

# The Beginning and Settlement of the Apartment Housing in Korea During the Postwar and Economic Development Era

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**Abstract :** The purpose of the study is to examine how the apartment housing became common and how it became the main structure type of housing in Korea, as well as the social backgrounds. The study also focuses on how such phenomenon caused the housing problems which become social problems, and how new trials in terms of housing supply were performed to provide solutions to meet various housing needs of households. The purpose was accomplished by the examination of related literature since the liberation from Japan in 1945 to the early 1990s. In fact, it was uncommon to have apartment housing as the main figure of housing style. However, it became the major housing culture in Korea. Even if there have been lots of blames for apartment housing for last forty years, they were able to settle in Korea. Major reasons for such phenomenon include desperate needs for a larger quantity of housing due to industrialization, urbanization, etc.

**Key Words :** apartment housing, industrialization, urbanization, housing needs.

## I. Introduction

### 1. Purpose

Korea has been going through rapid social changes during the past half century due to the Korean War followed by the prompt economic development. The conflict and adaptation of traditional and Western values of urbanization, population and family structure, and the living styles, along with the rapid economic growth, influenced the housing culture. It is very unique how the apartment housing became populated so swiftly that more than 50% of the Koreans now live in apartment housing. The study concentrates on how the apartment

housing became common and how it became the main housing structure in Korea, as well as the social backgrounds. It also analyzes how such phenomenon caused the housing problems of these types to become social problems, and how new experiments are performed to come up with solutions to fulfill various needs. The study focuses mainly on housing issues during 1945, after Korea became free from Japan's colonial rule, to the early 1990s when the society and economy became stable. By comprehending the procedure and background of the introduction and settlement of apartment housing in Korea, the meaning of apartment housing in the Korean housing culture will become clarified, and the best way of development for the future can be found.

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## **2. Method**

Research method used for the current study is an interpretative analysis of the related literatures. The literatures include books, research papers, journal articles, government reports, magazines, daily newspapers, etc. for the explanation of social and housing conditions behind the whole process of beginning and settlement of apartment housing in Korea.

The study covers since the liberation from the Japan in 1945 when the social conditions for introducing apartment housing were began to the early 1990s when new changes were tried after the settlement of apartment housing as major housing culture in Korea. To accomplish the purpose, the existing housing buildings were primarily grasped. Also both macro and micro perspectives related to the topic were investigated. Specifically, the changes of society in general including housing policies, population and urbanization were examined on the macro perspectives. For the micro perspectives, the changes of everyday lives, needs and consciousness of housing were reviewed.

## **II. The Lack of Housing After The Japanese Colonial Period**

### **1. Appearance of illegal shanty housing**

Three years after the Japanese colonial rule ended, Korea has been divided into North and South due to political situations. Due to such circumstances, Japanese went back to Japan but many Koreans, who came back from foreign countries, and North Koreans, who escaped from the communist threat, settled in urban areas such as Seoul and Incheon. As people constantly moved into metropolitan areas during the chaotic period, the population in urban areas increased in haste.

The housing problems, which were left unsolved during the Japanese colonial period, became more severe resulting with more homeless people in urban cities in

1945. For example, in 1952, the amount of housing was only about 190 thousand, and the homelessness was reached 36%. However, since most of the houses were insufficient, it is assumed that the homelessness would have been greater than 50%. There were approximately 50 thousand houses that were abandoned by the Japanese since the independence. Two to three families lived in each of these abandoned houses but they were inadequate (SMG, 1995). Until 1948, when the Korean government was established, the U.S. army forces remained in Korea for three years in order to stabilize the society in confusion. During this period, they mainly tried to solve the problems of starvation and order. Therefore, housing problems were considered insignificant. Furthermore, the people living in the house left by Japanese were forced to leave, as they became properties of the military government. Therefore these people became refugees and the housing problems became more severe.

As South Korea established the new Government, the political conflict with North Korea increased. The Government considered security, military, and a basic political system more essential and housing problems again became a second choice. Yet, the <Korean Housing Corporation> derived from the <Chosun Housing Corporation> started to have at least the minimum influential power. New policies on abandoned housing, which were conservatively managed during the three years under the U.S. military government, were established. The inhabitant in 1950, had the priority, and the current inhabitant should first purchase the house and then pay the price through a long duration. It was the first housing policy for Koreans. However, the urban population growth exceeded the establishments of housing policies that the number of poor housing such as shanty houses near rivers or on mountain hills greatly increased in Seoul. Before the Korean War, only 53% of the people in Seoul owned normal housing (KHC, 2002).

The Korean War started in 1950 caused a great damage throughout the nation. Seoul, especially, was severely bombed and eventually, destroying most of it. Nearly half of the 190 thousand housing units were damaged, and 20

thousand of them became incapable to serve. Consequently, 30% of the entire housing system had to be newly renovated. Also refugees' communities were formed throughout the nation during the war. People, as the war ended in 1953, moved back to urban areas. Farmers also moved to cities due to hardships in agricultural lives. People gathered and built illegal housings in order to 'survive'. The government eventually started destroying such houses, and the situation continued on.

