

Highlight: A Culture of Collaboration at UD

2018 Seoul Case Study Experience

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The Seoul Case Study Program is one of the more informative and fun ways to see South Korea in a week of Sunday-to-Friday programming. The University of Seoul hosts American graduate students who have public policy interests and provides a series of lectures and site visits to illustrate the ways in which the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) executes policy. As a requirement of participation, visiting graduate students produce a policy recommendation for the SMG based on their experience after returning to their respective universities.

These policy recommendations, typically in the form of a policy brief or short paper, are useful to the SMG because the city is willing to adopt sweeping changes that would be more difficult to implement in other metropolitan areas. While some of this is due to the cultural and political atmosphere in South Korea, a great deal is attributed to the history of Seoul itself. Seoul is a large city that developed incredibly quickly, from the devastation that followed the Korean War, to one of the more technologically developed metropolises in the world. Just under 10 million people live in the city, up from just over 1 million in 1950, meaning that 20% of the total population of South Korea lives in .6% of the land area. This makes for incredible density in an area that has developed very rapidly. Throughout and despite this sustained boom, Seoul preserved one-third of the city as green space. This was managed through a combination of city-owned parks and regulation of private property to create green space. Resultant of this managed development, many

parts of Seoul don't feel as one would expect of a city so densely populated. The University of Seoul's campus has generous open space liberally dotted with trees, and the renovated Cheonggyecheon stream-front walk is an oasis of green that stretches miles through the city. The renovation of the stream, though, is a prime example of the dramatic steps SMG has taken over the years, and one with beautiful results. The story of the renovation was presented during one of the lectures at the University, and later a site visit to the museum on the stream illustrated the story more pointedly.

During the Japanese occupation, the Cheonggyecheon became a de facto border between a Japanese neighborhood and a Korean one. Population pressures drove the construction of numerous makeshift houses on the Korean side, and the stream itself became intensely polluted. Due to its location in such a populous area, it was paved over in the burst of development after the war. In 1968, the SMG added an elevated highway, which contributed to Cheonggyecheon's status as a major thoroughfare. Thus it stayed until 2003, when SMG pulled down the entire highway structure as part of an urban renewal project. The whole project cost upwards of \$900 million and included the mass relocation of businesses that relied on the roadways in the area for large portions of their custom. More than five miles of highway is now a public recreation area. Due to the enormous scope of change the SMG is willing to enact, Seoul is an exciting place to study public policy.

The first day of the Case Study program, Sunday, October 21, did not dive into policy at all: it focused on the cultural background of Korea, and Seoul in particular, to provide context for the rest of the week. It helped set the stage for the sheer volume of information that was conveyed during the lectures, presentations, and site visits. The afternoon consisted of a field trip to, and walking tour of, Gyeongbokgung Palace, the sprawling former imperial residence in Seoul. Its popularity as a tourist destination for Koreans is a testament to the emphasis on continuity, history, and innovation that pervade and influence Korean culture, as well as the policy developed in service to that culture. One of the more prized and emphasized legacies of the Korean royal family we encountered on the walking tour was a cleverly engineered sundial that also functioned as an accurate calendar, demonstrating the historic value of technology and innovation in both Korea and Seoul.

Monday morning's discussion of energy policy in Seoul touched on the modern incarnation of the value of technology and innovation—specifically the One Less Nuclear Power Plant program. Seoul is responsible for only 4.2% of all electricity consumption in South Korea, largely because there is little industry in the city itself. In 2011, there was a significant impetus to raise awareness of and reduce energy consumption, despite the relatively small electrical footprint the city has. This was influenced in part by the Fukushima disaster, which sharply raised awareness, not just due to geographic proximity, but also because South Korea is sixth in the world in terms of nuclear energy production, with 24 active reactors. Another large part of the impetus stemmed from a heatwave in October 2011 that led to unexpected power demands for air conditioning and thus rolling blackouts in the city. A third impetus was a landslide which killed 32 people that year—the first deaths from a landslide since the Japanese occupation—raising more awareness of and concern about climate change and its impact. So, in an attempt to move away from nuclear and other non-renewable energy sources, the people of Seoul

pushed for the One Less Nuclear Power Plant (OLNP) program. The OLNP initiative set a goal to reduce energy consumption by 2 million tons of oil equivalents. The goal was reached in June 2014, six months ahead of schedule.

