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# MULTICULTURALISM AS A PROMOTER OF CULTURAL HOMOGENISATION? REINTERPRETING THE CASE OF ITAEWON, SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

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## INTRODUCTION

During the last decade or two, the neighbourhood of Itaewon has been widely perceived as a symbol of multiculturalism in South Korea not only for its demographic characteristic but also for its commercial landscape with high concentration of businesses that appear ethnic. However, on the other side of its symbolic status, urban problems such as marginalisation of migrants, geared along with excessive commercialisation and serial gentrification, remain as contradictions that have yet been hardly explained.

The present study claims for a need to set these issues as agenda for scholarly discussion and attempts to manage this task by perceiving Itaewon, as a space of empirical multiculturalism, within the context of the ways the relationship between Korean society and multiculturalism has been constructed. Positing a thesis that multiculturalism, as a ‘normative way of dealing with cultural differences<sup>1</sup>’ of Korea, has conditioned the construction of a logic that eclipses the loss of authentic multiculturalism with the ‘fake sense’ of cultural diversity constructed/articulated by the gentrifying agents, the study reviews how the ‘normative Korean way of dealing with cultural difference (which I shall name *Damunhwa Ideology*<sup>2</sup> to avoid confuse)’ has developed and explores the possibility that the *Ideology* has provided the socio-cultural contexts of the contradictions of Itaewon.

## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ITAEWON

Itaewon, located adjacent to the Yongsan Garrison, which was occupied by the US military in 1953 in place of the defeated Japanese forces, began to develop as its commercial hinterland during the 1970s, marked by a significant increase in the number of stationed US troops. Foreign embassies and major facilities such as the Seoul Central Masjid were also located by the Korean government due to its physical proximity to the US military base; concurrently, upscale residential developments emerged to accommodate mostly diplomats, US military families, and United Nations officers and technicians. Through this process, Itaewon transformed into the only foreigner-dense residential area within Seoul and a region where English was commonly spoken.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, Itaewon's local economy saw the emergence of goods, services, and stores that were rare to find in Korean society at the time. This transformation turned Itaewon into a shopping-tourism spot for travellers from overseas in the 1980s. The continuous interactions with the US military, diplomats, and tourists contributed to the formation of a pro-foreigner atmosphere, owing to which it

functioned as a gateway town for working class immigrants who entered the country in the 1990s. Up until the explosive increase in young Koreans as the primary leisure district in the 2010s, Itaewon had firmly established itself as the 'foreigner zone'.<sup>4</sup> Thus far, researchers have reaffirmed this, viewing it as a "a de-territorialized space<sup>5</sup>" or "a separate cultural territory<sup>6</sup>" where structures that are distant from the Korean norm operate. In the 2010s, with the emergence of the new trend pursuing ethnic culinary experiences, researchers such as S. Kim<sup>7</sup> understood it as a place where 'everyday multiculturalism' is 'signified'.

### **PROBLEMATIZING THE CONTRADICTION**

As mentioned earlier, while Itaewon has been perceived as a symbol of multiculturalism, the neighbourhood and its adjacent areas including Haebangchon and Gyeongnidan-gil, however, have been impacted by a series of gentrification since the mid-2010s.<sup>8</sup> Alongside this was the displacement of the migrants and small-scale business owners who originally sustained the economic and socio-cultural structures of Itaewon, resulting in their migration to relatively isolated areas such as Haebangchon or further outside Yongsan-gu.<sup>9</sup>

Scholarly interest in Itaewon seems to have been consistently expressed since the 2000s, though through handful number of publications. Setting aside the discussions whose foci are less relevant to the question the present study aims to address,<sup>10</sup> the perspective which perceives and problematizes the 'contradiction' – the persistence of symbolism despite the marginalisation of authentic multiculturalism (or the migrants as its source) – is also scarce within the existing literature on gentrification of, and post-gentrified Itaewon. For example, studies by J. Kim<sup>11</sup> or H. Shin<sup>12</sup> illuminate the emergence of the group who are identifiable as the 'creative class'<sup>13</sup> and their role in shifting the sense of place of Itaewon, thus, making themselves distant from the issues of marginalised authenticity.

