

**COMMUNITY OF STRANGERS:
ITAEWON FROM 'AMERICANIZED' GHETTO TO
'MULTICULTURAL' SPACE**

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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE
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I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and it has been written by me in its entirety. I have duly acknowledged all the sources of information which have been used in the thesis.

This thesis has also not been submitted for any degree in any university previously.

Kim Ji Youn

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28 FEBRUARY 2014

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ABSTRACT

With an increased migration in urban areas, there has been a revitalization of the notion of community. Much of existing literature on communities assumes that community share singular identity and delineate its spatial and cultural boundaries accordingly. This ways of representation of ethnic communities, however, only result in naturalizing ethnic communities and clear distinction about who is the hosting group and who are ‘strangers’. In addition, although much empirical research has invigorated community study by providing different cases of ethnic communities, many of them have not contested the traditional implications of the notion of community.

To redefine and enrich the implications of the conception of community, my research project analyzes Itaewon, which has been known as foreigners’ community in Korea. The spatial occupation by American army base since the early 1950s and its economic and socio-cultural influences shaped Itaewon as a camp town facilitating soldiers, which was a notorious ‘Americanized ghetto’ but also was a culturally abundant place. In tandem with the decreased number of soldiers, the influx of variegated foreigners from Westerners to Muslim populations has transformed the cultural landscapes of Itaewon into ‘multicultural ethnic community.’ The Korean government aims to shape Itaewon into a ‘multicultural community’ by promoting its foreignness in an ethnically homogeneous society. As such, Itaewon has been externally defined as foreigners’ community by the national desires to economically deploy the space as and to spatially bound strangers.

In this historical context, there are heterogeneous groups of people in a compact space, sharing neither a common identity nor an identical goal. The heterogeneity as well as the external defining forces have made no singular group enjoy privilege. However, the ontological commonness in terms sharing the temporal and spatial conditions has contributed a community exist in this space. As there is no particular hosting group, everyone is strangers to each other, i.e. community of strangers.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Central Argument: Community of Strangers

Given the pervasive belief among the Koreans that ethnic homogeneity is the natural order within national boundary, Itaewon has been regarded as an “exceptional,” “alienated,” or “deterritorialized” place within the national territory (Kim 2004:16). This deterritorialization of Itaewon results from its close proximity to the American army post that has been stationed in Korea since the 1950s. As the deterritorialized place whose governance was partly handed over to the American government (U.S. Forces), it has become a place for Koreans to be exposed to American cultures at everyday life level and to experience its ‘unique’ atmosphere and ‘exceptional deregulations’ (Kim 2004:17). The exceptional deregulations have enabled the flourishing of prostitution and the establishment of American influenced popular culture. As such, foreignness in Itaewon had been centered on American and military influences. Since the 2000s, however, along with receding American influences and increased transnational flow of goods and people, its foreignness has become more ‘multiethnic’ and ‘multicultural.’ The influx of heterogeneous migrants from different nationalities, especially with the prominent existence of a Muslim population, has transformed Itaewon into a foreigners’ space again within Korean society, thus expanding its spatial boundary.

Regarding this social and spatial transformation in Itaewon, there are two main discourses within the Korean society. On the one hand, scholars and civil sectors from left-wing nationalists have regarded the American military presence as colonization. So the military withdrawal from the capital and the concomitant socio-economic, cultural, and spatial changes in Itaewon are considered as a postcolonial process to revitalize

nationalistic space (Hong 2000). On the other hand, Itaewon's foreignness has been exaggerated as the arena of multiculturalism in this globalization era by the Korean government as well as by local developers, to sell its foreignness and difference as objects for consumption (Choi 2008; Han, Lee, Shin, Yoo, and Kang 2001). Consequently, Itaewon's spatial and sociocultural transformations as well as the changing discourses on this space have rapidly rendered Itaewon as a symbolic 'multiethnic community', representing Seoul as a global city. However, both perspectives only see either its past or its future without any historical contextualization and empirical observation on this space.

I situate my project within critical and interdisciplinary frameworks of cultural politics of strangers and otherness that approaches the relationship between community, culture, modernization in Korea on the one hand, transnational urbanism and globalization on the other hand. Much of existing literature on communities assumes that a community shares a singular identity and delineates its spatial and cultural boundaries accordingly. This way of representation of ethnic communities, however, only result in naturalizing ethnic communities and clear distinction about who is the host group and who are 'strangers'. Or like Young (1990) who asserts the politics of difference, the ideal of community is dismissed because it denies and represses any kinds of social differences. However, rather than dismissing the notion community, this research suggests a "community of strangers" as a new perspective of community. This perspective depends on the philosophical discussion surrounding the "inoperative community" (Nancy 1991), which means that, rather than a goal to be accomplished, community just exists by sharing infinitudes of human beings, specifically contemporaneity in terms of spatial and temporal limits. In tandem with this logic of community, the notion "community of strangers," which is empirically derived from cultural logics surrounding Itaewon as a community including smaller internal communities, suggests that a community is not maintained by members who share sameness, but it exists providing singular human beings with spatial and temporal conditions and those conditions are ceaselessly being transformed by human

beings. As such, the notion community of strangers, while deconstructing the traditional meaning attached to community, aims to show that people with heterogeneous backgrounds, who are strangers to each other, can belong to a community without having to share sameness.

1.2 Where is Itaewon and Whose Itaewon?

Since I started my research project and fieldwork in Itaewon, there were many opportunities to present about Itaewon at conferences and seminars. For many foreigners who had no idea about Itaewon, Itaewon seems to intrigue their interests due to its multicultural characters, given the stereotyped image of the Korean society as an ethnically homogeneous society. However, for many Koreans who have a strongly biased image of Itaewon as a “foreigner’s space,” it seems that my research topic is easily imagined as something related to either the controversial issue related to the American army bases or an emerging issue of multiculturalism in Korea. In a conference discussing about regeneration of urban spaces led by artists, I presented cultural activities of some young artists residing in Itaewon as an illustrative example of how younger generation in Itaewon as both artists and residents, who have no memory of the past of Itaewon, embeds different attitudes and views on Itaewon and creates different imaginary moments. To describe their roles in an effective way, my explanation about the past and present of Itaewon highlighted the contrast of two different images: from ‘notorious’ camp town where sex business facilitating American soldiers by Korean sex workers and crimes were ridden to a ‘multicultural’ ethnic communities where many foreigners as well as Koreans sense some multicultural atmosphere within a highly ‘homogeneous’ Korean society. Among audiences who were mainly Asian scholars, the only western scholars, an American professor who had worked in Korea during the 1970s and had visited Itaewon at the time, expressed that Itaewon was not different from the rest of Seoul. While Itaewon has been always regarded as foreigners’ space for most Koreans, the Korean society as a whole, regardless any places,

might be considered to be same for foreigners. Although I simplified diverse dimensions of Itaewon for my presentation, I could realize that how differently people have experienced, understood, and imagined the same place.

Although Itaewon is a relatively small area covering several neighborhoods, the mosaic characters of Itaewon have been maintained. For visitors and even inhabitants who have lived there for more than forty years, unless they intentionally walk around to experience Itaewon as a whole, their spatial experiences are highly partial and bounded. Even its temporal landscapes in terms of main activities that can be seen during daytime and nighttime are different. For instance, a married couple from India, who were interviewed, said that they had never crossed the main road in front of Hamilton Hotel, which is a landmark of Itaewon. Although there are more Indian restaurants across the main road, for them, the imaginary distance of the area seems to be far distant from them since there are many clubs for gay and transgender people. Meanwhile, transgender people working at these clubs, though many of them have lived at this area for more than ten years, have hardly been to the east bound of Itaewon where many boutiques and high-end galleries are located, although it takes only five minutes to get there. For business people who started their business since the 1970s, the current Itaewon is less crowded with foreign customers than before so it is losing its particular identity; for Koreans, however, it is always bustling with or 'overcrowded' with foreigners enough to make them feel 'nervous' due to worries that some foreigners can talk to them in foreign languages. A researcher who had considered Itaewon as one of research areas to analyze ethnic communities in Korea mentioned that Itaewon does not fit with his research model since the composition of ethnic communities in Itaewon is too complicated to deduce a 'plausible' model.

As such, it is not easy to define Itaewon simply as a foreigners' place or an ethnic community. Based upon each perspective of particular groups or individuals, there exist multiple layers of communities within or surrounding Itaewon. First of all, there is a salient image of Itaewon as a foreigners' place which is externally constructed by the Korean

society. In this context, Itaewon as a whole is spatially limited to several districts nearby the US army bases and they are regarded as politically deterritorialized areas within the Korean national boundary, i.e. an Americanized space or multicultural space. This representative image strengthens the differentiation between an ethnically 'homogeneous' Korean society and the other which is ethnically heterogeneous space, thus substantially reducing it to an exceptional space. The external forces reflect the conservative and ethnocentric nationalism that many Koreans have obtained. On the other end, there exist various smaller ethnic communities based on ethnic identities such as Nigerian African community, Muslim community, Filipino community, Pakistani community, and other ethnic communities. However, those groups do not have representativeness for each ethnic group. For instance, although there are many Pakistanis in Itaewon as residents or/and business people, a majority of Pakistani population reside in other parts of Korea as migrant workers or international students. For Filipinos' communities which are scattered in Korea, the most famous flea market held in Haehwa-dong, the northeastern part of Seoul, is symbolically regarded as the most important community place for the Filipinos. At first, it started as a small flea market selling necessity items, food ingredients, and street foods to Filipino migrants. With its popularity and visibility in the central part of Seoul, nowadays, not only the Filipinos but also Koreans accept the flea market as the most representative Filipino community place. As there are more representative places other than Itaewon for each ethnic community, any singular ethnic community cannot be chosen to explain the characteristics of Itaewon as community.

What is essential as regards noticeable characters of community found in Itaewon is that the inter-relationships among various smaller communities, between ethnic groups and individuals, and between Itaewon and the rest of Korean society: how different ethnic groups or business people coexist within limited spatial boundaries, how individuals appropriate particular group or ethnic identities, and how those people residing in Itaewon spatially and socio-economically intertwine with the rest of Korean society. By rejecting

both perspectives which defines Itaewon as a foreigners' community and which assumes it as a singular ethnic community, new dimension of community will be examined with reference to Itaewon's historical contexts, spatial construction, and cultural activities.

1.3 Research Methodology

1.3.1 Data Collection

As qualitative research, this thesis mainly depends on one year's fieldwork from July 2010 to August 2011 in Itaewon, a city area. This research examines three different but interrelated interests: spatial construction and transformation, business establishments and their activities, and interactions and activities centered on communities.

In anthropological urban studies, it is important to determine the boundaries of the urban space for research (Foster and Kemper [1974] 2002:138). Spatial settings were also important to delimit research scope. However, I did not set boundaries of Itaewon from the outset. Conceiving Itaewon as socially constructed space, I let interviewees describe its boundaries based on their daily activities as well as particular occasions. What was proposed to respondents in terms of spatial boundaries was the officially assigned tourist zone in Itaewon. Given the specific zone, respondents delineated their own cognitive map by shrinking or expanding the boundaries, as well as including or excluding particular spots. Based on their own respective spatial boundaries, interviewees explained their daily activities and feelings centered on these activities and space. In addition, commercial establishments as well as organizations to be observed were selected grounded on the extent to which interviewees mentioned these institutions as important references to their activities in Itaewon.

This research project employs three different research methods: critical analyses of locally published literatures and various materials about Itaewon; informal interviews with residents, business people, and visitors; and the researcher's field observations of the space

and activities in Itaewon.

For the literature review, both academic and non-academic publications are used. For historical background, scattered old cultural productions such as lyrics, novels, and dramas describing Itaewon in the past are included, which are useful for comparing old and new images of Itaewon. Online newspaper archives of those printed between the 1920s and the 1990s also provides specific data, which help in examining broader political, economic, and social conditions of Korean society. In recent times, an increasing number of newspapers and magazines' articles describe cultural changes in Itaewon. These articles are contributing to Itaewon's recent popularity for consumption culture among young generation. Reports by institutes for governmental service and research mainly focus on developmental plans of Itaewon as a 'multicultural' tourism zone. These papers show how the government locates Itaewon within Korean society and tries to do "place-making" by transforming it into a 'multicultural' space. The few academic publications about Itaewon tend to describe Itaewon as a deterritorialized area by showing the 'unjustness' of the American military occupation (Hong 2000), accompanied by flourishing of military prostitution (Lee 2007), and recent 'Islamization' by Muslim community (Lee, Yoon, Kim, and June 2008). However, some recent research have reexamined the implication of Itaewon from diverse perspectives: the consumption of Itaewon's exceptionalities by intellectual elite, who wanted to differentiate themselves from conservative old generation and pursue liberal values (Kim 2004); the significant roles of Itaewon for the burgeoning of Korean popular music (Shin, Lee, and Choi 2005); performing national or ethnic identities and clientele's interpretations centered on halal restaurants in Itaewon (Song 2007). These cultural analyses provide new perspectives in understanding Itaewon.

For in-depth interviews, about fifty-two residents and business people in Itaewon are included. As listed in Table 1, 25 out of 52 interviewees are business people and 35 out of 52 are residents. Among those residents and business people, 18 individuals doing

business in Itaewon live there too.¹ For the selection of respondents, snowball sampling was used but the snowball did not grow readily. The most critical problem was interviewees' hostile or alerting attitudes toward a person, this researcher who was recognized as an outsider. Many respondents from business sector did not willingly introduce their acquaintances because they are cautious in talking about their business to outsiders, especially when it is illegal business. Similar difficulty appeared too when I interviewed Muslims. As some of them were illegal migrants, they did not want to expose themselves much including their relations with friends or co-workers. Furthermore, as business people including many Muslim migrants were busy with maintaining shops, it was difficult to get agreement on interviews. As an indirect method, I attended a Protestant church where many Korean business people in Itaewon attend; and, I took two Arabic classes, one held at Seoul Central Masjid (mosque) and another held at a bookshop where many migrant Muslims were attached. During the first four months at the church and the mosque, I could establish a close rapport with key informants at each place.

Interviews of residents include both Koreans and foreigners across different classes, occupations and religions. Among these various interviewees, Korean shop keepers who have facilitated American soldiers and the newly built Muslim community are particularly interesting groups as their influences substantially affect Itaewon's local business as well as cultural landscapes. Visitors include those who visit Itaewon as consumers and tourists. Many interviews of residents resulted from repetitive meetings over a period of time. As respondents' consciousness on spatial and temporal conditions was considered as important factors to understand how they live and communicate with other people, I let interviewees choose a place and time for interviews. Some respondents invited me to their homes but many preferred their favorite hangout in the area.

¹ For ethnicities/nationalities, gender, and age distribution: 1) of 52 respondents, 39 individuals are Koreans and 13 foreigners are from various countries; 2) for gender female-male ratio, 32 females and 20 males; 3) for age variations, 8 people are in their twenties, 18 are 30's, 14 are 40's, 7 are 50's, and 5 are 60's.

Table 1. List of Interviewees

No	Name	Nationality (Ethnicity)	Age	Gender	Occupation	Category
1	Bae	Korean	40s	f	Bakery shop	B
2	Lee M.J.	Korean	41	f	Hairstylist	B
3	Ali	Pakistani	40s	m	Halal meat provider	B
4	Lee	Korean	50s	m	Supermarket owner	B
5	Kwon H.J.	Korean	30s	f	French restaurant owner	B
6	Joe	Korean	30s	m	Imam	B
7	Ji Hyun	Korean	30s	f	Office worker	B
8	Choe	Korean	60s	f	Bookshop owner	B/R
9	Chae	Korean	58	f	Souvenir shop	B/R
10	Simha	Indian	34	m	Office worker	B/R
11	Seo	Korean	40s	f	Street vendor	B/R
12	Park	Korean	50s	f	Hairstylist	B/R
13	Park	Korean	40s	f	Café owner	B/R
14	Mrs. Nam	Korean	30s	f	Nail shop owner	B/R
15	Moon	Korean	40s	f	Café owner	B/R
16	Lee	Korean	50s	m	Bag shop owner	B/R
17	Lamzi	Tunisian	20s	m	Assistant baker	B/R
18	Kwak	Korean	49	m	Leather shop	B/R
19	Kim E.K.	Korean	45	f	Clothing shop	B/R
20	Kim	Korean	55	m	Jewelry shop	B/R
21	Khalid	Syrian	45	m	Trader	B/R
22	Kang	Korean	50s	f	Golf wear shop	B/R
23	Jeong A.J.	Korean	60s	f	Dress shop	B/R
24	Jeong	Korean	60s	m	Bookshop owner	B/R
25	Han	Korean	42	f	Clothing shop	B/R
26	Erica	Peruvian American	31	f	Graduate student	R

Table1. List of Interviewees (continued)

No	Name	Nationality (Ethnicity)	Age	Gender	Occupation	Category
27	Choe M.H.	Korean	34	f	Piano instructor	R
28	Choe D.S.	Korean	20s	m	Islam information center	R
29	Yeo	Korean	30s	m	Office worker	R
30	Teddy	Korean	26	m	Undergraduate	R
31	Sheila	Filipino	39	f	Engineer	R
32	Shannon	Korean American	20s	f	Freelancer	R
33	Russo	Georgian	25	f	Graduate	R
34	Robert	British	30s	m	English teacher	R
35	Raymond	Korean American	43	m	English teacher /photographer	R
36	Nunu	Indonesian	30	f	Unemployed	R
37	Lee H. S	Korean	35	f	Unemployed	R
38	Lee	Korean	60s	m	Guard	R
39	Kim	Korean	60s	f	Housewife	R
40	Hae Sook	Korean	40s	f	English teacher	R
41	Hae Jin	Korean	33	f	Private instructor	R
42	Ae Hwa	Korean	51	f	NGO activist	R
43	Min Hee	Korean	20s	f	Accountancy	V
44	Song Y.H.	Korean	29	m	Undergraduate	V
45	Ryue J.H.	Korean	45	f	Unemployed	V
46	Ana	Canadian	20s	f	Undergraduate	V
47	Park Yeon	Korean	43	f	Travel agent	V
48	Park H.J.	Korean	30s	f	Photographer	V
49	George	American	30s	m	Consultant	V
50	Kim J.H.	Korean	30s	f	NGO activist	Etc.
51	Ahn J.K.	Korean	30s	m	Professor	Etc.
52	Kang	Korean	30s	m	Civil servant	Etc.

