regards to her use of English. She explains that as a Korean-American, there are high expectations placed on her to know certain things about Korea because of her appearance. She gives the example of going out to a restaurant where she and her Korean-American friends would be sure not to speak English too loudly because they did not want other Koreans to see them as arrogant and thus disrespectful because she knew that this could offend people given that use of the English language in South Korea holds particularly high symbolic value and cultural currency. Consequently, Koreans often feel intimidated when speaking English, especially to native English-speakers.

As Pamela, who was born in Korea but lived in Texas for ten years explains, an individual's grasp of the English language is indicative of your education and therefore position in society (Pamela, Interview, 10 Feb. 2015). Moreover, the Korean government's emphasis on 'being global' over the last twenty years, especially through knowledge of the English language, increases its practical and symbolic value (ibid.). According to Park and Abelmann (2004), the promotion and use of English in South Korea is both a local and global sign and is simultaneously an expression of nationalism and cosmopolitanism. As a result, the presence of wealthy Koreans in Songdo is in part due to the perception of the city as an inter-generational English language laboratory for adults, but more importantly, their

children. Exposure to English on a daily basis – through an international private education or in everyday spaces of the city – is perceived as an educational advantage and ultimately elevates an individuals' or family's social status.

Returning to Alice's story, she understands her ability to speak English and her improving grasp of the Korean language as an opportunity rather than a hurdle. As a foreigner with relatively adept Korean language skills,[6] Alice has made it her goal to help other foreigners adjust to life in Songdo having struggled herself through the transition. As Grace from Uruguay corroborates, "it is a myth that everyone in Songdo speaks English" (Focus Group 1, 28 Jan. 2015). She finds the lack of English especially frustrating because her first language is Spanish and thus it is almost impossible for her to converse in her mother tongue to anyone other than her immediate family and a few friends. Conversing in English further requires her to translate between English and Spanish, which she finds exhausting. While some accept that Songdo cannot be extracted from its Korean context, and that "it's not

[6] Due to the rapid turnover of foreigners in Songdo as well as the difficulty of learning Korean as a native English-speaker, very few foreigners are fluent in Korean. Free language courses are offered by IFEZA's Global Centre, but many residents cite the extreme difficulty of learning the language and rapid pace at which the classes proceed. Consequently, many begin the classes but few remain long enough to become conversationally fluent.

fair to expect any foreign[7] city to speak English, you can't force people to speak English" (Marie, Interview, 19 Jan. 2015), others wish that the city was more bilingual (Denise, Interview, 14 Feb. 2015). As Victor, an American teacher at Chadwick International, argues, "If Songdo is international, you would expect at least an English menu when you walk into a restaurant" (Victor, Interview, 10 Feb. 2015). Last, Alice's knowledge of Korean culture and customs, even despite her experience as a second-generation Korean-American born and raised in California, also gives her the unique ability to build cultural bridges. Presently, Alice is a key member of the Songdo Community group for foreigners and frequently participates in community events and initiatives. Additionally, she also works for a local Korean volunteer organization as a liaison between Koreans and members of the international community.

Others who are not necessarily *gyopos* but who also have a relatively firm grasp of both Korean and English are especially valued in Songdo. Returning to Pamela, she describes herself as "glue" between the Korean and international communities in Songdo (Pamela, Interview, 10 Feb. 2015). Her self-characterization parallels Emma's, an American professor of English at the University of Incheon

[7] Interestingly, foreign residents often spoke of Songdo as a 'foreign city', implicitly placing themselves at the centre of cultural references even though they are the ones who are 'foreign' in South Korea. For most international residents, Songdo is a 'foreign' place to them, but nonetheless, there seems to be a dissonance between who is deemed 'foreign' and 'at home' in this conversation and in the international city more generally.

with conversational Korean skills who has taken on a lead role within the Foreigner's Advisory Board (FAB). She helps to connect members of different foreign and Korean communities and transition new residents to life in Songdo. Other foreigners with previous experience living in South Korea, often as private English teachers, are also highly valued local experts even if they had not lived in Songdo previously.

In addition to members of the Songdo community identifying bilingual residents and *gyopos* as important socio-cultural and communication bridges,

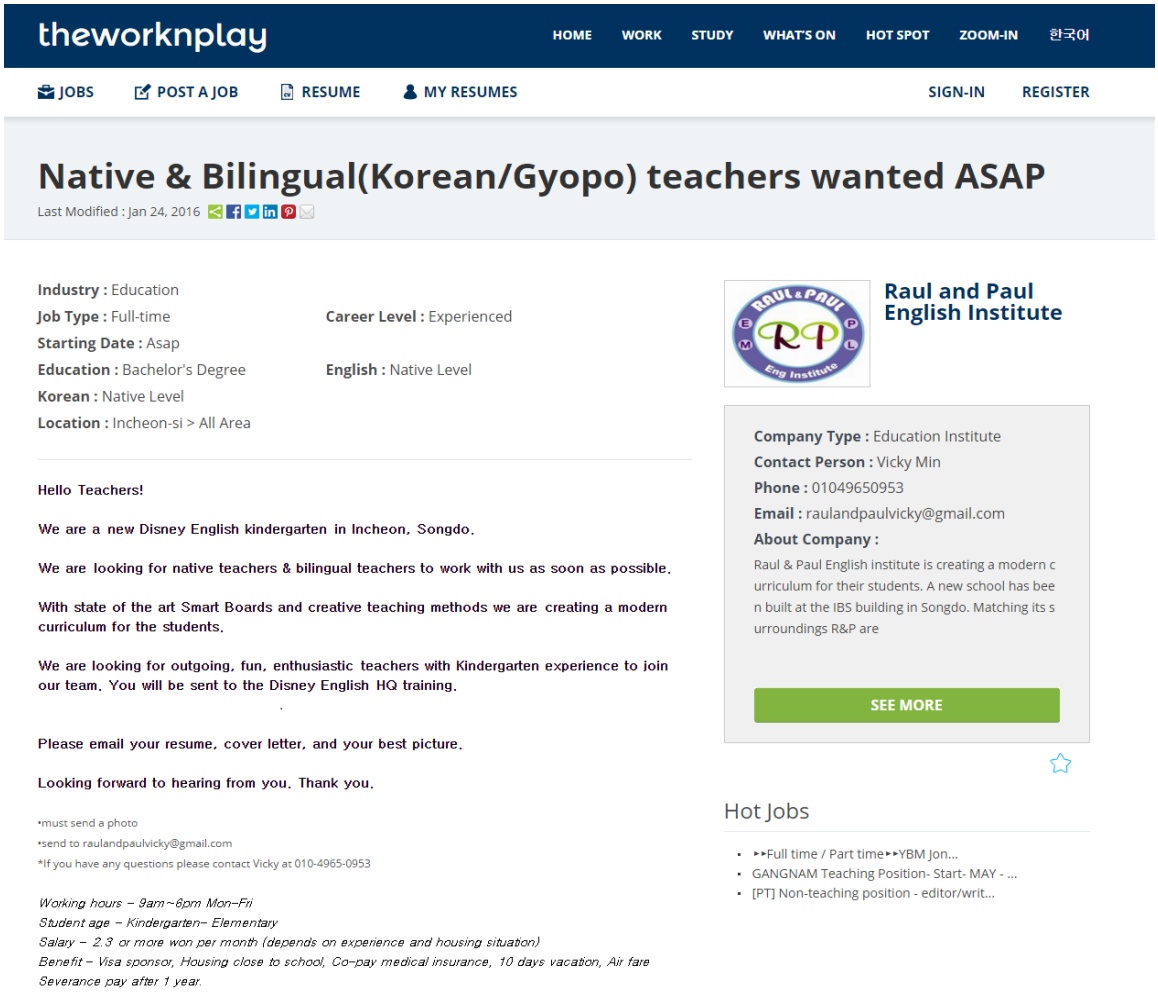


Figure 6.8 Web advertisement for Korean and *gyopo* English teachers in Songdo

Source: theworknplay, 2016

employers are also beginning to acknowledge the importance of these individuals. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) – one of the largest and most notable international organizations located in Songdo – placed several advertisements for a well-paid though part-time Relocation Officer whilst I was in Songdo. This individual's sole purpose was to help transition new international employees to life in Songdo by liaising with Korean and foreign networks, contacts, and businesses. Detailed knowledge of New Songdo City, Korean-English bilingualism, and residency in the city were listed as requirements for job applicants. Last, the private English tutoring job market has also taken to the hiring of *gyopos*, placing ads explicitly for them in local Songdo schools (Figure 6.8).

Though the representation of *gyopos* outside Songdo remains largely negative, the complexities presented by Songdo's expression as an international city, locally transform this identity. While many Koreans move to Songdo to expose themselves and their families to English-speakers and are often themselves well-travelled, many new foreigners living in Songdo are also eager to form new community ties and connect with resources to help settle themselves into their life abroad. *Gyopos* bridge both of these communities and help to actualize the state's aim to internationalize, economically and socially.

6.5 The (Al)lure of the international city

The recent transformation of the *gyopo* label from that of a negative betrayal of the Korean homeland to a more positive identity as an important social and cultural ambassador to the rest of the Western world is on-going and certainly contested in popular Korean culture (Wiggin, *The Los Angeles Times,* 2010). Nonetheless, the attempts to facilitate the internationalization of New Songdo City through these key actors are evident. Though South Korea has typically been known to value ethnic purity as a means of preserving and reinforcing national identity, nationalism in the context of post-1997 neoliberal reform places new emphasis on 'being global'. In this instance, Songdo is a material spatialization of Korea's economic internationalization attempts – all other attempts and tools deployed by various private and public actors are rationalized as being in service to this broad economic goal. This includes the urban planning and design of the IBD, the establishment of the IFEZ and IFEZA, the proclamation that English is the *lingua franca*, but also the unintended and unforeseen transformation of the *gyopo* identity. Here, *gyopos* facilitate the social internationalization of Songdo, in service to economic internationalization and as an expression of Korean citizenship in a neoliberalizing and increasingly global context. Thus, as Park and Abelmann (2004) argue, nationalism and cosmopolitanism under the neoliberal global order are not contradictory but complimentary in the South Korean context.

The introduction of Relocation Officers at major multi-national organizations and companies located in Songdo is ultimately an attempt to stymie the rate at which foreign workers fail to fulfil or renew their contracts due to the difficulties experienced when transitioning to life in Songdo. This is reported by several international residents in key positions and sectors of these companies (Steven, Interview, 19 Jan. 2015; Jack, Interview, 8 Feb. 2015; Emma, Interview, 20 Jan. 2015; Ulrika Martinius (GCF), Interview, 23 Feb. 2015; James, Interview, 19 Jan 2015). According to Jack (Interview, 8 Feb. 2015), one of the few international residents hired in a salaried position without a contract, it is typical for his company (one of the major biotech companies in the city) to hire two or three people for the same position with the expectation that one or more leaves prematurely. Jack concludes (ibid.):

> Foreigners are only 'window dressing' for when people come [to evaluate the labour force]. None of their ideas make it to the top…they can't retain [foreign] employees … there is a massive walk-out rate of employees…only about 65-70% of expats will fulfil the full three-year term of their contract (Interview, 19 Jan. 2015).

Foreign skilled labour is at the crux of Songdo's rationale, and those recruited to the city are often given one to three year contracts with very generous welcome packages that include housing, relocation fees, and full or partial coverage of tuition fees for children attending Chadwick International School. Contracts of this duration are typical because they allow companies to amortize the cost of skilled international

labour, spreading the cost across multiple years of employment. This is especially important in cases where employees do not fulfil the full terms of their contracts and thus companies can retain expenses that have yet to be paid out. This is not a policy explicitly aimed at attracting foreign labour, but rather, to compensate for other perceived difficulties of living in Songdo and provide incentives to stay long enough to serve their purposes.

These incentives, however, appear to fall short for many international residents who are frustrated and disappointed by the juncture between the marketing of the city and their lived experiences. While the city is no doubt in transition from its embryonic state to the next phases of its development, the representation of the city in urban rhetoric suggests that the city is already successful. Instead, foreign residents encounter a number of difficulties: language poses an insurmountable barrier for some, while socio-cultural differences also deter foreigners from staying in the long-term (Foreigner's Advisory Board, 2014). Consequently, Alice suggests that, "Korea does not have a lot of international experience. Korea is still learning to be international" (Interview, 14 Feb. 2015). Lastly, and importantly, many foreigners who bring along their partners also face challenges. Trailing spouses, often wives, are unable to take up formal employment due to restrictions to their visas (see *Chapter 5*). Many of these foreign women were employed in their previous cities of residence, but now find themselves restricted to tending to household matters much

like other wealthy Korean wives and mothers in the city. During a focus group session centred about women's experiences in Songdo, two participants conclude:

> *Heather: Winter. What you're going to see, [in a] coffee shop – you're going to see more women than men. We've got nothing to do*
>
> *Angela: It's true, it's true.*
>
> *Heather: And money [[laughing]]. If you go to the office, you see more men.*
>
> *Angela: Yes, and any afternoon, if you went for a coffee, you will see only women. (Focus Group 1, 28 Jan. 2015)*

While some pursue informal labour, most frequently as private English tutors, others struggle to find formal or informal labour, hobbies, or recreational activities offered in English. Moreover, those who are able to find work as private English tutors face ethnic bias by Korean mothers who prefer to hire white, Western women from 'original' English speaking countries – USA, Canada, and England (Janet, Interview, 6 Feb. 2015). Women who exhibit 'Asian features', apart from North American *gyopos*, are the least valued among foreigners as described by Melanie, a Vietnamese interviewee who works for a French company located outside of Songdo as an English teacher for businessmen and who runs her own free private tutoring class (Focus Group W2, 7 Feb. 2015). In Melanie's experience, the free English classes she offered to Korean mothers stopped after her teaching partner, a Filipino-American man, returned to the US and the mothers felt she had too much of an "Asian face" (ibid.). Unable to find a "Caucasian" *[sic]* replacement, she lost much of her clientele despite offering her free expertise (ibid.). Many foreigners are reported to have left because

of such difficulties faced by their partners in second-hand accounts by those who I spoke to that still remained. As identified by other scholars working on issues of domestic labour (see England and Stiell, 1997 or McDowell, 2008 for example), gendered, racialized, and classed constructions of national identity shape images and stereotypes of who is 'appropriate' or 'suited' to specific kinds of labour. These intersections of identity are not erased or overcome in the Songdo International City.

In addition to language barriers, foreign residents also find the lack of cultural activities, social networking opportunities outside of the workplace, and lack of nightlife frustrating. Since most foreign residents were brought to New Songdo City because of a job opportunity, many were hopeful that the transition to life in South Korea would be significantly eased by the promises that comprise the city's elaborate international urban rhetorics. A rich focus group discussion among foreign participants explores some of these expectations and experiences (Focus Group, 31 Jan. 2015):

> *Daniel: Yeah and internationals, you know, new is nice, and it means conveniences and everything else, but we want heritage, culture, interest, which Songdo doesn't have anything organic to it, except this idea of it being this super modern, utopian, green city, except it's not quite delivering on that – yet.*
>
> *Ben: [Songdo] lacks grit. There's no grit to Songdo.*
>
> *Daniel: Well there's Dream City if you want grit in terms of cigarette butts on the ground*

Ben: Well I mean grit in terms of some history and culture and some, some emotion to the city? There's just nothing there and you have to leave Songdo to find that.

Daniel: Population – the Korean population that comes here is fleeing that because they want different things and so they're not bringing their grit or their tradition with them.

Ben: If you look at the type of foreigners who are interested in living outside of their home countries, they tend to be interested in culture and things – exploring those ideas. It's hard to do that without leaving Songdo.

Daniel: Right. A utopian hanbok*, you know, show or some small cultural performance doesn't quite cut the cultural desires of internationals.*

Spencer: I mean who would come here if there weren't a job? I mean if you – as a place to come without, in a sense, having to come? I think you would find it very difficult to say there was a draw.

Daniel: But I've met maybe two people who have kind of said this is a good place to retire or—

Spencer: that's my nightmare

Ben: I've never met anyone like that

Steven: I don't know if there is anyone here who came because they wanted to live here? Like they insisted that they could go somewhere else but it was – yeah, you have a job and you come here – at least I haven't met in all these years.