Meanwhile, a study by Kyung and Jeong<sup>14</sup> that reveals that the demands of the newly emerged Korean visitors, identifiable as creative class, for upscale and symbolically meaningful consuming experiences of exoticism paved the way of economic restructuring of the neighbourhood appears to be relevant to the topic of question in the sense that the multicultural characteristic of Itaewon is seen as what the process of gentrification capitalised on; however, it does not provide deeper explanations of the contexts in which such 'gentrification of taste' took place, and, in a more fundamental sense, in which the loss of authentic multiculturalism cultivated by the migrant population could possibly be eclipsed by the manipulated, material multiculturalism. Without scrutinising these contexts, the marginalisation of ethnic population is equated with the defeat of the economically disadvantaged, and the complex relationship that these population has had with the new clientele of young generation Koreans – as dominant subjects of Korea's socio-cultural structures – of Itaewon is reduced to a matter of social stratification. Alike Zukin in her discussion on Bryant Park conceives the working of capitalist ideologies camouflaged by the promotion of 'public safety',<sup>15</sup> this study aims to explore the possibility that *Damunhwa Ideology* has functioned as the super-structure within which the myriad practices regarding Itaewon's multiculturalism have been mediated.

### **METHODOLOGY**

As an exploration of the influence of *Damunhwa Ideology* that developed in a specific way within the contexts of Korean society on the transformations of Itaewon's socio-cultural structures, this research operates within the following theoretical framework: Firstly, as mentioned earlier, *Damunhwa Ideology* is understood as a system that has shaped the society's normative perspectives on immigrants and foreigners. To grasp how the *Ideology* has been developed and what it should be understood as, the study scrutinises the discourses that are assumed to have played significant role in

reflecting and (re)producing ideologies<sup>16</sup> regarding the topics relevant to multiculturalism – migrants, foreigners, and so forth – which shall be marked as *Damunhwa Discourse*. This task is conducted by analysing editorials published by five major newspaper companies, the specific genre of which can be understood as itself an ideological device.<sup>17</sup> Here, the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, especially of the three-dimensional analytical model suggested by Fairclough,<sup>18</sup> that puts particular emphasis on deconstructing, and, thus, revealing the ideologies underlying text production provided analytical insights. The dataset was composed of editorials containing the keywords of [*Oegukin* (foreigner)], [*Yijumin* (migrant)], [*Gyopo* (overseas Koreans)], [*Dongpo* (Koreans with foreign nationality)], and [*Damunhwa* (multiculture)], published between 1990 and 2021. Following the normative method deployed by the media and communication studies of Korea,<sup>19</sup> the data was collected primarily through Big KINDS,<sup>20</sup> an official news database moderated by the government of Korea, supplemented by official websites of each newspaper companies and Naver’s News Library<sup>21</sup> to prevent missing data.

Secondly, the neighbourhood of Itaewon is regarded as place where the normative perspectives on immigrants and foreigners shaped by the working of *Damunhwa Ideology* have become empirically materialised by the social agents – in other words, people. Building upon the perspectives raised by Wise, Velayutham et al.<sup>22</sup> and Prato et al.<sup>23</sup> that emphasise the need for context-specific, ground-level, thus, ethnographic understandings of ethnic relations and practices, the study conducted twenty-eight in-depth interviews in total. Among these, the first cohort that consisted of eighteen regular visitors of Itaewon (interview Band A) randomly recruited through online were interviewed between August 2021 to February 2022. Interviewing these participants, the main foci were on exploring what are the general thoughts and perceptions of migrants and foreigners and how they consume Itaewon and its multicultural characteristics. The second cohort, consisting of ten long-term residents or visitors (interview Band B) randomly recruited on-field and online were interviewed between June and July 2022. The main foci of interviewing these participants who were relatively older than the first cohort interviewees were on collecting thick and vivid data regarding how Korean society perceived migrants and foreigners back in the 1990s and 2000s, how their perception changed, and how the landscape (economic, socio-cultural, and demographic) of Itaewon has changed through time. Given the objective of the study that is little relevant to exploration of group specificities, no separate sampling process was performed.