The illegal housing facilities, which appeared during this period, were shanty houses, which were underground shack built during the Japanese colonial period. After the Korean War, however, the shanty houses were built with galvanized iron, veneered plywood, and asphalt roofing etc. By that time, shanty house, tent house and cave were common, and multiple families living in the same house was considered usual. In addition, such poor houses extremely lacked in size and materials that these caused the area to become a shanty community. Such circumstances got worse as time went by. The areas with poor housing were very different before and after the Korean War. Before the war, poor housing was built under bridges, near the river, or on the hills at the boundary areas of Seoul. However, after the war, those were spread even to the center of Seoul, making the situation worse.

Under such circumstances, the government enforced the law on refugee accommodation in Seoul. This was previously used in Busan to relieve the war refugees from homelessness. October 1953, President Lee, Seung-Man even stated that homelessness is a more severe problem that must be solved promptly. He believed that homelessness was more significant than food situation and started reconstructing the nation (SMG, 1999).

## **2. The construction of public housing and the introduction of apartment housing**

After the war, the destroyed housing had to be

reconstructed or newly built. From 1955, the Korean Housing Corporation (KHC), the Korea Development Bank, Seoul city government and other public, financial, and voluntary organizations started to construct public housings. Among those, the most active role in reconstruction of housing was played by the KHC. The KHC constructed approximately 3 thousand housing units with various names until 1956. Considering the financial circumstances by that time, such accomplishment was a large amount.

The construction of public housing was financially aided usually by the UNKRA (United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency). The government paid for the construction that the refugees were able to receive houses for free. The public housing was called differently depending on the structure, source of funds, and the construction purposes. Before the war, they were usually built with wood. After the war, however, the inadequateness of materials caused the housing made of adobe (1952-56), which were built with a mixture of sand, lime, and cement. Later, as cement got produced, cement block housing (1957-61) was built. The housing facilities during this time period were houses, which consisted of the minimum living conditions, built with the minimum amount of materials in a minimum size (SDI, 2002).

During the early stage of the reconstruction period after the war, single-family housing was usually built. However, as the construction technology got developed, apartment housing was introduced in order to increase the efficiency of land use. The first apartment housing in Korea is the <Hengchon Apartment>, which was built in Seoul in 1957. It consisted of 8 row-house buildings with 52 units and 4 apartment buildings with 48 units. The apartment was a three-story building with a basement, and its inner and outer walls were all made of concrete-block. This was the symbol of the effort to solve the homelessness through the new construction methods, and it clearly foreshadowed the creation of actual apartment housings.

In 1957, the <Chongam apartment> was built in

Chongamdong, Seoul. There were three apartment buildings with 152 units. The apartment attracted a lot of people by using the best materials and inviting engineers from foreign countries for advice in the 1950s, when apartments were very rare. Governors, artists, professors, etc, who were considered high class during that time, lived in such apartments. This apartment showed the various Western characteristics as the first Western style apartment for multi families in Korea. It also consisted of a living room and balcony, a kitchen with a sink, and the first flush toilet in Korea. Also, other Westernized characteristics, such as an efficient kitchen and restroom, division between the living room and bedroom, attracted a lot of people.

The apartment housing from this period have significance that such type of housing was first introduced to Korea and that it provided a way to spread such type of housings throughout the nation along with the development of construction technology. Since then, traditional wooden housings, which were built in a handicraft way, were no more built. The housing culture, which lasted for thousands of years, halted immediately after the war and the reconstruction of the country.

### **III. The Needs for A Larger Quantity of Housing Facilities**

#### **1. Population change and urbanization**

From 1945, the independence, to 1960 was the most chaotic period in terms of the politics, society, economy, and population changes. The South Korean population in 1945 was 16,136,000. It, however, rapidly increased until the 1960s and reached 24,989,000. The refugees caused such phenomenon from North Korea, immigration from Manchuria and Japan, lower death rate, and higher birth rate caused by the 'baby boom'. Since the 1960s, the economic development was rapidly enforced, which caused the population to grow as well. The population change during this time was closely related to the

industrialization, urbanization, and the change in households. From the early 1960s to the early 1980s, the Korean society became more settled, along with an economic growth (Kim, 2002). The high birth rate started to reduce as the government enforced the policy of population suppression and as the social atmosphere changed. The death rate also reduced during this period. However, the reduction in birth rate was much greater than the population growth rate decreased rapidly.

The most prominent change from the early 1960s was the rapid increase in the household size caused by the change in family structure. The size of a household reduced and the organization of generation got simpler. The number of households increased as other family forms such as one person household, single elderly household, single parent household, female-headed household became common (Kim, 2002). The increase in number of households eventually caused a severe homelessness. In 1960, the total number of households in the nation was approximately 4,360,000, and it increased 3 times to become approximately 11,350,000 in 1990. Compared to the change in number of households, the number of dwellings increased to 7,160,000 from 4,460,000, which was only a 1.6 times increase. This clearly showed that homelessness was severe all the time at this period (Yoon, 2002).

