

## **Howard T. Fisher Prize in GIS**

The Howard T. Fisher Prize for Excellence in Geographic Information Science

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## The Demilitarized Zone: Redrawing the 151 mile border between North and South Korea

This map is an attempt to understand the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea beyond its apparent political and physical divide. The set of maps starts to represent the military buffer zone as a container of complex spatial condition than engender flows and reciprocities. This expands the understanding of the border beyond a single line on a map. Through the new four distinct lenses, the map scrutinize the DMZ at local and global scale over time. By representing the DMZ through the four lenses, "History," "DMZ as a barrier," "Flows in the DMZ," and "DMZ in global flux," one can start to understand borders not only as large geopolitical territories of reciprocities, but also start to formulate questions for further research.

Who drew the DMZ? Why was it constructed? Under what rules and regulations do they operate? How did it change over time? What deforms them physically? What are the nonphysical deformations? Who are the players in the border dynamics? What implications does the DMZ have on its surrounding environments? What are the externalities of the DMZ at different scales? What processes of border territories could be tapped into for multinational cooperation? With these questions in mind, new projections of the DMZ can start to emerge.

This map was constructed through overlaying and transforming non-visual research material to geographically referenced graphics, making them easier to understand at a glance. Furthermore, beyond the physical geographical territories, invisible processes, flows and legal impacts were represented together to help better understand the operations in the DMZ. The result is a base map that sets up a dialectical platform for the DMZ to be discussed further. Through this process, the hegemonic representation of the DMZ could also be rethought.

The map started as a research project in a graduate seminar at Harvard University, Graduate School of Design. The "Military-Industrial Landscape" seminar was lead by Associate Professor in Landscape Architecture Pierre Bélanger in Spring 2011. The research outcome in the seminar further allowed me to apply and receive a small grant to travel and document the DMZ in person. This resulted in a small summary publication titled *"The Demilitarized Zone : Redrawing the border between North and South Korea beyond tourism."* So far this summary documentation has been used to engage relevant academics, government officials stakeholders to refine and expand my research. Receiving this Howard T. Fisher Prize in GIS would add further credibility to my research and help further disseminate my research.

Currently, I am expanding this research into my thesis work. Finally, this map is not only an attempt to represent various modes of information into a coherent map, but one that strives to engage and disseminate critical analysis and societal issues through mapping.