### **DAMUNHWA DISCOURSE AND DAMUNHWA IDEOLOGY**

The findings from analysis on the editorials suggest the following: First, within the time frame from 1990 to 2021, a steady turn towards acceptance and appreciation of migrant and foreigners had been evident in the ways the editorials have rendered migrants and foreigners in general. In short, in the early 1990s, during early discussions on the need for labour importation, the editorials represented immigrants as ‘threat’, rendering them as labour ecosystem disturbance, subjects of irresistible invasion, and potential criminals. By the mid-1990s, as labour shortage in manufacturing industry remained unmitigated, migrant workers were represented as ‘necessary evil,’ often described as painful final resort or temporary fittings to economic problems. It was not until the late 1990s that their human rights became central agenda for the *Discourse*, which started to render migrant workers as the vulnerable and as the assessors of Korea’s reputation. From the mid-2000s, amidst excessive urbanisation leading to rural decline, low birth rates, and aging, marriage migrant women became central to the *Discourse*, being acknowledged for their instrumental utility as ‘mothers of future generation’ and ‘rural community invigorators.’ From the late 2000s onwards, various types of immigrants such as the children of marriage migrants, international students and ethnic Koreans with foreign nationality were brought into the *Discourse* and were portrayed as ‘future human resources’

and ‘elites’ for being equipped with knowledge in two different cultures and languages. In the 2010s, integration of migrants was rendered as means to prevent concrete crises of terrorism and civil unrest. Secondly, broadly speaking, the ideological underpinnings and orientations of the *Damunhwa Discourse* have demonstrated a pro-multicultural shift; however, nationalist ideologies have persisted. For instance, the ideological underpinning in the early 1990s was found to strict ethno-nationalism that prioritised ethnic singularity of the nation, often reflected in the term ‘*Pitjul* (bloodline)’. In contrast, from the mid-1990s to the late 2000s, the values stressed by the instrumental approach to migrant population often reflected the yearning for ‘globalisation’ which translated to economic and political development of Korea. The late 2000s witnessed the emergence of integrationist discourse that succeeded onto the 2010s; however, the emphasis on its necessity frequently centred on issues such as terrorism, civil unrest, highlighting the preventive role of integration against foreseeable racial conflicts. This indicates that until this period, *Damunhwa Ideology* distributed through *Damunhwa Discourse* had never recognised the intrinsic value of migrants but instrumental and extrinsic values. Thirdly, of greater significance, the discursive strategies employed to bolster the persuasive efficacy of the *Damunhwa Discourse* are identified as mechanisms for subtle discrimination. This is particularly evident through the sustained utilisation of the term ‘*Uri* (we/us/our)’ and its juxtaposition with arousing national sentiments. For instance, by presenting empathy to historical events such as forced labour and massacres during the Japanese colonial period as a default response expected of readers, the *Discourse* functioned as what naturally excluded from the target audience of the texts or pressure towards assimilation the presumed ‘others’ lacking such sentiment or knowledge of the historical backgrounds of it.<sup>24</sup> This subtle form of discrimination also operates through the emulation of the Western countries, seen as economically powerful and thus advanced, as the desirable model of Korea as a society increasingly becoming multicultural – by which the economically impoverished societies are simply excluded from the list to be considered in conceiving multicultural Korea, whereas the absolute majority of the so-called ‘multicultural members’ of Korea has been migrants from such countries. In essence, by such strategy the migrants are framed as mere ingredients for Korea’s development.

To give a brief conclusion, *Damunhwa Discourse* can be defined as the ‘language of persuasion’ that has constantly performed the role of justifying the necessity of migrants, foreigners, and of their social integration, in the use of which the consumers of the *Discourse*, ‘*Uri*’, have been limited to a specific group of people – who are assimilated to or willing to adapt to ‘*Uri*’ (our) culture – through various discursive strategies. In other words, the issues of inflow of migrants and foreigners, and of their settlement and integration have continuously been rendered as what are subject to ‘our’ approval – the unequal power relation of which has been constantly naturalised by the working of *Damunhwa Ideology*.

### **ITAEWON AS EMPIRICAL SIMULATOR OF DAMUNHWA IDEOLOGY?**

Through the interviews the study found the following: Firstly, during the 1990s, Itaewon had a generally terrible reputation among the Korean population, often perceived as an off-limit area or a “foreigner ghetto<sup>25</sup>” even for foreigners. It was found that during this period interacting with foreigners, particularly represented by the US troops, was seen as a violation of the ethno-nationalist values that emphasise ethnic homogeneity. Particularly, Korean women involved in such relationships were further disparaged with the derogatory name of ‘*Yanggongju*.<sup>26</sup>’ Multiple informants confirmed that this perception often functioned as a pervasive stigma that labelled any female population visiting Itaewon, making the neighbourhood further ghettoised.<sup>27</sup> Such phenomena can be interpreted as the materialisation of the ideas articulated through *Damunhwa Discourse* of the 1990s, which viewed migrant populations as threats and advocated for their rejection or temporary accommodation at best,

despite acknowledging their instrumental utility. This normative perspective may have contributed to the stigmatisation of Itaewon, where interactions with foreigners were perceived as a deviation from traditional Korean values and norms.