Note: For category, R means resident, R/B means resident/business, B means business, V means visitor, and Etc. means other various categories.

Observations include repetitive activities, sometimes events such as street festival, on the streets, at shops, at Seoul Central Masjid and churches, cafes, and restaurants. As activities and atmosphere around Itaewon show distinct shift between daytime and at night, the allocation of different time slots for observations was necessary to understand the different aspects of respective temporal dimensions.

1.3.2 Ethical Issues

Fluehr-Lobban (2003) suggests that “matters of ethics are an ordinary, not extraordinary” (p. 173). However, it was a complicated matter to keep this statement in my field site where “illegal things are ordinary”, according to one of interviewees who has been doing her business for a long time in Itaewon. Among interviewees, many business people, especially the ones who started their business earlier than the 2000s, have been involved in selling illegal goods or witnessed neighboring shops’ illegal business. The illegality was a kind of ‘open-secret’ among them and they share a kind of belief that the illegal business cannot be the object of moral judgment since it is imperative for their daily lives. While doing interviews, I confronted several such moments which the illegal occasions happened: when I interviewed a volunteer worker helping sex workers at a shelter house, a female sex worker came to the shelter house to get help after being beaten by her boy friend and eventually asked some amount of money, rather than accusing the man of assault; while walking around to observe space and people at market, I bought some counterfeit goods in order to get a chance to talk to them; business people I interviewed sometimes recommended to me newly arrived counterfeit goods as a favor; some illegal migrant workers accepted my interview request on the condition that I should meet him on his off-day, asking me to bring him to somewhere out of Itaewon, and it turned out to be a kind of date for him. For these cases, interviews became a problem of negotiation with interviewees. Would it be good to lend her some money to listen to her story? If I do not buy the bag, would the shopkeeper dislike my next visit? Or would I pretend to be

interested in the migrant worker too to make him talk about his life?

Another issue was about religious belief. I regularly visited two different religious institutions, a Protestant church and a mosque, to have a good rapport with key informants, as mentioned above. To religious groups, I mentioned my atheism from the outset. Contrary to my expectation that if I explain my atheism they would not make me to pursue their own religious beliefs, the church people let me participate in various religious activities such as bible reading group, the church choir, a prayer meeting of young females, and volunteers' meeting, hoping that my 'latent religious faith' would be awakened. The most difficult situation was when preachers spent much more time to assert non-religious issues during sermon time such as persuading people to support a particular political party, infusing biased negative images of Muslim community, and other various messages. As it was obvious that they would treat me in more amicable way when I share the same religious belief and even the same opinion about non-religious issues with them, it was difficult not to express any personal opinion. It became especially embarrassing when they criticized Muslim community for 'deteriorating' Itaewon, and then asked my opinion on that issue and suggested to go for missionary work near Muslim community in Itaewon.

As to the form and process of interviews, many interviewees did not want to be recorded by any kinds of electronic recorders. Even the form of informed consent was continually ignored by them. The formal process of signing gave them an impression that they would be responsible for some tentative legal issues someday. The meaning of business card exchange is also interpreted in different ways: as a researcher, a name card is given to interviewees to prove my identity to them; however, interviewees felt, if they receive my name card, that they might also need to provide their personal details, which they did not want to do. In this sense, formal procedures and attitudes that researchers are required to conduct can lead unexpected results.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three main chapters derived from empirical data from fieldwork, respectively analyzing three different dimensions of Itaewon as community: spatial conditions, mundane life and people living in the conditioned space, and business as main activities in this space.

As a brief introduction for the whole thesis, this chapter introduces a central argument suggesting the redefinition of the notion community. Under a heading of research method, introduction of literature review, details related to interviews – the selection of interviews, the list of interviewees, and process of interviews – and related ethical issues are described.

Chapter 2 reviews theoretical perspectives on community and strangers. The first three sections review various perspectives, mainly from urban sociology, on the organizing principles of community maintenance. The theoretical explanations include ecological conditions suggested by the early Chicago school, symbolic attachment to community, and the redistribution of economic resource in delimiting community's mobility in global cities. In the fourth section entitled “community of strangers,” rather than physical spatiality and shared identity among community members, two conditions – what they share is contemporaneity of time-space but what they do not share is singular identity – are suggested as ideal conditions for community, community of strangers.

Chapter 3 provides the spatial and temporal background surrounding Itaewon to provide the sense of place and historicity. Historical review covers a time period from pre-1950s up to the present and it is divided into four phases: before the 1950s; militarized period between the 1950s and the 1960s; economically the most prosperous period between the 1970s and the 1980s; more globalized period from 1990s to the present. Topography in this chapter briefly introduces geographical conditions surrounding Itaewon, locating it within Seoul, the capital of Korea and within *Yongsan-gu*, one of districts

including Itaewon in Seoul.

Chapter 4 analyzes the spatial process of how Itaewon has developed into military camp and a place for foreigners. While its strategic importance as military base was given by its natural environment, development into camp town and consequential image of foreigner's place is socially and culturally constructed. The recent redevelopment plan by the municipal government aiming to promote Itaewon as multicultural place is in tandem with the previous image of Itaewon.

Chapter 5 provides a description of mundane life among various groups of people in Itaewon. Although there is no singular axis to divide each group of people such as ethnicity, nationality, occupation, or gender, three different groups of people are shown here based on their conspicuous influences in both economic and cultural dimensions. Even each group does not show homogeneity within them but shows transient characters: American soldiers called "*meegun*," once the most representative foreigners in Itaewon, now are being replaced by young Westerners calling themselves as "expats", many of whom are working as English teacher; the inflow of Muslim community brought about by the existence of a mosque in Itaewon. Although they are seen as a religiously homogeneous group, there are multi-layered smaller groups comprising the Muslim community; younger generation with cosmopolitan cultural tastes has appeared as important players in terms of customers, business people, and artists, leading gentrification of Itaewon.

The last empirical discussion in chapter 6 shows business activities and its logics. The most conspicuous and valuable goods here is foreignness or otherness. Otherness is relationally and relatively constructed features. So foreignness to Koreans, Koreanness to foreigners, or gay and lesbian culture to other people becomes exchangeable goods. With the immaterial goods, business people have shaped Itaewon market as camp town, later tourist zone, and now trendy place for night life. The transformation of Itaewon market reflects the changing foreignness from American soldiers to more 'multicultural' foreigners

and economic activities has played an important role to shape relations among heterogeneous groups of people.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Although Itaewon is a small site located in Seoul, it represents the interstitial time and space between modernization and globalization during the urbanization of Seoul. However, despite the importance of research on the current cultural and spatial transformation occurring in Itaewon, hardly any attempt has been made until recently to study the spatial, social, and cultural transformations of Itaewon from ‘Americanized ghetto’, which were significantly influenced by American occupation to space heralding the arrival of ‘multiculturalism’ in an ethnically homogeneous society.

Firstly, within an ethnically homogeneous society like Korea, the observation and description of ethnic diversity and ‘multicultural’ atmosphere in Itaewon will provide empirical data to understand possible consequences of the arrival of ethnically heterogeneous society. Rather than focusing on Itaewon’s particularities and socio-cultural discontinuity, elaborating on the process of the spatial and cultural construction of this space, known as foreigners’ ghetto, would be necessary to understand both Itaewon itself and Korean society. In addition, interrogating the tensions between the various communities across ethnicity, gender, and class in Itaewon entails engaging with the history of the American occupation and diverse and uneven globalization. The attention to the tensions also is useful for better understanding of the meanings associated with difference and community in this ethnically ‘homogenous’ nation. So conceived Itaewon provides a useful site to understand the complicated cultural politics of difference and its implications on how this mono-ethnic society interacts with diversity.

Secondly, Itaewon presents a fruitful site to explore how the historical traces of Americanization are being transformed within the contemporary transnational condition. In Asia, even with the pervasive and tremendous American influences, discussions of its

influences have inclined to the issue on military occupation as well as political and economic policies at the national level. From this limited perspective, the presence of America is regarded as either indispensable 'friend' for national security and economic profits or 'enemy' that should be defeated for independence and autonomy. However, as it has featured as a model of modernization of economic, social and cultural development for substantial period in Asia, it is important to reconsider what Americanization signifies from the standpoint of Asian nations at the level of everyday life.

Lastly, this research would contribute to enriching the notion of community by analyzing how local communities interact under the transnational conditions. With critical spatiality as my point of departure, I seek to not only challenge the bounded conception of community in terms of how it is mapped onto spatial fixity and strong membership but also broaden the implication of community by providing a new form of community, community of strangers.

2 COMMUNITY OF STRANGERS: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Given that sociologists have been proclaiming the death of community for more than a century, it may seem surprising that recent years have seen its revitalization as a concept. (Day 2006:22)

The notion of community has variegated meanings depending on researchers' intentions, either lamenting the loss of ideal community and then longing for the regeneration of it or criticizing any attempts to define geographically or socially bounded groups as 'exclusive' communities. Following the German sociologist Tönnies (1888) who depicts the collapse of traditional community, *Gemeinschaft* displaced by *Gesellschaft*, which is driven more by individual interests than by familial ties and collaborative relationship, many sociologists affirmed that traditional community had disappeared due to industrialization, modernization, and individualization. Later, it is metropolis and urban area where 'ethnic communities,' 'cultural communities,' and political communal communities have been found by urban sociologists and political scientists. In fragmented modern cities, these groups who seem to share a singular ethnicity, similar lifestyle, or the same experience of economic and social discrimination, have been imagined as communities.

To identify the organizing principles binding these groups, geographical and spatial conditions, first of all, have been raised by the Chicago School (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1967). In addition, emotional attachment to places for communities have been added as important principles to overcome limited explanations provided by geographical and spatial conditions (Cohen 1985; Firey 1944; Hunter 1974; Mewett 1986). With emerging global cities, the economic conditions as to distribution and accessibility of resources have appeared as more critical elements affecting the differential resident areas

based on classes as well as ethnicities (Harvey 1989a; Harvey 1989b; Sassen 2000). Later, feminist geographer Young (1990) asserts that the notion of community should be abandoned since community intrinsically reinforces unity by oppressing otherness. So she suggests a new concept to refer to what she imagines as the ideal social relations that “embody openness to unassimilated otherness with justice” (Young 1990:320) rather than redefining the term community. In these analyses, the assumption about community is that communities are based on sameness of ethnicities, economic difficulties, cultural values, or other similarities and members of the community share common values and ideals.

However, rather than dismissing the term, it is worthy to maintain it as long as the notion of community denotes places of an intermediate scale providing people with a sense of time-space sharing. Nevertheless, it is necessary to contest the premise that internal ties and bonds are the main factors to organize communities and members of community share common values and goals. The spatial and social entity that I researched shows that the principal factor defining community results more from external factors than from internal bonds among individuals. This argument is not parallel with the view that communities are merely defensive or reactive. It emphasizes heterogeneity within a community and discrepancy between the internal logics maintaining a community and external factors defining the community. In this sense, to understand a particular community, it is indispensable to uphold a broader perspective to include external conditions affecting the community. For instance, in an ethnically homogeneous society, space with many foreigners is simply depicted as foreigners’ community neglecting the complicated interactions among heterogeneous individuals and external factors defining it as foreigners’ community. In this context, community study is not only about a particular community but also a society or a nation surrounding communities.

In the following sub sections, major existing theories about the principles for the construction of communities are reviewed: spatial conditions, emotional attachment, and economic conditions. After reviewing them, the relationship between community and

strangers will be explored to redefine the notion of community. The redefinition will rely on Nancy's philosophical discussion in terms of "inoperative community" (1991) and the discussion will articulate his philosophical considerations into more sociological conceptualization.

2.1 Spatial Boundary and Distance

Spatial boundary is one of the critical conditions to shape communities as well as an effect of shaped communities: spatial proximity enables people to physically confront and interact with each other; cultural similarities, on the other hand, provide people with motivation to get together so some spatial boundary become recognizable. With the pervasive use of the internet, the importance of physical spatiality has become devalued and virtual space is represented to provide unlimited environment to construct virtual communities without physical spatiality. However, spatiality is an indispensable factor to be considered for communities that inhabitants at bounded area reluctantly or autonomously face each other. Human geographer Massey (1984) also states that "most people still live their lives locally, their consciousness is formed in a distinct geographical space" (p. 117).

The Chicago School of urban sociology is a pioneering group that paid attention to urban communities with ecological and ethnographic methods from the early twentieth century (Park et al. 1967). As they were interested in reviving social cohesion and solidarity that were believed to be destroyed in the midst of urbanization as well as influx of immigrants from outside, their research primarily focuses on spatially segregated communities based on different ethnicities, classes, and other factors. The Chicago School, especially the early researchers like Park (1967) who drew on a biological perspective and Burgess (1967) who suggested concentric zone model, has largely been criticized for biological determinism. Park considered that the urban structure to be decided by competitions for limited economic and spatial resources among diverse communities and

changes of spatial and social structure are driven by circular process – competition, domination, invasion, and succession. The mechanically mapped zone model by Burgess plotted the “predictable spatial patterning of ethnic enclaves, racial ghettos, areas of prostitution, and ‘clean and bright’ [quotation marks in the original] suburbs” (Fincher and Jacobs 1998:5). Within this framework, economic resources which determine the residential allocation and the identity of certain groups is assumed as fixed attribute such as ethnicity, class, or criminality. Notwithstanding the above mentioned criticism by later urban sociologists, it is worthwhile to revisit their ethnographic findings, as long as those are understood as a means to explain the modern urban life for a particular moment. Their interests were situated in the specific historical context and spatial conditions – the early twentieth century’s American cities, especially Chicago. Savage and Warde also defend the biological model suggested by Park and Burgess, asserting that it is only metaphorical expression to provide “inferential similarities between urban life and a plant community” (1993), rather than asserting their exact sameness.

Related to spatial configurations and urban communities, the expression ‘mosaic’ as a new urban living condition is worthy to be projected into urban communities. The mosaic of the urban (Timms 1971) explains that the city is naturally separated into several different residential areas according to ethnicity as well as socio-economic status. Once the separation appears, this spatial expression comes to embed sentiment, traditions, and a history of its own (Park 1952:17). As such, spatial segregation is accepted as the inevitable result of the increasing scale, density, and heterogeneity of the urban community (Park et al.1967). In residential differentiation resulted from spatial segregation, the effect is the two sides of the same process: to decrease possible conflicts among heterogeneous groups, and to provide support for the homogenous groups with the same difficulties (Timms 1971). Many commentators of the Chicago school assume that less homogeneous

neighborhoods² show higher rate of crimes. As they were interested in stabilizing disorderly urban environments and decreasing ‘undesirable embarrassing’ contact, ethnic and socio-cultural homogeneity is believed to contribute to solidarity and social stability. Although residential differentiation may result from natural environmental conditions and socio-cultural differences, the resultant mosaic of the urban in terms of distinct communities associated with a particular combination of ethnicity or class is regarded as positive phenomenon.

Defensive Community

The notion of the “defended neighborhood” (Suttles 1972) has been raised to analyze the spatial and social logics of urban ghettos. Although Suttles did not provide a definitive definition of defended neighborhood, it is “the residential group which seals itself off through the efforts of delinquent gangs, by restrictive covenants, by sharp boundaries, or by a forbidding reputation” (p. 21). Defended neighborhood is a means to share feelings of safety and affinity among residents in an area while confronting a common plight such as economic difficulties, high possibility of crimes, and other oppressive living conditions. So it is said that defended neighborhood voluntarily maintain limited spatial mobility and distinct spatial boundaries, where formal procedures of control by the government become weakened, to protect themselves from dangers caused by others. Related to defended neighborhood, urban dwellers have cognitive maps of it, which ‘regulate’ their own spatial movement letting them avoid unwanted conflicts. According to Suttles (1972):

² Compared to community, the term ‘neighborhood’ was frequently used by the Chicago school. In Park’s terminology, a neighborhood means more socially constructed system, while community is closer to natural area. Gould defines four characteristics of neighborhood: a) a small inhabited area; b) the inhabitants of such an area; c) the relations which exist between the inhabitants: the fact or quality of their nearness to each other; d) friendly relations between the inhabitants (Timms 1971). In this way, Park and Gould consider neighborhood as socially constructed group of people living in a limited area and their friendly relations, which is mainly found in urban area. However, the use of “neighborhood” has been gradually displaced by the term “community” by following researchers to emphasize the fact that it is socially constructed unity rather than something is naturally determined.