The industrialization speeded up urbanization, eventually causing homelessness to become more severe. Urbanization, especially, accelerated after the 1960s during the rapid development. The 1960s was the time period, when the Korean society shifted to become more industrialized than agricultural. Since the industry and society renovation occurred simultaneously to strengthen the basis of industrialization, a massive rural exodus shortly emerged. Due to the economic development policy, which only stressed on imports, the rural areas rapidly became devastated and more people headed to the urban areas. Table 1 shows the population changes in Seoul and Kyunggi area since 1960.

&lt;Table 1&gt; The distribution of population in Seoul and Kyunggi area (%)

	1960	1966	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
Seoul	9.8	13.0	17.6	19.9	22.3	23.8	24.4	22.9
Incheon and Kyunggi	11.0	10.6	10.7	11.6	13.2	15.3	18.4	22.3

(Source: KNSO, Census of Population and Housing, 1960-95)

## 2. The economic development plan (edp) and the massive supply of housing

According to Korea's first Population & Housing Census in 1960, the housing conditions were still critical, though it has been seven years since the Korean War. The households with ownership in Korea were 79.3%, with Seoul having 56.5%. However, the household mentioned here involves normal houses and even warehouse, shanty house, tent, underground shack or other illegal poor conditioned buildings. The quality was also very poor (KHA, 1995). Until the 1960s, almost 15% of the Seoul population lived on illegal settlements. People in such areas were unaware of water supplies, transportation, education, or medical facilities. The situation was similar in other metropolitan areas, such as Soowon, Incheon, Sungnam, which rapidly developed during the extension of space in Seoul, and in other major cities, such as Busan and Daegu.

Since 1960, the government's housing policies established a long-term plan to compensate for such circumstances. A massive housing supply was a national problem. The solution for such problem was brought up from the boundaries of the EDP. Thus, the government's involvement and intervention in the housing market was unavoidable. The solution to the housing problems was planned more specifically during the five terms of EDP as the following (Ha, 1999).

### 1) The first EDP (1962-1966)

This was the first time for Korea to create the industrial basis, under the comprehensive plan, for the country to have an independent economy. During this time, there were two housing problems, which were the

lacking quantity and the inefficient quality. Therefore, the government focused on building more houses to reduce homelessness. It especially put more effort into building public housings for lower class people with less financial supply, who lived in deteriorated poor housing. For this, the government established new laws and provided institutional foundations for the development of a massive housing complex.

### 2) The second EDP (1967-1971)

This was the time when Korea concentrated on the rapid growth in the economy. Thus, housing constructions were considered insignificant. So the supplies in private sectors were more supported than in public ones. During this period, the Korea Housing Bank was established to support the housing constructions through to attract the private capitals. In order to provide solutions for the population growth in urban areas, the cities were managed and increased to develop massive housing sites. Also, the poor residential areas started to get organized. On the other hand, civil apartments started to get constructed to increase the efficiency of the land use in urban areas. In the early 1970s, huge exclusive apartment complexes were built in Seoul. During this period, approximately 540,000 units were built.

### 3) The third EDP (1972-1976)

The development and stability of the economic reconstruction started to balance out each other. However, the urban population was extremely intensified that the homelessness and illegal housings in city areas increased. Thus, the government focused on settling the development of apartment housing complex. It built housing facilities along with city developments, and it stressed collectivization and high-rise, also ran

huge site development projects to form massive areas of housing complex in major cities. However, the housing supply rate in the total nation reached only about 76.9%, which was much lower than the goal.

#### 4) The fourth EDP (1977-1981)

During the three terms of the EDP, the development results were not evenly distributed that the class differences increased, and the society became unstable. In order to compensate for such conditions, the government established a mass-production system of the construction of apartment housing. It also announced a plan to stabilize the price of housings and to increase the construction of small housing for low-income households in public sector. While constructing apartments and supplying those, gambling phenomena happened and the homelessness became even more severe. Problems such as, increase in housing price, instable housing conditions of renter households, low quality housing conditions, and conflicts between different classes due to massive housing constructions, were brought up once more.