Meanwhile, in the 2000s, a small number of Korean individuals began to appear as customers in Itaewon; however, there was a scarcity of substantial cross-cultural interactions. According to an interview, Korean visitors at the time tended to consume Itaewon in a manner akin to a “foreigner zoo,<sup>28</sup>” merely engaging in passive observation of foreigners. This phenomenon could be attributed to desires for learning English or building friendships with foreigners, hindered by linguistic barriers.<sup>29</sup> By the mid-2000s, greater volume of cross-cultural engagement was found to emerge, however, with the central role of cultural intermediation by the returning of the first generation ‘*Yuhaksaeng* (studied-abroad Koreans)’ being crucial.<sup>30</sup> I argue that this could be interpreted as an empirical manifestation of the *Ideology* of the 2000s that is characterised by a lack of recognition of foreigners as subjects of substantial integration and everyday exchange.

The 2010s marked a dramatic transformation for Itaewon, driven by the emergence of a so-called ‘*Gukjehwa* (internationalisation) generation’ equipped with substantial overseas experience compared to the previous generations, who matured into the area's primary clientele. This generation, distinguished by their extensive overseas experiences, became the area's predominant clientele, fostering a more open and active engagement with foreigners compared to previous generations. However, interviews revealed a prevailing ambivalence<sup>31</sup> among this generation towards migrants and foreigners: while they expressed general acceptance, real-life interactions were often avoided. Values such as freedom, tolerance, and emancipation from conservative culture<sup>32</sup> were celebrated within Itaewon's cultural milieu, yet the presence of immigrants did not significantly impact consumption patterns. This phenomenon, I argue, can be understood as a consequence of the pervasive *Damunhwa Discourse*, which instrumentalises migrants and foreigners by highlighting their extrinsic values, perpetuated by *Damunhwa Ideology*. This ideology, which entrusts the legitimacy of migrants and foreigners to Korean society's judgment, intersects with market logic, relegating them to commodities 'to be consumed.' Consequently, consumers opt for 'gentrified exotic experiences<sup>33</sup>' facilitated by incoming capital, overlooking migrants and foreigners as authentic contributors to Itaewon's cultural landscape. This dynamic results in the marginalisation of migrant populations, yet the symbolism of multiculturalism endures as an ideology conflating material multiculturalism with authenticity.

## CONCLUSION

This study introduces the concept of *Damunhwa Ideology* as a mental framework that categorizes immigrants and foreigners as ‘others’ existing to be consumed, shedding light on the paradoxical phenomena of the marginalisation of migrants or cultural homogenisation persisting in the symbolic status and meaning of the ‘multicultural city.’ In summary, this study discusses how the way Korean society consumes Itaewon reflects the mental framework of *Damunhwa Ideology* constructed through the working of *Damunhwa Discourse*, wherein Itaewon has transitioned from being perceived as a ‘foreigner ghetto’ from a racial nationalist perspective, to serving as a ‘foreigner zoo’ fulfilling a role in globalisation from an instrumental perspective, and finally to immigrants’ presence consistently being framed merely as ‘material’ within the context of Itaewon, rather than as essential components of the region's economic and socio-cultural structure, thus reducing their existence to that of ‘consumables.’