It [a cognitive map] helps to tell a person where his enemies and friends and how to find them. ... Above all, the defended neighborhood simplifies many of the choices of spatial movement to where they can be made as most decisions must be made: among a set of qualitative alternatives. (P. 29)

It shows well how mosaic ethnic enclaves in urban areas are constructed to avoid tentative conflicts and how people come to embed their own cognitive maps of places where they can inhabit and enter into. Although the boundaries are drawn by physical conditions such as streets and natural environments during the early period, this boundaries is socially constructed and maintained by socio-cultural differences among inhabitants. The image of the defended neighborhood is not fixed so the sense of belonging of residents to a neighborhood is contingent on their sentimental attachment to cultural unity. For Suttles, however, the functions of boundaries in terms of defending groups of people from 'others' and segregating 'others' are very obvious. His idea on boundaries explains only about one side of boundaries in terms of regulating individual residents' spatial movement and excluding others. It only focuses on tensions, animosity, and conflict among different groups of people so that the role of cognitive map and boundary becomes limited to interfering in any interactions among them. It does not explain urban inhabitants' desires to explore others' different places, which intrigue people's cultural curiosity.

Ghetto: the Impossibility of Community

Related to boundaries, ghetto would be the most extreme case of defensive community. However, for Bauman (2001), ghetto simply means "the impossibility of community" (p. 122). According to Bauman, there are two kinds of ghettos located at the opposite side. "Voluntary ghettos" i.e. gated communities provide global elites and upper classes with 'shelters' where outsiders are excluded but the insiders are free go out. In contrast, the "real ghettos" are places from which their members cannot escape by themselves (p. 116). Neither of them is an ideal model of community: the voluntary ghettos values global interconnectedness neglecting locally rooted relations; the real ghetto is a segregated space

where people are immobilized due to economic difficulties and socially traumatized. As to the real ghetto, although he does not negate the function of the ghetto as a shelter for minority groups, he points out the fact that communalism becomes their only possible option, not their natural preference. So the existence of ghettos for ethnic minority groups or lower class only proves the fact that they are excluded from the host society. In this context, ghettos need to be seen as the places of segregation and immobilization of lower class or minority groups. As such, as ghettos are spatially and socio-economically bounded and the inhabitants are reluctant to be defensive, they are far from ideal model of communities in terms of 'harmonious' living conditions. They only show incommunicable situation among host groups and others.

While many of the Chicago school are concerned with the construction of boundaries and their functions, it now seems to be more important to understand how the boundaries become porous and flexible. The perspectives to interpret boundaries as fixed ones only provide a means to understand who and which elements are included as 'ours' as well as are excluded from 'us'. Symbolic attachments are, in that sense, suggested to emphasize porous boundaries.

2.2 Symbolic Attachment Idealizing Community

While ecological theories assume that economic factors affect lineaments of urban space, the following urban sociologists (Cohen 1985; Firey 1944; Hunter 1974; Mewett 1986) see symbolic variables such as cultural values and emotional attachment to places as the main factors for individuals to attach them to a community. Firey (1944) analyzes that bearing of a wide range of sentiments – aesthetic, historical, and familial – upon locational processes influences on how the residents are concerned with maintaining their communities rather than pursuing economic profits. Hence, Mewett (1986) pays more attention to the process of how community boundaries are constructed through the cultural production of knowledge and discourse.

People can define themselves as different from other neighbouring bodies through the control of the discourse that constitutes the specific stock of knowledge that situates their social existence. This knowledge is related, revived, renewed and changed in its telling: in the discussions and gossip of everyday life that constructs the discourse relating to the collectivity. (P. 74)

From his observation oncrofting communities, sharing of common sense and daily routines become an important part of process for constructing a particular community. The 'natural units' is maintained and controlled by various apparatuses such as school, community association. In this sense, boundary is 'symbolic' (Mewett 1986:81) rather than the product resulted from the territorial differences. Boundary as a socio-cultural construction decides not only who will be included as 'insiders' but also who will be excluded as 'outsiders'. This assertion means that the inclusion in community needs not only spatial settlement but also daily interactions which produce symbolic meanings.

With the notion of "symbolic communities," Hunter (1974) explains that boundaries are no less than a social production resulted from the interaction of resident's cognitive, evaluative, and affective orientations toward their local communities (p. 180). As such, boundaries are varied depending on the compromise between an individual's interests and the reactions of different levels of social units. The negotiability of relationship between individuals and communities enable the individuals to selectively identify themselves with "hierarchies of community" (p. 179) constituted by multiple communities with different scale ranging from small village to more abstract societal level. The dynamics of boundary points out the importance of socio-cultural processes for the construction of local communities. Though the symbolic community makes the urban community of the past left behind, it accentuate the flexibly intertwined relations between individual identities and communities to which the individuals want to attach.

In *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (1985), Cohen explains that it is not structural forms but feelings and meanings for individuals to provide them with a sense of community.

Community exists in the minds of its members, and should not be confused with geographic or sociographic assertions of 'fact.' (P. 98)

As the meanings of symbols that people interpret are subjective and imprecise, each individual can assimilate to a community even when each of them has different ideal images of the community. As such, the sense of belonging to a certain community of an individual is a continual process of negotiation with commonality. Commentators of symbolic communities have shifted the emphasis of frameworks of how community is constructed from geographical conditions towards individuals' subjective and emotional attachments to places. As such, the identification of spatial placement, cultural values, and the assimilation of themselves to communities are taken for granted. However, the fact that symbolic meanings also have real consequences in terms of social practice and behavior (Day 2006:179) is not deeply considered in their research. Even the process of building symbolic meanings may be affected by economic as well as spatial conditions.

2.3 Redistribution of Resource and Bounded Community

While the early ecologists pay attention to spatial segregation centered on ethnic distinctions, the latter urban sociologists extend the research scope into global cities and focus on their capitalistic logics for the distribution of resources and the reorganization of space (Harvey 1989b; Sassen 2000). As to the questioning of scale, although these commentators focus more on global cities than individual subjects, many migrants have been regarded as the main subjects to maintain substructure of global cities. Their explanations show how global elites consisting upper class in urban areas and 'others from outside' have lived in urban areas under the economic conditions.

Harvey (1989b) analyzes residential differentiation as the representative urban processes affected by the logic of capital accumulation. On the macro level, residential differentiation is inherently linked to different access to the scarce resources such as

housing, education, and other public infrastructures that are essential to acquire market capacity (Harvey 1989b:118). Also, as the community resulting from spatial differentiation is the place of reproduction of labor power, the spatial fixity based on economic conditions affects the reproduction of classes and restricts the chances for social as well as spatial mobility. Although his explanation is inclined to explain a strong suburbanization process in the American cities since the 1930s, it explains well about how different classes construct their respectively different spatial practices and how these practices reproduce and exacerbate the interstitial gap between different classes.

Distinctive spatial practices and processes of community construction – coupled with distinctive cultural practices and ideological predispositions – arise out of different material circumstances. Conditions of economic oppression and socio-political generate quite different kinds of spatial practices and styles of community formation than will typically be found under other class circumstances. (Harvey 1989b:267)

While the upper class has the benefit of exchange values with flexible use of resources, low income populations are trapped in space and the pursuit of the use values of space are essential for daily life (Harvey 1989b:265). So lower class communities need tighter relationships with each other to share mutual aid and resources resulting in an ‘intense attachment to place’ (Harvey 1989b:265) than upper class. His arguments on economic conditions, which spatially and socially limit lower class, resonate with Suttles (1972) defensive community as well as Bauman’s (2001) ghetto.

Saskia Sassen (2000) argues that the dominant economic narrative basically posits that the global cities are hierarchically divided into two sectors: the center and the other. The central part of city is the site for the concentration of international economy, technology and communication and this center is rendered as rational space as well as mainly governed by international corporate power. The logic of spatial processes in the center is that there are no structural barriers to the flows of finance, telecommunications, and information. Like Bauman’s description on “voluntary ghetto” (2001) in terms of individuals with high mobility, the mobility of material goods and immaterial information

is reserved in the center of city. The 'other' spaces are sites where diversity of "amalgated otherness" (Sassen 2000:192) are segregated devaluing the lived city in terms of immigrants and cultural activities. The lived city is constituted by varied immigrants who have been excluded from the center. As Sassen puts it, even though they have been devalued, they have participated in maintaining the global cities' structures by providing cheap labour. So she asserts the new politics of identity as well as the cultural politics that are able to bring many of these devalued or marginalized sectors into representation. For this new politics, she insists to overcome a dominant narrative presenting globalization mainly led by corporate power as neutral principle. Instead, the recognition is suggested that the global city is the contemporary arena of which conflicts between the center and the 'other' happens everywhere in neighborhoods, school, and public spaces. So, when we analyze cities, rather than following the dominant capitalistic logics, it is necessary to understand the lived city and people.

In *The Power of Identity*, Castells (1997) posits community as an important base for the step of identity for resistance within his three forms of identity building³. Although his interests are more related to the identity building, his idea on community is that cultural communities are not 'arbitrary' but "historically and geographically determined" (Castells 1997:65). By adding prefix 'cultural' before communities, he refers to communities that are constructed with political, economic, or social projects rather than only geographically bounded. However, cultural communities are also indissolubly interlinked to religion, national, locality, and ethnicities, which means that the construction of communities is materially determined. Furthermore, the current topography of communities in this global era shows how they react to rapid transformation blurring the preexisted boundaries.

The reactions are against globalization dissolving the autonomy of institutions, organizations, and communication systems, reaction against networking and flexibility blurring the boundaries of membership and involvement, and reaction

³ There are three forms of identity building: legitimizing identity, resistance identity, and project identity. (Castells, 1997: 8).

against the crisis of the patriarchal family, as the roots of the transformation of mechanisms of security-building, socialization, sexuality, and personality systems (Castells 1997:65).

In this globalized era, communities are collective reactions of individuals who have become rootless against the process of globalization transforming the established social systems such as social organizations, patriarchal family, and other new systems for flexible global capitalism. Given this unstable situation dissolving time and space, people try to “anchor themselves in places, and recall their historic memory” (Castells 1997:66). In this way, the construction of communities are defensive and reactive. However, he also argues that these defensive reactions provides the possibilities to shape “new cultural codes out of historical materials” (Castells 1997:66).

These urban sociologists, unlike those from the Chicago School who regarded the economic factors as fixed elements affecting residential differentiation, thoroughly elaborate on how the economic processes produce two different levels of circuits in urban space. For them, the unequal consequences in terms of reproduction of classes caused by the global capitalism are rather the conditions to overcome than the natural orders. However, while emphasizing on the overwhelming influences of global capitalism on urban settings, they tend to describe the passivity of urban communities and do not closely pay their attention on the activities of urban communities. Instead of simplifying the processes of urban transformations affected by communities’ activities, it is necessary to combine the socio-economic external features as well as the cultural logics in terms of social bonds as well as emotional attachment based on ethnicities, religions, and other cultural characteristics.

Since the appearance of global cities with varied ethnic communities, the notion community has been reviewed and redefined. In the earlier work undertaken by urban sociologists and others, the major emphasis was on uncovering principles for organizing community – spatial conditions, emotional attachment, symbolic attachment, and class

division. Although each principle is criticized for each own weakness by other scholars, they remain significant, as they can be applied to explain multiple sides of communities at a variety of levels. Although environmental condition is not a conclusive factor to characterize community's construction, spatial conditions are still as important as emotional and symbolic attachment. Many characteristics derived from defensive community are still found at many ethnic communities. Harvey and Sassen's emphasis on economic elements are also applicable to explain dominant organizing principles of urban communities. Based on these acknowledged principles, in the sections that follow I will explore more philosophical considerations to redefine the term community.

2.4 Community of Strangers

The theoretical explanations on the organizing principles for communities that are reviewed do not contest the assumption that community is based on sameness and share identical values. The following discussion aims to unnaturalize the conservative meaning of community by suggesting 'community of strangers' and then broaden the concept of community by redefining what community members share: the commonness does not derive from singular identities but from the existential commonness.

2.4.1 Unnaturalizing Ethnic Community

As to spatial segregation and ghettoization, minority ethnic groups have been easily captured as the ethnic community. The notion of 'community' tends to be combined with the preformative word 'ethnic,' especially with the increase of transnational flows of people and goods. This naturalization of ethnicity or race to construct ethnic enclaves contributes to the way in which "a range of hierarchical structuring of social difference and moral ambitions to assimilate such differences are legitimated" (Fincher and Jacobs 1998:6). However, many commentators on 'ethnic community' have begun to raise questions about its negative meanings because of the possibility that the term gets used to

refer to the ethnic minorities and differentiate them from people of the hosting country (Baumann 1996). As ethnicity is socially constructed (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Hall 1997), identifying ethnic categories based on biological distinctions with social groups under the name of 'community' may reflect structures of power and inequality (Baumann 1996:19). In ethnographic research on Southall which is well-known as place of mosaic ethnic communities in England, Baumann questions whether the notion of community is chosen to describe a "collectivity one willingly participates in oneself, or a stereotype of uniform commonality projected upon others on the sole basis of their ascribed ethnic identity" (Baumann 1996:15). The dominant discourse on 'ethnic community' and culture tends to rely on naturalizing the interconnectedness of those two notions (Baumann 1996).

It is invariably a part to pious fraud. Ethnic minorities are called "communities" either because it makes them feel better, or because it makes the white majority feel more 'secure.' (Ignatieff 1992)

This rhetoric can lead to leaving 'ethnic community' behind and framing them into timely deterred group and consumed as an object for nostalgia 'without past'. For instance, in central tourist zones of many global cities, they have ethnic communities framed as 'China town,' 'Little India,' 'Little Italy', and other various places supposedly representing respectively ethnic groups. Regardless of its historical traces, when these neighborhoods are assigned as the representative places for ethnic groups in official ways, they become 'multicultural' places where their everyday lives are interpreted and are regulated by external forces. The analysis of the 'thematic development' of Singapore's Little India Historic District by Chang (2000) illustrates how the government's redevelopment plan has transformed activities and identities of local residents as well as business groups. The government's urban planning to promote the area as a tourist zone representing Indian ethnic community has resulted in replacing local residential units with retail attractions and declining traditional Indian owned businesses. This situation is described as a process of 'taming place' resulting from the insertion of external economic and cultural forces. In a

majority of global cities or cities desiring to become global cities, places where immigrants or different ethnic groups are located are easily grabbed by the host society and are represented as ethnic communities. However, denying those communities, simply on the belief that they are neither 'genuine' nor 'original' ethnic communities, can reproduce another ethnic-centric perspective. So it is more valuable to trace what internal and external forces build communities and how those dynamics affect socio-economic and spatial environments surrounding those communities. In this sense, it is important to maintain the notion community as a framework to analyze a particular group of people as well as its spatial environment, instead of entirely denying the validity of the notion community. A feminist geographer, Linda McDowell (1999), asserts the necessity of the term 'community' denoting places of an intermediate scale, with certain characteristics in common that tie people together (McDowell 1999:100), like place and locality. She argues that, even though communities' boundary is contingent and changeable by power relations, communities are necessarily bounded entities. She therefore suggests that, as long as the term 'community' connotes the unequal power relations, the term itself has its legitimate use apart from the moral judgment. However, instead of automatically assuming a familiar group confined by a limited area as 'community', we need to examine how it has been formed as a community out of the interconnected space (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:8).

2.4.2 Foreigners, Strangers, and Others

Many commentators from philosophy, psychology, and sociology engage in discussion about Others, under the different terms such as foreigners, strangers, and difference. In the ethnically 'homogeneous' Korean society, foreigners, who have been considered as others, are nothing less than an existence who contribute to reconfirm the homogeneity of Korean society. In this sense, Itaewon, which has been known as "space of foreigners," has been playing a role to spatially contain foreigners in bounded space, thus resulting in postponing consideration about the new condition of living with foreigners and

strangers. Although strangers in Itaewon mainly refer to foreigners, it has been also the place for variegated ‘strangers,’ not only of foreigners but also the “abject” under the context of the Korean society such as sex workers specially for foreigners, gays as sexual minority group who is assumed to threaten ‘normal’ citizens with the possibility of contagion, migrant workers as ‘uninvited guest’ and other lower class people.

In this review, the changing meaning of strangers will be examined to extend its meaning from simply foreigners to include everyone as stranger to each other in globalized urban setting. This consideration is imperative to contest the traditional meaning of community. For the conservative ideal of community, community has been constructed on the one hand by embracing sameness, on the other hand by excluding otherness. However, under the circumstances that everyone is a stranger to each other, the assumption on community based on sameness cannot be supported.

