

Research Paper

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Study on the Value of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage: Evidence of Humanity**DOO WON CHO¹***¹Board Member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Vice-President of ICOMOS KOREA, and Expert Member of the World Heritage Subcommittee to the Korea Heritage Service***Abstract**

The heritage of Busan, recognized as the wartime capital, stands as a remarkable testament to the urgent collaboration among the government, citizens, and the United Nations to ensure the safety of the people and protect refugees during the Korean War (June 25, 1950 - July 27, 1953), the first conflict of the Cold War. The principle of humanity, central to the UN's mission, is intrinsically linked to the existence and protection of human rights in the Republic of Korea, a nation that adopted a liberal democratic system in 1948, as well as to the events of the Korean War.

In this regard, this analysis will examine how the attributes of humanity—coexistence, solidarity, and inclusion—were implemented in government operations, refugee life, and international cooperation facilities during Busan's tenure as a wartime capital, and whether these principles continue to be upheld today. During the Korean War, Busan served as a wartime capital for 1,023 days (First Period: August 18, 1950 - October 26, 1950, Second Period: January 4, 1951 - August 14, 1953). Most of the facilities associated with the wartime capital were repurposed from existing structures. However, even after the armistice agreement on July 27, 1953, rapid urban development occurred, and these facilities have been well preserved in Busan's city center for over 70 years. This study analyzes the values and significance of a heritage site in Busan Wartime Capital during the Korean War, which was used for emergency purposes and has maintained its vitality during the post-war urbanization process. Given its humanity-linked nature, we compare it with similar World Heritage sites to discuss its uniqueness. We also analyze the key attributes of coexistence, solidarity, and inclusiveness, which constitute the site's core values. This analysis establishes a domestic and international foundation for the protection of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage.

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Keywords*Busan, Wartime capital, Humanity, World Heritage, Cold War***1. Introduction**

The outcomes and functions of various historical acts in the field of cultural heritage are ongoing, reflecting an active movement toward recovery through memory, commemoration, and self-reflection on historical events. Among these, one significant international event that cannot be overlooked on the Korean Peninsula is the Korean War. This conflict is particularly notable as a pivotal moment in human history that unfolded during the Cold War, within the broader context of international history (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.). First, the Cold War period is categorized as the period from 1947, two years after the end of World War II, to 1991, when the former Soviet Union collapsed. The aspects of the Cold War are divided into the 'Eastern Bloc' centered on communist countries and the 'Western Bloc' centered

on the free market economic system, and the Korean War was an 'event' that occurred amidst the military, economic alliances, ideological and systemic expansion between the Eastern and Western camps, and the subsequent checks and restraints. Among the numerous international incidents resulting from the ideological expansion and arms race between the East and the West in the following; North Korean communist expansion occurred in the Eastern Bloc in 1948, the Truman Doctrine was declared to support resisting communist influence, and the Greek Civil War also took place in 1948 as a conflict involving the Western Bloc. The First Indochina War began in 1948 with Western involvement, and the Marshall Plan was initiated in the same year to promote economic recovery in Western Europe. The People's Republic of China was established in 1949 within the Eastern Bloc, while NATO was formed as a Western military alliance in 1949. The Warsaw Pact was created in 1955 as the Eastern Bloc's response. The United States conducted a nuclear test in 1945, and the Soviet Union followed with its own test in 1949. The Korean War erupted in 1950, marking a significant event in international history due to its impact on the conflict on the Korean Peninsula. During this period, Busan served as the temporary capital of the Republic of Korea and as a Wartime capital for those representing the free democratic camp on the peninsula for 1,023 days (First Period: August 18, 1950 - October 26, 1950, Second Period: January 4, 1951 - August 14, 1953). Meanwhile, the significance of the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage was recognized through the collaborative efforts of scholars, researchers, the Busan Metropolitan City, its citizens, and the Korean government, resulting in its inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List in July 2023 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2023). Ongoing in-depth research, heritage protection, and heritage utilization initiatives are currently underway amid diverse interests. In this context, within the framework of World Heritage, this study systematizes the value and significance of the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage during the Korean War, identifies its key attributes and the components that reflect them, and examines the feasibility of protecting this heritage in a way that reflects its humanity.

2. Methodology

The heritage significance of Busan can be seen as a collection of diverse values. Its historical importance as the wartime capital during the Korean War is reflected in functional, social, and humanitarian aspects. The Busan Wartime Capital Heritage site demonstrates universal human values of overcoming war, rebuilding, and pursuing peace through a multi-layered structure that organically links three values—government maintenance in the functional value, refugee life in the social value, and international cooperation in the humanitarian value.