Of course, I express this study as an exploration of possibilities rather than presenting it as finalised knowledge, as many may agree. This is because a definitive answer regarding whether behavioural patterns in Itaewon are unequivocally influenced by ideology disseminated through discourse cannot be provided. However, despite anticipated criticism, I believe that revisiting Hall and van Dijk's

definitions of ideology could offer some insight: ideology serves as the “mental framework<sup>34</sup>” that naturalises power relations.<sup>35</sup> In other words, until deconstructed, ideology remains a vast system and superstructure, camouflaged within various social conventions – represented by *Damunhwa Discourse* in this study. For instance, an interviewee in their 30s, who expressed anti-foreigner sentiments after watching news about foreigner-related crimes, claimed that their perspective was a ‘natural’ reaction based on empirical facts. However, this case illustrates how layered ideologies, including societal implications of foreigners and crime, genre conventions of news, and the perceived inevitability of resentment, operate as the basis for value judgments without being consciously recognised. From this perspective, dismissing the influence of *Damunhwa Ideology* on behavioural patterns in Itaewon would be an unrealistic assertion, and I hope that this study’s validity will be acknowledged to some extent.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 6.
- <sup>2</sup> This study coins the term of ‘*Damunhwa Ideology*’ as the structure of thoughts regarding non-native population developed specific to the contexts of Korea and differentiate it from ‘*Damunhwa-ju*’ which is normally used as a straight translation from the English term ‘multiculturalism.’; In speaking of the term ‘ideology’ I adopt Hall’s discussion that defines it as the “mental frameworks,” by the working of which the power relations are camouflaged and naturalised; Stuart Hall, “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 29; Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillside, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988).
- <sup>3</sup> Do-Young Song, Dan-Bi Gu, and Sang-Il Choi, “Spatial Structures and Cultural Territories,” in *Itaewon: Space and Life*, ed. Hong-Bin Kang, Sang-Bin Park, and Sang-Soo Kim (Seoul: Seoul Museum of History, 2010), 139.
- <sup>4</sup> Do-Young Song, Dan-Bi Gu, and Sang-Il Choi, “Spatial Structures and Cultural Territories,” in *Itaewon: Space and Life*, ed. Hong-Bin Kang, Sang-Bin Park, and Sang-Soo Kim (Seoul: Seoul Museum of History, 2010), 139.
- <sup>5</sup> Eun-Shil Kim, “Itaewon as an Alien Space within the Nation-State and a Place in the Globalization Era,” *Korea Journal* 44, no. 3 (2004): 37.
- <sup>6</sup> Do-Young Song, Dan-Bi Gu, and Sang-Il Choi, “Spatial Structures and Cultural Territories,” in *Itaewon: Space and Life*, ed. Hong-Bin Kang, Sang-Bin Park, and Sang-Soo Kim (Seoul: Seoul Museum of History, 2010), 139.
- <sup>7</sup> Soochul Kim, “The Shifting Food Politics of Ethnic Food and Everyday Multiculturalism since the early 2010s,” *Culture and Politics* 5, no. 3 (2018): 70-72.
- <sup>8</sup> Shinwon Kyung and Kyuri Jeong, “Who are the people leading the gentrification process in Itaewon?,” *Seoul Studies* 20, no. 2 (2018): 12-14.
- <sup>9</sup> Interviewee B1 (local tradesperson), in discussion with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 2022.
- <sup>10</sup> For example, Soyoung Lee, “Making ‘Exoticness’ of Korean Merchants in Itaewon: A Historical Approach to Itaewon’s Place Identity,” *Cross-Cultural Studies* 28, no. 2 (2022): 49–96; Doyoung Song, “Spatial Process and Cultural Territory of Islamic Food Restaurants in Itaewon, Seoul,” in *Migration and Diversity in Asian Contexts*, ed. Ah Eng Lai, Francis Leo Collins, and Brenda S. A. Yeoh (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing, 2012), 233–53; Jong-il Choi, “A Study on ‘Americanization’ Expressed in Itaewon Space” (Seoul National University, 2003); Do Young Song, “Formation and Communication Strategies for an Urban Multicultural District of Korea: A Case Study of Itaewon, Seoul,” *Discourse201* 14, no. 4 (2011): 5–39; Jae-Yeon Choi and Heung-Soon Kim, “The Place Image and Satisfaction of an Ethnic Place - Comparing Koreans with Foreigners in Itaewon, Seoul,” *Journal of Korea Planning Association* 48, no. 7 (2013): 37–54; Jongsoo Park, “Characteristics of Itaewon as a Religious Area and Its Understanding as a Multicultural Space,” *The Journal of Seoul Studies* 51 (2013): 155–79.
- <sup>11</sup> Ji Youn Kim, “Cultural entrepreneurs and urban regeneration in Itaewon, Seoul,” *Cities* 56 (2016): 132-140.
- <sup>12</sup> Hyunjoon Shin, “Creative Classes and the Production of Contested Places in Hannamdong (Yongsan, Seoul): Another Cultural-Economic Communities of Strangers,” *Journal of the Economic Geographical Society of Korea* 19, no. 1 (2016): 33-50; Hyunjoon Shin, “From Foreign Community to Creative Town? Creativity and Contestation in Itaewon, Seoul,” in *Re-Imaging Creative Cities in Twenty-First Century Asia*, ed. Xin Gu et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020): 95-111.
- <sup>13</sup> Richard L. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).
- <sup>14</sup> Shinwon Kyung and Kyuri Jeong, “Who are the people leading the gentrification process in Itaewon?,” *Seoul Studies* 20, no. 2 (2018): 1-17.
- <sup>15</sup> Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995): 38-47.
- <sup>16</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 28-29.
- <sup>17</sup> Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillside, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988); Frances Henry and Carol Tator, *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-Language Press* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).
- <sup>18</sup> In this study I adapt to Fairclough’s (1989) model of three-dimensional analysis with slight modifications. Whereas the suggested model performs analysis on text, discursive practice – regarding production, consumption and distribution of text, and social practice, I examine the following: How relevant topics are rendered at text level, how the consumers of the text are defined and who are identified as such, and what ideologies are underpinning and promoted by the discourses; Norman Fairclough, *Language as Power* (New York: Longman, 1989): 25.