The discussion resumes following a discussion of the Eco- and Smart City aspects of the city:

Steven: … I think the question is what is the main attraction for a foreigner to leave your entire – leave your home country and go somewhere else? So what attracts us? I think that's and interesting question.

Ben: Yeah, I assume you mean besides jobs. I think we've come back to where we were before about culture and languages and experiences. I mean the only reason why I left the US was for the experience because I love travelling and learning a new language and meeting people who think differently from I do, which, you know, things here – it's more challenging on a day-to-day level. I

learn more living abroad than I do than where I'm from because it forces me out of my comfort zone. That's why I like it.

Spencer: But that's not why you came to Songdo

Ben: No, no, that's just sort of a general – that's why I like living [in Korea], which I thought was the question posed. Songdo specifically was for a job.

Steven: Yeah but, which you answered – the job.

Ben: yeah

Steven: yeah the job

Ben: Which I think everybody pretty much said

Lisa: So, the experience of coming to Korea, I mean you have this opportunity to be somewhere else, and there are challenges and it's exciting – but Songdo itself, I don't know, is a bit of a let-down? Is that [laughing] fair to say?

Spencer: No, I wouldn't say that, I think that's unfair. I mean for me, it wasn't Korea or it wasn't Songdo, the job could have been anywhere in Korea, any city, and I would have taken the job. It'd only be for a couple years so it just happened to be here. And I think for most people, that's how it is too.

As these focus group participants note, those who tend to remain in New Songdo City, even after it presents its challenges, are those who have experience living abroad already. That is, the city does not necessarily attract greater numbers of 'global citizens', but rather, the exclusive few who have experience living abroad and can thus 'survive' life in Songdo. Though some, like Ben and Daniel, arrive with the intent to explore new cultural experiences, they are disappointed by the lack of cultural infrastructure in New Songdo City. Alternatively, foreigners who come to Songdo for jobs and with the hopes that the 'international city' will ease these same challenges are also left disappointed by the lack of support from the city, employers, and community groups.

Unfortunately for many foreigners, the city falls short of their expectations, prompting some to leave before the end of their contracts (or spouse's contract), or to decline a contract renewal. For many single women in their twenties and thirties, personal life in Songdo can be particularly challenging as they find social life especially isolating given socio-cultural context that privileges men, the very old, and the very young, and that creates stark divisions between women and men. These are further exacerbated by ethnic hierarchies and graduated sovereignty (Ong, 2000). Homophobia within the Korean culture makes same-sex and queer unions highly stigmatized and thus largely hidden. Thus, different social groups are met with a variety of additional challenges as per their gender, marital status and sexuality in conjunction with their ethnic heritage.

Despite various financial incentives and benefits granted by Songdo's location within the IFEZ, the city's international-ness remains in question for many of its foreign residents. Many of the international institutions and facilities that have been established in Songdo because of IFEZ's special policies are difficult to access due to their extraordinarily high fees. At Chadwick, a year of tuition costs $36,000 USD (roughly £28,000) per child. For many international residents, this is unaffordable without substantial financial help from employers, who often cover the majority of costs in their welcome packages. Interestingly, ninety-two percent of the students at

Chadwick are Korean and the majority of international students are the children of Chadwick's own foreign teachers.

Moreover, following the 2008 economic downturn, changes in the master plan allowed traditional and more affordable apartment developments called *danjis* to be built in Songdo, which quickly grew in popularity (Shwayri, 2013). The abandonment of English street naming followed as Korean residents increasingly rejected aspects of the international city that Gale International had previously celebrated (Gale International, 2015a). Finally, most services and amenities, such as restaurants and day-cares, are operated in Korean as few working in the service sector are able to speak fluent English. Unskilled labour, generally, is difficult to retain according to Darren, a local restaurant owner, because most people living in Songdo are well off and are not looking for this type of work (Darren, Interview, 20 Jan. 2015); those looking for work cannot afford to live in the city and must commute to their jobs using inadequately developed public transportation. This is in contrast to the Korean urban elite who are able to afford to live in Songdo as they have access to top international schools, private tutoring, and often previous experience living abroad; luxury vehicles fill the parking garages of the most desirable apartment complexes despite the initial design vision of the city to be walkable and thus 'green' (KPF, 2002), also allowing these elites to access the scattered amenities and services

in the city with relative ease.[8] Consequently, limited social and cultural infrastructure in Songdo is accessible to international residents due to language and financial barriers. Today, though some high-profile companies and organizations are increasingly targeting international residents, many small businesses struggle to remain afloat in this predominantly Korean city. Even Darren's 'landmark' Italian restaurant has closed.

All of these efforts have been deployed in an attempt to reproduce the material and social mechanisms of a distinctly Korean neoliberal capitalism. According to an IFEZA representative, Songdo and its proponents aim to attract skilled labour to the city, away from Seoul (Lee, W. (IFEZA), Interview, 31 July 2014). In Songdo, future skilled labourers can attain an international education with the aim of being employed by one of the high profile global companies located in the city. "They don't need to go to Seoul" (ibid.) for education, work, and even cultural amenities. According to Tom Murcott, Executive Vice President of Gale International, Songdo was always intended to create jobs for Koreans (Murcott, T. (Gale International), Interview, 30 Dec. 2014). The prioritization of job creation for Koreans, not foreigners, in the medium- and long-term of the city is corroborated by a key informant, David Moore. As one of the original twenty-two foreign residents,

[8] Most foreign residents I spoke to (aside from two) did not own a car while living in Songdo. Instead, many are cyclists or chose to walk to most places.

a former project manager at Gale International working on the development of Songdo, and current business owner in the IBD, David Moore is often regarded as the go-to person for any and all information regarding the development of the city. According to Mr. Moore:

> It is common for foreigners to be brought into companies to help develop projects and people, and then [they] are let go and replaced by [the] Koreans they trained. This is a relatively natural process because the Koreans ultimately like to have control. (Interview, 20 Jan. 2015)

Thus, foreign labour is 'used' and 'discarded' in the short and medium-term, only to be replaced by Korean labour in the long term. The goal of attracting international companies, workers, and residents, is thus an attempt to eventually reproduce Korean labour and a South Korean-situated Asian urbanism in the context of neoliberal globalization.

The very conceptualization of an 'international city' lies at the heart of the disjuncture between the marketing of Songdo and its lived experience by foreign residents. For public and private stakeholders involved in the visioning of the city, a narrow representation of what makes a city international has been applied and marketed to would-be residents. This is often the standard by which foreign residents then measure their experience. This is complicated by the long-term ambitions of IFEZA who seek to (re)produce Korean skilled labour via 'international' urbanization. Songdo as an international city, however, should not be seen as a failure to imitate antecedent cities in the West since it succeeds, arguably, in South

Korean terms. 'International-ness' is thus conceptualized as contingent as discussed next in the conclusion of this chapter.

6.6 Conclusion

Through the analysis of rhetoric perpetuated by marketing and policy-makers that positions Songdo as an international city in an increasingly internationalizing South Korean economy and which shapes the city's urban expression, this chapter explores three key facets of the international city. First, the aerotropolis concept is used as both a synecdoche for global urban space while also attempting to facilitate global connections. The establishment of the IFEZ further emphasizes the value of mobility in an increasingly globalized world, connecting South Korea and Songdo via the IFEZ to global markets. However, the real effects – social, economic, and material – of the city's aerotropolis status and infrastructure is unclear. Second, the pointed efforts to attract multi-national and global companies to Songdo in an attempt to internationalize the economy have also provided the basis for the rhetorical establishment of Songdo as an international city. 'International standards' of urban planning, design, and architecture aim to facilitate this image. However, though IFEZA has had (limited) success attracting foreign companies and organizations, and therefore highly-skilled foreign labour, many individuals struggle to adapt to life in Songdo and are disappointed by their everyday experiences of this so-called

international city. As a result of the cultural gaps perceived between foreigners and Koreans, the value of *gyopos* has begun to change. As mediators between the West and Korea, *gyopos* are recognized as increasingly important to local organizations and businesses. Following suit, large employers in the city are now also recruiting *gyopos* and other persons with experience living in the area as relocation officers that help to settle new hires.

Though it appears that efforts are increasingly being made – both through formal employment and through grassroots community organizations (see C*hapter 5*) - to make Songdo live up to its own promises of being an international city, the long-term goals of policy-makers and developers troubles this image. Use-and-discard models of labour migration apply to foreigners permitted through the ITTP/EPP, as well as modified visas granted to foreign skilled labour residing within the IFEZ, albeit on a longer time scale and for different purposes. In the case of the former, foreign labour migrants are exploited in 3D jobs without any chance of attaining citizenship. On the other hand, skilled foreign labourers are granted special privileges and are well provided for by their employers through generous welcome packages. However, they too are hired with the intent, and sometimes expectation, that they leave. Skilled workers are hired to develop and pass on their expertise to Korean companies to produce a city where foreign knowledge and employees are no longer needed. Songdo is thus a city that facilitates the social and material reproduction of

a Korean form of spatially-selective neoliberalization in the post-1997 era of urban development. Ultimately, the logics embedded within the development of Songdo work to reproduce an international Korean labour force rather than the international city conceptualized by dominant urban rhetorics and developmentalist expectations that privilege Western urbanisms as stand-ins for 'international urbanisms'.

Songdo is continually in the process of becoming. The urban future that Songdo's proponents perpetuate, however, is more complex and contested that the coherent and glossy narrative that its marketing promises. The international city is not simply attributed to urban planning, design and architecture, the presence of an international airport, nor the presence of international businesses and labour. International-ness, as exemplified by Songdo's urban expression, is contingent and varies across social groups, actors, and timescales. While foreign residents question the city's international status, many Koreans have relocated here to expose their children and themselves to the English language in this urban enclave. As a rhetorical and ideological construct, the 'international city' retains conceptual and experiential fluidity. Rather than being conceived of as a failure to create a 'truly' international city, or to materially and socially replicate the major urban centres it references, Songdo is an example of how worlding practices dynamically transform the regulating fictions of neoliberal urbanization to suit the specificity of the South Korean context and the goals of the South Korean state.

Despite supra-national market pressures to internationalize and neoliberalize a relatively protectionist economy and homogenous socio-ethnic population, the South Korean state, Incheon Metropolitan City, POSCO E & C, and IFEZA have used Songdo as a medium through which it may negotiate these seemingly opposing forces. Instead, spatially-selectivity allows both to co-exist within the confines of New Songdo City and the IFEZ. Sections of the Korean economy are indeed neoliberalizing and internationalizing; however, traditional sectors where *chaebols* dominate are still relatively insulated from these economic policy changes. Meanwhile, Korean employees and residents in New Songdo City enjoy a (relatively) international and Western lifestyle without ever having to leave the country (or Seoul Metropolitan Area for that matter) as was common in previous decades before special economic zones allowed private international educational institutions to operate in designated areas. Thus, the international city of Songdo exemplifies the complexity and plurality of Asian urbanism(s) by decentring Western frames about what constitutes 'the urban', 'international', and 'successful' cities.

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7

Chapter Seven
Spatio-Temporality in New Songdo City: a spectro- geographical analysis

7.0 Prologue

As I argue in the previous chapters, inter-woven worlding practices and urban rhetorics aim to position New Songdo City as being on the cutting edge of urban development. It is, as some have proclaimed, 'the city of the future' (Arbes & Bethea, 2014), and an *avant-garde* experiment in urban design and development. However, Songdo's spatio-temporal emphasis on futurity is replete with indeterminacy, liminality, and slippage as I now demonstrate in this chapter. Some of the challenges of thinking through New Songdo City are the different temporalities at work in its imagination, construction, and experience that are particular to the city. I also argue

that this spatio-temporal slippage is characteristic of Asian urbanism(s) in general. Drawing on, but also complicating and subverting hegemonic visions of the urban form and urban life, the future-expression of New Songdo City that is operationalized transforms the meaning, dominance, and normativity of Euro- and Western-centric urbanisms.

To investigate the spatio-temporality of New Songdo City, spectral geographies and hauntology are used as metaphorical and conceptual tools. Though this research does not engage with circulating ghost stories or ghost sightings in Songdo, the framework allows tools developed by spectral geographic approaches to explore and problematize urban rhetorics that position Songdo as the 'City of Tomorrow' (Castaignede, 2014). To do this, I draw from Wylie (2007) who argues, "… the spectral above all confounds settled orders of past and present. Spectrality effects in place, and differently in different placings, an unsettling complication of the linear sequence of past, present and future" (p.172). Moreover, Wylie suggests that rather than humanistic conceptualizations of 'dwelling' (Heidegger, 1971; Seamon & Mugerauer, 1985), place and self are constituted by haunting and a continual returning-to. Thus, the spectral is not simply about what is not visible or the spiritual, but how spectral geographies and spectro-politics can be used to unsettle both narrative and subject (Wylie, 2007). Furthermore, spectral geographies reveal the "contingent potentiality of haunted spaces … to usher forth new

interpretive frameworks, to open up new epistemologies or even our ontologies in fantastic, strange and sometimes baffling ways" (Holloway & Kneale, 2008, p. 308). By conceptualizing Songdo as a space that is haunted by multiple socio-spatial imaginaries, a spectro-analysis helps to highlight the slippages that are present in the rhetorical and material construction of the city. The spectral is also always multi-temporal, simultaneously imminent and already-passed. Consequently, I operationalize the spectral as a motif to explore the ways that time and space are folded upon one another, allowing the distant to become intimate (Maddern & Adey, 2008). Songdo's futurity – a key part of its rhetorical construction and this fourth and final urban expression I explore in this thesis – is thereby destabilized, as are the uneven material and social landscapes that are produced as a result of this future-oriented urban vision.

Research that engages with the spectral faces the inherent methodological problem of communicating the more-than-representational (Lorimer, 2005). Holloway and Kneale (2008) suggest that this is because:

> There is always an excess to the ghost and the spaces they haunt. Spectrality and haunting are impossible to exorcise through the securing categories that have often been created for them. Ghosts and spectres appear and disappear, are both absent and present…Inexplicability means that spectral geographies always produce and are produced through a degree of hesitancy…This uncertainty and hesitancy is, we would argue, the specificity and particularity of spectral geographies. Indeed, the interpretative criteria we use to understand spectral geographies must likewise be hesitant. Ghosts can never be *fully* understood, represented or brought into representation. (p. 308, original emphasis)

How then, should spectral geographies be 'written' and how might they be 'read'? Though I acknowledge the limits of representation, I engage with the spectral through text, albeit with apprehension. To approach New Songdo City through a spectral lens, I deploy the 'ghost tour' approach used by Edensor (2008) to explore the spectrality of Manchester, England. This narrative style meditates on tacit knowledge production and on 'being there' to interpret the material, spatial, and affective landscapes of New Songdo City. Though the walking tour may be read as a linear sequence, in this chapter drawn from my first visit to Songdo (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2 for a map of the route, ordered by temporal sequence), I have organized the following analytical sections of this chapter according to emergent themes drawn from the walk. Indicated by italicized text, narratives of reflections, impressions, and encounters are not necessarily linear in their sequence within and between sections. The linearity of the walking tour, therefore, is intentionally unsettled as a deliberate methodological tactic to highlight the tension between the yet-to-be (Edensor, 2008), the visible/invisible, and the indeterminate.