The key attribute of this paper, encompassing the entire Busan Wartime Capital Heritage Site during the Korean War, is "humanity," as defined in the dictionary. The Cambridge Dictionary defines humanity as "understanding and kindness towards other people." The derived word "humanitarian" means "a person who is involved in or connected with improving people's lives and reducing suffering." For example, regarding the legacy of the wartime capital of Busan, "The United Nations is sending humanitarian aid to the areas affected by the Korean War" (Cambridge University Press, n.d.).

In other words, in situations where coexistence with others is possible, solidarity and inclusiveness, grounded in understanding and kindness, underpin humanity. This expression of humanity can be seen as a humanitarian response to support the newly established liberal democracy in the Republic of Korea during the Cold War, initiated by UN Security Council Resolution 84 (United Nations Security Council, 1950). This dictionary definition, along with the UN's specific, humane measures involving over 60 countries in peacekeeping efforts, has been implemented in Busan, a city at the forefront of coexistence related to Busan citizens, South Korean refugees from other regions, and North Korean refugees, solidarity demonstrating the relationship between the South Korean government and the UN forces, and inclusiveness related with South Korean and North Korean refugees, UN forces, and enemy forces.

Therefore, the study examines how these core attributes—coexistence, solidarity, and inclusiveness—can be reflected in the elements of the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage. To deepen understanding, it also compares this heritage to similar sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List that represent values of humanity.

The research aims to identify specific aspects associated with each attribute and to highlight elements that fully capture the character, integrity, and authenticity of the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage as a heritage of humanity in the aspect of the UNESCO World Heritage framework. The research methodology is outlined in **Figure 1**.

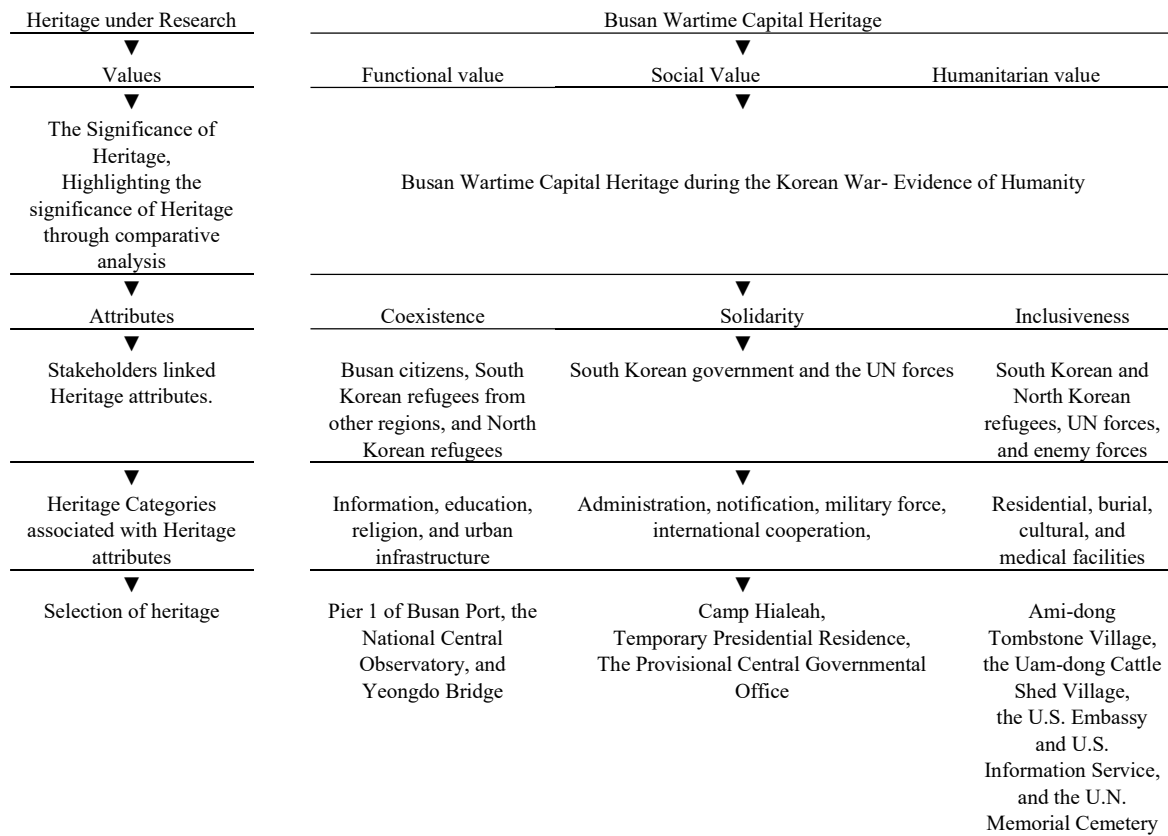


Figure 1. Flow chart of the research methodology.