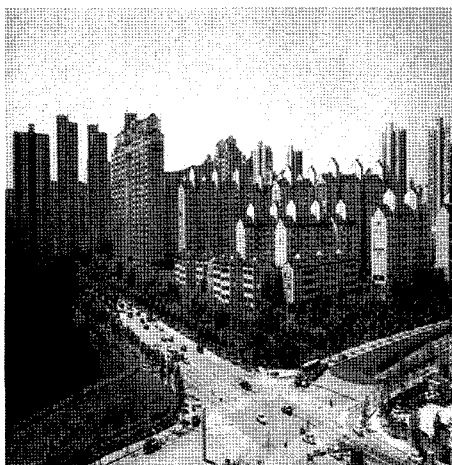
#### 5) The fifth EDP (1982-1986)

The homelessness became extremely severe, the housing price increased, and the housing problems were still very critical. During this period, the goal was to stabilize the housing price, to improve the housing status, and to increase the supply of cheap housing for low-income homeless households. However, the city's poor housing areas for low-income households were destroyed to build massive apartment complexes that the housing policy for the poor families was not followed according to its original purpose. Although the housing construction in public sectors greatly increased, due to the apartment constructions for the middle classes, the speculation in real estate became more severe.

From the late 1980s, the housing policies became more specified by dividing the income groups. A housing policy for low-income groups was permanent rental housing and became the turning point as a true



<Figure 1> Yeoido apartment complex, 1970 (left) and high-rise apartment complex in Jamsil, 1976 (right).



<Figure 2> New town in Bundang, 1989.

social housing. Such housing supply continues on to the 2,000,000 units plan (1988-1992). However, due to the governments plan to construct 2,000,000 units in a short duration, excessive housing investments were made compared to the economy size. As shown in <Figure 2>, Bundang was constructed at that time with other new towns such as Ilsan, Pyeongchon, etc.

### 3. The spread and unification of functional apartment housing

Since the 1960s, the housing market in Korea concentrated on quantity. The ideology of functional apartment housing started to become significant. In doing so, the Korea Housing Corporation (KHC) played a major role. The KHC introduced huge examples of Neighborhood Unit theory, which was a modern concept

of housing complex, and became the role model of other businesses. The KHC concentrated on constructing apartments, and it introduced the use of lightweight materials, prefabricated housing using dry method, and mass production of materials to reduce the price, to decrease the term of works, and to produce more housing. The massive supply of reinforced concrete also played a significant role in doing so (KHC, 2002).

The government also established the upper limit of apartment price and its application system in 1977 in order to restrain gambling on apartments. The price control had a positive aspect by stabilizing the price of apartment, but the due to this, the cities turned into apartment forests. Due to the limited apartment price, having various floor plans, exclusive materials, more unique facilities and technology became a great burden to the company along with the increase in price. It was impossible to provide good housing through creativity, quality, and price competition, under such circumstances. Thus, the planners faced obstacles related to freedom and belief in planning. This eventually caused uniform unit housing and appearance, complexes to get produced (See <Figure 3>). The companies in private sectors were able to construct housings in large quantities by uniform plan and construction, and sold them to earn more benefits (KARCHIPCE, 2001).

On the other hand, the plans of apartment housing complex were not able to attract a lot of attention until the 1980s. The exterior area was planned to suit the



<Figure 3> Apartment complex with uniformed appearance.

minimum legal guidelines needed to form a complex. Equal unit housing continually placed in a parallel row formed the exterior of the complex. The KHC also tried the cluster method, which forms a court. It was due to two purposes; to provide a public area as a residents' community and to efficiently use land (KHC, 2002).

The unit of a apartment housing was given as a whole as a uniform housing based on the appropriate size calculated. This stated that the common family type was a nuclear family with 4-5 members, who are parents and children. It also suggested 85 m<sup>2</sup> as the reasonable size. This size became popularized, and it eventually uniformed the floor plan of a housing unit. It is still the most common apartment size that is constructed in Korea, and also caused the floor plan of the unit, kitchen and restroom facilities, finishing materials, furniture arrangement, and a way of space use to become uniform.

#### **IV. Living in Western Housing: Conflicts and Compromise**

##### **1. The western housing and traditional living style**

The Korean society traditionally kept the extended family system. However, since the industrialization and the urbanization since the 1960s the social and geological shifts intensified, and the Korean society changed to have more nuclear families. The rate of nuclear families in 1977 was 66.8% and it increased to 75.4% in 1985. Extended families with more than three generations living together, decreased from 26.9% in 1960 to 10.3% in 1990. The average household size per household also decreased annually from 5.7 in the 1960s to 3.8 in the 1990s, which is a reduction of two persons (Kim, 2002b).

Nuclear families showed characteristics that cannot be seen from extended ones from the past. The uniqueness and creativity of each family member were respected,

and women's statuses were improved. Also, an equal family relationship was made. Marriage, children's education, respecting elders, husband and wife relationship and their role divisions were considered democratically. Families with both parents working became common, thus the living conditions were improved, and leisure time and financial comfort were increased. Consumption was more emphasized than production since the 1970s. This was a new characteristic of living produced by nuclear families. The preference for nuclear family increased greatly among the young generation people in the cities. The increase of nuclear families also raised the total housing demands, thus intensifying the shortage of housing. The more preferred housing type for nuclear families was the multi-family housing, especially apartment. This influenced apartments, which were being produced massively by that time, to become the symbol of nuclear families and to become the most common housing structure in Korea.