Through a wandering style of travel writing (Bissel, 2010), I trace my walking routes in Songdo, primarily on the very first day I had visited the city in the summer of 2014. In the following sections, I explore my kinaesthetic and sensory experiences of the city to better understand the relationship between time, space/place,

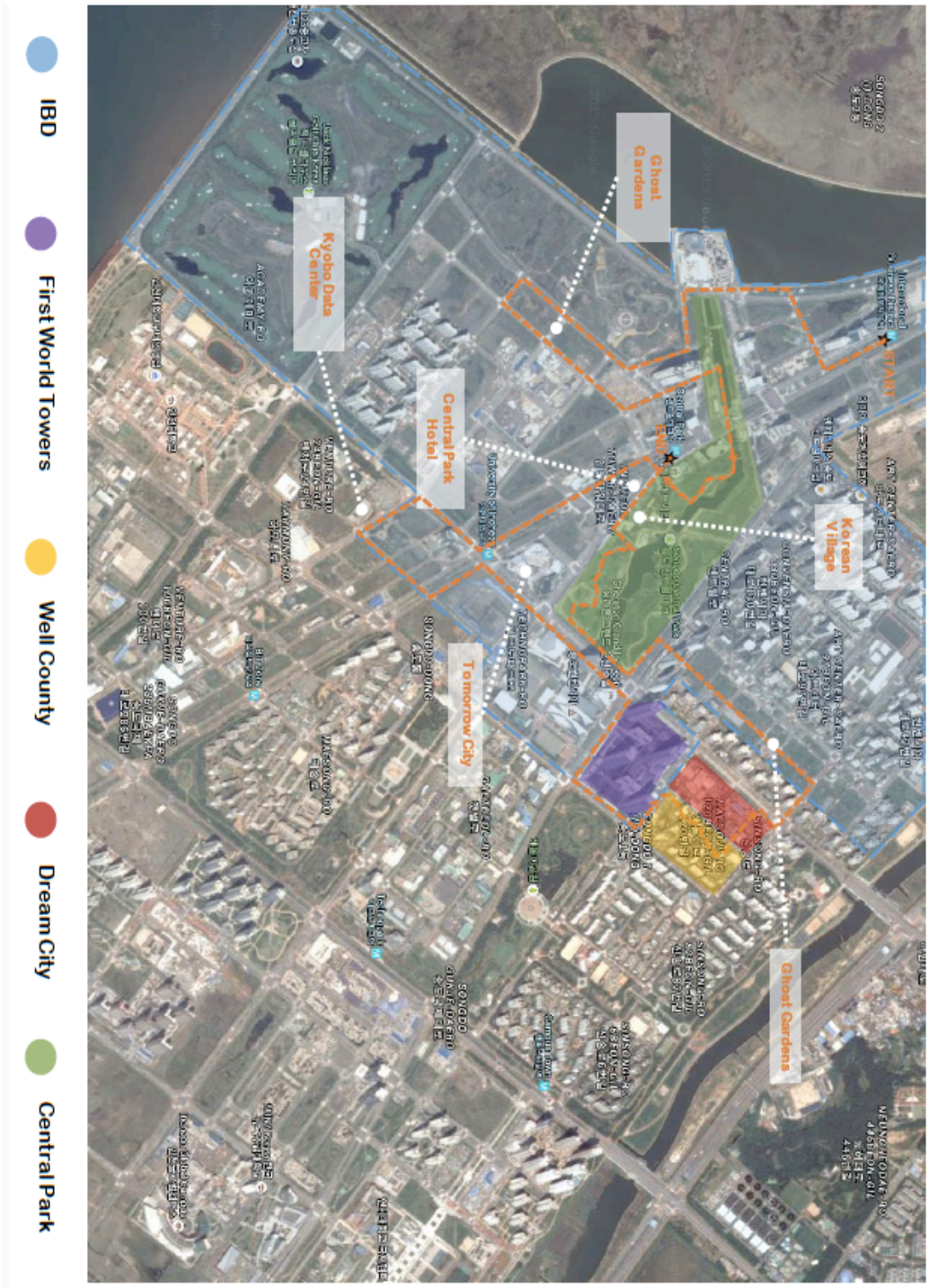


Figure 7.1 Ghost tour walking route, aerial view.
Source: Author, 2016; Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe

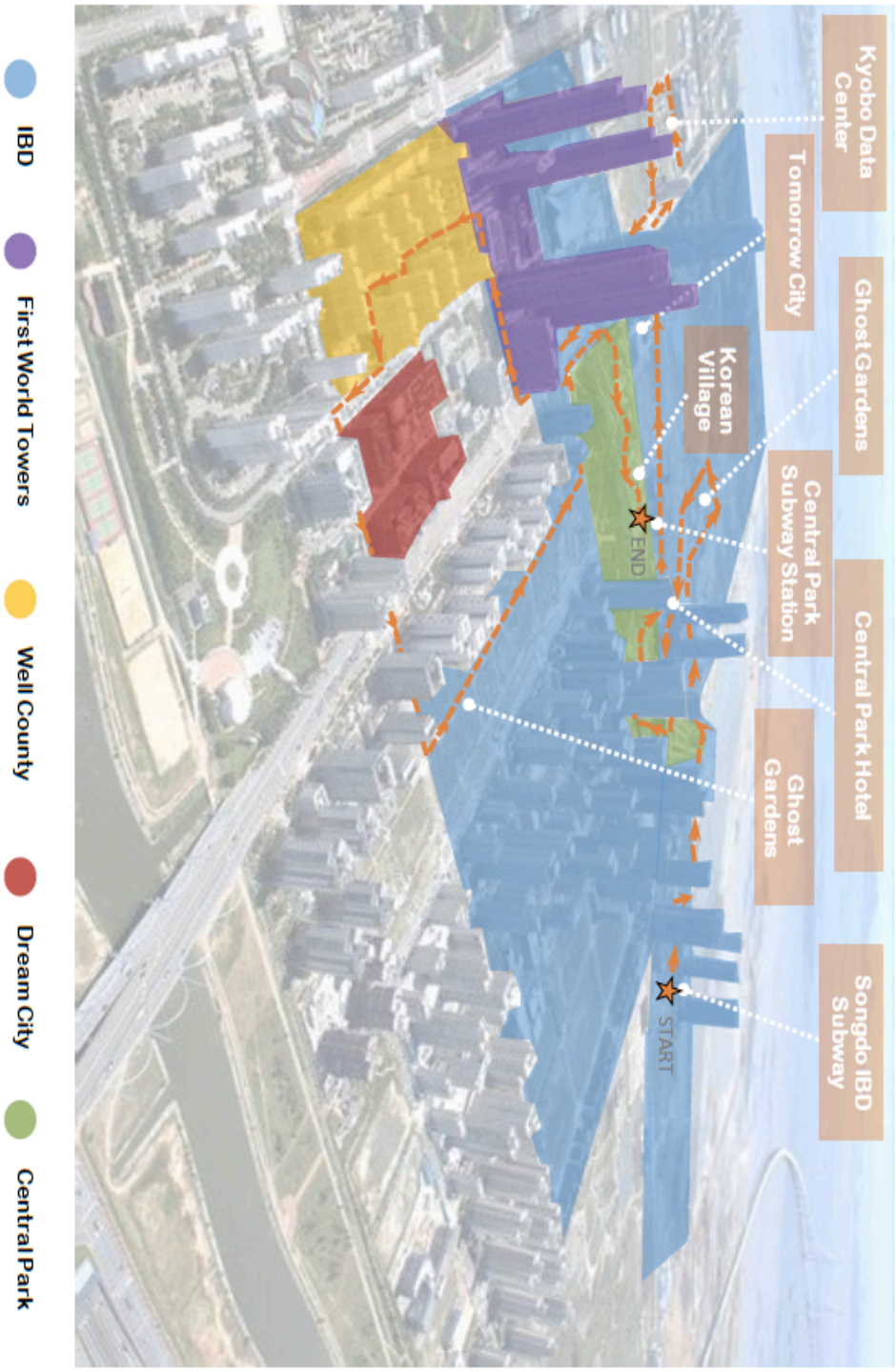


Figure 7.2 Ghost tour walking route, aerial-oblique view.
Source: *Author, 2016; Map data: Google, DigitalGlobe*

movement, and the contexts in which they are situated (Fincham, McGuinness & Murray, 2010). Here, the Flâneur (Benjamin, 2002 [1982]) and psychogeographic

dérive (Debord, 2012 [1958]) are evoked, moving through the city according to whims and being "drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there" (p. 50) . However, I must also practice self-reflexivity and the ways in which my own subjectivities (as a foreign, female researcher who was already familiar with Songdo's plans and other related marketing and media) privilege a particular narrative and experience of Songdo that would not otherwise be produced in other ghost tours by residents, other researchers, or even myself on a different date. Moreover, my first-person account of Songdo used to represent this dynamic experience deploys static text and images. Therefore, the descriptive accounts found here are not accounts of an external reality or truth, but rather, the experiences presented are a result of the relationship between my own perception of reality, other actors, and surrounding structures. Static images are, literally in the case of photographs, snapshots of what I otherwise consider to be dynamically changing scenes, events, processes, and experiences of them.

Nevertheless, I aim to highlight moments of surprise, curiosity, weariness, discomfort, confusion, and 'the uncanny' (a Freudian concept to describe that which is strangely familiar rather than wholly mysterious) through the narration of my movements through the city. Tacit knowledge is privileged in this chapter, adding further nuance to research on New Songdo City that has thus far omitted such affective experiences of the city. Though this spectral tour of Songdo is constructed

ex post facto, I nevertheless use this metaphorical lens to draw out the spatio-temporal complexity of the city. As Edensor (2008) demonstrates, this tactic works to "reinscribe the significance of everyday urban space, which arises through both banal and spectacular processes urban change and production of obsolescence" (p. 313). Hence, I aim to complicate one of the dominant expressions of New Songdo City through this spectro-geographic approach.

Following each narrated vignette, I address key themes and the ways that a spectro-geographical lens helps to unsettle the spatio-temporality of Songdo presented in dominant development narratives. To do this, I explore socio-spatial changes that are conjured by the still-becoming urban landscape. Rather than being a *fait accompli*, Songdo is shown to have 'cracks in its façade' (Haines, 2011) – fissures, wrinkles, and seams in the dominant urban expressions of the city. Re-envisioning the urban as a kind of fabric (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]), the observations in this specto-geographic analysis emphasize "the momentary materializations of on-going socio-spatial transformations that actively produces, unsettles, and re-works 'the urban', and constantly engender new urban configurations (Brenner and Schmid, 2015a, p. 165). Thus, this approach to New Songdo City aims to emphasize the fluidity, contingency, indeterminacy, and ephemerality of the urban phenomenon and Songdo's urban expression more specifically. Moreover, this analysis turns Western-centric urban theory on its head: rather than modelling, inter-referencing,

and hyper-building being inadequate, incomplete, or 'poor' imitations of Western urbanisms as posited by developmentalist urban theory, New Songdo City's spatio-temporality works to destabilize the hegemony of metrocentric regulating fictions of global and world city-ness. Worlding practices deployed in the case of New Songdo City help to excavate geographies of urban theory (Roy, 2009) and "the stories the West most often tells about itself" (Ibid., 2016, p. 207). Thus, a spectro-geographic analysis of New Songdo City simultaneously reflects and subverts hegemonic urban theory and thereby underscores the theoretical importance of Asian urbanism(s) that form the basis of the analytical strategy used in this chapter.

7.1 Spectres in the City

The following four sections explore key locations and themes that emerged from my initial impressions of New Songdo City in the summer of 2014 and winter of 2015. Through a narrated walk through Songdo analysed with a 'spectral eye', I explore the 'pluritemporality' (DeSilvey and Edensor, 2012) of the city. The four themes I have selected are, to some extent, arbitrary since they were chosen based on their reoccurrence and intrigue, echoing Guy Debord's (2012 [1958]) use of the dérive mentioned previously. Identifying notable details along my walk inevitably led to me looking for 'more-examples-of-' or 'something-else' and I do not deny the subjective choices that result. On the contrary, my subjectivities and situated interpretations

of New Songdo City are intentionally highlighted, as previously mentioned. Thus, the four themes are: (1) the always-already/yet-to-be and master planned urban development; (2) urban gardens and historical residues; (3) spectres of labour, past and future; and (4) the commodification of the spectral past. In the first theme, I compare master plans of Songdo with what has been built, alongside historical representations of what the city was envisioned to be. In the second, encounters with informal gardens in the IBD raise questions about changing socio-spatial and economic relationships that are represented and lived out by some of Songdo's residents. Third, the visible and audible presence of construction workers prompts an exploration of the politics of coastal infill and the relationship between the construction industry and labour policies in South Korea. Last, experiences of new 'traditional' South Korean landmarks raise questions about the value of the past within the context of the neoliberal and future city.

These themes are drawn from multiple journeys through Songdo. The narratives themselves, importantly, also evoke simultaneous presences and absences; inclusion invariably necessitates exclusion. That is, while I have noted several observations, affective responses, and questions to consider, I have also omitted moments deemed 'too banal', 'unimportant', or that which simply escaped observation or memory. Moreover, the recounting of my experiences in Songdo is also partial and, in part, beyond representation. Not only are spectres more-than-

representational, but the limits of representation (Rose, 2012; Hall, 1997; Lorimer, 2005) more broadly cannot be overlooked. As a result, uncanny haunting carries an excess that is not easily represented due to the almost-present-ness of the invisible (Holloway and Kneale, 2008). Rather than a shortcoming, the ontological excess of the spectral city can instead be understood as mirroring the ontological excess of 'the urban' as discussed in *Chapter 2*. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of remaining lines of analytical, methodological, and theoretical inquiry that would further contribute to the aims of Asian Urbanism(s).

7.2 Spectral urban landscapes

On a hot and humid Sunday afternoon in August 2014, I hopped on a rickety blue bus in Yeongjong-do and headed towards Unseo Subway Station where I caught a train to get my first glimpses of New Songdo City – the 'Jewel of Incheon' and proclaimed city of the future. Having only encountered the city in pictures (Figures 7.3 and 7.4) and text before this trip, my excitement grew steadily. In the cool, air-conditioned train, I studied the transit map and decided to disembark at Songdo International Business District (IBD) Station at the terminus of Incheon Line 1. On that summer Sunday, I expected to see people out and about, especially in the well-publicized Central Park and along its canal's banks. Instead, I found a strange sort

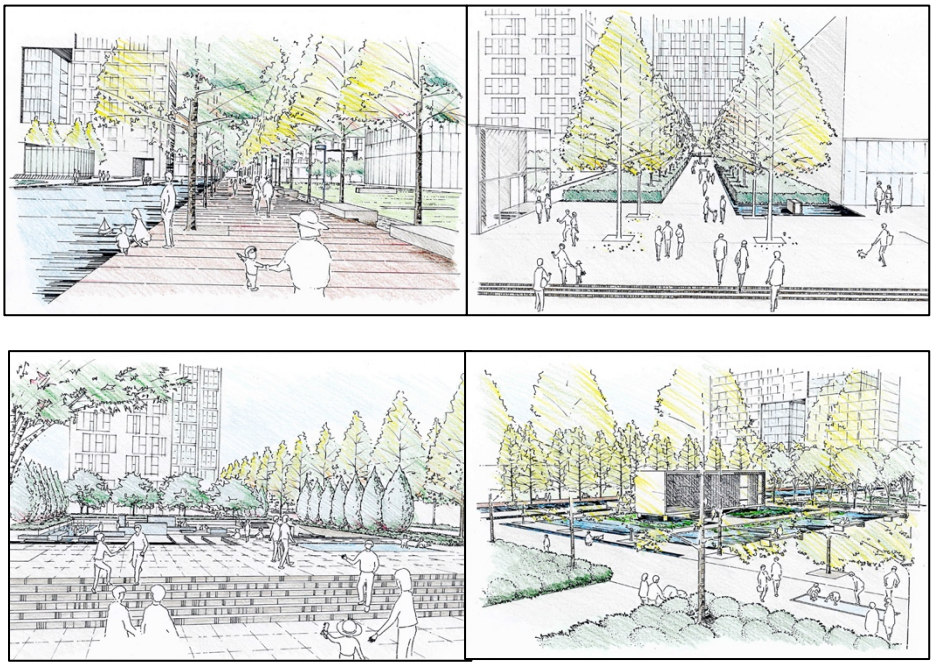


Figure 7.3 Landscape architecture renderings of New Songdo City, IBD

Source: Towers Golde, 2016



Figure 7.4 Architectural rendering of Central Park, looking north, New Songdo City, IBD

Source: Towers Golde, 2016

of post-apocalyptic urban landscape of the future - there was no one around, the landscape barren when I exited the subway station. Though the city was still under construction, the eerie emptiness of the eight-lane roadways, sidewalks, and large

swathes of undeveloped land was palpable as I wandered through the northern end of the city. As I tried to get my bearings, passing vacant shopfronts with their newspapered windows, I heard faint yelling and screeching metal off in the distance…

…I wandered on, desperate to complete my walking tour before my water bottle was emptied and I overheated in the intense heat. In an attempt to, at the very least, find some shade, I walked towards Central Park and the iconic buildings that lined its edges. As I walked towards the gleaming POSCO towers, I crossed a six-lane roadway where not a single vehicle or pedestrian could be seen in any direction (Figure 7.5). Then, out of what seemed to be nowhere, a pair of cyclists whizzed by, following the road along the waterfront encircled by construction barriers. Despite being a 'new' city, the landscape looked as though it had been abandoned for years. The roads and paving stones were cracked and upheaved while the landscaped



Figure 7.5 Venture-ro and Convensia daero, looking south towards Kyobo Data Centre
Source: Author, 2014



Figure 7.6 Overgrown walkway, Zone 4
Source: Author, 2014

boulevards were overgrown. Weeds grew tall between cracks in the pavement while the branches of the young tress that lined the empty road grew wild above the sidewalks, forcing unexpected pedestrians like myself to duck beneath them (though I was grateful for their cool shade) (Figure 7.6). The strange absence of development, people, or activity, and the traces of long-since abandoned landscaping, certainly made the area feel like a ghost town.[1]

Drawing closer to the city centre, I finally arrived at Central Park and the meandering canal that runs through its centre. Along the canal-side path, families with strollers and young children were spotted off in the distance. Taking a few strides towards them, I was taken by surprise by the faint and unexpected sound of classical music. Unsure of where it was coming from, I wandered in a small spiral, listening for the string instruments growing louder to indicate the source of the sound. Eventually, I was led to a post with a small speaker perched on top. Looking down the canal, I could see intervals of posts along the water's edge. I continued my stroll, amused (and bemused) by my finds. Scanning my surroundings for a placard or signage that explained the presence of the music, I instead came upon a series of apartment buildings still under construction…

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[1] As mentioned in *Chapter 4.2*, Fisherfolk occupied the mudflats prior to the land reclamation project in the 1990s that laid the foundations for the City. The sensation that the area was a 'ghost town' is ironic considering that the infilled land, as observed today, has yet to be occupied or developed.