3. Diverse Values of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage

As the war situation deteriorated and the government relocated to Busan, the city became the final stronghold and main base of the counteroffensive, serving as a rear logistics hub and wartime capital (Busan Metropolitan City, 2019). During the Korean War, Busan served as a temporary capital, preserving the Republic of Korea's constitutional functions and upholding liberal democracy. It played a crucial role in national recovery by supporting United Nations forces. The significance of Busan as a wartime capital will be examined in terms of its role as a war command post and as the endpoint of the Pusan Perimeter, and its rapid formation following large-scale population movements. Furthermore, we will examine the functional, social, and humanitarian value of the capital space, which strategically uses its topographical features and existing infrastructure in emergencies.

3.1. Functional value of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage

In terms of functional value, 'building a wartime capital' is the most important. The establishment of a capital that simultaneously served as a war command post and maintained the administrative, legislative, and judicial functions of the newly founded liberal democracy following the Pusan Perimeter is a rare case in international history.

3.2. Overview and significance of the Pusan Perimeter

When analyzing the international historical context of the Korean War, the 'Cold War' must be mentioned or explained. The Cold War period is defined as 'starting two years after the end of World War II and ending in 1991 when the former Soviet Union collapsed' (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Map of the Cold War.

Source. Histoire Pour Tous de France et du monde (n.d.)

In this part of international political history, the Korean War is viewed as an 'event' that occurred during the expansion of military and economic alliances, ideologies, and regimes between the East and West, along with the subsequent checks and deterrence measures (Figure 3).



Figure 3. The outbreak of the Korean War and the Pusan Perimeter.

Source. Encyclopædia Britannica (n.d.)

It was a conflict between North and South Korea from 1950 to 1953, with the ideological struggle between communism and democracy as a prominent feature as global powers became involved. Specifically, the Korean War, which began on June 25, 1950, was mainly driven by North Korea's advance and was opposed by the United Nations forces, including the U.S. Army, which established the Pusan Perimeter with U.N. support. It laid the groundwork for the country's development and territorial restoration (Figure 4).

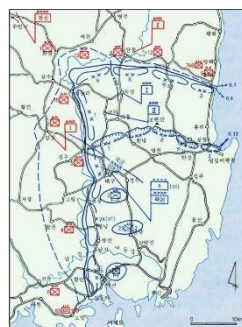


Figure 4. Pusan Perimeter.

Source. Institute of Military History of the Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea (2008)

In particular, the Pusan Perimeter was a 140-mile (about 234 km) defensive line established by UN forces in southeastern South Korea, centered on the port city of Busan during the Korean War. This line was a crucial point where UN forces could halt the North Korean army's advance and launch a counterattack. It extended from the Korean Strait to the East Sea, with the Nakdong River on the western boundary and mountainous terrain on the northern boundary (Institute of Military History of the Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea, 2008).

This defensive line enabled them to defend Busan, a strategically vital port city for relief and military logistics, and the country's emergency capital. From an international historical perspective, it gave them a strong defensive position where UN forces could regroup and launch counterattacks. Holding this line prevented further advances by the North Korean army into South Korea, ultimately laying the groundwork for strategic operations such as the Inchon Landing on 15 September 1950, which ended on 19 September. It also set the stage for turning the tide of the war and

preserving South Korea's sovereignty by using irregular forces, such as the Yeongdo guerrillas, who infiltrated the enemy's rear in the Busan Yeongdo Island area to disrupt operations and destroy enemy facilities (Briscoe, 2013).

3.3. Logistics Center Busan

The city of Busan developed into a modern port city after its port opened in 1876, following the Ganghwa Treaty. Its port expanded significantly after Korea and Japan's annexation in 1910, becoming the main shipping hub on the Korean Peninsula. During Japanese colonial rule, the port became a center of exploitation and later served as a gateway for Japan's continental invasion in the 1930s. In the Korean War, Busan played a vital role, with most United Nations Allied Forces, led by the U.S. Eighth Army, entering through the port, which also handled military supplies and civilian relief efforts (Seo, 2023, p. 135). Consequently, Busan became a city marked by political, economic, and social diversity, symbolizing its international presence while maintaining a strategic military importance. The port supported the United Nations and the Republic of Korea armed forces by managing command and control during the Pusan Perimeter operation and by providing logistical support to sustain supplies for UN and ROK troops along the Nakdong River, reinforcing its crucial role in the conflict (Figure 5).