- <sup>19</sup> Jeongwon Yang and Sunhee Lee, "Framing the MERS Information Crisis: An Analysis on Online News Media's Rumour Coverage," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 28, no. 4 (2020): 386–98; Dongkuk Lee and Hyuksoo Kwon, "Keyword Analysis of the Mass Media's News Articles on Maker Education in South Korea," *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* 32, no. 1 (2022): 333–53.
- <sup>20</sup> An online database which archives newspaper articles under monitoring of Korea Press Foundation. <https://www.bigkinds.or.kr/>.
- <sup>21</sup> An online database which archives newspaper articles published before 2000, run by Naver Inc. <https://newslibrary.naver.com/>.
- <sup>22</sup> Amanda Wise and Selvaraj Velayutham, eds., *Everyday Multiculturalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
- <sup>23</sup> Giuliana B. Prato, ed., *Beyond Multiculturalism: Views from Anthropology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).
- <sup>24</sup> Vladimir Tikhonov, *Your Republic of Korea* (Seoul: Hankyoreh, 2001).
- <sup>25</sup> Interviewee B10 (former GI at Yongsan garrison and long-term American expat living in Seoul), in online discussion with the author, August 2022.
- <sup>26</sup> The term *Yanggongju*, initially denoting female prostitutes catering primarily to US troops during the 1960s and 1970s, was found to have evolved to derogatorily refer to Korean women who engaged in personal relationship with the US military, irrespective of their involvement in prostitution.
- <sup>27</sup> Interviews B6, B7 and B9 (long-term local residents), separate discussions with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 2022.
- <sup>28</sup> Interviewee B10, in online discussion with the author, August 2022.
- <sup>29</sup> Interviewee B3 (long-term local merchant and resident), in discussion with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 2022.
- <sup>30</sup> Interviewee B9 (long-term local resident), in discussion with the author, Seoul, South Korea, July 2022.
- <sup>31</sup> As explored by a studies on Koreans' attitudes towards migrants and foreigners; Sang-Soo Ahn et al., "A Study on Multicultural Acceptability in Korea" (Seoul: Ministry of Gender Equality and Families, 2012); E-Seon Kim et al., "The 2018 Study on Multicultural Acceptability in Korea" (Seoul: Ministry of Gender Equality and Families, 2018); Sang-Soo Ahn et al., "The 2015 Study on Multicultural Acceptability in Korea" (Seoul: Ministry of Gender Equality and Families, 2015).
- <sup>32</sup> Interviewees A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A11, A15 and A16 (regular visitors), in separate online discussions with the author, August-December 2021.
- <sup>33</sup> Shinwon Kyung and Kyuri Jeong, "Who are the people leading the gentrification process in Itaewon?," *Seoul Studies* 20, no. 2 (2018): 1-17.
- <sup>34</sup> Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 28-29.
- <sup>35</sup> Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology: Marxism without Guarantees," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 28-44; Teun A. van Dijk, *News as Discourse* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1988).

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