The Western living style was introduced from the early 1960s. The traditional Korean housing had a briquette hole and under-floor heating room called Ondol, a bedroom and a living room where most of the families spent time at, a conventional toilet at the corner of the garden, everyday lives centered to the floor of the rooms, and an interior which had few furniture except a closet. However, the housing built in Western style had the living room inside and used it as a living area instead of having a yard. This was due to the purpose to escape from the discomfort and inefficiency that came from traditional housing called Hanok. Also, it was separated into sleeping areas and living ones, kept the bathroom inside, and renovated the kitchen. Especially, it was very reformed to have the housewife's household chores to be done in living room and kitchen in an efficient way.

Such changes were made to the first apartment complex in Korea, <Mapo apartment>, shown as <Figure 4>, in 1962. Mapo apartment portrayed the Western life styles pursuing a living by furniture, having an individual heating system using briquette and flush toilet



<Figure 4> The first apartment complex, Mapo apartment, 1962.

for the first time in Korean history.

The Western living with a sofa, kitchen cabinets, and dining table, was introduced mainly through apartments. Apartments, later on, were still based on the Western living styles. However, most of the people were not totally free from the traditional life styles or consciousness and lived in apartments, that not all opinions about apartments were positive. Especially, the space organization for the Western living conflicted with the traditional housing culture, and went through an adjustment period. The procedure can be summarized as the following (KARCHIPCE, 2001);

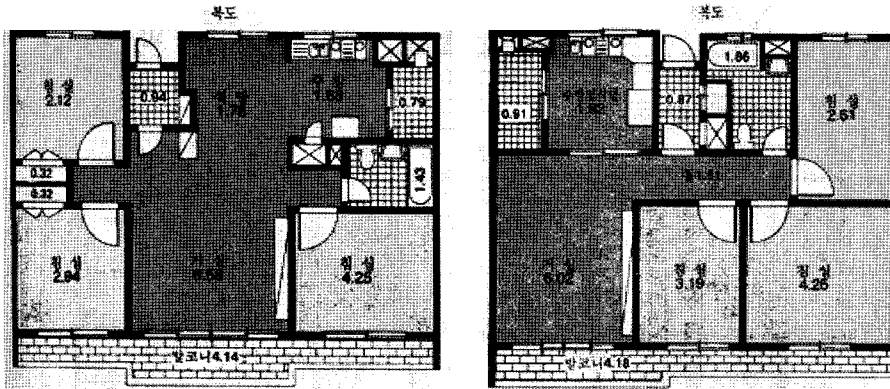
### 1) The Korean style living room

Living rooms first appeared in Mapo apartments in 1962. The open space plan with the living room in the center took a lot of time to settle in Korea. Until the 1970s, the way of dividing the bedroom and living room, which was the Western style of space planning, was used. However, later on, the open space plan with bedrooms surrounding the living room was settled as shown in <Figure 5>. In the 1980s, the LDK method settled which connected and combined the public areas, as the common way of planning.

### 2) The settlement of the floor heating system that seems like traditional Ondol

In the early 1970s, the Western radiator heating systems were introduced. However, as it faced conflicts





<Figure 5> Preferable unit (left) and less preferable one (right) in 1970s.

with the traditional housing culture, the majority of the bedrooms in apartments started having floor panel heating system by the mid 1970s. After the mid 1980s, the total indoor areas, including the living room and dining room, began to have floor heating.

### 3) The choice of living styles

The use of beds, sofas, and tables increased, yet living in both of these two styles became very common. Especially, due to the floor panel heating, sitting on the floor in bedrooms or living rooms was still preferred.

### 4) The use of master bedroom called Anbang as a bedroom for parents and as a place for the family's public use

Though living rooms appeared in the houses, due to the traditional living styles, serving visitors or family gathering was still held in the Anbang. Therefore, the Anbang is placed in the front of the house with the living room, and it was planned to become the center of family living. The preference for the southward and the traditional paternal living style played a significant role in having the Anbang placed in a certain way.

## 2. The preferences for apartment housing and its generalization

When apartment housing were first introduced to Korea in the early 1960s, they were not able to attract a

lot of interest, because there was a stereotype that apartments were for low-income households and doubt in the poor construction. However, as time passed by, suppliers, such as the KHC, started producing a large quantity of apartments in high quality. Therefore, people started considering apartments as an alternative housing style and people's preferences for apartments were gradually increased. Especially, the apartments that were built after the 1970s were aiming for middle-class clients. The middle-class nuclear families, which were young, educated, and rich, demanded for a simple but high quality of life. Thus, such people accepted apartments as an attractive housing style. There were more reasons why people preferred apartments: they were near the cities with comfortable transportation coming from massive supply; they consisted of various public services and convenient facilities inside the complex; they were easier to manage for nuclear and dual-income families; they were considered as the symbol of urban life and modern culture; the elitism came from apartment livings; they were the best for asset accumulation, due to the high preferences for apartments.