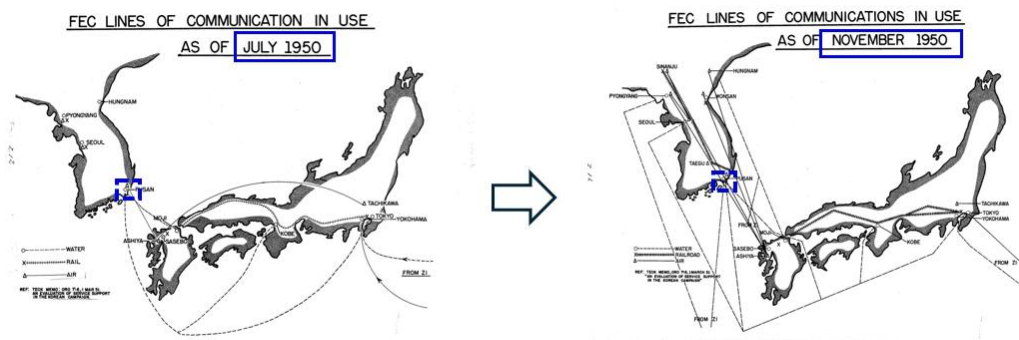


Figure 5. Changes in US military logistics supply in July and November 1950, at the beginning of the Korean War.
Source. Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library (n.d.).

3.4. Maintaining the government functions of Busan, the wartime capital

The wartime capital role in Busan was more than just a political evacuation. Legislative, judicial, and administrative functions were relocated there to make use of the existing infrastructure at the time. For example, the National Assembly held meetings at the Busan Theater and the Culture Theater, and legislative activities continued. The legislative activities recorded in the minutes of the National Assembly and the official gazette at the time show that Busan was not just a temporary administrative base but a true center of government operations. During the Korean War, from December 1950 to early January 1951, the UN forces retreated from Seoul in response to an offensive by the Chinese People's Volunteer Army and communist forces. After regaining control of the city post-January 4, 1951, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea relocated to the Gyeongnam Provincial Office building in Busan. It continued its functions without interruption after the Constituent Assembly, thus maintaining the government's legislative authority (Busan Metropolitan City, 2025a). Therefore, Busan, the wartime capital, can be recognized as historically significant because it was a place where constitutional functions were upheld and democracy was actively practiced.

3.5. Social value of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage

The social value of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage is closely linked to the survival and recovery of refugees. It exemplifies the choices made under desperate circumstances, reflecting a culture of emergency use and sharing, as well as ongoing reconstruction efforts even after the armistice. A government survey conducted a year after the Korean War began revealed that refugees arrived from all over the country, resulting in Busan's population soaring from 470,750 in 1949 to 844,134 in 1951—an increase of over 370,000. As of March 1951, the majority of these refugees had come from Seoul (165,878), Gyeonggi (32,599), North Korea (33,891), South Gyeongsang Province, and Gangwon Province (Cha et al., 2010). Over one million refugees sought refuge in Busan, transforming it into

both a battlefield of survival and a city grappling with extreme deprivation. The influx overwhelmed urban services, leading to social chaos and a severe housing shortage. Refugees often lived on mountainous hills in makeshift shacks vulnerable to collapse, with limited access to water and electricity, and constant threats of fire, hunger, and hardship. Factors such as unmanaged refugee populations, the development of shantytowns, aid supplies from overseas, and devastating fires like those at Gukje Market and Busan Station profoundly altered the city's landscape. Yet, amid these struggles, the resilience and hope of refugees became the driving force behind Busan's social and spatial transformation. These displaced individuals, who had once enjoyed peaceful lives elsewhere, now relied on the coast, riverside, mountain villages, and marketplaces as their new homes and workplaces. The 'One Room Emptied Movement,' a response to the desperate need to sustain families through market stalls and to find shelter, exemplifies the city's humanity and inclusiveness—highlighting how the trauma of war was met with resilience and shaping Busan's identity as a city that endured and transformed through adversity.

3.6. Humanitarian Value of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage

The humanitarian value of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage lies in its demonstration of humanitarianism, notably as the only city where international aid was present during armed conflict in the Cold War era, exemplifying humanity without distinction between friend and foe, as enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. During the Korean War, international cooperation enabled the emergency use of local facilities to support refugees, embodying a universal humanitarian spirit at the global, national, and regional levels amid Cold War geopolitics and the war's aftermath. Following Korea's recognition as the sole government on the peninsula in 1948 and the subsequent outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the UN supported South Korea's government through UN Security Council Resolution 84 (United Nations Security Council, 1950) and peacekeeping efforts, with over 60 nations contributing aid despite limited independence among many countries at the time. This aid framework included US technical assistance, UNKRA, and KAVA, underscoring Busan's pivotal role in refugee acceptance and settlement during the conflict. Reconstruction efforts involved organizations such as KCAC, UNKRA, the government, and military forces, fostering domestic and international solidarity and laying the foundation for future responsibilities in protecting children (Busan Metropolitan City, 2025b). Additionally, Busan's involvement in the Korean War, set within Cold War international politics divided between communist and liberal blocs, underscored its importance in global cooperation and support for Korea's reconstruction, symbolizing the protection of humanity and the experiences of refugees on both national and international levels, thereby highlighting the historical and functional value of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage.