In a short but impressive essay on stranger by Georg Simmel (1950), a stranger is defined as the person “who comes today and stays tomorrow” . This phrase shows that the position of strangers in the twentieth century was not merely of wanderers as they maintained closer ties with a host society, while not threatening the host society. It was possible since strangers are still distinguishable from people of the host society and since he/she has not been rooted in the host society. As such, according to Simmel, the strangers could maintain objectivity to host society and host people and the objectivity of strangers comes from the double characters in terms of “distance and nearness, indifference and involvement” (Simmel 1950:403). The bilateral character described by Simmel exactly points out that strangers are keen to maintain both spatial and social distances. The fact that the stranger is on the spatial and social borders makes it possible for the strangers to maintain objectivity. The strangers never totally belong to a community nor leave the community.

However, with intensification of globalization, the meaning of strangers has shifted from the ones who distancing themselves from a host society to someone who

permanently stay, either willing or reluctantly. The changed conditions of strangers produce different ways of representing them. In Turner's (1991) review on Harman's (1988) writing on strangeness, he compares two different perspectives of the American and the German versions on the implication of the strangers.

Whereas German theorists like Simmel and Schutz (1944) were interested in the phenomenology of being a stranger, the Chicago pragmatists turned the German question (what is it like to be stranger?) into an American issue (how can we make them like us?) [Parentheses in the original]. (Turner 1991:249)

Whereas Simmel was more interested in stranger's unique position related to community, the Chicago school's commentators on strangers were more concerned with examining migratory traces of strangers, identifying their locational positions, and integrating strangeness into a hosting society. In this sense, Turner adds that the Chicago school's following studies on strangers and communities were the product of "migration, urbanism and the creation of a multicultural America" (Turner 1991:249). Indeed, as the strangers, described by Simmel, is the ones historically situated in the early twentieth century, the strangers implicitly refer to Jewish traders. So the 'modern' strangers of Simmel have become outdated to explain a new mode of stranger who has become a permanent *modus Vivendi*, as Bauman puts it.

Sharing space with strangers, living in the unsolicited yet obtrusive proximity of strangers, is a condition that city residents find difficult, perhaps impossible to escape. The proximity of strangers is their fate, a permanent *modus Vivendi* which must be daily scrutinized and monitored, experimented with, tested and retested, and (hopefully) [parentheses in the original] put into a shape that will make cohabitation with strangers palatable and life in their company livable. (Bauman 2010:86)

It shows that, as Bauman puts it, the increased confrontation with 'other(s)' such as immigrants, foreigners, and other unfamiliar presences become unavoidable conditions in this era. Harman (1988) also mentioned strangeness has become "a way of life".

However, the way in which the stranger depicted by Simmel is worthy to be remembered as it emphasizes the ambiguous position of a stranger on the border of two

opposite sides rather than focusing on simply defining who the stranger is. Rather than reinforcing the identification of strangers, it opens a possibility to imagine community of strangers, by blurring the dividing line as to who are strangers and who are members of the host society. When Young (1990) posits the politics of difference, the difference refers to all kinds of minority groups who have suffered from prejudices and unequal treatments in cities, such as women, gay men and lesbians, migrants, and many kinds of 'others'. Her political ideal is of realizing an unoppressive city in terms of acknowledging politics of difference and welcoming anonymity. However, Young (1990:250) argues that the ideal notion of community, which is suggested as an alternative to liberal individualism, denies and represses social difference. It means that, insofar as people consider themselves members of communities, an oppositional differentiation from other groups is unavoidable. So the ideal of community naturally validates and reinforces the fear and aversion some social groups exhibit toward others (Young 1990:261). In this context, the unoppressive city, which acknowledges difference, is not compatible with the ideal of community since sameness is an ideal community's defining characteristic, rather than difference. However, her political ideal for unoppressive city is as much ideal as the ideal of community she criticized, since it denies any kinds of interconnectedness among individuals.

2.4.3 Community of Strangers

Various commentators on community have been concerned with defining the notion community: what defines community, how it is organized, and who becomes subject. However, the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) shows how and why community itself is 'inoperative'. Inoperative community does not deny the existence of community, instead shows that it does not work to accomplish tasks such as harmonious social gatherings, as Nancy puts, "there is neither function nor finality" (1991:15). Shindo (2012) explains that Nancy's attempt to contest the traditional myth surrounding community provides an alternative way, not to see community as "an object which we need to

accomplish,” (Shindo 2012:151), but to admit that community just exists.

Nancy’s question about community starts from what community means in modern world where individualism is praised and political experiments for communion were evaluated as having failed. In the dominant Western philosophical thoughts, a community has been imagined as a totalizing, exclusionary myth of national, racial, or religious unity (Glowacka 2006). However, rather than giving up the notion of community like Young (1990), he reserves the legitimacy of the term community. Nancy argues that the concept of community is not disposable one, despite all myth attached to the concept. Although Morin (2006) named Nancy’s discussion as “putting community under erasure,” Nancy’s works on community are more inclined to re-conceptualize community and induce politically practical strategy to realize community based on the new concept. Against this myth, discussions among Nancy (1991; 2000), Blanchot (1988), Agamben (1993), and other commentators have opened up the concept of community onto a broader political and cultural context, and even ontologically more fundamental arguments (Glowacka 2006).

There is, however, a difficulty to directly apply Nancy’s conception of community as “being-in-common” onto social and cultural phenomenon. Contrary to Young (1990) and other researchers who consider it is important to acknowledge difference and embrace others with tolerance, Nancy defines human beings as “being-in-common.” Although it seems to repeat a conservative and old-fashioned concept of sameness, being-in-common does not mean individuals share the same identities. In his later work, he prefers to use a term “being singular plural.” Here, singularity means neither particularity nor individuality, but a singular existence presupposing plurality. A singularity cannot exist without all the others. In this sense, a singularity is equal to a plural.

The togetherness of singulars is singularly “itself.” It “assembles” them insofar as it spaces them; they are “linked” insofar as they are not unified. (Nancy 2000:32)

As Nancy puts, singularity is possible when singulars are not the sum of singulars. However, it does not mean singulars exist independently without interlinking or communicating with others. It is important to maintain distance but, at the same time, to be interconnected. What let singulars be interconnected is the fact that singulars are not perfect from the outset in terms of the existence of sharing mortality. In this sense, Nancy also terms “with” as a significant trait of being. A person as a being has a tendency to incline towards others as each person is not perfect so they need to coexist with others. However, this “with” does not mean sharing their identities but sharing time and space, in other words, contemporaneity.

The “with” is the exact contemporary of its terms; it is, in fact, their contemporaneity. “With” is the sharing of time-space; it is the at-the-same-time-in-the same-place as itself, shattered. It is the instant time scaling back of the principle of identity: Being is at the same time in the same place only on the condition of the spacing of an indefinite plurality of singularities. (Nancy 2000:35)

In sociological perspectives, the term “with” of Nancy implies how the relations with others are built. The relations are possible with spatial distance and shared time.

As mentioned in the earlier paragraph, the dependence of being-with by sharing the common limit of death, in other words, finitude or immanence, community is ontologically imperative for all beings. When Nancy explains the nature of community as being “inoperative” (1991), it interrupts and refuses the myth of loss community that suggests a possibility of sharing a common identity. Such a community and the desire for it, as Nancy puts it, might well be nothing other than “a belated invention that tried to respond to the harsh reality of modern experience” (Nancy 1991:10).

Community is given to us – or we are given and abandoned to the community: a gift to be renewed and communicated, it is not a work to be done or produced. But it is a task, which is different – an infinite task at the heart of finitude. (Nancy 1991:35)

As community exists only when people recognize each other’s finitudes and limits, it is important to find an inclination toward the other to find community. Young would explain

this inclination as difference. But difference itself does not explain the need to communicate between singularities. In this sense, members of community need to be regarded as strangers each other and it provides the way to see members as plural singulars. They maintain some distance and singular identity, not pursuing unified identity.

By extending his arguments, relations between space and community can be found. In understanding of community by Nancy, singulars exist as plural singulars in so far as they are not unified but are spaced. Distance of exposition between plural singulars makes it possible for singulars to be linked and communicate with each other. Distance does not exist outside singulars but space between plural singulars coexists to constitute a world. In practical articulation of spatial elements when we analyze communities, it is more imperative to understand how people maintain social distance but, at the same time, share contemporaneity.

If we go back to the discussion about strangers by Simmel to articulate Nancy's singular plural, the objectivity of strangers is possible by distancing oneself from the host society. It is quite similar with singular plurals of Nancy who are distancing themselves. While, in Simmel's explanation on strangers, there is no clear explanation about how strangers are interconnected with people of the host society and there is still some distinction between strangers and the host society, Nancy's singular beings signal the 'replacement of self-contained individuality' (Dallmayr 1997:174) but these singular beings, due to their inherent finitude, show *clinamen* letting them attract each other. In this sense, community is an exposition of strangers in terms of singular plurals, in which any individuals do not have any form of prerogatives.

2.5 Conclusion and Summary

In this review, many organizing principles for community have been reviewed: spatial conditions, emotional attachment, and economic conditions. These three elements are inextricably intertwined to shape urban communities. Geographical conditions and spatial

environmental setting are closely linked to economic conditions. Many ghettos, as Bauman puts it, results from those reluctant circumstances: crime-ridden neighborhoods or remote areas from central part of city become the only options for low-income people and its spatial conditions become economic and social barriers prohibiting their moving. However, once someone settles down, one's emotional attachment toward one's neighborhood does not always follow economic profits to decide where to settle down. Although these principles contribute to the understanding of urban communities, they do not contest the traditional views on community. Given the conservative perspectives on community, it is based on sameness in terms of same ethnicities and singular identities. However, in a circumstance that a living with foreigners or strangers has become a permanent condition, it is necessary to redefine the notion community embracing strangers, even when it is getting difficult and unnecessary to distinguish who the host group is and who are strangers/foreigners.

For the redefinition of community, relying on Nancy's philosophical discussion about "inoperative community" (1991), it suggests that what people share is neither sameness nor singular identity but contemporaneity in terms of space and time. For spatial commonness, it is more worthy to try to understand how people with different backgrounds managed to maintain social and spatial distances among people, rather than paying attention to where spatial boundaries are lying to distinguish communities. Under the condition that heterogeneous people are either voluntarily or reluctantly to coexist in limited urban setting, the various ways to maintain social and spatial distances are getting important. Maintaining spatial distances means neither an exclusion of others nor blasé attitude, in terms of the indifference as a psychological response towards overflows of stimulus elements in metropolitan cities (Simmel 1971:329). Instead, it can be understood as alternative ways of urban everyday lives in which one neither exclude others nor make others share one's values and identities. As to temporality, rather than stigmatizing a particular group by naming them some ethnic community, the recognition of the fact that

all urban residents, regardless their ethnicities or nationality, live as singular plurals of the same age should be taken for granted.

Given these premises, as Nancy puts it, community is not a goal to accomplish but a spatial and cultural embodiment showing how heterogeneous people share time and space. My argument is that, even though there is no institutional engagement or people's intentional effort to construct community, spatial and temporal conditions which all people share without exception, provide basic elements to lead people communicate with one another. Combined elements such as spatial conditions, emotional attachment, and economic circumstances still significantly affect characteristics of communities, however, in the era of globalization in terms of living with 'strangers' has become a permanent *modus Vivendi*, the recognition that all urban residents need to share time-space transform features of community from construction based upon sameness to spatial and cultural embodiments without distinction between host people and strangers and without sharing same identity.

In the following chapter, prior to main discussion about Itaewon's spatial and temporal characters, an explanation as to geographical and historical context surrounding Itaewon is provided.

3 SITUATING ITAEWON IN A TOPOGRAPHICAL- HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Most references about history of Itaewon pay much attention to how and when Itaewon became a place for foreigners. This has shaped the impression that Itaewon had always been different from the rest of Korea for a long time. However, throughout the Korean War (1950 – 1953) followed by the settlement of the US army after the war to the present, Itaewon has gone through modern historical transformations such as industrialization, urbanization, and political and social turbulence as a constituent of Korean society. In the history of Itaewon, rather than naturalizing deterritoriality of this space, it is more critical to excavate its historical traces that are intermingled with Korean society so as to explain the political, economic, and social roles and meanings of Itaewon within the Korean society. Before explaining about the historical background, it is necessary to provide topography of Itaewon and statistical reviews of population to get a sense of place.

3.1 Topography of Itaewon

Seoul is the capital and the largest city of South Korea and also is the economic, political, and cultural hub of a country. It has approximately over 10 million populations, representing roughly a quarter of the total population of Korea,⁴ despite the fact that the city itself accounts for less than one percent of the country's total land area. As shown in Figure 1, the city is divided into north and south by the *Han* River winding its way through Seoul from east to west. The capital, called Hansung during the Joseon Dynasty period (1392–1910), was much smaller than the current scale so the old capital covered only the

⁴ Source from Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS). Retrieved October 11, 2012 (<http://kosis.kr>).

area north of the Han River that even did not include Itaewon⁵. The capital has been gradually stretched out in all directions during urbanization since the end of the Korean War. At present, Seoul has autonomous 25 districts called *gu*, and each *gu* is divided into smaller neighborhoods called *dong*. Among 25 *gus* in Seoul, Yongsan-*gu*, the larger district that includes Itaewon, is located in the central part of Seoul, facing the Han River.

Seoul's special status as a capital city: It is home to fully one-quarter of Seoul Korea's population, all major government agencies, all top schools from elementary through university level, and industry headquarters. Seoul has historically acted like a magnet, drawing individuals and families toward the nation's center of political power and toward educational and career opportunities (Larson and Park 1993:22).

By the river, Seoul is both geographically and socio-economically divided into two areas: Gangbuk, literally meaning 'north of the river'; Gangnam, literally meaning 'south of the river.' While the former that includes Yongsan-*gu* has been existed as the old city center, the latter was created by the urban development policies during the 1970s and the 1980s. It aimed to develop secondary nodes within the city limits to reduce the complexity of the old city center (Nelson 2000:39), resulted from an increasing number of populations in Seoul migrating from agricultural areas. In Gangbuk, several districts such as Jung-*gu*, Dongdamun-*gu*, and Mapo-*gu* has been developed from the old city district to the bustling urban center encompassing most of the important political, economic, and cultural functions. In Gangnam, the project of making 'modern spaces' (Nelson 2000:41) was rapidly realized by transforming the southern banks of the Han River into gigantic apartment towns for newly emerging the upper middle class. The development also entailed the construction of school zone belt as well as commercial areas full of luxurious department stores as well as boutique shops of global brands to meet the upper middle class's desire to differentiate them from lower class. With real estate speculation, Gangnam has been rapidly changed into residential area for the upper middle class and business districts.

⁵ The old map of *Hansung* is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 1. Map of Seoul

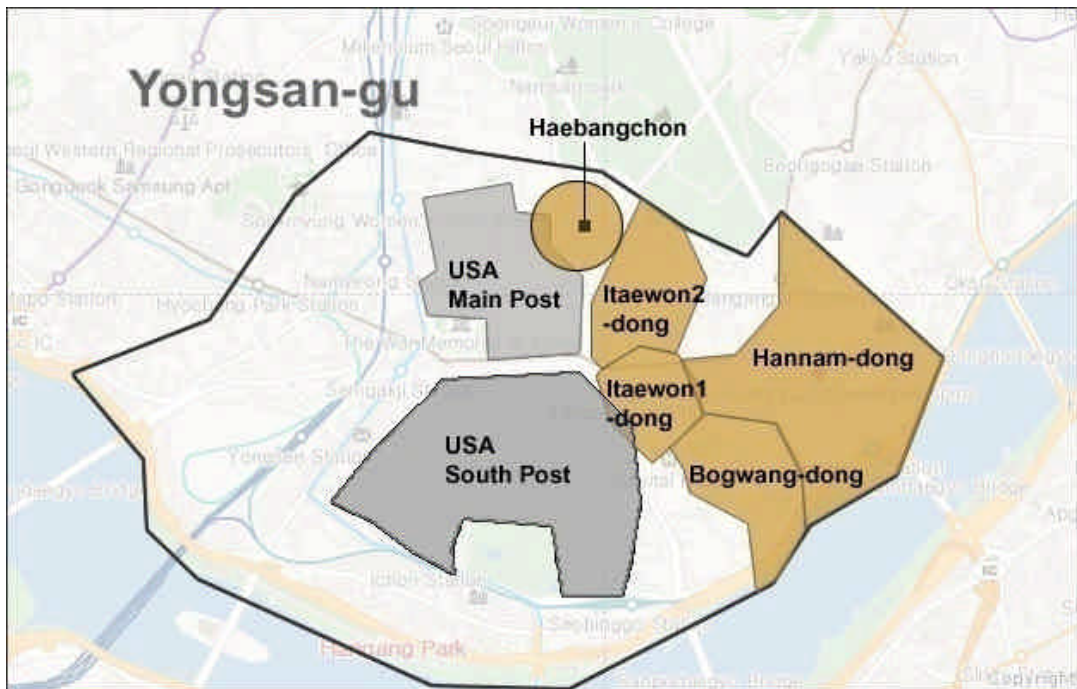


Figure 2. Map of Yongsan-gu

With the new construction of Gangnam, the geographical meaning of Yongsangu became changed from the outskirts of the old central area to the middle region bridging Gangnam and Gangbuk. Demands had been made for the provision of infrastructure to link two parts of Seoul. To meet the demands, the construction of three tunnels passing through Namsan Mountain, which located at the northern part of Itaewon thus blocking the flows between Gangnam and Gangbuk, was completed during the 1970s. Before this construction, accessibility to Itaewon was much lower but concomitant with these three tunnels also made it convenient to access Itaewon. Compared to other central parts of city, however, Itaewon's spatial development plan has been continually 'deterred' due to the presence of the US military base, occupying approximately more than a third of the district. It was later when Seoul Subway Line Six with three consequent stations – Noksapyeong, Itaewon, Hangangjin⁶ – penetrating Itaewon was opened in 2000 for more people to get easy access to Itaewon.