Figure 7.7 Tomorrow City, closed to the public since 2011
Source: Author, 2015

…Continuing towards the iconic flagship buildings surrounding Central Park, I eventually approached a large spaceship-like structure whose steel cladding glimmered in the hazy sun. Flags and signs around the main entrance indicated that this was Tomorrow City Exhibition Hall (Figure 7.7), which ironically, was closed with no indication of when it might be open next or what its current function was. I noted the building and the contact information for tours posted on the door, but was quickly distracted by the buildings that punctuated the skyline in the background – towers of blue glass in the predictable-though-still-stunning 'international style'. Familiar façades featured in promotional material and other literature that I had studied before my arrival were easily identified: The Northeast Asian Trade Tower (NEATT, the tallest building in South Korea), the First World Towers (FWT, the

first luxury residences built in the IBD), and the Central Park I and II apartments (two other distinctive luxury apartments designed by KPF built shortly after). Strolling down Convensia-daero in front of the FWT, I was disappointed to see the gates locked with a security guard manning the entrance. Walking along its frontage, I could not help but let out an uncomfortable chuckle as I contemplated the name of the highly publicized housing development, 'First World', and the marketing used by Gale International and KPF to attract foreign would-be residents.[2]

Turning down the north-eastern edge of the FTW, the city seemed to vanish. Glassy reflections disappeared and were replaced by vacuous fields. Despite being at one of the main intersections in the IBD (Convensia-daero at Central-ro), vacant shop fronts and empty roads stood in stark contrast to the towers behind me. Only a few teenagers gathered to wait for the bus. It was as though the gleaming surface of the apartments were looking glasses and I was peering into another world. But again, with the mere turn of a corner, the city in front of me was yet again transformed. Another cluster of apartment buildings came into view as suddenly as

[2] Several residents and key development actors commented on the name of this apartment block. While 'First World' likely refers to the towers' establishment as the first housing complex in New Songdo City IBD, the connotations of a vertical socio-spatial hierarchy are also evident. The 'First World' in development terms, aligns this development with the West and the pinnacle of developmentalist frameworks. Moreover, the targeted advertising to international elites and the promotion of the city as an international enclave further solidify this interpretation. These towers in particular, are advertised explicitly to foreign residents (though only 5% of its apartments may be owned by foreigners and are among the most expensive to live in within Songdo).

the others had disappeared. These ones, though, were noticeably different. First, no gate or security personnel guarded the entrance. Instead of gleaming glass cladding, the concrete blocks of buildings belonging to the Well County development looked aged (Figures 7.8 and 7.9). The painted characters and images on the side of each tower, differentiating the identical structures, were faded. Despite the state of the buildings, the park space below was beautifully maintained with walkways and ramps weaving through the buildings, over and under gardens and landings, and dotted with playgrounds. The concrete slabs seemed to be guarding a small oasis.

As an elderly couple strolled below me, their persistent and watchful looks reminding me that though this park was unguarded by security guards or gates, it was still part of a private development, and more importantly, people's backyards. Searching for the nearest exit, I was spat out onto a busy street. To my surprise,



Figure 7.8 View of Well County park and paths, with the FWT (background)
Source: Author, 2014



Figure 7.9 Façade of Well County Apartment
Source: Author, 2014

cafés, markets, and street vendors filled the streets in commercial shop fronts – the only part of the city, it seemed, where residents and visitors strolled, shopped, ate, and socialized. I spotted a Daiso (다이소; a Japanese version of Poundland) and rushed towards it. As the automatic doors opened to let out two teenagers, a blast of cool air hit my face. Desperate for relief from the summer heat, I strode in to bask in the air-conditioned store. Browsing to justify my lengthy stay in the shop, I eventually left with a few items, including a bottle of cold soda.

By approaching New Songdo City as a spectral urban landscape, the non-linear and pluritemporal (DeSilvey and Edensor, 2012) processes of urban development that have, are, and continue to take place across the city are highlighted. The yet-to-be and always-already juxtapose that which has been built and that which has not. The verticality of flagship developments and horizontality of the expanses of empty parcels make some of the presences and absences of the News Songdo City development abruptly apparent. Oddly enough, the pervading sensation of my initial impressions of the city was that of a ghost town, the irony of course being that many of the developed-but-vacant plots of land had never been inhabited in the first place given their recent formation through the infill of the Incheon coast. The stark contrasts in landscapes are instead symptomatic of the privatized development of the city where large parcels of land are bought, developed, and/or leased. The



Figure 7.10 Master Plan of New Songdo City, International Business District
Permission to reproduce this image has been granted by Gale International

resulting fragmentation of the landscape disrupts the aims of KPF's master plan (Figure 7.10) that attempts to seamlessly fill in the landscape with a comprehensive urban imaginary.

Obvious contrasts between tall glass flagship apartments, more traditional Korean *danjis,*[3] and rectilinear plots of grass with the odd mound of construction debris give a sense of a patchwork landscape. The already-developed butts up against the yet-to-be developed, delineated by crisp property lines. However, in a conceptual reversal, the future rather than the past haunts Songdo in this instance. The spectres

[3] *Danjis* are the name for more typical Korean apartment buildings that are characteristically uniform in height and often utilize slab or poured concrete exteriors. They are typically built in large clusters rather than the smaller one- or two-tower glass apartment developments by Gale International and KPF.

of future development, or lack thereof,[4] are indicated here by their uncanny absence, giving a sense of the yet-to-be (or never-will-be), folded into the present. In the case of Songdo's spectral urban landscape, empty plots are indicative of future developments that haunt the incomplete city. Moreover, DeSilvey and Edensor's (2012) work on theorizing ruins also helps to make sense of the urban landscape. Used to do "particular kinds of cultural and aesthetic work, [ruins produce] different meanings and modes of encounter" (ibid., 467). Though New Songdo City is a greenfield development, here I conceptualize it as a future ruin that "[carries] the false memory traces of an abandoned set of futures … As 'ruins in reverse', these buildings do not fall into ruin after they are built but rather rise into ruin before they are built" (Smithson as cited in DeSilvey and Edensor, 2012, p. 469). As a future ruin, the fragmented landscape is emphasised to problematize normative assumptions about urban order and urban visions that are, in this instance, premised on the spatially-selective neoliberalization of the South Korean economy (Park, 2005) and speculative urban development. In Songdo's case, the vertical towers and developed parcels rub against the spectral buildings of the future and/or IFEZA's present failure to complete their grand plans. Furthermore, the spectral rendering of

[4] The IFEZA has been heavily criticized by public and private actors as having 'failed' to attract sufficient investment from international companies within promised timeframes, pushing completion dates for New Songdo City further and further into the future.

space and objects is registered in a disruption or dislocation of ordinariness (ibid.). The seams of the urban fabric are split here, destabilizing the highly ordered spaces of the gridded landscape and masterplan.

As another future ruin, Songdo's liminal position between temporal frames is perhaps best exemplified by Tomorrow City (Figure 7.7). Opened in 2009, Tomorrow City is an exhibition hall that was used to showcase the new Smart- and Ubiquitous-City (U-City) technologies being developed by IFEZA and its partners, Cisco and LG. Using miniature models and participatory virtual displays, Tomorrow City used



Figure 7.11 Screenshot of the Future City Zone inside Tomorrow City

Source: Tomorrow City, 2009

viewers' experiences as an integral component of U-City pedagogy (Figure 7.11). Tomorrow City was closed in 2011 and has not re-opened to the general public since. Already outdated and arguably obsolete, the exhibition hall still attracts curious onlookers with its metal-clad Gehry-esque façade. Though private tours are advertised, my efforts to secure one were inadequate and no responses to my requests were received. Today, Tomorrow City is always closed.

Though I was not able to see the exhibition hall first hand due to its closure, accounts by BBC journalists, Arbes and Bethea (*The Atlantic,* 27-Sept-2014) comment on their own experience (or lack thereof) at Tomorrow City. In their article, they recount the words of their city tour guide who remarked that the hall was closed "because our predictions have been realized. Tomorrow is yesterday" (ibid.). The authors further describe their experience: "The exhibition hall's windows were dark, and no one we spoke with remembered exactly what technologies were featured inside. Were we merely visiting yesterday's tomorrow?" (ibid.). This poignant question speaks directly to the already-historicized futurity of New Songdo City. As Kitchin, O'Callaghan and Gleeson (2014) explore, 'ghost mansions' of speculative urban futures in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland embody new ruins that have never been occupied. Rather than buildings falling into decay or dereliction after capital has be extracted and then relocated elsewhere, it is the urban visions that are promised by city marketers that have fallen into disuse and that were never

materialized. That is, new ruins result from rapid injections and withdrawals of capital as is the case in speculative urban development projects in post-Celtic Tiger Ireland and present-day South Korea. Here, abandoned infrastructure is indicative of a 'ruined' future of financialized capitalism and speculative real estate economy. Likewise, the ruins of the still-standing-but-always-closed Tomorrow City relegates the futurity it seeks to represent to the past as a historical vision of New Songdo City.

Together, the patchwork of development that presently characterizes New Songdo City is indicative of the tension between master planning and visioning, and on-the-ground development (or lack thereof) of both the social and material landscape. Urban rhetoric that promotes the Songdo development as a revolutionary 'city-in-a-box' ready to be exported anywhere in the world, is challenged by the fractured landscape of its urban expression. Rather than a futuristic e-topia, flagship developments like Tomorrow City subvert representations of Songdo as being on the cutting edge of U-City development. Day-by-day, as the shiny cladding on the façade of Tomorrow City loses its future-esque lustre, the current structure stands as a monument/memorial to the future, reminding passers-by that the future is already passed, or perhaps always out of reach, displacing the present from itself.

7.3 Ghostly Gardens

Walking towards Central Park, I noted the vast expanses of undeveloped land, construction debris scattered haphazardly around. Stopping to take a sip from my water bottle, I noticed a few bright red chili peppers dangling from a small but neatly arranged row of plants. Intrigued, I looked out into the grass fields for any hint or explanation. Off in the distance, the tops of wooden stakes poked through the waves of green grass in an orderly grid – not indicative of the discarded infill waste that littered some of the empty parcels. Upon closer inspection, rows of stalks were tied carefully to each stake. A small garden discretely grew among the yet-to-be developed land. Still heading towards Central Park, I wondered about what I had just seen. To my surprise, a scattering of gardens suddenly became plain to see as I walked along the road (Figure 7.12). Some were well-disguised, others planted immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. Familiar vegetables reminded me of my mother's and great aunt's backyard gardens back home in Toronto, with their distinct leaves conjuring



Figure 7.12 Gochu gardens
Source: Author, 2014

memories of side dishes, every one distinctly seasoned by each ajumma's (아줌마; an older woman, usually married) family recipe. Even corn grew on neatly planted stalks, tempting me to pluck the ripe ears from them, though I resisted. But, most often, gardens nourished the rows upon rows of gochu (고추) peppers, a type of Korean chili that is used in almost every Korean dish in some form.

Every now-and-then, I spotted a weathered sign that indicated that the land was available for development. Inquiries with residents and key actors later revealed that these improvised urban gardens are maintained by families residing in the city, either as new tenants in the high-rise apartment buildings, or the fisherfolk who were pressured to sell their land to Incheon Metropolitan City and were then given compensation by way of land or property in Songdo. Swathes of 'unproductive' land are made useful by Koreans who grow and care for their gardens to make any number of Korean dishes. Many members of older generations would have grown up in a vastly different Korea prior to the post-war development boom, the Miracle on the Han River (1953-1997), which transformed the Korean landscape from a predominantly agricultural nation to one dominated by manufacturing in major urban centres. Subsistence farming and food preparation practices from this period and prior live on in these scattered urban plots, performed by ajummas *that now find themselves in these new high-rise towers with their children and grandchildren.*

The spectral non-signification of ghostly gardens amidst overgrown landscaping can be used to conceptualize the abject spaces, times, and bodies produced by the development of New Songdo City. In the first instance, the gardens are conceptualized as residues of rural Korea and the fisherfolk who previously resided on the infilled tidal flats where Songdo now stands. Alternatively, the patches of 'unproductive' land are 'borrowed' by residents who, living in the concrete and glass towers of the city, have no access to gardening plots or public gardens. Though IFEZA or other private investors technically own the empty land and the use of the empty parcels for gardens constitutes trespassing, the gardens are commonplace. Both ordinary and out-of-place, the gardens are evidence of two socio-cultural groups - the fisherfolk and rural migrants - that have only partially been erased by New Songdo City, leaving spectral traces among the fields.

The gardens are largely regarded by popular Korean society as indicative of a different way of life – a way of life associated with the past, the traditional, poverty, and that existed prior to mass state intervention through urban development. For those who occupied Songdo's mudflats prior to its reclamation, their livelihoods as fisherfolk are commonly seen as 'backwards' and are associated with poverty and those who were not able to keep up with a modernizing Korea. As actors in a

'traditional' economic sector, fisherfolk and their mudflats are frequently subjugated by Korean society since the Miracle on the Han River. Their subjugation by current urban development like New Songdo City is again made visible through the urban gardens.

Alternatively, the gardens are sometimes attributed to the grandparents of recent occupants of new *danji* towers. Inter-generational households are not uncommon in South Korea, nor is poverty among the elderly (OECD, 2016).[5] Again, as living ghosts of South Korea's agricultural and impoverished past, this generation of Koreans continue to take part in the cultural practices of subsistence gardening and food preparation. Given the food desert that exists in some areas of the city,[6] the transformation of unproductive parcels of land into gardens is also advantageous for families who struggle to meet the financial demands that come with life in this elite urban enclave.[7] However, for the many Korean elite who live in Songdo, the gardens are regarded as a blemish on their new city and they eagerly await their

[5] In South Korea, the poverty rate of persons 51-65 years old is ~15% versus the OECD average of ~10%. For those aged 65 years and above, the poverty rate is ~50% compared to the OECD average of ~12%. Those that are employed are concentrated in temporary jobs (~40% versus the OECD average at ~6%) (OECD, 2016)

[6] The observed towers are located in what had been established as 'highly inconvenient areas' (Park, J., Interview, 20-Jan-2015) upon my return in winter 2015 due to the lack of services and amenities nearby.