3.7. Comparative studies regarding the heritage of humanity

To better understand, several examples of cultural heritage sites where humanity has been or is being practiced are presented, highlighting the differences between these and the Busan Wartime Capital heritage sites.

At first, Holocaust Rescue Networks had been related to the activities and traces of individuals and organizations who worked to rescue Jews during World War II. The Related World Heritage Site is Auschwitz Birkenau - German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1979). This heritage is distinct from the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage during the Korean War, which reflects the spirit of coexistence, solidarity, and inclusion, and is located in a strategically important geopolitical location through international solidarity.

Secondly, disaster response can be raised as a comparative case for the heritage of humanity. For example, the Historic Centre of Évora is related to the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake and the development of Enlightenment thought. At that time, Aid was provided by Spain, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany after the earthquake. Questions arose as to whether natural disasters were God's will, leading to the development of more scientific urban planning and architectural methods (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1986a).

This heritage site has a distinct contribution to its formation from the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage site during the Korean War, which was linked to human-caused physical conflict.

Thirdly, regarding Heritage related to overcoming disease, Toledo Santacruz Hospital, a charity hospital in Spain, is included in the World Heritage Site 'Historic City of Toledo.' Toledo retains a series of outstanding examples of 15th- and 16th-century architecture: the church of San Juan de los Reyes and the Cathedral, the hospitals of San Juan Bautista and Santa Cruz, the Puerta Nueva de Bisagra, etc. Each of these monuments is a perfect example of a particular type of architecture of the Spanish Golden Age, whether religious, hospital, or military. Moreover, Toledo witnessed the emergence, starting in the Middle Ages, of a Mudejar style that combined the structural and decorative elements of Visigoth and Islamic art, adapting them into successful styles, as represented in buildings such as Santiago del Arrabal (13th century), the Moorish Workshop and Puerta del Sol gate (14th century), the wainscot of Santa Cruz Hospital and the chapter house of the Cathedral (15th and 16th centuries), etc. The value of the hospital building is evaluated solely as an example of architectural style (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1986b).

The Historic City of Toledo, with its legacy of hospital facilities linked to representative philanthropic activities, stands apart from the other philanthropic heritage sites that formed the Busan Wartime Capital during the Cold War in the 20th century. In particular, the Historic City of Toledo is a comprehensive urban heritage site that reflects the city's entire history.

Lastly, when considering heritage related to peaceful diplomacy, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) in Japan stands out. This site has served as a powerful symbol of world peace for over fifty years since the devastation caused by the most destructive force ever unleashed by humanity. The memorial highlights a different aspect of human resilience and can be seen as a legacy of peace linked to the conclusion of war (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1996). In contrast, the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage, associated with the Korean War and involving multiple nations during the Cold War, offers a different humanitarian lesson. It embodies international solidarity through the diverse refugees who resided in Busan at the time and the emergency capital operations that served as a springboard for national recovery.

4. Significance of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage

Based on the functional, social, and humanitarian values discussed above, the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage Site, located in a strategically important geopolitical location during the Korean War, demonstrates resilience through solidarity and inclusiveness among the government, refugees, and the international community. It reflects how existing facilities and infrastructure were repurposed during the war to ensure survival and aid humanitarian efforts. This site exemplifies international, national, and regional solidarity and inclusiveness, demonstrating how systems have adapted to promote coexistence among diverse peoples amid the challenges posed by refugee crises. It embodies the unique spatial composition of Busan as a wartime capital, encompassing legislative, judicial, and administrative districts, as well as international cooperation zones, even under wartime conditions. Most of these sites—excluding the UN Memorial Cemetery—were built during the late Joseon Dynasty and the Japanese colonial period and were rapidly repurposed within 50 days of the outbreak, as most of South Korea was occupied, leaving only the area south of the Nakdong River. Used in emergencies, these sites provided refugees with comfort and hope, exemplifying humanitarian practices aimed at overcoming the crisis.

The following section examines how the attributes of humanity, as part of the heritage, can be applied to the specific components of the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage Site in the context of coexistence, solidarity, and inclusiveness.

4.1. Coexistence of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage

The dictionary definition of "Coexistence" is "the state of being together at the same time and place ("Coexistence," n.d.-a). In this regard, information, education, religion, and urban infrastructure such as waterways and streets related to Busan citizens, South Korean refugees from other regions, and North Korean refugees who gathered in the strategically located city of Busan to ensure safety and survival during the Korean War can be classified as related heritage. In other words, this section closely links the formation of the United Nations Command to the outcomes of efforts to sustain liberal democracy in the Republic of Korea.