As to the extent of Itaewon, its boundary has not been noticeably changed but has been continuously expanded. When Itaewon had been characterized as a camp town during the early 1960s, it only referred to limited small area of several alleys, currently known as Itaewon1-dong. However, it has been enlarged into a larger area including several dong – Itaewon1-dong, Itaewon2-dong, Hannam-dong, Bogwang-dong, and Haebangchon⁷ –, mainly the eastern side of US army base as can be seen in Figure 2. Commercial facilities are concentrated on in Itaewon1-dong but its commercial influence has been rapidly extended into other dong as well as Haebangchon, where it has more residential units. As this research aims to cover the past and present of Itaewon, the research areas include not

⁶ The three stations - Noksapyeong, Itaewon, Hangangjin - are respectively located on the western end, central, and the eastern end of Itaewon. Among them, Noksapyeong station is famous for a huge size with four underground levels. Its design is also known as unique: a glass dome on top of the station letting sunlight provide natural lighting, multiple layers of escalators, and interior design symbolizing Korean traditional patterns. Subway line six was officially opened in August 2000, but the two stations – Itaewon and Hangangjin – were the latest stations to be opened later in March 2001 because it took longer time for excavation work.

⁷ Haebangchon is not an official address name but an alias, which is more frequently called by residents. It designates a neighborhood on the top of the hill which is located between Itaewon2-dong and USA main post.

only Itaewon1-dong but also other four neighboring areas since Itaewon's economic, social, and cultural influences are being extended into neighboring dong.

3.2 Foreigners Living in Korea

3.2.1 Exaggeration of Incoming Multicultural Society

The announcement of the transforming Korean society from ethnically homogeneous society into a multi-ethnic as well as multi-cultural society has been widely accepted in Korean since the 2000s. Many newspaper articles and academic journals began to quote a common phrase like: 'South Korea is rapidly becoming a multi-ethnic society with over one million foreign residents as of September 2007'. Given the rapidly increased number of foreigners, a growing awareness of its consequences in this 'ethnically homogeneous society' is not unreasonable. According to survey of foreign residents⁸ in Korea conducted by Ministry of Justice (MOJ) shown in Figure 3, the average growth rate for the past ten years between 2000 and 2011 was over 20 percent. Compared to 1992, the number of foreign residents has increased from 66,000 almost twentyfold in 2011. A growing influx of foreigners is mainly explained by two different groups: migrant workers and international marriage couple. Almost 40 percent of foreign residents are migrant workers from other Asian countries and more than 10 percent are foreigners who are married to Korean (MOJ, 2012). The increased foreigners reflect structural changes of economy and social transformations in Korea.

⁸ "Foreign residents" is foreigners who are eligible to stay in Korea for over three months.

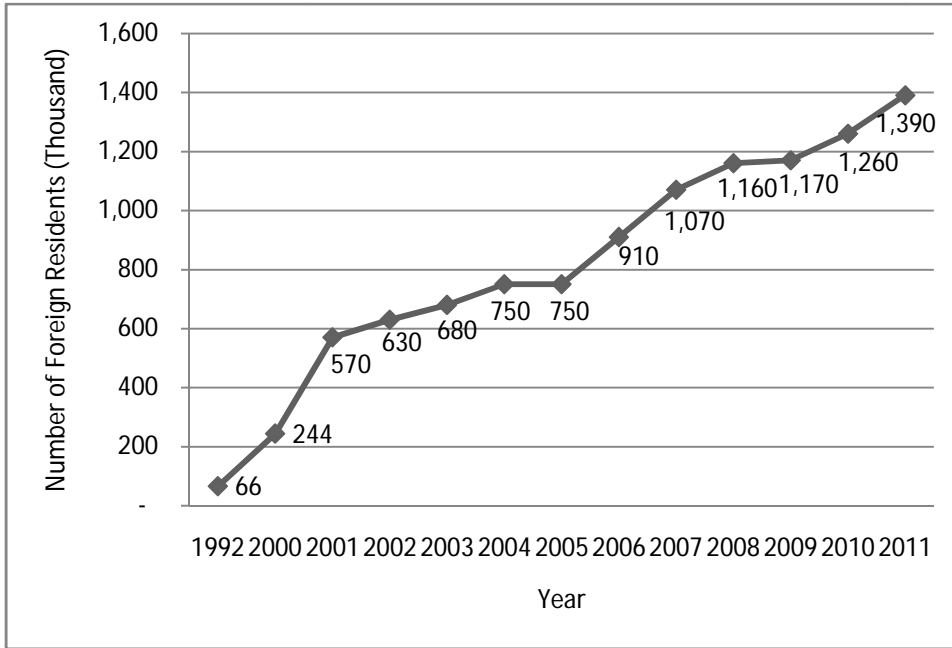


Figure 3. Number of Foreign Residents
 (Source: Ministry of Justice, 2011, <http://www.moj.go.kr>)

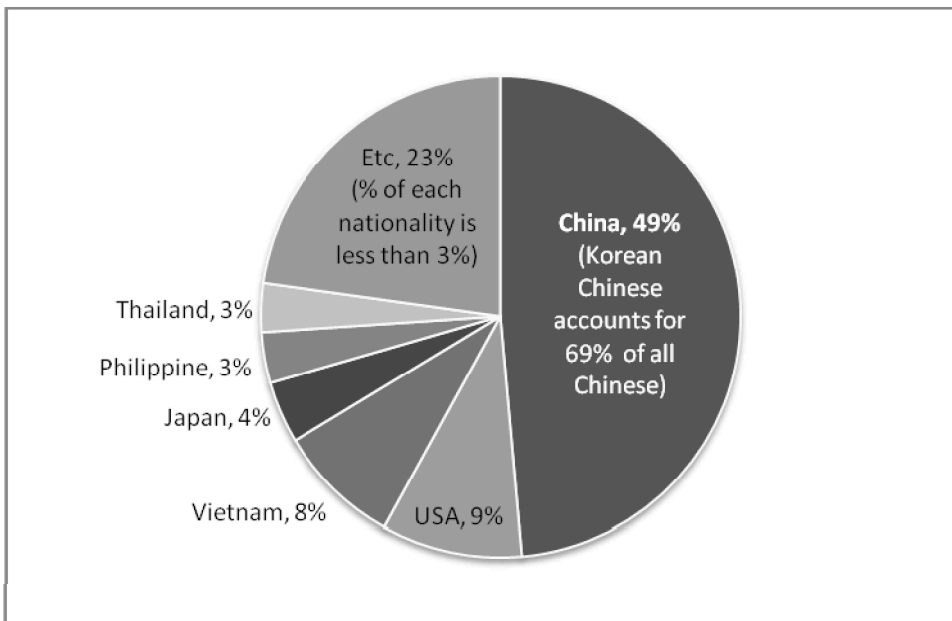


Figure 4. Nationalities of Foreign Residents in 2011
 (Source: Ministry of Justice, <http://www.moj.go.kr>)

Regarding migrant workers, the rise of middle class in Korea resulting from economic development transformed the structure of workforce. Whereas South Korea was a country that mainly sent their people as migrant workers to other countries until the 1980s, it became the country that receives more foreign migrant workers from other countries since the 1990s. With a series of general strikes during the 1980s, income level has steadily increased and the wage gap between the employees of major companies and of small companies has widened. Furthermore the scarcity of labour for the second industry mainly from manufacturing to construction industries has brought about labor shortage amidst economic development (Seol 1998: 92). At the time, the relaxed immigrant regulation during the early 1990s affected increasing foreigners from other Asian countries with visa for traveling and short-term stay. Those who once entered Korea settled down to work in Korea and they fulfilled shortage of labor in the second industry.

With regard to international marriage, marriage between Korean men and Asian women is dominant. At first, it began in the 1990s as the “Getting Rural Bachelors Married” project (Kim and Kang 2007:101). From the 2000s, with the increased women’s economic power, men who are economically unstable could not find spouses in Korea and the vacant positions are being replaced by migrant women from other Asian countries. According to Statistics Korea’s report on international marriage, 1 out of 10 marriages in 2011 is international marriage. As a result, a new family type, named the “multicultural family,” appeared. This has been used to represent the ground to show that Korean society is rapidly becoming a multicultural society.

On a survey conducted in 2011, foreign residents, however, only account for an estimated 2.79% of the national population in Korea. Even, as can be seen in Figure 4, Korean Chinese accounts for almost half of foreign residents in Korea. They are ethnic Koreans with Chinese nationalities, called *Joseonjok*, who settled in northern China during the early twentieth century and have maintained their lives in China. During the Cold War era, the diplomatic relations with communist countries were severed. After the Cold War,

the Korean government tried to normalize the adversary relations with communist countries – the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China – and Fifth Republic led by Noh Tae Woo (1987-1993) opened its gate to China. It also aimed to improve Korea's economy by accepting *Joseonjok* as migrant workers. They are preferred by Korean employers for several reasons: first of all, it is easier for Korean employers to communicate with *Joseonjok*, compared to other foreigners, because most of them are bilingual in Chinese and Korean; they are ethnically not distinguishable from Koreans so Korean employers assume that *Joseonjok* produce less tension at work place than other foreign workers; lastly, in spite of *Joseonjok*'s ethnic and lingual similarities, their wage is generally lower than Korean workers.

In the ethnically homogeneous Korean society, a very small number of foreigners, accounting only three percent of total population, have become an alarm heralding the arrival of multicultural society. However, a majority of foreigners are still Korean Chinese who are considered as Koreans by most Koreans because of ethnic and language similarities. The second largest foreign population is Americans accounting for nine percent of foreign residents, who have always been considered as the only 'probable' foreigners because of military alliance and political relationship with America. In this situation, however, a rapidly increased migrant workers and international marriage couples have brought more diversified foreign nationalities, other than Americans and *Joseonjok*, such as from Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and other various countries, and the diversity of ethnicities may give rise to the exaggeration of multiculturalism in Korea.

3.2.2 Is It Really Foreigners' Place?

Compared to the national average of foreign resident of 2.79%, there is more foreign residents in Yongsan-gu, 4.8%, as can be seen in Table 2. If it is limited to five dong that this research focuses on, the percentage of the foreigners becomes higher to 8.1%. Especially, in Itaewon1-dong's foreign residents' percentage reaches 18.2% of total local

residents so it means that almost one in five is foreigner in this neighborhood.

Table 2. Number of Foreign Residents in Yongsan-gu (2010)

	Total Population	Foreign Resident	Percentage of Foreign Resident	
Yongsan-gu	257,143	12,290	4.8%	
Yongsan2ga-dong	14,340	985	6.9%	
Itaewon1-dong	10,685	1,946	18.2%	
Research Area	Itaewon2-dong	11,817	376	3.2%
	Hannam-dong	25,440	2,410	9.5%
	Bogwang-dong	19,336	875	4.5%
	Total Population	81,618	6,592	8.1%

Source: Yongsan-gu Office (<http://www.yongsan.go.kr>)

Table 3. Nationality of Foreign Residents in Yongsan-gu (2010)

Nationality	Foreign Resident	Percentage of Foreign Resident
China	3,731	30%
Others	2,643	22%
U.S.A	1,622	13%
Japan	1,607	13%
Phillippines	563	5%
Taiwan	383	3%
Canada	381	3%
U.K.	314	3%
India	246	2%
Russia	194	2%
Vietnam	159	1%
France	152	1%
Mongol	133	1%
Republic of Uzbekistan	102	1%
Thai	60	0%
Total	12,290	100%

Source: Yongsan-gu Office (<http://www.yongsan.go.kr>)

With regard to the national composition of the foreign residents, it shows a similar pattern with that of Korea as a whole. Two major groups of foreigners across Korea – Chinese and American – also accounts for almost 43% of foreign population in Yongsan-gu. However, the number of Vietnamese in Yongsan (1%) is relatively smaller than the national average of 8%. The percentage of Vietnamese on the national level mainly results from international marriage. Most international marriage couples between Asian women and Korean men live at either outskirts of Seoul or other remote regions since their economic condition is not enough to live in the central city and they mainly depend on agriculture and factory work. As a central part of Seoul, Itaewon has less Vietnamese population. In contrast, the number of Filipinos is relatively higher than the national average. Though statistical data does not provide the reason to explain the higher percentage of Filipinos, it can be assumed that more Filipinos work for commercial facilities as employees or work for other foreign families as domestic workers, since they can communicate with customers or their employers in English.

Interestingly, even though Itaewon has been recently known as the place for Muslims, the statistics in table 3 does not show their existence. Since Muslim is a category for religion, the statistics of population categorized by nationalities cannot show the exact number of Muslims in Itaewon. However, they seem to be included in some part of the category named ‘others’ that accounts for 22% of foreign residents in Yongsan-gu. As will be explained later, it is estimated that approximately 137,000 Muslims are staying in Korea⁹ and many of them are staying in Gyeonggi province where many factories are located, forming community based on their workplace. In Itaewon, as will be explained later, the place called ‘Muslim street’ is limited to a very small street near the central mosque and its symbolic function attracts Muslims during Friday and the weekend when the migrant Muslim workers can take a rest and visit the mosque. So the Muslim

⁹ Song Kyung Hwa, and Ahn Soo Chan. 2011. “Muslims in Korea, How many?” Hankyoreh Newspaper, May 16, Retrieved 22 February, 2012 (http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/478232.html)

community may not be captured as foreign residents.

Like the rest of Korea, a majority of foreign residents in Yongsan-gu consists of (Korean) Chinese (30%), American (13%), and Japanese (13%). However, approximately a quarter of the foreign residents are of diverse nationalities and ethnicities as residents, business people, or visitors. In addition, as Itaewon is a complex area combining commercial zones and residential areas, a significant number of foreign visitors cannot be counted based on the given data. So, rather than designating this space for a singular ethnic or national group like Muslim's street, this research understands Itaewon as a space with heterogeneity. Although the following four sub sections are assigned to four different groups, each section does not naturalize each group as a group representing singular ethnicity or nationality. Following sections will trace changed constitution of important subject groups and interrelationships between them; either amicable or antagonistic relationship. Furthermore, the existence of Koreans in Itaewon should not be dismissed as they have affected the shape of Itaewon's economic and cultural landscape. So the existence of Koreans will be dealt with equal importance of other various communities in Itaewon.

3.3 Historical Context of Itaewon

The historical facts are presented in chronological order, which are divided into three phases: the formative period (1950s–1960s) as camp town mainly facilitating the US army; the heyday (1970s–1980s) as representative tourist zone for foreigners as well as commercial area selling counterfeit goods; and the transnational period (1990s to the present) characterized by more diverse foreignness and otherness. Before going down to the main phases, a brief explanation of the pre-1950s historical background is necessary to understand Korean's historical awareness on Itaewon.

3.3.1 Before the 1950s

The historical origin of Itaewon as an area for foreigners is rooted in the *Joseon* Dynasty (1392-1910). From the early period of the *Joseon* Dynasty, as one of four gates bridging Seoul, the capital city and the local provinces, Itaewon had provided civil servants and travelers with facilitations such as lodging and tavern. Also, due to the proximity to *Han* River as the main water route from the Southern part of the peninsular to Seoul as can be seen in Figure 5, Itaewon was filled with foreign envoys and was an important site for goods exchange with foreign countries as well as with local regions (Kim 2004:19). As such, with environmental and geographical conditions, there existed heterogeneous gatherings of people and goods. The origin of its name, although several different versions exist¹⁰, also shows how Itaewon, originated from Chinese words referring to ‘the other’, has always been associated with the place for foreigners.

Another attribute attached to Itaewon is of militarized zone. Because of its strategic importance, with the outbreak of war, it has been temporarily occupied by foreign military force, from Chinese armies, to Japanese colonizer, and to American forces. As to the Japanese military’s presence during the early 20th century, even before official commencement of the colonization of *Joseon* Dynasty in 1910, the Japanese army had established its main base at Yongsan, the larger district that includes Itaewon, in 1894 (Cumings 1997:153). During the Japanese colonial occupation, through the construction of the railroad network and military headquarters in Yongsan, the area played an important role in distributing the colonial military force.

¹⁰ There are several explanations on the meaning of the name ‘Itaewon’. Firstly, the origin of the name is related with heterogeneous character of the residents in this area. When the war between *Joseon* Dynasty and Japan that lasted seven years ended in the late 16th century, some Japanese became naturalized in Korea and began to live together around this area. As they were foreigners, Chinese words referring to ‘the other (異他人)’ began to be used to call this area. Secondly, there is an explanation that Itaewon became the shelter for nuns and women, who raped by the Japanese soldiers during the war, as well as their children. As the children had different family names, people began to call this area as the place for people with different family names. Lastly, it (梨泰院) just simply came from the fact that there were many pear trees at that time (Han, Youn Joo, Moo Young Lee, Seong Hee Shin, Jae Hyun Yoo, and Ye Lin Kang. 2001).

