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The Role of the Skyscraper in Shaping the Korean Central Business District

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Abstract

When one thinks of an city, perhaps the first image that comes to mind is the skyline. While important cities have always had symbolic skylines made up of palaces and city halls, it was in the end of 20 century Korean city that the terms city and skylines became practically synonymous. The evolution of the Korean central business district (CBD) was shaped by, and in turn attempted to shape, the skyscrapers office tower. It is a bit difficult to decide where to start a discussion of this phenomenon, since the tremendous concentration of activity in the Korean CBD is both the cause of and the result of the invention of the skyscraper. On the other hand, the monumental office skyscraper has had such a major impact on the Korean CBD that is no wonder it has also become very controversial. Many researchers have argued that skyscrapers are ruining the city while others argue that they have saved the city through economic revitalization.

The purpose of this paper is to systematically examine, from the perspective of history and urban design, the role of skyscrapers in CBD and to draw finding and lessons. The key research questions of this paper include:

What is the original meaning of the terms of CBD and downtown?

What are the main forces behind the skyscraper comes of age?

What is the impact of skyscraper office buildings on CBD in terms of urban design perspective?

To answer the questions, the present paper conducts a literature review of major downtown development including urban renewal studies in downtown Seoul. This paper uses a secondary data such as journals, books, Census Data, and pictures which deal with understanding the programs and practices aimed at shaping Korean downtown. No attempt is made to report the result in a way that is generalized. Nevertheless, common trends and the results of a careful review are reported here based on a depth of understanding and review of its body of literature.

In this paper, I wish to concentrate on two in terms of the skyscraper and urban design : (1) Downtown revival and the Office Boom (2) Skyscrapers and

Urban Design; Problems and Prospects the Skyscraper comes of age (1) the skyscraper and the over-concentrated CBD (2) the skyscraper and diminished downtown diversity (3) the skyscraper and the skyline wall.

The purpose of this paper is to systematically examine, from a historical point of views, urban renewal phenomenain the U.S. and to draw findings and lessons. Clear understanding of downtown and urban renewal stories in America should lead to more critical thinking about how urban renewal policy and programs have worked and which aspects are indeed useful for future downtown redevelopment. The key research questions of this paper include: What is the original meaning of the terms of CBD and downtown? What are the forces at work behind the emergence of the American downtown in the 20th century and recent theories on the future of the American downtown? What are the main forces behind the federally supported U.S. urban renewal programs effected after World War II? Why did these programs initially enjoy broad-based support? And why have they eventually been called failures?

To answer the questions, the present paper conducts a literature review of major urban renewal studies in

the U.S. This paper uses a secondary data such as journals, books, Census Data, and pictures which deal with understanding the programs and practices aimed at shaping American downtown. No attempt is made to report the result in a way that is generalized. Nevertheless, common trends and the results of a careful review are reported here based on a depth of

understanding and review of its body of literature. This paper begins with a brief history of urban renewal policy in the U.S. Next, it reports the details in accordance with the preceding research questions. Finally, this paper closes with the findings and lessons.