In the early 1980s, apartments became one of the most prominent figures of the Korean society with more than 500,000 households living in those. This was mostly due to the political influence, which caused the apartments to lead the housing market by supplying massive amounts for 2, 30 years. Also, the middle-class life, which was

<Table 2> The distribution of the structure type of housing (%)

	Single-family housing	Apartment	Others
1970	95.0	0.7	4.3
1975	92.0	1.4	6.6
1980	89.7	4.9	5.4
1985	82.2	9.0	8.8
1990	75.3	14.8	9.9
1995	59.8	26.9	13.3

(Source: KNSO, Census of Population and Housing, 1970-95)

portrayed in the media as elegant and opulent, resulted in envy and imitative feeling among the people. They were able to buy apartments if affordable. Thus, purchasing an apartment was considered the same as entering the middle-class. It was also used to show off wealth and social status. It also consisted of various social implications, such as changing the reputation of apartments and strong propensities of ordinary Korean people to join middle-class. The increase of apartments in the distribution of structure type of housing is presented in <Table 2>.

The living styles of middle-class families settled in Korea since the 1980s. It basically meant living in an approximately 100 m<sup>2</sup> apartment with a car and various electronic devices and live a physically opulent and relaxed life, enjoying leisure and eating outside. The Western space planning, a restroom for parents in the master bedroom, a stand-up living with sofa and beds, central heating system, a bathroom that always supplies hot water, comfortable and efficient kitchen, a well planned outdoor spaces including parking lots, and various convenient facilities, etc. were the major features of a comfortable middle-class life that were desired by modern people.

The people continuously preferred apartments since the 1980s. As shown in <Table 3>, in 1987, 79.3% of the people answered that the preferable housing type was single-family housing, and it reduced to become 63.3% in 1992. However, the preference for apartments

<Table 3> The preference of the structure type of housing (%)

	Single-family housing	Apartment
1979	92.5	6.5
1982	85.0	12.5
1987	79.3	18.3
1992	63.3	34.2
1997	61.4	35.2

(Source: KNSO, Social Index in Korea, 1979-1997)

increased 2 times from 18.3% to 34.2%. Especially, 52.8% of the people under 30 preferred apartments to single-family housing (43.3%) (Yoon, 2002). The Korean society seemed to be showing a stage of changing norms that has gone beyond a preference stage.

In the 1970s, mostly the middle-class people preferred apartments. However, as they were massively supplied and as new housing policies for low income people were established, the target of supply and area expanded. Also, the social and cultural chances, which only a few chosen people were able to have, started to spread out among everybody along with the income increase in the society. Many people started asking for better living qualities through housing lives. The apartment housing culture, which was introduced through various sources during the past 29 years, already went beyond the stage of imitation for non middle-class people. They were able to enter the apartment housing culture of the middle-class through the stages of practice and adaptation. Since the late 1980s, apartments were not any more housing types for only middle-class people.

The imitation and adaptation between different classes, which were made with apartments in the center, also influenced different housing styles such as single-family housing. The physical characteristics, the structures of housing, were different but certain aspects like space arrangements, materials, equipments and the contents of living tended to copy those of apartments. In accepting apartments as the middle-class housing, crazy speculation on apartment also played a major role. The preference for and purchase of apartments increased, and the land

price also increased that the housing prices went up, directly relating to speculation.

### **3. Apartment housing and social problems**

Since the beginning of the introduction of apartments in Korea, bipolar problems of low-income apartments and luxurious ones were already present. Massive apartment supplies under social issues such as development and renovation eventually caused fraudulent work. Furthermore one apartment building even collapsed. Low-income apartments, which were built in by deceit, had possibilities to become slums in the 1970s. These apartments were already categorized as poor housing in the 1970s with severe safety and sanitary problems.

Under such circumstances, luxurious apartments, in contrast of low-income apartments, were built in large amounts. They were extremely different in terms of quality and quantity. The super high-rise mixed-use building, located in the cities, with residential and commercial together and some apartments in certain areas were larger than 165 m<sup>2</sup>. In contrast to the low-income apartments, which were about 33 m<sup>2</sup> for 4-5 people, this was extremely huge. The interior was constructed separately, in Korean or western, depending on preferences. They also attracted rich people with high technology facilities, such as a bathroom, flush toilets, warm water supply, and heating and cooling systems that can be controlled with a button.

During the 1960s and 70s, the Korean society faced another social problem, which was the division between classes based on different homes. While massively supplying homes since the 1960s, the government formed colossal apartment complexes and enforced spacious redistribution of classes. This caused the class divisions in urban areas to intensify. The social and financial characteristics, and life style, minds, actions, and even the general customs of each class were classified based on type, size and location of the

dwelling, which the people who formed each class, owned.