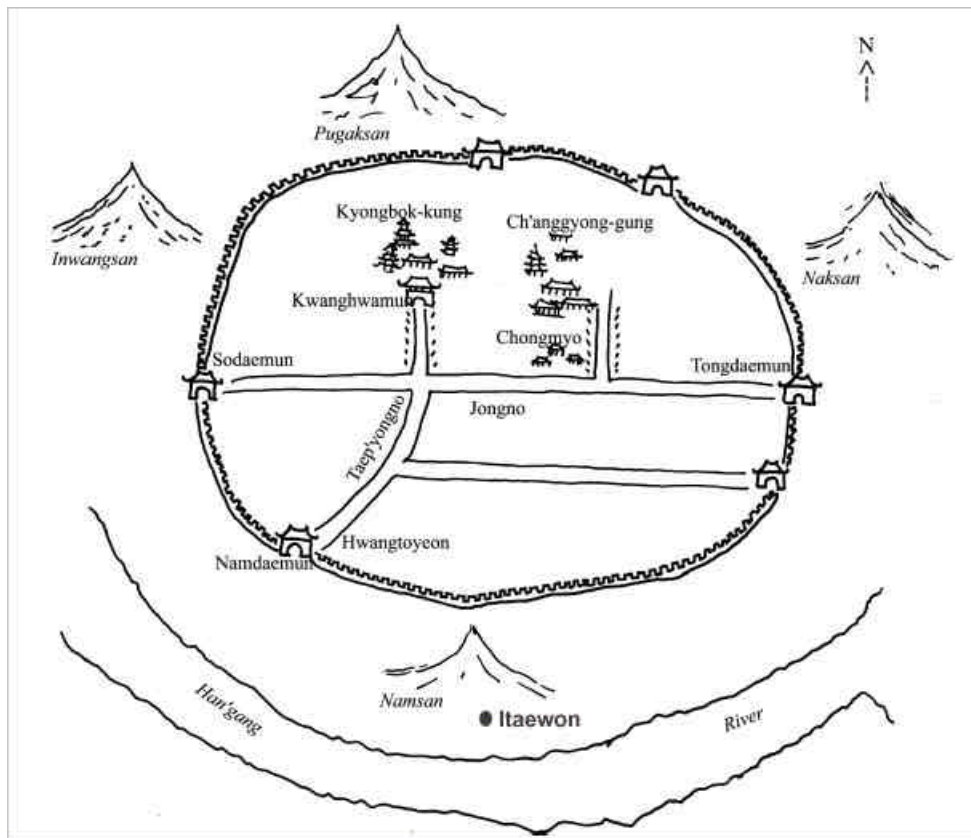


Figure 5. The Capital of Joseon Dynasty in 1394 (King 2009)

While the urban formation of colonial capital, called Kyungsung at the moment, was being sustained by boulevards, squares, and railway connections signifying modern city and especially stimulating the colonized Korean's new identity (Hong 2008), Yongsan's militarized features had not been transformed. With the Japanese colonial occupation that had been lasted for more than forty years, the militarization of Itaewon strongly affected its following occupation by foreign forces, i.e. the settlement of the UN troops as well as the US army.

This historical background of Itaewon has played a key role for naturalizing its foreignness and deterritorialization. This 'coincidental' connectivity between the presence of foreigners and colonization, foreigners and military occupation, or foreigners and the story of violent situation such as raped nuns may have provoked antagonistic views and attitudes toward foreignness.

3.3.2 1950s-60s: Militarization and Foreignness

It [the Japanese army's main base at *Yongsan*] remains an American military base today, except that now it is a gigantic complex smack in the middle of an enormous, sprawling, bustling city – contemporary Seoul. (I can't think of another capital city quite like it, where you turn a corner and suddenly see a mammoth swatch of land given over to a foreign army.) [parentheses in the original] (Cumings 1997:153)

At the end of World War II, Korea was liberated from the Japanese colonization in 1945 by the allied forces under the leadership of the US army. The previous Japanese military's headquarter in Yongsan immediately occupied by foreign forces. In liberated Korean peninsula, two different ideological groups, the communist backed up by the Soviet Union and the liberal democratic backed up by America, confronted each other. After the first democratic election held in only South Korea under the dictate of the UN in 1949, followed by the Korean War (1950–1953), the Korean peninsula was divided into two nations. During the period mentioned above, Yongsan army base was left empty when the UN allied forces and the US army left in 1949. Then during the Korean War, it was taken up by the North Korean. Again after the Korean War, the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) returned and has settled in Yongsan army base since 1953 up to now.

Since the division of the peninsular into north and south, the process of nation building in South Korea has strongly been affected by the ideology of anticommunism. Meanwhile, economic development, which was considered to be 'hampered' by and during the Japanese colonial occupation, became the urgent goal, as much as proving the ideological superiority of liberal democracy over communism. In these political and economic circumstances of political turbulences – the liberation from Japanese colonization, the Korean War, the division of the country, and the prolonged Cold War era – the military and economic dependence on America was regarded as indispensable requisites to Korea. Indeed, Korea became politically and economically dependent on the US military governance.

As such, the stationing of the US military in the Korean peninsula was regarded as indispensable for the security of the nation. However, the relationship with America was, for the South Korean government, unstable and uncertain because American policy toward the Asian region is of greater importance to Japan (Kim 2008:84). So, when the American military authority settled down in South Korea, the right to station permanently was guaranteed by the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA¹¹) between the Korean and the American government. Due to its unequal agreement, most Koreans are aware of the extraterritoriality that Yongsan base camp, which is also known as Yongsan garrison, as well as Itaewon as camp town governed more by American military authority than by Korean government. So, while the EUSA in Yongsan constructed their own ‘village’, maintaining their own residential units, schools, churches, sports and other facilities, outside army base, Itaewon was developed into the ‘Americanized’ space to facilitate the US military forces in every possible ways by the two governments.

The close proximity of Itaewon to the army post in Yongsan transformed it into an area facilitating the American soldiers’ leisure. The representative image of Itaewon as an ‘Americanized ghetto’ was thus shaped through the bounded interactions among the American soldiers and their family, Korean civilians attached to the military, and other Koreans facilitating outside camps such as tailors, restaurants and bars’ owners, money exchangers, sex workers, and other various service sectors’ employees in Itaewon. The prominent commercial activities in Itaewon at the time was ‘PX (Post Exchange) economy’ in which US soldiers, their family, or Korean employees purchase some tax-exemption

¹¹ “SOFA is an agreement under Article 4 of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the US, regarding facilities and areas and the status of United States Armed Forces in the Republic of Korea. After the Korean War, the Mutual Defense Treaty was signed between the two in 1953. It authorized for the U.S. military government the right to use Korean territory without any compensation. As SOFA that was signed in 1966 by persistent demand of Korea is agreement under the Mutual Defense Treaty, it also guaranteed exclusive privilege for using bases as well as exclusive criminal jurisdiction over the accused soldiers, civilians attached to the military, and their family. Since the first ratification of SOFA, it has been amended several times but many civil activists in Korea believe that it still have many unequal elements.” Available from “The National Campaign for Eradication of Crimes by the U.S. Troops in Korea”; Retrieved October 23, 2010 (<http://www.usacrime.or.kr>)

products from PX and sell these items to the local market for gaining some profits. Cumings (1997) renowned for his research on Korean history describes the economic and social circumstances at the time, when South Korea was absolutely dependent on the US army's existence:

Since the American post exchanges were the main supply line for the Korean black market and since the American military commander controlled the entire U.S. aid program from 1951 to 1959, Koreans therefore attached themselves to Americans by any means necessary, hoping to get to America – uniformly conceived as a country where the streets were paved with gold, a fabulous PX in the sky (P. 304).

Above all, the flourishing of sex business which was systematically supported and regulated by both Korean government and the U.S. military authority contributed to the construction of a negative image. The number of sex workers for foreigners in 1955 was estimated at around 100,000 and almost half of them were only for American soldiers. (Lee 2007:17) These sex workers were called as '*yanggongju*,' literally meaning 'the Western princess' but the actual meaning is a 'whore' for foreigners. Many Koreans had ambivalent attitude toward them: on the one hand, they were treated as a sympathetic 'sister' or 'daughter' who had to economically support family by selling their bodies; on the other hand, they were criticized as fallen women who corrupted public morals and mediators who transferred 'vulgar' American culture to Korean society. As the Lee Seung Man's administration (1948-1960) deployed patriarchic order valuing family and nation over individuals and heightened superiority of homogenous ethnic group of Koreans, the presence of *yanggongju* was regarded as the ones threatening nation's ethnic purity through sexual contact with foreigners (Lee 2007:17). So the current prevalent image of Itaewon as the 'sexualized' and morally 'contaminated' space results from the sense that Korean women "mingled flesh and blood with foreigners" (Moon 1997:3) in a society with strong Confucian morals. However, as the government could not neglect sex business's

economic contribution to earning US dollar¹², it could flourish in this ‘permitted’ area under the governance by the two authorities.

The main residential area for foreigners during the 1950s to 1960s was also of great importance for earning foreign currency. The northern and eastern part of Itaewon called *Hannam-dong* was chosen for embassies of many nations and gradually became the residential area for the diplomats’ families and international business people. For instance, the residence called ‘UN village’ in *Hannam-dong*, as can be seen in Figure 6, was built to facilitate only foreign residents in 1962 and it soon came to represent a luxurious housing estate, compared to shantytowns of Koreans surrounding it. Although it was not affordable for most Koreans at the time, this area has been eventually developed into high-end residential areas like gated-community for both foreigners and Koreans.



Figure 6. UN Village in *Hannam-dong*¹³

¹² During the 1950s, the economy of the whole base camp accounted for 25 percent of GNP and half of it was related with sex industry (Lee 2007:31).

¹³ Smothers, Bill. 2007. "1965 Seoul, Korea, UN Village." Blog page on Flickr Web site. Retrieved July 11, 2010 (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/smothers/381276672/in/set-72157594512152183>).

At least until 1960s, Itaewon was, for foreigners and especially for the US soldiers, the only place in which they were able to do shopping, engage in leisurely activities, and communicate using their own language. For Korean government and civilians, Itaewon was the place for mediating the flow of American PX goods, English books, American pop songs, and other American influenced culture from the US army base to the rest of Seoul. However, the most important role was economic benefit earning foreign currency, from ‘unpresentable’ black market and sex business to officially acknowledged rental housing market and service industry for foreigners.

3.3.3 1970-80s: Modern Project and ‘Glorious Participation’

***Yushin* Regime**

Throughout the period of 1970s and 80s, Korean society had been through harsh political transformation. The turbulent period had been heralded by military coup led by General Park Jeong Hee in 1961 and he was put in power. The consequent authoritarian dictatorship began industrial development plan, called a five-year economic development plan, which contributed to the legitimization of authoritarian regime. Fourth Republic led by Park’s third term (1972–1979) started with the declaration of martial law and following constitutional amendment enabling a president in power to tightly control society. The period of reformation called *Yushin*¹⁴ regime went through a series of political actions against democratic constitution such as dismissing National Assembly, closing universities, enforcing strict censorship of the media. Although the *Yushin* regime was to guarantee indefinite tenure of Park’s office, he tried to claim its legitimacy in pursuit of reunification and economic development. For both achievements, the presence of US army in South Korea was still considered necessary and the role of Itaewon facilitating base camp was maintained. In addition, in the pursuit of export-driven economy, private sectors actively

¹⁴ The term ‘Yushin’ comes from Chinese words (維新) that means reformation on the whole.

participating in exporting goods to the global market were given various benefits by the government, such as ‘generous’ access to bank loans, cheap rental contract, and other institutional supports (Buzo 2002:134).

Cultural Liberalism and “3S” Policy

Even after the end of *Yushin* regime with the death of Park, who was assassinated, another General Jeon Doo Hwan assumed power. After the declaration of martial law in 1980 by General Jeon against fierce student demonstration and *Gwangju* massacre¹⁵, he indirectly elected to a seven year term. As he was also backed by military power, Fifth Republic’s political, economic, and social control over the nation was not significantly changed. During the 1980s, Korean economy enjoyed benefits of “Three Lows” – three international economic factors that were highly favourable to Korean economy: falling price of oil, falling interest rates, and a related appreciation of the Japanese yen which raised the price of Japanese exports and enhanced the Korea’s international competitiveness to the USA market (Buzo 2002:163). By the mid-1980s, economic prosperity and growing international contact had fuelled the explosive growth of a middle class (Buzo 2002:160). Pressure for social change continued to arise from industrialization, urbanization, the changing family structure, the decline of patriarchal and generational authority, and growing awareness of international norms. The demise of traditional values is explained in terms of by economic development followed by individualism.

Traditional appeals to frugality and collective sacrifice became increasingly unconvincing as Koreans began to enjoy the fruits of individual achievement, and as the new middle class was restrained less and less by the collective values of their parents’ generation (Buzo 2002:167).

¹⁵ It is an incident happened in *Gwangju*, the capital of South Jeonra Province, in 18th May 1980. At the time, many citizens of *Gwangju* were killed by armed force, which was known as being commanded by Jeon Doo Hwan’s military regime. By borrowing BBC’s description on *Gwangju* massacre: “In 1980, South Korea was being swept by a tide of demonstrations, mainly by students, in the wake of the assassination of the dictator Park Chung Hee and the military coup which brought General Chun Doo-hwan [Jeon Doo Hwan] to power in his place. It was the sheer, open brutality of the response of Korean paratroops which proved decisive.” (Branford, Becky. 2005. “Lingering legacy of Korean massacre.” May 18, 2005. BBC News; Retrieved September 24, 2011 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4557315.stm>)).

In this context, Chun's Fifth Republic, compared to the pursuit of Confucian value by *Yushin* regime, pursued cultural liberalism called "3S" policy¹⁶ promoting sports, screen, sex [sensual issues] to divert the people's attention away from political issues. This cultural liberalism was to embrace the cultural desire of an increasing number of middle class and educated elites as the leading characters of society. In tandem with these liberal transformations, a series of deregulations was realized. For instance, the curfew from midnight to early morning in the whole Korean society, which lasted for thirty seven years since 1945, was lifted in 1982. The government also liberalized its regulation on hair length and school uniform of middle school and high school students. The deregulation aimed to improve the national image for the preparation of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games since it was evaluated as a means to enhance the basic right of citizen.

Deregulation and Itaewon

With the deregulation, however, public concerns and fear of 'unbridled' hedonistic culture and consumption culture were expressed by cultural conservatives. As a disreputable area in Seoul in terms of red light and crime-ridden district, Itaewon became the easy target to be criticized. Indeed, the deregulation has transformed the cultural landscape of nightlife of Seoul. Especially lifted curfew made it possible to do 24-hour business and, since then, nightlife in Seoul has changed from exclusive possession of the rich to lifestyle available to everyone else (Kim and Kim 2006). However, the police strengthened its crackdown on crime and Itaewon was represented as one of dangerous place for encouraging deviation and promoting crime.

Along with this negative representation of Itaewon, its sexualized image was

¹⁶ As a part of "3S" policy, a series of new cultural events and materials was introduced. In July 1980, the Miss Universe beauty pageant was held in Seoul. In December on the same year, color television broadcasts began. It attracted more people in front of television but also made people buy new color television, which opened a new market for companies. Along with color TV, the introduction of VCR (Video Cassette Recorder) contributed to the wide circulation of pirated films, many of them were pornographic films. During the 1970s and 80s, professionalization of sports such as football, baseball, *ssireum* [Korean traditional wrestling], and other many sports were realized. As Chun's Fifth Republic invested so much financial support for sports while neglecting well-fare and other political and social issues, they were called "Sports Republic."

intensified through the emergence of the gay community, consisting of several gay bars and clubs, which is adjacent to the street for foreigners-only clubs and bars. As the presence of the highly visible gay community, coincided with the appearance of AIDS-phobia in Korea during the 1980s, abhorrence toward Itaewon as a sexually and morally ‘contaminated’ area became more pervasive. Its image was badly damaged when AIDS infection was reported on media. One American soldier in *Yongsan* garrison was found to be infected with AIDS and was repatriated to America. On the assumption that he could have contacted other people in Itaewon’s gay bar, the Korean government let all attendants of Itaewon gay bars be tested for HIV¹⁷. AIDS phobia resulted from this occasion rapidly spread throughout the Korean society so business even unrelated with gay bars had to suspend their business for some time. The district became an empty space.

The most noticeable new phenomenon that deteriorated its negative image but also made it popular during 1970s to 1980s was the formation of fake branded products market. As a cheap manufacturing base in the world market, there were many factories that produced brand product under OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) in Korea during 1970s to 1980s. These local producers could sell fake branded products which used the extra materials for ‘real’ products. This was the beginning the fake branded market. As there were many foreigners who knew the brand value as well as newly appeared middle class of Koreans who were eager to buy these branded products, Itaewon gained its fame for more ‘authentic’ fake branded products.