Busan, as the wartime capital, played a crucial role in providing both administrative and military support to safeguard the nation and government functions and economic support to protect its people and stabilize daily life. Its

responsibilities included maintaining government operations, supporting war recovery through legislative, judicial, and diplomatic efforts, ensuring national defense, and facilitating military cooperation, including joint efforts with UN forces. During the wartime capital period beginning in July 1952, a constitutional amendment was enacted, and Syngman Rhee was elected as the second president via direct elections. A currency reform was implemented to curb inflation caused by the war, with Busan handling 85% of the country's trade at that time. The city also hosted UN organizations, various foreign embassies—including the United States—and the US military headquarters, which managed military operations and logistics. Notable infrastructures such as Pier 1 of Busan Port, the National Central Observatory, Yeongdo Bridge, and Bokbyeongsan Mountain Drainage Area exemplify how diverse groups collaborated during this era to achieve common goals.

Pier 1 of Busan Port (Figure 6) served as a gateway for 2 million UN forces, transporting supplies and refugees and providing relief supplies, making it a historic site that illustrates the economic aspects of refugee life. Pier 1 was a key hub that coordinated and connected the wartime capital's logistics and transportation system, and it was particularly used as a space for special vessels such as hospital ships and power lines. Busan Port, where Pier 1 is located, was a key port for the repatriation of prisoners of war, the transport of refugees, and the unloading of humanitarian supplies. It can also be seen as a site where the wartime humanitarian obligations of the Geneva Conventions (Conventions III and IV: Protection of Prisoners of War and Civilian Persons) were put into practice. Currently, excavations are underway at Pier 1 to examine remains from the time of the wartime capital (Busan Metropolitan City, 2019).



Figure 6. Pier 1 of Busan Port, No. 1 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2019)

The National Central Observatory (Figure 7) utilized the Busan Regional Meteorological Administration, located on Bokbyeongsan Mountain, north of Daecheong-ro. The National Central Observatory provided regular weather information to refugees, providing information on the operation of the fishing industry, their primary livelihood, and the management of ships and hospital ships transporting relief supplies. Its location, free of surrounding structures and offering a commanding view of Busan Port, played a crucial role in managing the coastal waters where relief and aid supplies flowed in and out (Busan Metropolitan City, 2019).



Figure 7. The National Central Observatory No. 3 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2019)

Yeongdo Bridge (Figure 8), completed in 1934, was Korea's first land and drawbridge and served as a gathering place for refugees to meet and communicate. During the Korean War, the bridge was raised six times a day. This symbolic significance drew refugees here, hoping to find family members separated during the evacuation, and it became a place to soothe their sorrow and longing for home. Fortune-telling services, which listened to these stories, also flourished. Furthermore, it appeared in various songs that sang the joys and sorrows of the refugee period, soothing the sorrow of the displaced. Its influence continues to this day, and Yeongdo Bridge is recognized by the Korean people as a symbol of refuge (Busan Metropolitan City, 2019).



Figure 8. Yeongdo Bridge.
Source. Author (2025)

The Bokbyeongsan Mt. Drainage area (Figure 9) played a vital role, drawing water from the Seongjigok Reservoir through a 15km pipeline to supply tap water to refugees who crowded the Daecheong-ro and Sanbok-ro areas of the city center. Due to a severe water shortage at the time, it was supplied only twice daily, but it helped ease the suffering. To accommodate the constant influx of refugees into the city, the limited capacity of the Bokbyeongsan Mt. Drainage area was continuously reinforced from 1952 to 1955, providing a source of drinking water for the refugees. It continues to function as a reservoir to this day (Busan Metropolitan City, 2025a).



Figure 9. The Bokbyeongsan Mt. Drainage area, No. 4 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2025a)

4.2. Solidarity of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage

"Solidarity" refers to support by one person or group of people for another because they share feelings, opinions, and aims ("Solidarity," n.d.-c). In this regard, the sites of administration, notification, military force, international cooperation, and solidarity that demonstrate the relationship between the South Korean government and the UN forces within the wartime capital during the Korean War can be classified as related heritage.

The judiciary operated out of the courts and the district prosecutor's office. The temporary presidential residence, now the wartime capital memorial hall, and the building now housing the Seokdang Museum of Dong-A University, which was once a temporary government complex, were also political spaces established during this period. Administrative functions also persisted, with the Examination Committee and the Ministry of Education being assigned to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry during the Building of Namseon Electrics, and the prosecutor's office moving to the District Prosecutors' Office. Therefore, Busan holds historical significance as a wartime capital where a genuine democratic government operated with all three branches functioning, not just a provisional government.