In the 1970s, apartments were usually supplied in complexes. Apartment complexes made the separation of social classes easier. The apartment complex areas portrayed the spaces for the upper-middle class people. Due to the purpose of mass production, a complex was formed with similar sized housing units. Thus, the residents, who lived in apartment complexes, had a closer relationship with each other than other housing complexes. In terms of the characteristics of site, size, furniture, equipment, materials, and decorations, the differences between each class increased. Based on such procedure, in the early 1980s, Seoul was already divided into different housing areas based on the class divisions. People were able to predict what kinds of people were living in what kinds of ways in different areas, just by knowing the name of the place.

The rehabilitation project of urban poor housing, which was conformed in the 1980s, caused other class division problems to occur in apartment supplies. In some areas, high-rise apartment complexes coexisted with the areas of poor housing. Such division, isolation, incongruity, and relative deprivation between classes became other social problems.

Urban poor problem is another production of the Korean economy. In the urban poor, there are some needy households with extreme poverty included, but most of them are those from rural exodus. The rural exodus, caused by the industrialization and the economical policies that stressed imports, reached its climax in the 1960s. The urban population, who massively moved from rural areas, intensified homelessness. They also illegally settled in national and public lands in the boundaries of Seoul and formed huge poor residential areas (Ha, 1999). It was possible to live with much lesser amount of money in such areas than living in normal housing areas. Also, such location provided the urban poor with appropriate living means. Though it was instable, there were employment networks that were useful to the urban

poor, and they were able to build strong relationships between each other by coping with the situation together (Kim, 1985).

In the early 1960s, the government attempted to destroy the poor residential areas by justifying themselves with the improvement of city environments and ground efficiency problems. In addition they tried to force the inhabitants out to the boundaries of the city. However, most of these people had jobs in the cities that the new settlements became a slum once again. Therefore, since the late 1960s, the city government of Seoul stated to enforce a policy to nurture the poor housing selectively, which were better than a certain condition, than physically evacuating them. This was a rehabilitation policy, which respected the citizens by legally protecting the people's effort to repair the poor housing and influenced the people to actively join the rehabilitation project business. Later on, the government assigned the area for the improvement of housing environments, and enforced new policies for the urban poor, such as repairs of poor housing, and installations of water supply and group work area, etc.

However, the urban poor were still not able to relieve poverty in the 1980s that the problem of this was continuously perceived as a social problem. Since the 1970s, the inhabitants themselves started to renovate, destroyed, and regenerated their poor housing, but the areas continued to expand. In the 1980s, these areas became the target of the new regeneration plans. In 1983, the union of residents was organized and new way of rehabilitation, which allowed private developer to get involved, was introduced. This activated the rehabilitations but most of the areas became apartment complexes, causing numerous errors. Thus, gamblers, separation among the classes, solutions for the renters, conflicts between the residents, threat of evacuation, violent and forced evacuation, and strong resistance from the inhabitants, which come from the driving process, caused violation of human rights, which are still left as a new task that the Korean society must solve.

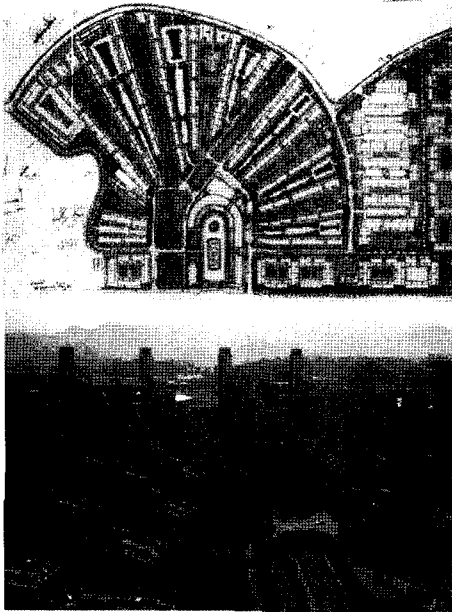
#### 4. New trials of apartment housing

During the twenty years since the 1960s, apartment housing was able to spread and became common in a short period, based on the rapid development that Korean went through. However, the disadvantages coming from apartment living such as noise, privacy, security, etc. were constantly mentioned and discussed. Therefore, since the 1980s, the bodies related to housing supply started putting more efforts in the provision of apartments more cautiously and they started having new attitudes and concerns about the target users of housing.

C.A.Perry's Neighborhood Unit theory, which was a strong paradigm during the spread of apartment complex, started getting replaced with new attempts along with the regrets on the isolation of the complex. From the Sangyedong, which was developed in the mid 1980s, new trials to harmony with the other urban spaces were introduced. Also, in a similar period, other apartment complexes, such as Asian Athletes' apartment, Olympic Athletes' apartment, and Mokdong new town, were made to clearly distinguish themselves from the previous apartment complexes. They provided new features with clear concept of plan, the appearance of building arrangement, the circulation of cars and pedestrians, the plan of outdoor space, and other specifications of building plan. Also, there were new attempts conserving the original natural environment, such as making terrace houses on ramps (KARCHIPCE, 2001).