Seoul's response to waste and the policies surrounding waste management is also influenced by an awareness of the importance of climate change, as well as the space limitations of the city. The Mapo Resource Recovery Facility was the Tuesday site visit and is one of the site visits that occurs during most Case Studies. The site visits are not repeated identically in every iteration, but they're a central focus of the Case Study since they are one of the aspects that would be inherently irreproducible without being physically present in Seoul. When walking the city, the lack of trash cans in public areas is very apparent; visiting Mapo Resource Recovery Facility explained the reason behind that. Recycling a variety of different materials is easy in Seoul, though it requires sorting recyclables. Compared to the single-stream recycling common in many areas of the United States, Seoul has strict waste sorting requirements. Compliance with this sorting is high, however, because residents are charged for food waste and garbage by weight and volume, respectively, and are not charged for recycling. Additionally, during the initial phase of policy implementation, surveillance was used and reporting of violations encouraged to minimize illegal dumping. This helped reduce the garbage coming out of Seoul to a manageable volume. Mapo is built atop landfills that have been bulldozed over, and is surrounded by a park built on the same. Our guide explained that the still-massive quantity of waste generated is burned. The progressive filtering and processing of the waste and heat provide both electricity and heat to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Wednesday's site visit was aesthetically very different. The group was taken to the shining glass and steel of Digital Media City (DMC), a planned commercial development centered around digital media such as television, video games, and virtual reality. The several blocks that comprise the DMC were previously

a residential area that was constructed on a former landfill. Those residents were bought out: gentrification on a precisely planned scale. Due to the official nature of most of the introductions to South Korean policy we received, gentrification was primarily spoken around and not directly of. Instead, we got to explore augmented reality games in the DMC headquarters.

Beyond the DMC, Seoul is incredibly technologically integrated. Over the course of the week, we visited two Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs): the 119 Center, the combined fire and medical emergency response line; and the center for Seoul Transport Operation and Information Service (TOPIS). Those EOCs were set up similarly to the EOCs in the United States: the control room has a long conference table where stakeholders can come together for face-to-face discussions, a screen and podium at the front for whomever is presenting, and numerous communication devices to obtain information and communicate any decisions made. These functional similarities highlighted the differences in overall priorities, concerns, and operations at both locations. The first, and one that the two locations shared, is that the EOCs were both multiple storeys underground, with secure doors between the EOC and the outside world. In New Castle County, Delaware, where flooding is one of the primary disasters that an EOC could expect to encounter, the EOC is on the second floor, to remove it from the threat of flood. Seoul's proximity to North Korea requires that the EOC have locations that could maintain operations through the threat of missiles, despite the threat of flooding from the Han river. Another difference is that firefighter

teams responding to 119 calls have a team member whose primary responsibility is filming operations, in case the surveillance cameras, which are all around the city, are unable to provide a sufficiently accurate and immediate picture. The calls themselves can be video rather than purely audio calls, providing an opportunity for the trained medical responders available to respond to the calls to observe and make recommendations, including guiding callers through CPR.

Technological integration is also an overarching policy goal, with SMG aiming to be the most technologically advanced city in the world. This means that SMG has made issues like potholes reportable via mobile phone. It has also led to 'm-voting,' the survey app used for polling to provide transparency and more immediate citizen engagement on policy issues. M-voting also lets citizens run polls - one of the examples given was a family polling where they should go on a weekend outing. There was no shortage of interesting places to go during the evenings, when nothing was scheduled as part of the official Case Study. The night markets, the parks, and the restaurants were all fun to explore, even with limited ability to speak Korean.

The Seoul Case Study Program is a great experience in a fascinating city, and the Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration class that encompasses this trip is highly recommended for students of public policy. The Seoul Case Study Program class is a full-semester class that can be taken for one to three credits with Dr. Jonathan Justice, and is an immersive look at comparative public policy.