[7] The majority of Korean residents in Songdo are, broadly, divided into two socio-economic groups: the elite of Incheon and very wealthy from Seoul who purchase apartments, and the rising/aspiring middle class, usually from Incheon, who pay a monthly chonsei sum (similar to rent) rather than buy apartments in the city (Park, J. (realtor), Interview, 20-Jan-2015; Park, K-Y. (IFEZA), Interview, 12-Jan-2015).

replacement by more glass and concrete to house their luxury goods, services, and homes, as discussed in one focus group (Focus Group 3, 31-Jan-2015).[8] This explanatory speculation, though, parallels the processes of accumulation by speculation (and dispossession) and the speculative real estate market in South Korea that transformed the mudflats and facilitated rural-urban migration in the first instance.

The overgrown gardens of the city – the once perfectly manicured landscaping that has been left to grow 'wild' again – can also be interpreted as a spectral presence. According to Maddern (2008, p. 367), "architectural abandonment has its own meaning and message". In this instance, the visible traces of abandonment are made apparent through the growth of vegetation beyond the borders and boxes where they were intended to grow. The growth of green leaves and limbs marks a temporal passing of non-attention, representing a timeframe from which the landscaping had not been done. At the time of the photo (Figure 7.4), it appears as though the trees and shrubs had been un-pruned for some time. As a result, the landscaping looks out of place among the carefully designed boulevards, reminding passers-by of the defiance (or perhaps resilience) of nature that persists over the stalled development of the city.

[8] In a follow-up conversation with one Songdo resident (June 2017), he notes that the vegetable gardens in the city's centre have indeed disappeared and have been replaced by new construction sites.

The enigmatic presence of the gardens and overgrown landscaping are instances of absent presences that conflict with representations of Songdo as not only a 'complete' city, but also as a city offering a superior quality of life. Evidence of alternative uses for the privately-owned and undeveloped parcels of land in the IBD attest to the insufficiency of the planned city to meet the needs of who reside there. As branches and carefully landscaped hedges are left unkempt while carefully managed gardens grow among the rubble and construction debris, the spectres of the unrealized visions for the city are made visible. Alongside these future ghosts, the gardens also tread into the past, alluding to past local peoples and their livelihoods in pre-1950s Korea, as well as the cultural practices of these slowly-disappearing ways of life.

7.4 Ghostly labour and spectres of Japanese imperialism in South Korea

Following the high-pitched sounds that filled the hot heavy air on that Sunday morning in August, I wandered towards a cluster of apartment towers in the distance and what I hoped was a livelier part of the city. As I drew closer, the sounds grew louder, joined by clangs and the occasional murmur of the voices of construction workers. Peering over the tall overgrown grass, concrete apartment buildings rose out of the urban savannah with construction cranes towering above them (Figure 7.13). The sweltering heat made me feel as though I was melting from the short walk, and I could not help

but wonder how the construction teams managed the extreme weather conditions given the physicality of their work. Confused by the apartment buildings surrounded by nothing but grass and empty roads, I reassessed the area and was drawn towards a different part of the city off in the distance…

As I walked towards towers on the perimeter of Central Park, I could only find traces of construction workers, made present by the sounds of metal-on-metal banging and the buzzing of tools. The few cars that passed me were occupied by workers, carrying loads of construction equipment. Others leant against their work vans in the cool shade of the roadside trees. In the heat and humidity, which only grew more intense as the sun rose towards noon, I understood why no one else was around.



Figure 7.13 Housing development under construction in Zone 3
Source: Author, 2014



Figure 7.14 Central Park Hotel, under construction
Source: Author, 2014

The heat was still oppressive, but walking on, I finally came across a small group of people out enjoying the park. Though only a dozen or so people were spotted along the canal path, it seemed like a horde given the nearly complete absence of pedestrians to that point. Walking along the southwestern edge of Central Park, the familiar sound of construction overtook the soft sound of classical music and chatter of small children at play. Yet another building was under construction, though it differed from the concrete towers I had just seen. The gold and brown glassy façade of the new Central Park Hotel was just about complete (Figure 7.14). Busy construction workers carted materials back and forth while others on their break stood in the narrow shadow of the building for shade, sipping water, their chatter muffled by the heavy air…

Visual and audible traces of the construction labourers are present throughout the narrative above. Every building, piece of infrastructure, and even the very ground that is beneath it all, bear the traces of those who constructed it - their labour is embedded in the materiality of the city. But, on the hot summer day in August 2014, the bodily presence of construction workers could be seen and heard. On the day of my walk, their presence was distanced though unmistakably clear. The sounds of their labour echoed through the fields and streets; observed from a distance in

most instances, they could be seen going about their work. Other evidence, however, also pointed to their future spectrality.

At the base of apartment buildings under construction, rows of temporary housing and offices were identified upon review of my photographs. With the motif of spectral geographies in mind, the presence of construction workers conjures two erasures/traces that I would now like to draw attention to: (1) the spectre of Japanese imperialism that is expressed through major land reclamation and construction projects; and (2) the future-ghosts of the precarious labourers who build Songdo. To do so, the common phrase *ppali ppali* (빨리 빨리), meaning 'quick, quick', is used to understand the intersection of labour, Japanese imperialism, and the production of urban space in the South Korean context. Here, time and space are not conceived of as mutually exclusive categories of analysis, but rather, are entwined, intersecting as multiple dynamic trajectories to form uneven power geometries and uneven development.

First and foremost, the phrase *ppali ppali* implies speed and a relationship between space and time. Originating as a popular saying following the end of Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula (1910-1945), civil war (1950-1953), and dire poverty immediately after, *ppali ppali* was the mantra of a manufacturing-driven Korean society (Lee, 2005). Before this period, labour, punctuality, and diligence were tied to working classes, particularly women and children who had to be at a

certain place at a certain time to perform their labour-intensive jobs in the fields or kitchens. Alternatively, the privileged elite did not abide by these same social codes – punctuality was of no consequence for the elite who did not need to work and around whose time others would have to accommodate. However, following years of conflict, the rise of state-led industrialization, and the subsequent growth of the middle class, many advocated equality among classes in South Korean society. During the manufacturing-intensive era that gave rise to the Miracle on the Han River (1962-1997), the value of time, especially in relationship to labour time, underwent a paradigm shift, diligence and hard work were valued across all members of society, taking cues from Western-liberal social norms. As a result, even the elite members of Korean society believed in the power of *ppali ppali* to lift the nation out of economic turmoil.

Coinciding with the socio-economic revision of labour time, *ppali ppali* was also used to bolster state sovereignty, especially through construction *chaebols* and manufacturing sectors. Major infrastructure projects were initiated to demonstrate the power of the state as well as the modernization of the economy following civil war. Land reclamation was one such way that the Korean state sought to demonstrate their independence from Japan (1945) and following the division of the Korean peninsula between North and South in 1954. By producing new land, the Korean state could physically expand its sovereign territory and thus power,

especially in the context of recent Japanese occupation and on-going land disputes with both Japan and North Korea. Rapid development and the material construction of land, infrastructure, and cities through the labour of Korean workers would not only assert South Korea's power relative to North Korea and Japan, but also elevate their global economic standing and providing thousands of jobs.[9] *Ppali ppali,* therefore, is a powerful ideology that spans national, economic, and social beliefs in South Korea.

Last, *ppali ppali* also evokes notions of upward class mobility and therefore, an important emphasis on futurity. In the popular Korean cultural context, inter-generational family obligation and sacrifice are well-established and engrained in family life. For parents, the willingness to sacrifice their quality of life to ensure a better future for their children is prevalent in many arenas of life. Broadly, parents believe that they are obliged to self-sacrifice through difficult labour to give their children important opportunities (frequently manifest through educational opportunities). Hard work and diligence at school is then presumed to lead to a good career for those children, and therefore greater wealth, improved family status, quality of life, and ultimately happiness. This partially explains why so many Korean

[9] Presently, the *ppali ppali* work ethos still exists; however, South Korea ironically has one of the lowest productivity rates despite having the longest working hours for men, and second longest for women across all OECD member countries (OECD, 2016).

children attend school for upwards of ten hours a day with extra homework and/or private lessons in the evenings and weekends. The collectivist Korean culture that places the family (and arguably the nation) ahead of the individual, therefore, is explicitly future-oriented. *Ppali ppali* is thus also a mechanism by which families and the broader nation pursue upward mobility through diligent and sometimes difficult labour.

While *ppali ppali* was frequently linked to Korean labour and diligence immediately following Japanese occupation and the Korean Civil War, today's construction labour has a different shape and politics. Most obviously, foreign migrants do much of the hard and gruelling construction labour that is presently used to build places like Songdo. As outlined in *Chapter 6.4*, large numbers of foreign labour migrants began to enter South Korea in the 1990s, several years into the nation's steady upward trend in economic development (Seol & Skrentny, 2009). Through the 1993 *Industrial Technical Training Programme* (ITTP), later the 2007 *Employment Permit Programme* (EPP), labour migrants were admitted into the country on a temporary basis and were permitted to fill low-skilled entry-level jobs to compensate for a rapidly ageing population and resulting labour shortage (Kim, 2008). Fearing that labour-intensive manufacturing would relocate to other developing Asian nations where wages were lower, the state began to accept labour migrants in an effort to retain domestic companies. This was especially true for the

manufacturing sector, drawing in foreign labourers from nearby developing Asian nations, particularly ethnic Koreans from China.

Due to its many loopholes, these temporary work programs often entailed the exploitation of 'trainees' at all stages of recruitment and training and exempt employers from abiding by legal protections that were only applicable to domestic workers (Kim, 2008). Limited to 3-D (dangerous, dirty, demanding) jobs that are undesirable to domestic labourers, the population of both legal and illegal migrant labourers in South Korea continues to rise.[10] Presently, the IFEZ also has relaxed labour regulations within its bounds, arguably heightening the exploitation of this already precarious social group. Thus, the construction workers seen and heard at various points along my walk through Songdo embody the nexus between labour, migration, urban development, and economic development trends. The construction workers labouring in the hot humid sun are mostly Chinese (though they may be ethnically Korean), (Seol and Skrentny, 2009; Kim, 2008) migrants who have not been permitted to bring family members with them and who must leave after their contract expires. With no possibility to (legally) obtain permanent residency or

[10] Due to their unregistered presence in South Korea, population data about illegal migrant workers who overstay their visas, who escape workplaces due to 'appalling conditions' (Ock, 2016, April 7) or those who illegally immigrate are not readily available. In 2016, the Justice Ministry began a campaign to reduce the number of illegal foreigners to less than 10% by 2018. In 2016, they quote 1.9 million foreign nationals in South Korea (3.7% if the entire population), where 11.3% are illegally in the country (Ock, 2016, April 4).

citizenship, their presence in the city is temporary – they are the future ghosts of Songdo, whose traces remain in the infrastructure they construct.

In the meantime, though, their traces can also be heard in the clamour of voices and tools around the work sites; their temporary homes can be seen along the edges of the apartment developments under construction; their trucks and vans seem to be the only ones present in some expanses of the city. And yet, when the buildings are complete and their contracts expire, they will be forced to leave the city and country. They are the spectres of uneven global development that permits the exploitation of labourers from still-developing nations and the lowest rungs of the South Korean social hierarchy. *Ppali ppali*: they work quickly in the heat and humidity, with little rest, and with few legal protections. Their exploitation fuels the urban development of Songdo. Initially used to inspire diligence and hard work as an expression of nationhood, today *ppali ppali* is a haunting omen for those who can never be accepted as full citizens or even permanent residents of South Korea.

The rhetoric of speed and its value in the highly competitive global marketplace envelopes Songdo. *Ppali ppali* is the mantra of development here, and it is sharpened by the relative slowness of the 'traditional' past that is commodified alongside the architectural and urban design symbols of the future, discussed next.

7.5 Commodifying the spectral past

Songdo re-visited: winter 2015

Though only a few months had passed between trips, so much had changed when I returned in January 2015. Many of the construction cranes had relocated to new sites that sprouted ever-more apartment buildings, leaving behind finished blocks, still surrounded by grassy parcels of undeveloped land in some cases. The speed of construction became evident, as did the growth of the city's population. Despite the cold winter air, I must have seen more people walking about and in various shops in that first hour of my winter visit than I had the whole day the August just prior. As the cold air whipped my face, I travelled along roads to key sites that I had not visited in the summertime, or that had not yet existed. In particular, my attention was drawn to one of the newest structures in the IBD, the Gyeongwanjae Ambassador Hotel (Figure 7.15).



Figure 7.15 *Gyeongwanjae* Ambassador Hotel, resembling a *hanok*
Source: Author, 2015



Figure 7.16 Central Park Korean Village
Source: Author, 2015

Designed to resemble a hanok *(한옥), a traditional Korean House, the* Gyeongwanjae *is a luxury hotel where visitors can enjoy a mix of 'traditional' cultural experiences and 'modern' comforts of home. The five-star hotel is owned by the Incheon Free Economic Zone Authority but is privately managed by Accor Hotels. It is also the largest* hanok*-style hotel in the country. Though its private gardens were barren given the cold, piercing winter winds, the structures nonetheless stand in a warm glow that reflects off of the wooden frames. Nearby, a row of traditional* hanoks *line the southwestern edge of Central Park where other luxury amenities complete the newly-built Central Park Korean Village (Figure 7.16). This development replicates architecture from Korea's Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897) (though* Gyeongwanjae *is a historical name for Incheon from the Koryeo Dynasty (1356-1392), though with plenty of parking lots for its patrons. And, though it was only partially completed when I visited in the winter of 2015, the architecture of the* hanoks *stood juxtaposed against the glassy towers on the other side of Central Park. I was lucky enough to be invited to one of the restaurants perched on the top floor of one of these* hanoks *to conduct an interview. Many of the other* hanoks *were still under construction.*

On a different day, I walked passed the Korean Village on my way to the POSCO Towers and the Smart + Compact City Exhibition Hall. In front of the village, a small group of protesters gathered with their signs, all written in Korean.

Unable to communicate directly with the protesters to find out what they were advocating for, I took note and asked my contacts if they had any information. At the time, none of my contacts were sure what the protest was about, especially because it was quite small and took place on a very cold day on the edge of the construction site where few people walked. Later, I learned that the small group of residents were protesting the commercialization of the park…

In this final section, I draw attention to two instances of the commodification of the past that are present here: (1) the development of the Korean Village (including the *Gyeongwanjae* Hotel); and (2) the designation of the Songdo Tidal Flat as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention. While the two cases may appear to be discontinuous, both problematize processes of knowledge production and the production of history. By drawing these two sites together, the relationship between spectres, economic processes, and Songdo's spatio-temporality is elucidated.

The *Gyeongwanjae* Hotel is South Korea's largest hotel constructed to resemble a *hanok*. Though the hotel offers modern comforts, it nonetheless emphasizes its 'Korean-ness', albeit in profitable ways. Each room in the ultra-luxury hotel contains an *ondol* (온돌; under-floor heating system) and access to private gardens for upwards of ₩ 210, 000 per night (approximately £144 per night) and well over ₩ 652, 000 per night (£450 per night) for the Royal Suite (prices vary

throughout the year). Marketing the hotel as a cultural experience, *Gyeongwanjae* aims to attract wealthy tourists and business elites visiting the city. In this case, the *hanok* hotel is interpreted as "the sublime spectre [that] has been turned into entertainment" (Maddern, 2008, p. 372) in "an attempt to invoke ghosts in a controlled, tamed and domesticated sense" (ibid., p. 373). The exoticized past from South Korea's *Joseon* period is tamed by modern comforts and sold for a premium price on a nightly basis.

Right next door, the City of Tomorrow (Figure 7.7) lies in juxtaposition to the *hanok* hotel, further emphasizing a 'traditional Korean past' as just that, the past. The *hanok* occupies and symbolizes a history that never existed on Songdo's tidal flats. The City of Tomorrow, on the other hand, occupies the space of the present-future, standing in stark contrast to the aesthetic symbols of the past, represented by the Korean Village. The spatio-temporal construction of both reifies a linear trajectory that relegates the past to the realm of commodities. Far from being a benign process of commodification, Fletcher (2011) argues that the global tourism industry and its rise are one of the important ways that capitalism is able to survive and advance, and thereby deepen socio-spatial inequalities at local, national, and global scales (see also Derrida, 1994).