International Events and Tourist Area

Even though many reported crimes happened in Itaewon made it the object of gossip proving its hedonistic culture, it could ‘participate in’ modern project in various ways.

¹⁷ “AIDS 54 (Blood Test for Fifty-four Koreans Who Have Physical Contact With AIDS Infected American Solider).” *Donga Ilbo*. Nov 7, 1985. Page 11. Retrieved October 2, 2011(<http://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.nhn?articleId=1985110700209211013&editNo=2&printCount=1&publishDate=1985-11-07&officeId=00020&pageNo=11&printNo=19724&publishType=00020>).

Firstly, when Korean economy faced oil shock in the 1970s, *Itaewon* appeared as a place for showing the government's friendly gesture toward Middle Eastern Islamic countries. The oil crisis resulting from the radical oil price increase by OPEC, the oil cartel, in 1973-74 delivered a blow to the Korean economy. Because of the government's concentration on the heavy and chemical industry (HCI) sector, it was desperately trying to find ways to minimize the impact of oil crisis. Although there's no clear explanation about its consequences, one of measures related to Itaewon was to establish amicable relationship with the Middle East through the construction of the first mosque in Korea. The reason why the Korean government chose Itaewon as the site for the mosque is known that many foreign legations were, at the time, already located at Itaewon to be under the protection of the US army, preparing the occasion of breaking war.¹⁸

The Korean government voluntarily provided city land for the construction of a mosque and this helped Korea to receive preferential treatment of oil import from oil-producing countries. The construction of mosque was accomplished in 1976 and since then, it became an important location for any Islamic related events or activities as well as diplomatic issues. Since 1981 up to the present, the Seoul Central mosque has provided Arabic language classes. During the early period, some Muslim foreign students who studied in Korea taught the classes for free. When Korean companies had opportunities to gain a series of large-scale construction contracts in the Middle East, many construction workers dispatched to the Middle East received orientation from the mosque before they left.

Secondly, after holding two consecutive general meetings of IBRD¹⁹ and IMF in 1985, Korean government recognized the importance of developing tourist resources for foreign tourists. Before the staging of the Seoul Asian Games in 1986 as well as the Seoul

¹⁸ Related to the location selection, in an interview with Korean imam of the Seoul Central mosque, he explained that the Korean government suggested two areas – Itaewon and Apgujeong in Gangnam. During the 1970s, the second area was a barren field since it was before the development of Gangnam area. So religious leaders at the time preferred to build the mosque in Itaewon.

¹⁹ The abbreviation for International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Olympic Games in 1988, those two general meetings were the biggest international events for Korean society and Itaewon got much attention as a shopping area. So the investment for infrastructure in Itaewon was concentrated during the 1980s, which affected spatial transition from residential area to more commercialized area. The municipal government changed the city plan of this area to enhance tourism infrastructure such as expanding the main road, building more parking lots, and assigning this area as special commercial zone. Private capital of real estate developers, trading company, or other business people also tried to establish their shops in Itaewon.

Along the 500 meter-long main street from Hamilton hotel to *Hannam-dong*, more than ten new buildings for shopping malls were either under construction or were ready to open.²⁰

One newspaper estimated that 10,000 to 15,000 foreigners visited Itaewon one day during this event period, which showed a tremendous increase in numbers compared to the average daily number of visitors 3,000 to 4,000 visitors per day²¹. With the staging of the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, Itaewon was promoted as the representative destination for foreign travelers and the business dependent on tourism was a great success during the 1980s. Since the staging of the Seoul Olympics was positively evaluated in Korea that it contributed to foster a “growing openness and globalness in Seoul” (Kim 2004:71), the reputation of Itaewon became improved. However, right after this event, overinvestment that enjoyed the increased demands brought up crisis of waning market here.

Anti-Americanism and Decline of American Influences

Reputation as an international market and tourist zone for foreigners has been rapidly on the decline. First of all, overinvestment due to the staging of Olympics resulted in empty

²⁰ “Construction of New Buildings on the Boil At Once.” *Maeilkyungjae Shinmun*. November 20, 1986. Page 10.

²¹ “Itaewon Enjoying the Increased Demands during the Olympic Period.” *Donga Ilbo*. October 1, 1988. Retrieved November 13, 2011 (<http://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.nhn?articleId=1988100100209210009&editNo=2&printCount=1&publishDate=1988-10-01&officeId=00020&pageNo=10&printNo=20616&publishType=00020>).

offices and shops with the decreased tourists. Secondly, crackdown on counterfeit items was strengthened. While the aforementioned two reasons affected directly the economic condition of businesses, the increased anti-sentiment against America provoked the fundamental issue in terms of the legitimacy of the American military occupation in Korea.

The radical tendencies of the 1980s also deepened the anti-Americanism that many Koreans had felt all along, but especially after the *Kwangju* [*Gwangju*] Rebellion²². Radicals linked Korea's internal repression to the history of American imperialism in Korea and elsewhere and thus drew upon deep wellsprings of nationalism. Kwangju brought all this to a head, but the soil of anti-Americanism was plowed up first and foremost by Americans themselves (Cumings 1997:386).

Acquiescence by the American government as well as EUSA on consecutive military dictatorships in Korea resulted in acknowledgement of General Jeon as a new President of Korea, who was assumed to order *Gwangju* massacre. As a result, as Cumings explains, especially after the *Gwangju* massacre in 1980, the anti-Americanism was deep-rooted and was expressed as forms of political movement during the 1980s. In Korean modern history, the late 1980s is remembered for pro-democracy movement and revolution. During the political strife led mainly by nationalists, many of whom were left-wing, the issue of the withdrawal of the US army became linked to the independence of Korean government from American imperialism. A series of 'unjust' incidents by the US soldiers as well as the US military authority – sexual assaults, brutal violence and murder of Korean sex workers, refuse of extradition requests for American criminals, and the illegal disposal of toxic materials – further provoked anti-Americanism. This anti-sentiment intensified in proportion to the decrease in the dependence on America due to the Korean economic development.

This anti-American sentiment was also affected by international affairs. Due to the aftermath of the Gulf War in 1991, the US military imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew on the

²² In his book, Cumings called the incident happened in *Gwangju* "rebellion." However, civil society and NGOs protested that the term "rebellion" devalued its political value for democratic development. The uprising was renamed the "*Gwangju* Democratization Movement", also called "May 18 Revolution," in order to restore its democratic values. (Available from the May 18 Memorial Foundation, <http://eng.518.org>; Retrieved February 12, 2012.)

US soldiers and their family. While military police patrol the streets of the entire commercial area of Itaewon, the street became prominently empty space. In 1992, another incident²³ happened in the city Los Angeles of the U.S. affected the tension. During the LA riots, stores owned by Koreans were widely targeted by African Americans and one Korean boy was killed. Related to this incident that happened in America, the American embassy got an overwhelming number of calls of complaints on LA Riot and some Africans in Itaewon regardless of their nationalities were threatened by anonymous threatens. Throughout the incidents of LA riot, security around residential area for Americans in Itaewon was tightened up by a concerned Korean government.

As such, Itaewon became a ‘contested’ space fed by the rampant anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism has been shaped by not only national political and economic situation but also by global circumstances beyond the spatial discrepancy between ‘real’ America and Itaewon ‘symbolizing America’ within Korean national territory.

3.3.4 1990s to the Present: Globalization and ‘Multicultural’ Space

Since the 1990s, the intensified process of globalization has widened the gate of Korean society for foreigners from many parts of the world. However, the widened gate was opened not only to foreigners but also to Koreans. Since the liberalization of the overseas trips²⁴ in the early 1980s, the number of immigration and trips abroad has been gradually

²³ The 1992 Los Angeles Riots, also known as the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Unrest and Rodney King Uprising were sparked on April 20, 1992, when a jury acquitted four Los Angeles Police Department officers accused in the videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King following a high-speed pursuit.

²⁴ Before the liberalization of the overseas trips in the early 1980s, passport issuance was so strict that individual overseas trips were hardly permitted. Only top officials in the government, entrepreneurs, and some adults over 50 were allowed to get passport. The limited passport issuance was a means to regulate national boundary and ‘social order’ by controlling movement of the people. For instance, it functioned to stop asylum of political dissidents, to interrupt political connections between international NGOs and Korean political activists, and even to regulate the outflow of foreign currency by limiting overseas trips of individuals. Since the liberalization of the overseas trips, the number of Koreans, who go abroad for trip, business, and other various reasons, has gradually increased.

increased so experiences abroad have become somewhat ordinary occasions among Koreans. The increases in international tourism and marriages, the arrivals of foreign companies and their employees, and the influx of migrant workers intensified foreign presences with increased diversity in ethnicities and nationalities.

Especially, the rapid increase in the number of international marriage and migrant workers gave the impression that Korean society has become a 'multicultural' society, even though the total number of foreign residents is only two percent of the total population. Amidst this exaggeration, there have been many attempts to assign some parts of Seoul as an 'ethnic village' for the Japanese, French, Italian, and other ethnic groups (Kim and Kang 2007; Kim 2005b). Since the late 1990s, with the increase of the number of migrant workers from Pakistan, Indonesia, and other Asian countries, the Muslim community began to expand their space through the construction of shops, restaurants, marts for Muslim population, in the vicinity of the only mosque in Seoul located on the hill of Itaewon. Meanwhile, American military presence has been gradually weakened. First of all, along with the long discussion of Yongsan garrison's relocation from the central city area to the outskirts of Seoul since the 1990s, a number of soldiers were relocated to other bases out of Yongsan. With increased downtown places for nightlife where foreigners do not attract too much attention of Koreans, soldiers' destinations to hang out have become diversified. For American soldiers and many civilian foreigners, Itaewon is not the only option anymore.

Along with the weakened military presence as well as the growing number of foreigners, Koreans began to appear as one of the important 'visitors' to Itaewon. In the past, due to the negative image of Itaewon as sexually dangerous to females and as an 'exclusive community' for foreigners, ordinary Koreans were not the main customers of the Korean shop owners and Itaewon was not known to Koreans for leisure activities. However, an increasing number of Korean younger generations began to appear in Itaewon as consumers of 'exotic' and 'more original' ethnic food and 'unique' place since the 2000s.

A number of gentrified and aestheticized shops and restaurants began to be established to meet the demands of their leisure and consumption needs. Compared to the former generation who was economically dependent on the presence of American military, the younger generation has various experiences of living or traveling abroad and has the ability to communicate in English. Their presence has become a clear sign, heralding social and cultural transformation of Itaewon in a different way.

3.4 Summary and Conclusion

Review on earlier history of Itaewon shows that it played an important role to bridge the capital of Joseon Dynasty and local areas at the time because it was one of main gates to reach the capital and faced Han River where flows of people and goods at the time were concentrated. Its geographical location also became a crucial factor for foreign troops to be stationed in this area up to the present from the early 19th century. Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, residential units and commercial facilities surrounding the American army bases, known as camp town, have developed. As such, during the early period of urbanization and industrialization of Korean society between 1950s and 1960s, the existence of American army bases and American soldiers strongly affected the spatial and social construction of Itaewon. The Americanization and militarization of this space produced a particular type of market structure, which facilitated and favored more foreigners than Koreans, and dealt with PX products flowing from the army bases. Nevertheless, it was not possible without the participation of Koreans as subjects and counterparts of economic and cultural activities.

During the 1970s and 80s, Fifth Republic's cultural liberalistic policies, mainly focusing on the preparation of the Olympics Games, brought about hey-day of Itaewon. The government intended to promote Itaewon as a representative tourist zone for foreign visitors and its public policies inclined to enhance built environment and to deregulate many administrative regulations. The exceptive deregulations applied to Itaewon would

result in shaping the impression among most Koreans that, in Itaewon, there are its own cultures and customs. The current physical appearance of Itaewon – several shopping centers selling souvenirs and fake branded goods, street vendors occupying sidewalks, bustling streets with people and multilingual signboards – also has been shaped at the time. At the same time, however, the legal regulation of its burgeoning illegal businesses such as sex business, drug business, and other various clubs and bars, as well as the social regulation of some cultural activities which were treated as dissolute and hedonistic, has been intensified. From the 1990s, overinvestment during the late 1980s for the preparation for the Seoul Olympic Games caused the demise of Itaewon's economic boom. In addition, political movement shouting anti-Americanism from the 1980s consistently deteriorated the image of Itaewon.

Now, the impact of globalization has retransformed Itaewon from 'Americanized ghetto' to 'multicultural' space. When American soldiers were the majority foreign population at least until the 1980s, Itaewon was regarded as a sort of ghetto since the economic and social structures based upon camp town had maintained. As a result, there were some economic and psychological barriers obstructing inflows of new comers. As the area had been shaped to facilitate foreigners, for Korean business people, it was not an attractive market. Many Koreans as visitors still felt reluctant to hang out Itaewon due to its negative image in terms of crime-ridden and dangerous area. However, many foreigners as migrant workers, tourists, business people, and residents began to replace American soldiers. Among them, especially the influx of Muslim community has economically and culturally influenced revitalization of Itaewon.

In view of this fact, unlike its image as isolated area from the rest of Korea, Itaewon has been a vibrant urban area where many strangers intermingle with one another, while buying, selling, and exchanging material or immaterial goods and services. It was not totally separated from the rest of Korea but rather closely interrelated with both local

and global influences in terms of political, economic, and cultural changes. At this point, as can be seen in this topological and historical review, spatial conditions of Itaewon is one of important factors to shape Itaewon's features. So, in the following section, the spatial production of Itaewon as well as its transformation will be reviewed.

4 The PRODUCTION OF SPACE OF ‘OTHERNESS’

According to Lefebvre's theory on space, every society or every mode of production produces its own space (Lefebvre [1974] 1991:31) so, the ideal of a society can be understood by reading its spatial representation. This chapter shows how foreigners and heterogeneous groups of people as others in Korean society have historically and socially been located in Itaewon and how this space have been connected with the rest of Seoul by overcoming its bounded ecological conditions. From the spatial representation of Itaewon explained in this chapter, the ideology of Korean society that produced this space can be understood. At the government level, the production of this space was realized by constructing camp town for American soldiers and residential units for foreigners. Meanwhile, the residents began to participate in appropriating this space into business oriented space by converting their houses into commercial buildings. Despite the focus on Itaewon's spatiality, the following discussion adopts a temporal axis to show the historical layers embedded in spatial manifestation. It deals with three different phases to look through the historical layers of Itaewon. However, this does not mean that one place corresponds to a single phase, rather it is about how some places or spots represent transitory spatio-temporal conditions.

4.1 *Situating Itaewon*

To understand wider ecological conditions and social settings surrounding Itaewon, it is necessary to situate Itaewon within a larger district *Yongsan-gu* in *Seoul*. *Yongsan-gu* is divided into three different sectors along the axis running from north to south: a business sector in the western part, military zone with two US army posts stretched across the central part, and a residential area including Itaewon in the eastern part.

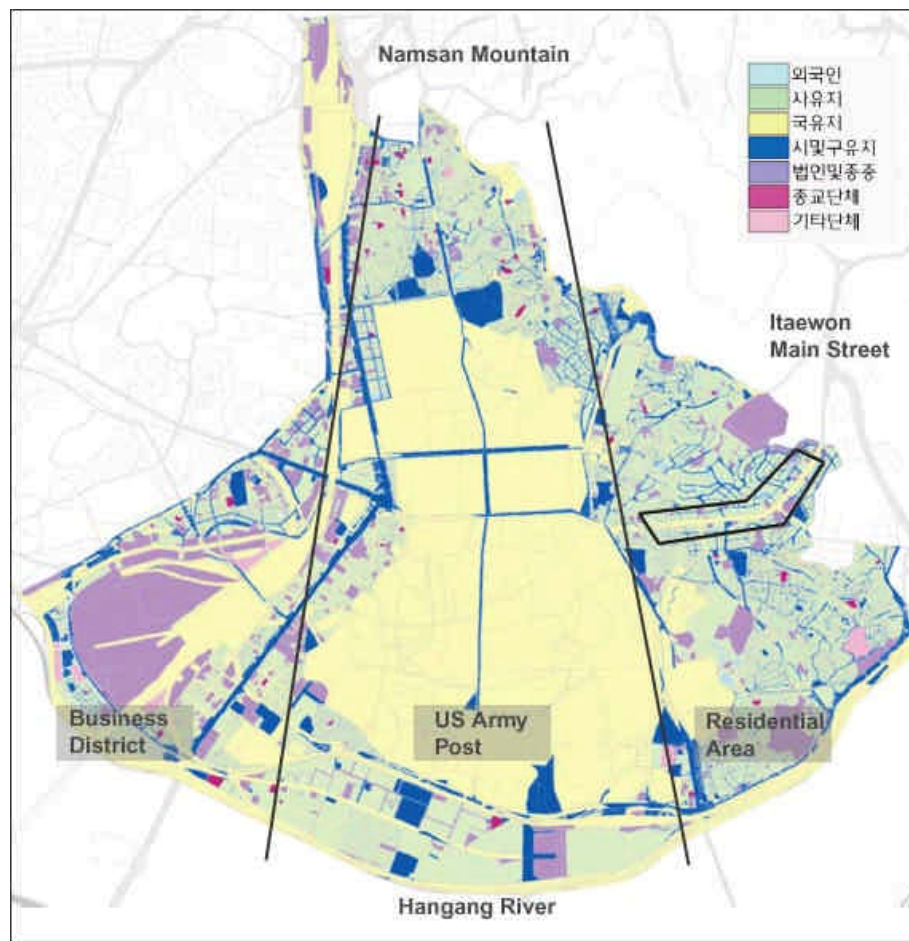


Figure 7. Map of Yongsan-gu (Seoul Development Institute 2010)

As can be seen in Figure 7, the business sector in the western part has been playing a role as the main artery between Seoul and other regions in the country since railway facilities had been built during the Japanese colonization. Along with the railways, following urbanization of Seoul, a well-known electronics shopping mall district has been located and high-rise office buildings as well as residential units also stand there. Among these buildings, some area in the middle of this business sector remained underdeveloped; there were some red light districts and shanty houses around a hustling train station. However, the area has demolished by the *Seoul's* city government for redevelopment plan. It plan to redevelop this derelict land into a new international business district and develop a section of the riverside of the *Han River* into a waterfront town. Though this development plan was in place since the mid 1990s as a part of Seoul city government's

urban renewal plan to promote Seoul as top global city by attracting world financial capital (Seoul Development Institute, 2010), the construction work is continually postponed due to difficulties of mediating different interests among the city government and private developers.