In detail, after liberation from the Japanese colonial period, the Camp Hialeah (Busan Citizens' Park) (Figure 10) served as the Busan Base Command under the US Military Government in Korea. After the outbreak of the Korean War, it served as a key base for the US Forces Korea and the UN forces. It is described as a historic site of international solidarity, where the UN, governments, and citizens supported international peace in the face of wartime crises and cooperated to overcome them. It was also a hub of international cooperation, where UN forces and international organizations gathered to provide supplies and relief. Beginning in the 1990s, through Busan citizens' campaigns for the return of US military bases, it was reborn as Busan Citizens' Park, a memorial park. It is a space that embodies the complex memories of modern and contemporary Korean history, where military bases were transformed into international relief hubs and civic spaces (Busan Metropolitan City, 2019).



Figure 10. Camp Hialeah, No. 7 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2019)

Gyeongmudae (Temporary Presidential Residence) (Figure 11) is located at the end of Daecheong-ro, the primary axis of the modern port system that extends vertically from the port. It was originally the official residence of the Governor of Gyeongnam Province. During wartime, the facility served as the President's office and residence and also housed various diplomatic offices. Meetings were held with ministers and ambassadors from UN support countries, the Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command, and the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, and it also served as a press center. It is a historic site where policy decisions, diplomatic initiatives, and announcements were made, and it is evidence of efforts to address national crises and preserve the nation's existence even amid the threat of war (Busan Metropolitan City, 2019).



Figure 11. Temporary Presidential Residence, No. 5 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2019)

The Provisional Central Governmental Office (Figure 12) is located on the right side of the Daecheong-ro axis, diagonally opposite the Gyeongmudae (Temporary Presidential Residence). It served as the Gyeongnam Provincial Office and served as the administrative center of the Busan wartime capital. It housed the State Council, the highest deliberative body for government affairs, which coordinated and decided on the affairs of government ministries; the Office of the Prime Minister; eight government ministries (Ministry of General Affairs, Ministry of Public Information, Ministry of Government Legislation, Ministry of Planning and Budget, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense, and Ministry of Justice); and the Offices of the President, Vice President, and Prime Minister. It was here that the first official announcement regarding the relocation of the wartime capital was made (August 18, 1950), and the Refugee Countermeasures Guidelines were established on August 24. It was also here that the Agreement on Economic Coordination between the Republic of Korea and the Unified Command, pursuant to a UN Security Council resolution, was signed (May 24, 1952) (United States Forces Korea, 1952; Busan Metropolitan City, 2019).



Figure 12. Temporary Government Complex, No. 6 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2019)

4.3. Inclusiveness of Busan Wartime Capital Heritage

"Inclusiveness" refers to the deliberate inclusion of deliberately including people, things, ideas, etc., from all sections of society and points of view ("Inclusiveness," n.d.-b). In particular, the residential, burial, cultural, and medical facilities associated with South Korean and North Korean refugees, UN forces, and enemy forces who flocked to Busan during the Korean War are linked as heritage sites.

The heritage of refugee life reflects the hardships faced by refugees who gathered from all over the country to escape war, as well as their resilient lives that continue to this day, including the Ami-dong Tombstone Village and the Uam-dong Cattle Shed Village. These sites stand as evidence of the willingness to accept around a million refugees who had nowhere to go, capturing the essence of their residential life during that period. The ‘Uam-dong Cattle Shed Village,’ built initially as a quarantine station for cattle during the Japanese colonial period—used for colonial exploitation—serves as a unique residential heritage that vividly depicts life during the refugee era and shows how the common people’s housing transformed when the stable was repurposed into a refugee residence. The ‘Ami-dong Tombstone Village,’ developed during the Japanese colonial period as a Japanese cemetery, was abandoned after liberation with unclaimed graves. Built on a graveyard, this site symbolizes the urgency of survival even amid death, and its distinctiveness remains today as a heritage that reflects life and housing during the refugee period. Additionally, Busan Port Pier 1 is a heritage site that highlights the economic aspect of refugee life, as it was a space where refugees found employment and made a living.

The Ami-dong Tombstone Village (Figure 13) was an emergency refugee housing site, urgently constructed from a former Japanese cemetery. Because it was a public cemetery, it was not completed until 1953, when the housing shortage was at its peak. Here, visitors can encounter unique houses and stone walls built from the original Japanese cemetery and tombstones, where the living and the dead coexist. The exposed tombstones used in the refugee housing project have been identified as 537 at 297 locations, spread over approximately 40,000 square meters. This site embodies the spirit of coexistence and inclusiveness rooted in humanity, and it has continued to expand and transform even after the armistice agreement (Busan Metropolitan City, 2025a).



Figure 13. Ami-dong Tombstone Village, No. 8 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2025a)

The Uam-dong Cattle Shed Village (Figure 14), located at the Quarantine station for moving cattle from Busan, a site of Japanese cattle exploitation, was abandoned after liberation. Some returning Koreans used it as a temporary shelter. After the outbreak of war, a refugee camp for approximately 10,000 people was established at the nearby enemy-flagged wharf, and the Cattle Shed shelter was fully utilized as refugee housing. Each household was assigned a 3.5- to 4.5-meter-square unit (approximately 16 square meters), with approximately 25 households per barracks. It is confirmed that a total of 370 households lived in this shelter. This heritage site embodies the desperation and hardships of the refugees who were forced to live in these small barracks. This site, too, has undergone continuous expansion and transformation to reach its present state (Busan Metropolitan City, 2025a).