Korean history is depoliticized in a highly selective ghosting process that involves both the conjuring and exorcism of spectres from the commodified

'traditional' past. At the same time, the emphasis on a profitable traditional past as appropriate for cultural consumption further obscures other histories, in particular, the presence of marginalized social groups that *actually* resided on the Songdo Tidal Flats prior to the construction of the city (as in *Section 7.1.2*). Though the fisherfolk who are subjugated as peoples of the past, their wetlands are re-made as a coastal oasis, celebrated by environmental enthusiasts and presented as monuments to the livelihoods of fisherfolk. On July 10, 2014, Songdo Tidal Flat was designated an Internationally Important Wetland by the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty whose mission is to conserve and ensure the wise use of all wetlands through local and national action, and through international cooperation to achieve global sustainable growth (Ramsar, 2016). According to an environmental NGO Director, the Ramsar designation of the Songdo Tidal Flat is an example of "… the real politic of conservation and it's frightening. Basically, destroy the area and then - almost the whole area - and then what's left, get it designated as an internationally important wetland which you can fly over visitors from all over the world and say, 'we created a Ramsar site'" (Anonymous NGO, Interview, 5-Feb-2015). Despite the massive environmental degradation that was caused by the development of New Songdo City, the Ramsar designation makes spectres of the fisherfolk and the fragile wetland landscape that existed before the city did.

According to Ramsar (2014), "Traditionally, the [Songdo Tidal Flat] has been used by fishermen and clam collectors, who fish with their bare hands ... Threats to the Site include reclamation and the building of facilities at the adjacent Songdo International City". Again, the 'traditional' past is used as a legitimation tool that only functions when it stands in contrast to the future-present through processes of commodification. The fisherfolk and their traditional practices are made abject, like the wetlands, and represented as obsolete things-of-the-past (Figure 7.17). Their histories are literally buried by the reclamation of Incheon's wetlands and the conjuring of this past existence through the Ramsar-designation. Consequently, the



Figure 7.17 Satirical cartoon depicting 'extinct' fisherfolk
In the image, a teacher shows her students the marine life that used to exist in New Songdo City, including a fisherman.
Source: Benedikt, 2016

process of 'museumification', the "transition from a living city to that of an idealized re-presentation of itself, wherein everything is considered not for its use but for its value as a potential museum artefact" (Di Giovine, 2009, p. 261), is instigated. The past is made static through a selective process that conjures specific social and environmental landscapes as spectres, producing 'absent presences' (Maddern, 2008). For Degen and Hetherington (2001, p. 3), "Experiences of absence in presence are most of the time revealed when places are changing, transforming, and when a debt is not being acknowledged in that transformation". As the Songdo wetlands are transformed into an elite urban enclave, Korea's past is commodified, transforming traditional cultural practices into consumable cultural symbols and experiences that mask their own destruction.

The Ramsar designation of the Songdo Tidal Flats and the construction of the *Gyeongwanjae* Ambassador Hotel demonstrate the intersection of the neo-capitalist economy and place production/destruction where strategic place management simultaneously conjures and exorcises spectres to best suit capitalist goals. The past is relegated to the exotic cultural experience offered by the *hanok* hotel, or an eco-tourism site that acts as a living museum of Songdo's impoverished coastal past. The absent presences described here, as well as the relationship between remembering, forgetting, and imagining, are further explored in the concluding discussion.

7.6 Discussion

Asian urbanism(s) may be conceived of as a spectre or haunting of Western and Euro-centric hegemony over urban knowledge production. The ontological excess of the urban is akin to the excess of the spectral where both the content and the potentiality of each is not fully known. Alternatively, the potentiality of Asian urbanism(s), much like that of spectro-geography, lies in its ability to decentre and destabilize what might otherwise be taken for granted. Rhetorics of completion, futurity, tradition, culture, and linear time grapple with expectations as they encounter lived experiences of the city's urban expression. Thus, it is especially pertinent to understand this chapter as a situated account of New Songdo City, not an objective testimony - its narratives and analysis are doused in uncertainty, partiality, contingency, and ephemerality. Future research would benefit from further spectro-geographic studies of New Songdo City that invites residents to also conduct their own ghost tours and note their experiences. The multiplicity of situated, affective, and rich descriptions of their encounters would further contribute to the ways that the spatio-temporality of the city is constructed, enacted, perceived, and experienced.

Unsettling linear temporal frames is primary to the theory of spectro-politics. Drawing on the work of Hetherington, Maddern (2008) suggests that "haunting brings up the issue of temporality through an unsettling of the order of space. To

haunt is to remain where one does not belong – *unheimlich* (uncanny, but literally 'unhomely'), thereby blurring the ordering of space through a folding of time" (p. 365). Further, Wylie also suggests that "place, or placing, the taking-place of place, is constituted not so much by dwelling as by haunting" (2007, p. 172). A repetitive returning-to, leaving-from, remembering, and anticipating - the affective challenge of being without - thus constitute place and self. In this instance, conceptualizations of (un)homeliness (Blunt & Dowling 2006) and the spectral are entwined to unsettle the rationalized spatiality that epitomises the Songdo master plan.

In the first example, KPF's master plan of the city, conceived of as a model 'city-in-a-box' (Kasarda and Lindsay, 2011), becomes a battleground upon which ideas of urbanism clash. The cutting edge City of Tomorrow is ruptured by economic processes of real estate speculation and consumer demand. Second, urban gardens should not be read as the failure of individuals or households to assimilate into the international (i.e. Western), modern, future city. Though landscapes of all kinds bear traces of the different times and places, this does not equate to them being lesser though they may be 'out of place'. Further, the commodification of the spectral past again speaks to this fallacy - the past is not inherently backwards, uncivilized, or exotic. Rather, tradition and time are constructed along temporal frameworks that privilege linear time and developmentalist theories of urbanization.

The social construction of the South Korean past, here presented as 'cultural' attractions, again should not be read as the city and the state's attempt to carve out global space as a cultural fetish fuelled by the tourism industry. While aspects of South Korean culture and tradition are repackaged as a luxury hotel, for example, this does not necessarily mean that Koreans have resigned themselves as Other to Western-centric ways of life. Instead, a double illusion is at work - both the Koreans and the foreign visitors know the *Gyeongwanjae* hotel is not an accurate representation of Korean history, society, and culture. And yet, perhaps both are willing to maintain the charade for different reasons. For Koreans, it makes business sense and feeds off tourist sectors. For foreign visitors, it maintains their ability to be somewhere Other, somewhere 'authentic', somewhere 'East', so they can say they have 'been there' without sacrificing the comforts that they are used to.

Though the application of spectro-analysis is used as a metaphorical device and epistemological tool, it nonetheless aids in the elicitation of complex spatio-temporal dynamics. As purposefully disruptive of linear narratives of progress, spectral geographies are especially productive when exploring the relationships between space, place-production, and temporal framing. However, spectro-politics also necessitates a critical analysis of their application and usefulness. In particular, the spectral reveals tensions between memory, forgetting, and imagination, as well as witnessing and veracity.

First, temporal folding necessarily involves processes of remembering – of 'placing' phenomena in time. Drawing from the work of humanist geographers, memory is conceptualized as intrinsically place-based rather than a more abstract space-based phenomenon (Casey, 1987). Through the lived experiences of the individual and their positionality among a multitude of space-time trajectories, memory is formed. Further, to re-member is to bring something back to mind that resonates in some way with the self. According to Casey, "memory matters in our experience by making a difference in the form our experience itself takes" and that "in remembering, we come back to the things that matter" (ibid., p. xii). Memory, in its formation and re-collection, is therefore an important part of knowledge-production about the self, place, and the relationships between them.

Memory, however, cannot be conceptualized without acknowledging simultaneous processes of forgetting. It is not possible to remember everything and forever. Thus, processes of remembering require processes of forgetting. Furthermore, memory is not always recollected the same way each time it is brought back into account. Each re-visiting of a particular memory entails a creative re-interpretation. Thus, the past is continually recreated, each time with slight variations (Bachelard, 1971). "Memory" then, "is not just a retrieval of the past from the past, it is always a fresh, new creation where memories are retrieved into the conscious realm and something new is created in that context" (Jones, 2003, p. 27). With each iteration,

place, memory and self are redefined and re-ordered in relationship to other emergent spaces, places, activities, and temporal realities. That is, memory is also an inherently imaginative and dynamic process.

Consequently, the work explored here is partial, subjective, and inventive by its very nature. This does not mean, however, that it is invalid. Instead, a reading of the spectral geographies of Songdo must always consider the positionality of the writer, viewer, and their particular ways of seeing. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the experiences and reflections presented are subjective accounts and that others who conduct a similar task will surely produce different results. This is also in part because the body itself is also acknowledged as a pertinent place and site for the formation of "body memory" (Casey, 1987) that connects the subject to the affective experience of remembering and the physical features of place. This tacit *in situ* knowledge production mediates the material and the immaterial world(s). For example, my stumbling upon the gardens instantly triggered visceral and specific memories of my own experiences with Korean food, family, and sentiments of home. These stories mark the intersection between personal and collective memory, mediated by the spectral residues of past times, places, peoples, and ways of life. Edensor (2008) provides a useful way of conceptualizing these spectral traces:

> … change occurs at a different pulse, seeps in more gradually. Adaptations to change tend to be less totalizing in their transformations. Whereas typically, the rapid redevelopment of city centres systematically effaces even recent historical traces, in these mundane spaces, the past is less likely to be entirely

> disposed of, polished away or obliterated. Things, buildings, people and traces hang on. That which is supposedly unfashionable or obsolete is still used, or might remain as an enduring fixture around which routines take place, a familiar, comfortable constituent. (p. 326)

Here, tensions between processes of witnessing and storytelling also rub against issues of veracity and processes of knowledge production. The partial erasure and re-writing of urban spaces are thus made present despite attempts to frame New Songdo City as 'new', futuristic, and master(fully) planned. Processes of change and transformation thereby emphasize the political and social histories that contextualize and complicate urban development in these examples.

While the narratives in this chapter are examples of a kind of testimony – of observing and recounting – there are clear moments of uncertainty and gaps my knowledge, understanding, and/or interpretation. What is presented is, again, a single account among many. Neither fact nor fiction, the narrative style deployed here occupies a liminal space between these two categories of writing. I argue that this too mirrors the folding of time, space, and experience central to spectro-politics and its value for geographic analysis. As Holloway and Kneale (2008) contend, the indeterminacy of spectral encounters creates space for new and multiple ontological potentialities. Further, they offer an opportunity for alternative and imaginative orders that reconfigure experiences and meanings of urban spaces. Knowledge-production through the lens of spectral geographies, then, is dynamic and multi-temporal, relying on processes of memory-making, imagination, re-collecting, and

interpretation. Attuned to spatio-temporality, spectro-analysis is a useful metonym to attend to these nuanced and complex phenomena and the processes by which they emerge.

Asian urbanism(s) benefit from spectro-analytical approaches as the destabilization of linear time, developmentalist conceptualizations of place and progress, as well as Western and Euro-centric urban imaginaries are emphasized. In this chapter, the urban expression of Songdo as the 'City of Tomorrow', constructed through worlding practices and urban rhetorics, is disrupted by spatio-temporal changes and first-hand experiences that locate the future city in the past. As a result, specto-geography is demonstrated to be productive analytical tool deployed to assist Asian urbanism(s)'s aims to destabilize hegemonic processes of urban knowledge production.

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8

Chapter Eight
Conclusion: Towards Asian Urbanism(s)

8.0 The Potentiality of Asian Urbanism(s)

The inevitable course of research has taken this thesis through twists, turns, and unexpected pathways of inquiry. What began as a project focused on the most marginal employees of hub airports in the aerotropolis has become a thesis on Asian urbanism(s) in a world(ing) city in South Korea. Nonetheless, we have arrived here at the conclusion. In *Chapter 1*, I asked, 'w*hat is this place?'* when confronted by New Songdo City for the first time, leading to the formation of my research questions:

> *1. If New Songdo City is conceptualized as an example of Asian urbanism(s), how does the development, expression and lived experience of this city*

transform and dis-/locate, relationships between different conceptualizations of 'the urban'?

2. What is the relevance of New Songdo City to urban geography? What kind of city is this and for whom?

To answer these questions, I explored four themes that I have conceptualized as urban expressions: (1) the South Korean Urban Dream and the Eco-city; (2) the U-City; (3) the International City; and (4) the spatio-temporality of New Songdo City and the 'City of the Future'. These urban expressions emerged from the entwining of various urban rhetorics and worlding practices that operationalize multiple mediums of communication discussed in *Chapter 2*. Though the city's expression in different examples, times, and places may vary as demonstrated in *Chapters 4-7,* none is fully erased or fully over-shadowed by another. As a result, New Songdo City is first and foremost, a city of simultaneity.

In sum, this thesis has contributed important and valuable insights into the complexities of Asian urbanism(s) as well as the situated processes of geographic theory production that have shaped not only the 'answers' that urban researchers seek, but also (and perhaps more importantly) the questions that are asked in the first place. Through the four empirical chapters in this thesis, I approach some of this theoretical complexity and broader reflection on urban research practice through work centred on experiential, social, cultural, and every day lived aspects of New Songdo City. Rather than more structuralist approaches that have been developed and deployed in existing research on New Songdo City, this research works through

'the urban question' beginning with context-specific and situated discussions of urban processes. Thus, my emphasis on the experiential and socio-cultural gives additional nuance and complexity to current debates revolving around planetary urbanization. By drawing New Songdo City together with a range of inter-linked places, people, processes, events, experiences, and so on, this thesis has aimed to negotiate tensions between broad and encompassing theories of planetary urbanization and calls for context-specific urban research through an exploration of Asian urbanism(s). Consequently, the experiences of New Songdo City's residents are understood as sites of tension between 'the global' and 'the local', and further highlight the disjunctures between varying situated conceptualizations of 'the urban' and 'the city'. Ultimately, through the conceptual framework of urban expressionism and an exploration of the ways that they are articulated, experienced and played out in the everyday lives Songdo residents, the epistemological utility - that is, the potentiality - of Asian urbanism(s) is thereby emphasized.

To summarize, I have demonstrated in the preceding chapters the ways that New Songdo City's urban expressionsim challenges hegemonic conceptualizations of 'the urban'. In *Chapter 4*, the importance and power of urban rhetoric was emphasised and explores the South Korean Urban Dream within which Songdo is situated. Dominant rhetorics - globalization, neoliberalization, competition - were identified as key components that frame the city's development and also its

expression as an Eco-City. However, the significance of New Songdo City here is not as an example of the structural power of such totalities. In this instance of Eco-City development, broadly accepted frameworks for evaluating the performance or success of sustainable urban developments, for example LEED certification, were demonstrated to be Western-centric in their conceptualization of what it means to 'be green'. Arguably, New Songdo Eco-City lives up to South Korean conceptualizations of what the eco-city entails - lower densities of housing and built forms, large manicured park spaces, and well-hidden waste disposal infrastructure, for example. In this chapter, perceptions of eco-living were thus not understood as a failure to abide by global standards of sustainable urban development, but instead highlighted the ways that these standards are situated social constructions. Alternatively, this analysis of New Songdo City exemplified some of the ways that urban development actors transformed space through the enactment of worlding practices that are rooted in South Korea's experience of colonial occupation, civil war, and the developmental state.

In *Chapter 5*, I explored New Songdo City as a Ubiquitous and Smart City. In this instance, the techno-utopian features of the city were criticised through the lens of a gendered analysis that places emphasis on the experiences of women in the city. I showed how Smart Cities create and stymie opportunities for women in both formal and informal labour sectors. The New Songdo U-City cannot, therefore, be

reduced to a mere Korean inflection or failure of Smart urbanism. Examples from the daily lives of women living in Songdo instead show the ways that the U-city simultaneously reinforces and subverts modernist socio-spatial binaries centred on gender.

Further, the experiences of women living in New Songdo City demonstrated the ways that Smart City technologies that reproduce normative Western divisions of space according to gendered perceptions of labour run in parallel to specific aspects of Confucian social hierarchies and spatial orders. Stemming from divergent socio-cultural values, the reproduction of gendered spatial divisions and gendered divisions of labour converged in the Songdo Smart City. The expression of the New Songdo Smart City as either a Western- or Eastern-centric urban development was thereby complicated as neither could fully account for, nor be separated from, the underlying spatial assumptions that shaped the digital, material, and social infrastructures of the city.