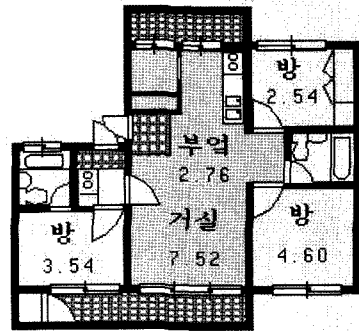
<Figure 6> Mangmi terraced apartment in Busan, 1986.



<Figure 7> Olympic athletes' apartment with radial arrangement, 1988.

After the 1980s, the long cubic styles of buildings were not built any more in southward in rows. In order to show diversities in the appearances and arrangements of apartment buildings, there were various attempts made, such as composite arrangement with tower style buildings, the combination of low- and high-rise buildings, and radial arrangement, etc. Since the 1990s, the construction companies showed more interest in the outdoor areas of the complex than the interiors of the unit housing. Thus, typical complex planning started to disappear.

Since the mid 1980s, super high-rise mixed-use buildings were constructed as the development of metropolitan area and the downtown regenerations were being enforced. The 15- and 20-story apartment buildings that appeared in 1985 were the first super high-rise apartments. Also, apartment buildings, which combined the residential and commercial, appeared in the central areas of the cities after the end of 1990s. Most of those were super high-rise, so they improved the efficiency of land use in the downtown areas. The time it took people to move from their homes to workplaces during rush hours decreased significantly due to the fact that the



<Figure 8> Floor plan for the three generation apartment in Sanggyedong, 1986 (Source: KHC, 1995).

distance between their homes and workplaces was reduced. Moreover, the residents were able to comfortably enjoy the recreation facilities within the building. This kind of apartments, at the beginning, was initially formed with 1-2 buildings, but as they formed complexes, they started playing a major role in supplying housing. Though high-rise and super high-rise apartments had great views and spaciousness, they had limited the approaches to the ground, caused psychological stress and traffic jams through high densities, and spoiled the scenic beauty that destroyed the housing environment. This caused people to criticize such buildings and raised awareness of the new types of housing (SDI, 2001).

There were various attempts made on floor plans. In 1986, the three-generation apartment, provided in Sanggyedong was a new attempt of unit housing considering the conventional family structure in Korea (ACK, 1991). An extended family was a still vital family structure in the Korean society because a great proportion of elders live with their married offspring. Such advantage of an extended family was emphasized in the plan of three-generation apartment (See <Figure 8>.). The introduction of apartments with ordered floor plan and those with flexible plans was also due to the attempts to respond to various needs of the users. In the late 1980s, there were other attempts made in apartment housing. Some were just limited attempts, but most of them became the symbol showing the change in the

housing market such as those that allowed the users to choose the floor plan, those that allowed the users to choose the finishing materials, those for the disabled, and those that made it possible to combine or to divide two units, depending on the needs for the housing size.

## V. Conclusions

It is uncommon to have apartment housing as the main figure of housing style. However, it is the major housing culture that is formed in Korea. Though there were numerous negative predictions made, they were able to settle in Korea. There were major reasons that were more significant than the appearance of apartment housing. They included homelessness after the war, one of the world's largest population density and rapid urbanization, the social atmosphere due to rapid inventions and developing era during the past 50 years, and the housing policies on such situations, only possibility to quickly improve the housing conditions in a society that rapidly changes, and the group consciousness of Koreans pursuing homogeneity, imitation, and adaptation.

The past 50 years was the time period when apartment housing was introduced and settled in Korea. The time since the 1990s was a period when new changes were needed. The apartment housing in Korea shows the possibility to develop in a positive way. It is never negligible from the Korean housing culture, and the only problem left is to constantly look for quality improvements, and to prevent super high-rise, which already have shown several errors. In order to do so, the shape must change to fit the Korean situation. Also, the housing policies centered on quantity should alter its direction to support housing welfare. The homelessness of urban poor should also have solutions, which will emphasize the advantages of an apartment housing. Also, the life style that changes to become more various, instead of becoming uniform, should be considered, and a variety of plans needed to do so, should be presented.

The study understood that the supply and expansion of apartments were not only due to the housing supply aspect but also due to the user's need for modern living and the imitation and aspiration for the middle class in the economic development era. Therefore, it is proven through the apartment expansion process that housing is a combination of both physical and architectural traits and also a social phenomenon. However, the effort to investigate new housing types is needed because the counter reaction against the Korean apartments is being discovered. Also, the research on the social factors that cause such phenomenon should be continued.

The contribution of the study is to organize the undiscovered historical materials and to understand the changing process of housing based on the objective historical materials. This differentiates itself from other studies that ignored the historical materials and were instead based on the researchers' intuitive interpretation and general information, which eventually caused mistakes in describing the history. Another contribution of the study can be found in the study method. The conclusion of the study is the discourse on the historical facts. Therefore, it cannot be statistically quantified. Such qualitative research is superior over quantitative research considering the current global studies trend.

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