Figure 14. Uam-dong Cattle Shed Village, No. 9 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2025a)

The U.S. Embassy and U.S. Information Service (Figure 15) was established in 1949 as the U.S. Overseas Public Information Service's Busan branch. Since August 1950, it has maintained close diplomatic ties with the South Korean government, fostering international cooperation with the UN and various countries. It also served as a communication channel between the UN and refugees. Specifically, it simultaneously served as the U.S. Embassy, where practical U.S. military, diplomatic, and economic policies were communicated and implemented, and as the U.S. Information

Service, where information was exchanged with stakeholders from all walks of life, including UN forces stationed in the wartime capital and international organizations. It also served as an international public relations function, conveying the devastation of war and the need for relief abroad and stimulating international public opinion to encourage diplomatic and humanitarian assistance (Busan Metropolitan City, 2019).



Figure 15. U.S. Embassy and U.S. Information Service, No. 10 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2019)

The U.N. Memorial Cemetery (**Figure 16**) is the world's only cemetery and memorial space (consisting of a symbolic cemetery and a main cemetery) for UN soldiers killed in action. On December 15, 1955, the United Nations, after receiving the resolution from the Korean government's National Assembly, adopted Resolution 977(X) at the UN General Assembly to permanently oversee this cemetery (United Nations General Assembly, 1955). In December 1959, an agreement was signed between the Republic of Korea and the United Nations for the establishment and maintenance of the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Korea (United Nations, 1959). The cemetery was donated to the UN, and since 1960, the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) has been responsible for its management (Lee, 2024). It serves as a symbol of peace, preserved through UN and global cooperation, and as a place of remembrance, honoring and conveying the noble will of the victims.



Figure 16. UN Memorial Cemetery, No. 11 of Figure 16.
Source. Busan Metropolitan City (2025a)

5. Conclusion

This analysis provides clear spatial evidence of human expressions in both domestic and international settings, contextualized within the refugee crises of the Cold War and the Korean War. Following the outbreak of the war, the government promptly moved the capital to the southeast, officially designating Busan as the wartime capital on August 18, 1950, due to its strategic location near the Pusan Perimeter, its infrastructure established during Japanese colonial rule, and its role in wartime operations, aiming to maintain the Republic of Korea's functional continuity amid challenging circumstances. Socially, it illustrates how emergency measures and existing infrastructure supported the survival and recovery of diverse refugee populations. From a humanitarian perspective, the UN's international solidarity facilitated recovery and reconstruction through relief efforts during wartime. The Busan Heritage Site exemplifies enduring inclusiveness achieved through coexistence and solidarity among refugees, the South Korean government, and international organizations such as the UN, all striving to uphold humanity on the Korean Peninsula amid Cold War-era conflicts. In this context, the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage site embodies international cooperation grounded in humanitarian values.

Legally protected sites support coexistence, solidarity, and inclusiveness, though many were damaged or destroyed during post-Korean War urbanization, leaving them unprotected. Currently, eleven sites have been designated and managed as cultural heritage sites, with both local and national governments recognizing their value and authenticity, leading to the creation of heritage protection zones and preservation areas. Compared to UNESCO World Heritage sites related to humanity, the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage site stands out for its strategic location, emergency response capabilities, and international solidarity, especially compared with sites related to Holocaust relief, disaster

response, disease prevention, and peace diplomacy. This underscores its roots in coexistence, solidarity, and inclusiveness. We highlight the significance of the Busan Wartime Capital Heritage as evidence of these attributes, supported by key heritage sites reflecting each aspect. Therefore, it can be considered a heritage of universal and unique value.

Nonetheless, post-war reconstruction and urban development, along with climate change, threaten these sites. Only select sites, such as Gyeongmudae, the U.S. Embassy and Information Service, Pier 1 of Busan Port, the National Central Observatory, Camp Hialeah, Uam-dong Cattle Shed Village, Ami-dong Tombstone Village, the United Nations Memorial Cemetery, and Yeongdo Bridge, have been preserved. Ongoing excavation and study of facilities related to Busan's wartime capital history are essential for sustainable conservation. Effective preservation requires coordinated efforts among the central and local governments, citizens, and international stakeholders, emphasizing the need to strengthen legal protection. In addition to the sites discussed in this paper, numerous other sites lack authenticity and integrity. Therefore, future research should explore additional sites related to Busan as the wartime capital and conduct in-depth studies of their legal status and protection mechanisms.

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