In *Chapter 6*, I grappled with issues revolving around how the 'international' city is conceptualized, articulated, and experienced, as well as the ways that this was sometimes used to justify explanatory developmental frameworks. Particularisms that posit that some people and places were inherently different from others, and that these differences could be used to construct social hierarchies, highlighted the hegemony of Western-centric interpretations of the urban. In many

instances, classifications of people, places, and processes were divided along cultural lines that reinforced a binary logic of difference. Most commonly, 'internationals' placed themselves in opposition to Koreans, while 'foreigners' or 'immigrants' often referred to non-Western migrants. Such binary oppositions ultimately worked to (re)produce vertical hierarchies that placed greater value on the needs or ideas of some over others.

Consequently, I argued that cultural difference and the specificity of place should be reframed as an arena for transcendence, commensuration, or as lines of intersection that create space for new socio-spatial relationships. As in the preceding chapters, the New Songdo International City was instead explored as an example of the ways that the South Korean state, IFEZA, and Incheon Metropolitan City have engaged in worlding practices by selectively appropriating specific policies, architectures, and rhetorics from the repertoire of regulating fictions that are derived from existing global and world city discourses. However, rather than conceding to these predominantly Western urban processes, South Korean development actors transformed Western-centric urban tropes into mechanisms that facilitated the reproduction of South Korean labour and society. By co-opting the language of global urbanisms, rhetorically and materially, the New Songdo International City reconfigured the international city as a Korean city.

In the fourth and final empirical chapter (*Chapter 7),* I examined the spatio-temporality of New Songdo City. Both the content and the mechanisms by which Songdo's futurity is articulated was explored. Through a narrative tour of the 'City of Tomorrow' and its subsequent spectro-geographic analysis, I highlighted the speculative nature of the city. Speculation, in that chapter, pertains to the broader socio-economic structures of urban development capital as well as situated interpretations of future possibilities that remain open and indeterminate.

Focused on temporal frames, this chapter emphasized the destabilizing power of spectral geographies over material urban environments, as well as onto-epistemological conceptualizations of 'the urban'. More specifically, a first-hand account of New Songdo City through the lens of spectro-geographies highlighted the connections between changing urban imaginaries of the city (and urbanization in South Korea more generally), and important political, economic, and socio-cultural transformations. By meditating on spatio-temporal aspects of urban development, as this chapter has shown, the 'City of Tomorrow' was recast as a historically situated urbanism that cannot be separated from South Korea's current and historical geopolitical contexts.

Ultimately, I conclude that 'the city in the back of our heads' (Vaiou, 2010) need not always be in the image of those antecedent few - New York, London, Paris, Los Angeles, and Chicago, for example. 'The urban' remains a conceptual and

ideological battleground upon which people experience life. Thus, preceeding chapters should neither be read as a series of narratives about who is to 'blame' for Songdo's perceived failures, nor who is to 'thank' for its successes. Rather than arguing that tensions between urban expressions and urban rhetorics are indicative of a polarized battle battle between 'Asia' and 'the West' to define, articulate, and enact urban visions, these tensions instead point to the ways that hegemonic urban theory, knowledge, and practices are constructed, reproduced, re-/dis-located, and destabilized by Asian urbanism(s).

Thus, 'East' and 'West' become completely inadequate socio-spatial classifications through urban rhetoric and worlding practices that create multi-faceted expressions of 'exceptionary' cities. These multiple, diverse, complex, simultaneous, and sometimes contradictory urban expressions, I argue, are analytical tools that reiterate the potentiality of Asian urbanism(s). This potentiality lies in Asian urbanism(s) ability to achieve several things: to decentre, destabilize, invert, and complicate Western and Eurocentric conceptualizations of the world. However, 'Asian' urbanism(s) is also oxymoronic in some sense. As a theoretical project, Asian urbanism(s) attends to the ways that socio-spatial categories are constructed and exert power. It is therefore possible to conceive of Asian urbanism(s) as an assertion of a region-specific 'truth' or universalism; Western-centric urban theory is simply replaced by Asian-centric urban theory (though this is *not* what I am advocating).

In this case, 'Asia' is a social construction in much the same way as 'the urban' is. Combining both socially constructed conceptualizations of space into a single concept is thus doubly misleading. But again, herein lies the power of Asian urbanism(s) - even in this vein of argument, the inherent self-reflexivity of Asian urbanism(s) still works to unsettle the 'West' and the geographies of theory that privilege certain places over others. To construct and empower a theory of Asian urbanism(s), processes of knowledge production *and* knowledge erasure must be acknowledged. Thus, Asian urbanism(s) is not an inversion of Western-centric urban theory, but a critical reversal that aims to tell a story about the way the 'West' and others tell (urban) stories. This is the onto-epistemological potential of Asian urbanism(s). In the following section, I conclude this thesis with future research directions and a short update on New Songdo City.

8.1 Where next?

To say that this research has reached a tidy conclusion would, no doubt, be dishonest. Over the course of the last four years, there have been countless times when I wondered how I might have gone about something differently. As a result, I now briefly identify other research paths stemming from this thesis that could further augment urban geography's theorization of New Songdo City, Asian urbanism(s), and processes of urban knowledge production most broadly.

First and foremost, I believe that research on the (im)mobilities of those employed in 3-D jobs in and around New Songdo and other cities that fit into the concept of an aerotropolis merit further investigation. The precarity of their employment and their relationships to the aerotropolis would provide important insights in to the socio-spatial dynamics that are produced, transformed, and reinforced through this type of development and the propagation of various rhetorics that support it. To this end, interrogating whether the aerotropolis is truly 'the way we'll live next', and by extension and even more importantly, if it is where we *want* to live next, is critical for the future politics and experiences of cities everwhere.

Relating more specifically to this thesis, a more thorough longitudinal investigation of expectations, opinions and experiences of South Koreans living in New Songdo City would add significant depth and insight into Asian urbanism(s). Moreover, including Korean residents living in Yeonsu-gu but outside New Songdo City IBD, those who work in Songdo but who do not live there, and those more broadly located in the Seoul Metropolitan Area and elsewhere in South Korea in this new work would add important insights into more broadly held urban imaginaries and the ways that New Songdo City figures in to them. This would help paint a more nuanced picture of the South Korean Urban Dream and the ways that it is interpreted across the country and across many different socio-economic gradients of the Korean population.

Research on Eco-City development, as explored in *Chapter 4*, could be augmented by an additional focus on the evaluation tools that have been developed, or that are in the process of being developed, to assess the merits of this urban expression in the New Songdo City case. To this end, focusing on how current infrastructure, technologies and development conform to, challenge, or completely side-step the Eco-City rhetoric presented by Gale International and KPF in the early years of the city's development would add further insight to the power and pervasiveness of this planning paradigm.

The themes explored in *Chapter 5* could further add to research on Smart Cities and digital urbanisms through a broader analysis of gendered socio-spatial divisions in New Songdo City. Again, Korean women's voices are not as prominently featured as they could be, missing their interpretations and experiences of the Smart City. The labour landscapes of Korean women living in Songdo, both in formal and informal sectors, could be investigated to form a better understanding of the ways that digital, social, and material urban processes are co-constituted in the Smart City. Further, the ways that digital geographies mediate, transform, and translate existing socio-spatial relationships in digitally mediated cities (Rose, 2017) would add greater depth to understandings of mixed forms of digital engagement in diverse examples of digital urbanisms. Thus, the power to shape, transform and discipline urban knowledges and bodies through digitally-mediated cities would provide new

and important insights about how Smart Cities and digital geographies more broadly transform 'the urban'.

Investigations of the 'international city, as explored in *Chapter 6,* could also be augmented by further research with Korean-speaking residents and workers in New Songdo City. Extensive and rich accounts of urban life for these individuals would further add nuance to the perception and experience of the 'international' city, in the case of Songdo but also across other examples. Moreover, additional insights from municipal actors and state representatives would add a more complete picture of public-sector visions and urban development mechanisms.

Finally, a longitudinal study of development patterns and dynamics would also create a richer repository from which spectro-geographic analysies of Asian urbanism(s) could draw from. Additional layers of spatio-temporally situated urban imaginaries of New Songdo City would speak to the dynamic and diverse ways that the city is transformed over time, materially, ideologically, and experientially, extending the work found in *Chapter 7*.

In general, the pursuit of Asian urbanism(s) can be augmented by comparative studies of other cities in Asia, but perhaps more importantly, beyond Asia. 'Asian' cities are, as Robinson (2006) contends, not incommensurable with those in the 'West', and that they have much to offer urban scholars. In these cases, the ways that theories of Asian urbanism(s) travel, remain stationary, or are

transformed can further help to de-stabilize Western hegemony over urban knowledges and help to produce to more diverse geographies of urban theory production (Roy, 2009). Consequently, it would be valuable to conduct such research with critical reflexivity to ensure that some form of Asian urban hegemony does not take hold. Rather than an inversion of developmental frameworks, the more productive (I believe) aim to destabilize and de-centre can create an even larger opening for diverse knowledges and theories of the urban.

Moving beyond the destabilization of Western and Eurocentric urban theory, additional research through the framework of Asian urbanism(s) can further add to urban geography's ability to speak from multiple places, hybrid places, and/or worldly places. However, these opportunities for theoretical and analytical innovation also pose dillemas for researchers. Broadly, generalizations about a given place, or a given theory developed in a specific site, raise important questions about the robustness of those generalizations. Consequently, the tensions between the general and the specific remain. Alternatively, though the debate continues between onto-epistemological approaches of the 'planetary' and the 'particular' (Peck, 2015), these tension nonetheless fuel urban research's vitality and capacity to make theoretical and analytical innovations.

8.2 What's Next?

Though New Songdo City has a large range of promotional material that advertises the virtues of the city to prospective investors and residents residing in the 'developed West', the city retains, unapologetically, numerous and notable Korean features. Expectations of Westerners based on these media are often met with disappointment upon arrival, where many foreign residents believe that the city is a failure or a poor interpretation of international standards for city-building and city living. However, key Korean stakeholders in the development of the city, perhaps, never intended to create a 'New York of the East'. Situated inflections and interpretations of urbanism(s) are therefore not acts of imitation, but instead transcend hegemonic and developmental interpretations of city-building in Asia. The use of Western models in city designs is not, I argue, an attempt to replicate urbanisms in the West, but instead take part in worlding processes that have been developed and operationalized in other Asian nations and cities. Ultimately, urban rhetoric is an agent of development processes and urban knowledge production, but it does not simply mask some greater or truer reality that Western scholars can 'discover'. Instead, Asian urbanism(s) can be operationalized through the lens of urban expressionism to highlight the ways that the West tells stories - urban stories - about itself.

Today, New Songdo City is in its third phase of development, the 'stability phase', which it is expected to be complete around 2020. The population is slowly inching towards its target of 250,00 residents (it was 86,000 at the end of 2014) and 80,000 apartment units, it is home to a number of new and on-going developments like the American Village, a housing complex for foreigners, especially Korean return migrants. Plans for a casino have just been approved in the city even though gambling is illegal for Koreans (though it is legal for foreigners). The city has just finished hosting the 2017 New Cities Summit, and a 'succession of mega-events' at Songdo Convensia (IFEZA, 2017 May/June). The IFEZA still asks its prominent members of the international community to pose for pictures next to the mayor or the CEO of multi-national business located in Songdo. The city is still heavily promoted as 'smart', 'international', 'eco', and as an urban 'frontier' on the cutting edge of city building. At the start of this thesis, I asked, *what kind of city is this?* Perhaps, it is fitting that I conclude now by asking, *what kind of city will Songdo be*? An Education City? The next Las Vegas? Perhaps it will become the Hollywood of Korea, playing off its celebrity residents and filming locations. Perhaps city proponents will build on its recent characterization as the 'drone Mecca of the world' (Kim, 2016). Whatever urban expression(s) emerges next, New Songdo City will remain an intriguing example of contemporary Asian urbanism(s) and city building

that is wrought with the tensions that can captivate and inspire urban geographers from the 'East', 'West', and everywhere in between.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Map of New Songdo City and Surrounding Region

Source: Author, 2017



Appendix B: Aerial diagram of New Songdo City (2011)

Source: IFEZA, 2011



Appendix C: List of Professional Representatives and Stakeholders

Organization	Contact	Position
IFEZA	Dr. William Lee	Tourism Investment
IFEZA	Kyung Yong Park	Infrastructure Service Industry
IFEZA	Yoo Yeon Sung	Planning and Policy
IFEZ Global Centre	Jessica Kang	Administration
June Real Estate Agency	Juny Park	Realtor
KPF	Richard Nemeth	Architect, Master Planner
Gale International	Tom Murcott	Executive Vice President
Gale International	Christine Lee	Communications & Investor Relations
Former project manager at Gale International; Restaurant owner of What's David's	David Moore	Restaurant owner; Songdo expert
Gale International	Scott Summers	Vice President, Design & Construction
Gale International	Stan Gale	CEO
Incheon Metropolitan City	Mayor Yoo Jeong-bok	Mayor
Yeonsu-Gu	Lee Jae-Ho	Mayor
Cisco	Mi Young Lee	Communications ?
East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership	Spike Millington	CEO
GCF	Ulrika Martinius	HR
GCF	Junghyun Kim	Liaison Officer
UN GCF	Ana Lee	HR assistant
York University	Simon Posner	MA Candidate
	Ana de Oliveira	Architect, MBA
N/A	Andrew Stokols	Freelance journalist, researcher
Foreign Advisory Board	Soleiman Dias	Executive Member
George Mason University	Jung Ah Jung	Translator; Undergraduate, management
Cinder Bar	Warren Kidd	Owner
ComIn	Kim, Jini	communication & cintents service provider
Seoul National University	Bae-Gyoon Park	Associate Professor, Department of Geography Education

Seoul National University	Sofia Shwayri	Department of Environmental Planning, Graduate School of Environmental Studies
Birds Korea	Nial Moores	Director
IFEZ	Ryu, Kyung Tae	U-City Division
U-Life Solutions	Ji Won Jung	PR
Smart Compact City	Isis Lee	Tour Guide

Appendix D: Transit Connections to and from New Songdo City

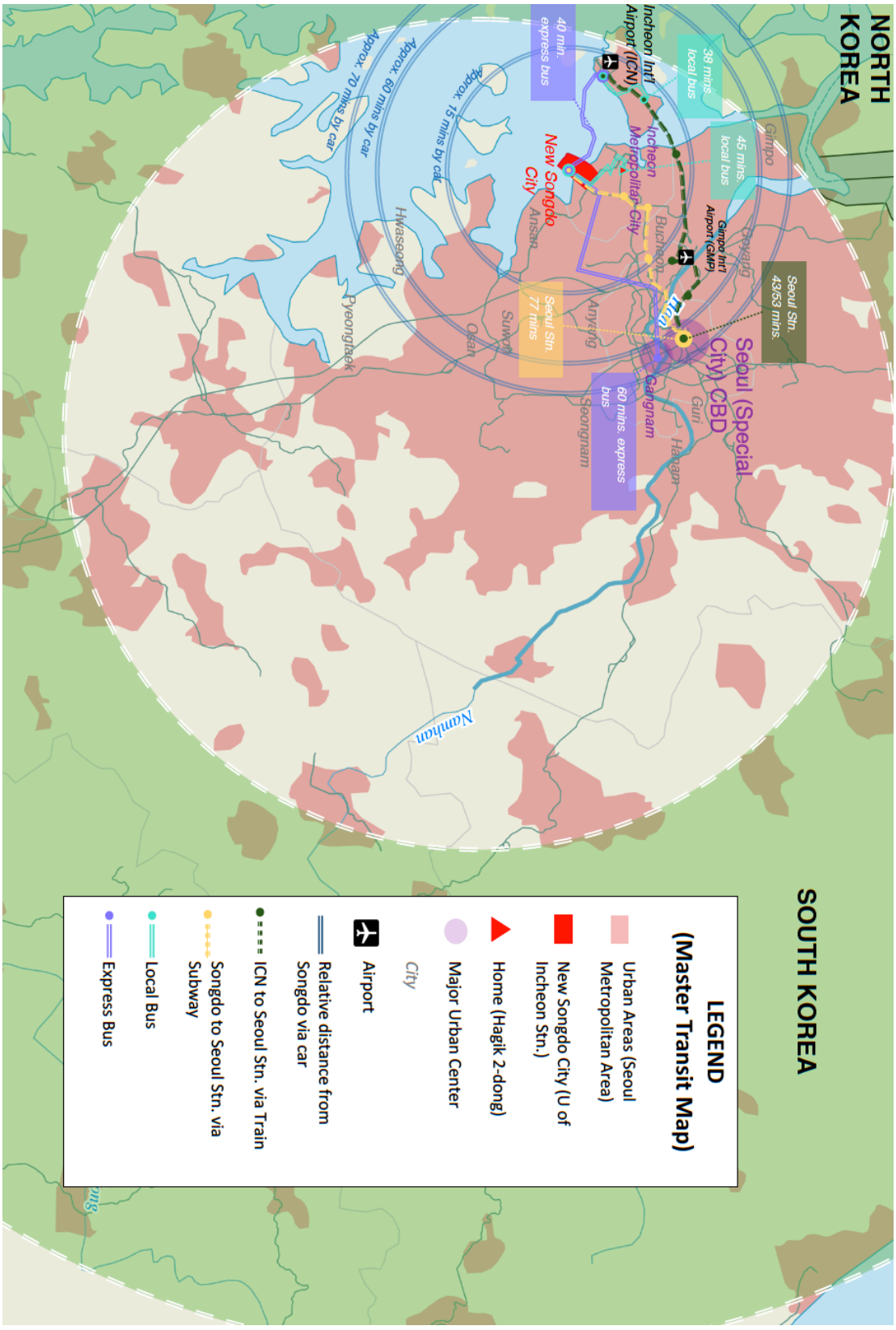
Map D1: Distance by airplane

Source: Author, 2017



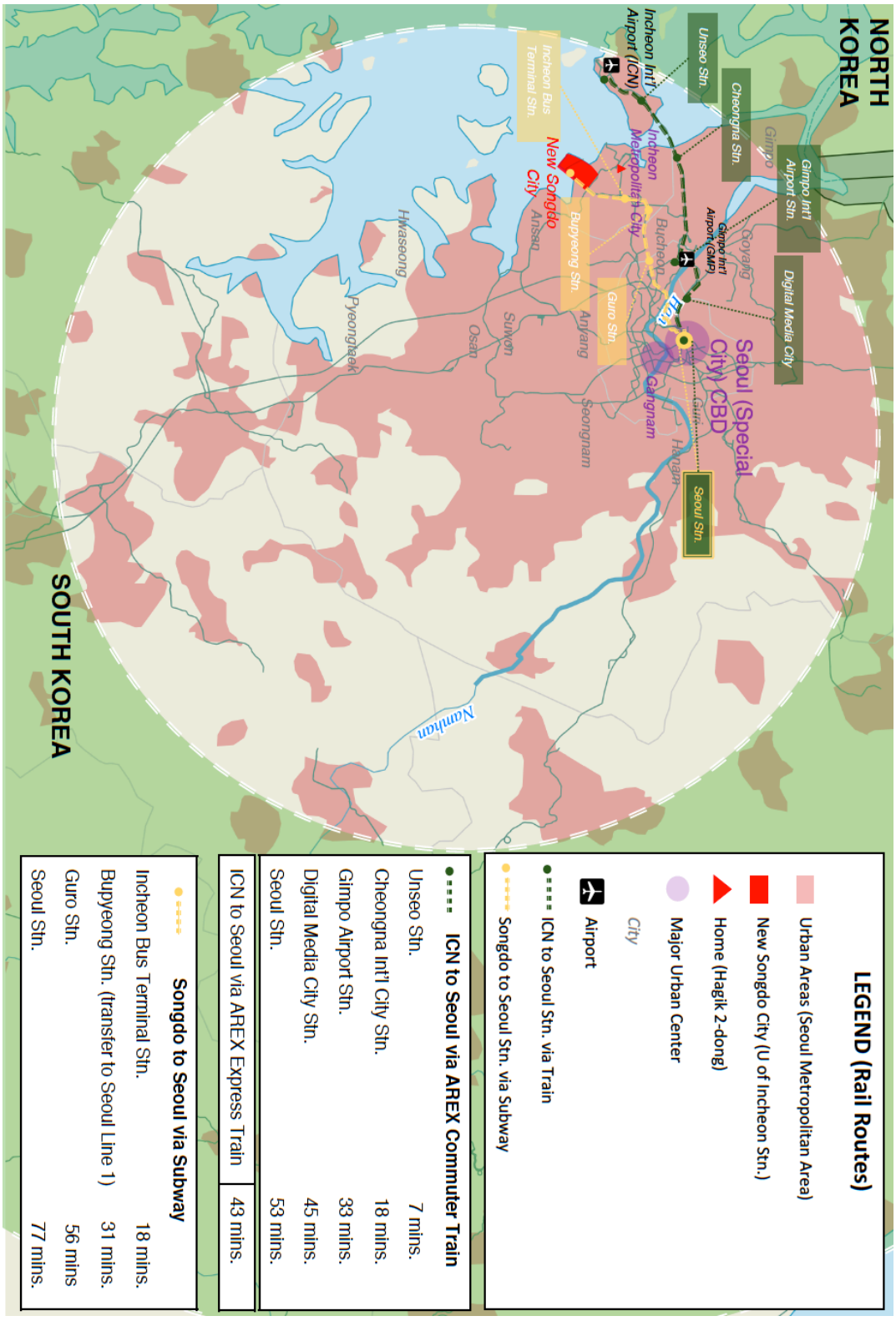
Map D2: Master Transit Map of the Seoul Metropolitan Area

Source: Author, 2017



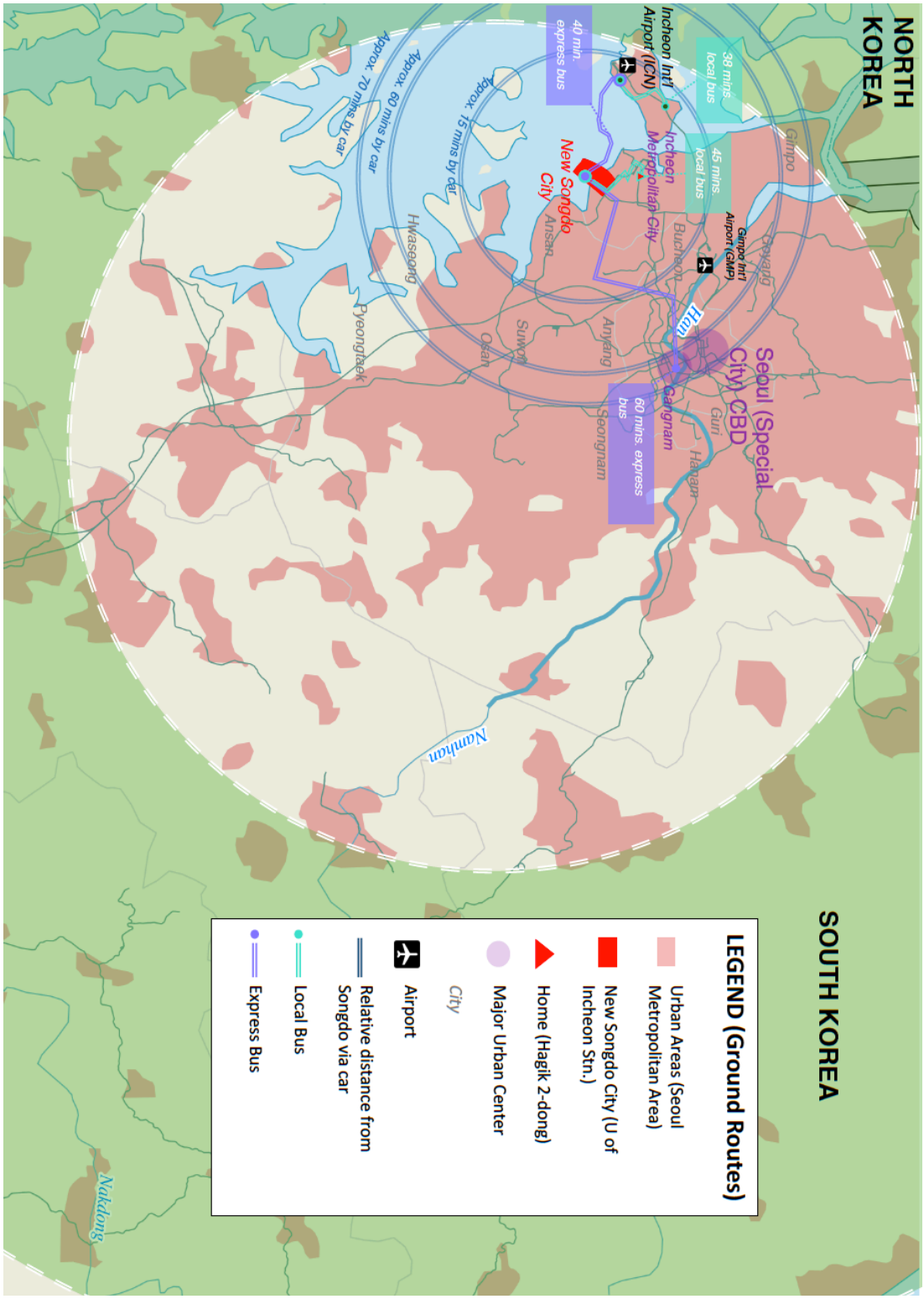
Map D3: Rail Transit Map of the Seoul Metropolitan Area and New Songdo City

Source: Author, 2017



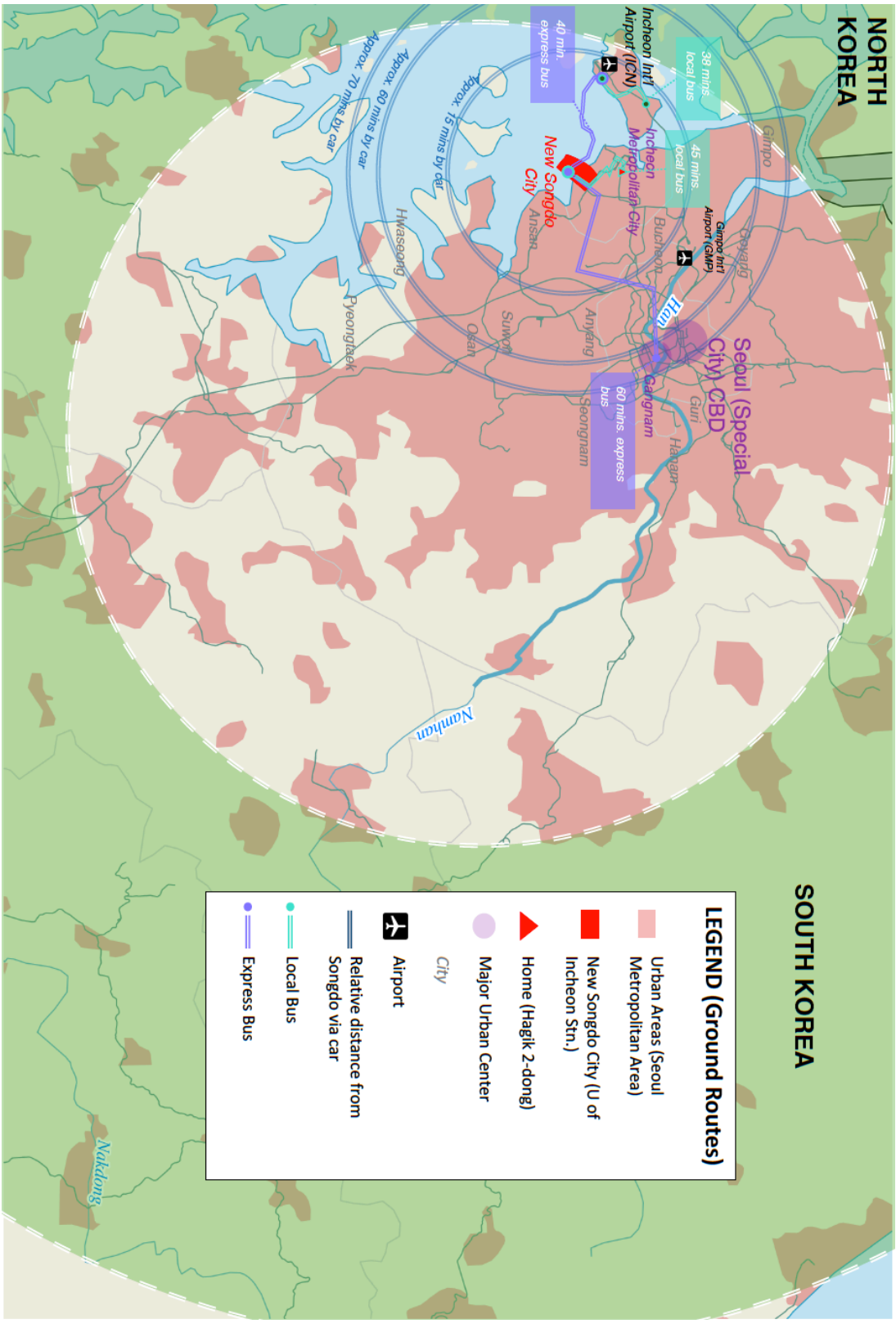
Map D4: Rail Transit Map of the Seoul Metropolitan Area and New Songdo City, focused view

Source: Author, 2017



Map D5: Transit Map (Ground Routes) of the Seoul Metropolitan Area and New Songdo City

Source: Author, 2017



Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Guide for Residents of New Songdo City

Introduction

- Research Outline
- Informed Consent

Background Information

- Length of residency in New Songdo City
- Location of residence
    - Rented? Owned?
    - Single or family occupancy?
- Previous place(s) of residence
- Reason for moving to New Songdo City?

Please discuss the following:

- Expectations of Songdo before moving to the city
- Did you research the city? How? What did you find?
- What were some of your initial impressions of the city? How have they changed?
- What are some of the challenges you face living in Songdo?
- What attracted you to the city?
- How do you experience the Songdo Smart City?
- How do you experience the Songdo Eco-City?
- How do you experience the Songdo International City?

Final Remarks, questions, and comments

Appendix F: Summary of Residents Interviewed

This table includes interviewees mentioned in this thesis. Those who are not directly mentioned are not included in the table.

Name (pseudonym)	Nationality (Self-Identified)	Length of Residency in Songdo	Marital Status	Individual Interview, Small Group Interview, or Focus Group?	Descriptors
Alice	American	1 year	Married with children	Small Group	Korean-American from California
Angela	Portuguese	<1 year	Single	Individual and Focus Group	Architect
Anthony	American	1 year	Married with 2 children	Individual	UN employee
Ben	American	-	Single	Focus Group	University staff
Camelia	American	<1 year	Married	Focus Group	Unemployed
Cathy	American	3.5 years	Married	Small Group	Unemployed
Daniel	American	1 year	Married	Individual and Focus Group	University staff
Darren	British	9 years	Married	Individual	Restaurant owner
Denise	Lebanese	10 months	Married with 2 children	Individual	Full-time mum
Ellen	Korean	-	3 years	Small Group	Husband works in Tokyo; frequent traveller
Emma	American	4 years	Engaged	Individual and Focus Group	English teacher

Grace	Uruguayan	10 months	Married with children	Individual and Focus Group	Unemployed; Speaks Spanish as first language
Heather	Vietnamese	-		Focus Group	-
Jack	American	Almost 4 years	Married with children	Small Group	Consultant at biotech company
James	American	6 months	Married with one child	Small Group and Focus Group	Member of the FAB and active member of the community
Janet	Korean	4 Years	Married with children	Small Group	Entrepreneur
Kate	Korean	3 Years	Married with 1 child	Small Group	Moved to Songdo for employment
Lydia	Korean	Non-resident	-	Small Group	Works in Songdo
Marie	American	4 months	Single	Individual	English teacher at s international school in Songdo
Melanie	Pilipino	-	Single	Focus Group	English teacher for business people
Pamela	Korean	3 years	Married	Individual	English teacher and community volunteer
Rachel	British	>1 year	Single	Focus Group	One of the few women I met employed in a white-collar position
Spencer	British	2.5 years	-	Individual and Focus Group	Works for a local

					environmental NGO
Steven	Brazilian	9 years	-	Small Group and Focus Group	Director at Chadwick International School
Victor	American	3 years	Married	Individual	Teaches at Chadwick International School; local musician