The central sector of military zone remains intact regardless the rapid urban transformation of modern Seoul. While Seoul has filled its space with modern architecture and global atmosphere obliterated traces of colonization and the Korean War, this militarized area has not allowed any attempts to penetrate the fortress. The army bases in *Yongsan*, also known as *Yongsan Garrison*, is one of the biggest installation among numerous posts and camps within Seoul, an enormous land of about 2.5 *square kilometer* occupying 1,225 buildings and green fields. Relocation of army bases has been discussed between Korean and US governments and both agreed in 2003 to move them out of Seoul. Even before this latest agreement, there were several agreements on relocation of army bases for the restoration of 'national pride'. However, for residents in Itaewon, more important issue is the effect of relocation affecting spatial transformation after the huge amount of lands become vacant. Given the expectation of relocation of army base, redevelopments plan for the tentative huge empty land, has been discussed since the early 1990s. According to the redevelopment plan, the land is going to be transformed into a public park and is expected to intensify national identity and elevate national pride as Koreans, which has Central Park in New York as an ideal model. However, the relocation has been continually postponed due to many political and economic reasons; one of the most controversial issues is about who is responsible for all the expenses of the relocation.

Lastly, the residential area including Itaewon lies in the eastern part of *Yongsan-gu*. It is surrounded by *Namsan* Mountain to the north, *Hangang* River to the south, and the US army base to the west. Its natural environment and social barriers have affected Itaewon's spatial and social separation from the rest of Seoul, though the separation has never been perfectly realized. As to the natural environment, as can be seen in Figure 8,

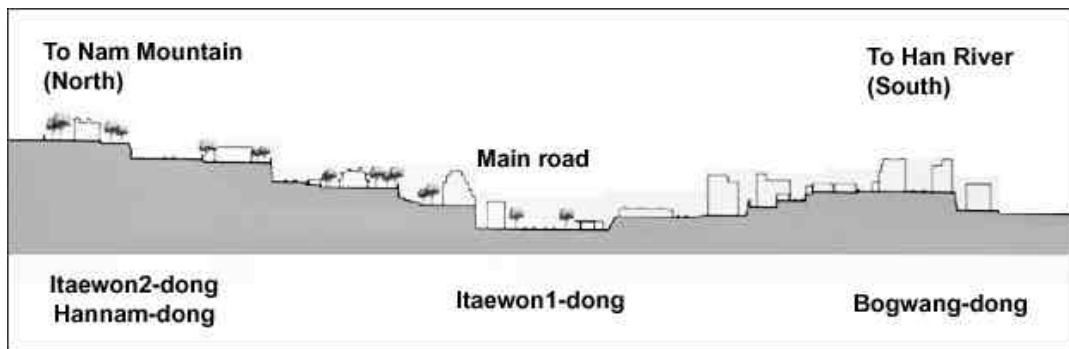


Figure 8. Itaewon Cross Section Map (Source from Kang 2010)

both the mountain and the river have drawn a clear spatial boundary from north to south shaping the main road in Itaewon into a valley-shape. From the foot of *Namsan* mountain to the main street, the slope is filled with houses with a nice view of *Hangang* river.²⁵ The main street between the foot of mountain and a relatively lower slope is surrounded by two slopes so the extension of the street is naturally blocked. Most of the commercial activities are centered on the main road running from east to west. The southern slope running to *Hangang* river is also covered with the mixture of homes, offices, shops, and markets. Residential buildings located at the end of the slope facing the river fetch a high price in the housing market as the natural conditions make it possible for those buildings to have a delightful prospect of the river.

Compared to the rest of Seoul, Itaewon's development has been deferred. First of all, the proximity to army bases has prohibited the development. For instance, more convenient and efficient public transportation system has not been installed since public transportation is not allowed to pass through the army bases. Height-limit has also been imposed to preserve the landscape of *Namsan* Mountain. In sum, political, social, and environmental conditions have affected the bounded spatiality in Itaewon and the presence

²⁵ "The Han River development project, this massive project, requiring an investment of 387.5 billion won, was at once a flood control and antipollution project and a program to beautify Seoul. ... Accordingly, the Han River Project involved drainage work, dredging, and the construction of raised embankments on both sides of the river within the city. These were developed into public parks, gardens, and athletic fields, subway construction, international transportation, roadside improvement and beautification." (Larson and Park 1993:153)

of military army has deferred wide-ranging spatial development. The spatial conditions also have affected the construction of somewhat unique atmosphere. The unique social and cultural atmosphere in Itaewon, however, has not been contained in this area but has crossed spatial boundaries, intriguing people's interests from other areas as well as being influenced by neighboring areas.

4.2 Externally Defined Space

4.2.1 Militarized Space

They remain privately owned and have become one of the city's most popular night markets (as well as one of the world's most notorious red-light districts). Patpong is best known for its counterfeit goods – everything from clothes to watches and music – and is slowly encroaching on the neighbouring stretches of Silom Rd. This area first became popular in the 1960s, when American soldiers on leave from active service in the Vietnam War travelled here for rest and recreation. In the 1990s, more fashionable bars and nightclubs began to carve a niche for themselves among the sleazy go-go bars and massage parlours, even though these are still thriving. Silom Sois 2 and 4 have a lively gay scene, which is quite open and generally very mixed. (Bracken 2010: 46-47)

South of Namsan is the busy tourist shopping and expat entertainment area of Itaewon - a different atmosphere to the rest of the city. It's a UN of eating establishment and gay and hostess bars, with street stall blocking up the pavements and lots of foreigners walking around. ... Larger sizes in clothes and shoes, souvenir T-shirts, leather jackets and hip-hop gear, together with tailor-made clothing, can be found in Itaewon, where English is widely understood. (Robinson and Zahorchak 2009:32, 82)

It is noteworthy to see how two distant areas, Itaewon in Seoul, Korea and Patpong in Bangkok, Thailand, belonging to different countries, yet show identical occurrences within its spatial boundary: the flourishing of brothel, gay scene, night clubs and bars, counterfeit goods, and other unacceptable phenomena to the rest of each society. Though the national historical layers are different, they share similar historical background in that both were used by foreign military personnel for their rest and recreation. Given the identical local consequences, it can be assumed that foreigners' transitory spatial occupation have affected these local areas in significant ways. Though it would be interesting to research how these

two different areas have shown similar trajectories, the main concern in this research focuses on Itaewon, with how military facilities' installed in Itaewon have affected the adjacent neighborhoods in terms of spatial, social, cultural, and economic situations.

An incidental occurrence of the Korean War is the fact that Korea never had so many diverse foreigners in its national territory: sixteen nations and seven non-combatant allies. This contact with foreigners was, however, spatially limited to a small number of people. So, after most of the UN allies left the Korean peninsula, the prolonged station of the US army shaped the common sense that foreigners in Korea meant without doubt Americans and they were military personnel. Although there are scattered hundreds of US army bases all over the Korean peninsula, most of them are located at remote area from residential areas and their main activities are military training. So the interaction between foreign military personnel and Koreans are not as frequent as experienced in Itaewon.

In Itaewon, there are the headquarter of the US army since the early 1950s, Ministry of National Defense conterminous to the US army since the 1970s, the War Memorial of Korea opened in 1994, and several blocks of apartments for Korean soldiers and their families. Even though no serious operation of military training or action has been conducted, the militarized atmosphere can be sensed not only by the presence of military facilities but also by solders' appearances such as short hair and military uniform. As Korean society has been ethnically homogeneous, this American centered foreignness as well as militarized atmosphere demarcated Itaewon as 'Americanized ghetto'. In many maps of *Yongsan-gu*, a large central area is drawn as 'empty green field' with neither signs nor buildings. Although the green field sometimes looks like Central Park in New York, there are actually US army bases and attached military facilities. As can be seen in Figure 9, many military facilities and related residential buildings of the US army bases are concentrated in Itaewon: Ministry of National Defense since 1970, Army Central Finance Accounting Center (also known as *Kyungridan*) since the end of the Korean War on 1953, the War Memorial of Korea since 1994, and other various scattered sites and buildings.

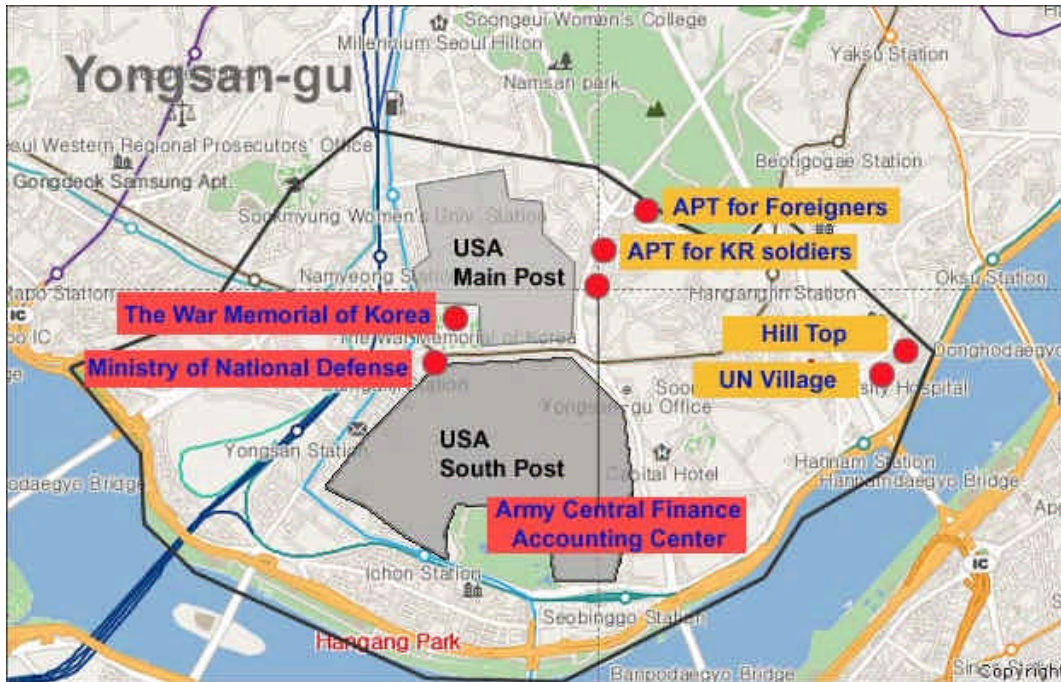


Figure 9. Map of Yongsan-gu with military facilities

Access between units is provided by 20.4 miles of paved roads. The post is divided into three major areas: South Post, North Post and Camp Coiner, with several smaller adjacent areas (Hannam Village, Camp Kim, the FED Compound, the Sebingo Compound, Seongnam Golf Course, and the Retreat Center). Yongsan Main Post hosts several major commands including the United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, United States Forces Korea and the Eighth United States Army. Yongsan and surrounding installations is populated by all segments of the USFK team, soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, as well as Department of the Army civilians, Embassy personnel, and invited contractors. Close to Seoul are Camps Red Cloud, Stanley, Casey, and Hovey to the north. Nearby to the south are Colbern, K-16 and Suwon. Additionally, the post provides all the support facilities associated with a small city; i.e., a hospital, a fire station, a police force, commissary and exchange facilities, schools, theaters, clubs and restaurants, a hotel, sports and recreational facilities, water and sewage treatment plants and emergency electrical power. USFK has about 2,500 military personnel assigned to the quad-command headquarters and support agencies at Yongsan. They are augmented by about 1,000 US civilian and 6,000 Korean civilian employees. More than a thousand KATUSA soldiers work at Yongsan, and some 3,500 military and civilian employee family members reside on South Post, Hannam Village, a contract housing area east of South Post, or on the civilian economy in neighborhoods adjacent to the compound. (Inter-Ways 2012)

As explained in the above explanation about scattered installations related to US military forces, the base camp in Yongsan maintains an ‘independent nation in a foreign country’. There are hotels, recreation clubs, churches, golf clubs, and schools for children within an independent address system. The ‘deterritorialization’ of Korea by foreign

military facilities in the central Seoul, symbolizing ‘American imperialism,’ has generally provoked nationalistic and anti-American view among Koreans. In a newspaper article with an illustration about Itaewon, a Korean architect Seo Hyun (1999) metaphorically described US army base as wire fence, as illustrated in Figure 10.

Football players cannot play a game in the playground that a barbed-wire fence is being stretched around the center-circle. Players will grumble. Audiences will boo and hiss asking its removal. ... The wire fence covering this city should be withdrawn before furious audiences throw empty bottles and cans. (Seo Hyun, 1999)

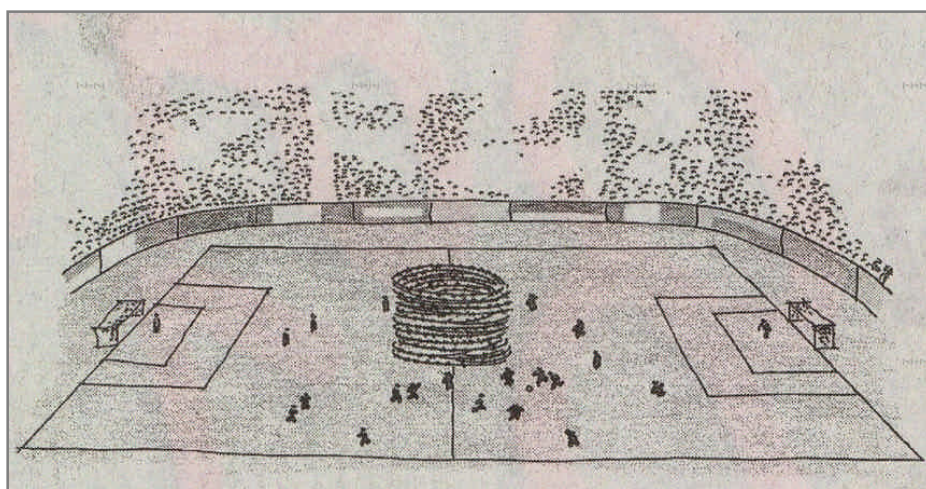


Figure 10. Architect Seo’s drawing about Itaewon’s situation. ²⁶

If the playground is Seoul, the wire fence occupying on the central part of the playground is the American army base, thus hampering what is supposed to happen or work in this space. His perspective on the army base reflects the common view of Koreans toward it. The symbolic meaning of its central location is nothing other than ‘spatial injustice’, especially given the fact that the use of land is permitted to the US military authority for free, even without guarantee on the specific date for withdrawn.

The army bases as well as other military facilities, which sit in a densely packed

²⁶ Seo Hyun. 1999. "Architect Seo Hyun's Reading 'Our Street': the Scars of Being, Seoul Itaewon Street." Donga Ilbo, June 29, page 31. Retrieved October 1, 2012 (<http://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.nhn?articleId=1999062900209131001&editNo=45&printCount=1&publishDate=1999-06-29&officeId=00020&pageNo=31&printNo=24234&publishType=00010>).

residential area, are off-limits spaces; access is restricted to authorized personnel only. The limited access to the army base provided neighboring Koreans with an impression that the world inside would be really an 'affluent Western village' different from their own neighborhood.

My middle school was next to the army base. As my mother worked there, I could enter into the base with my mother and she sometimes bought the American pizza. At that time, though there were two or three local brand pizzas, the American pizza was different from the local ones. When I brought it to the school to share with friends, they were envious by the fact that I entered into the army base and could buy more delicious pizza there. (Kwon H.J., 30s, Chef of a French restaurant)

The exclusive permission to enter into the 'American territory' is allowed only for Koreans who work inside the camp like Ms. Kwon's mother or someone who has familial relationship or guests whose identifications are guaranteed by someone who qualifies. Their statuses were hierarchically categorized. Young Korean men serving as KATUSA (Korean Augmentation to the United States Army)²⁷, for instance, were regarded to have higher social status as they seem to be on a par with the US soldiers. Among sex workers (*yanggongju*), their social and economic status was bifurcated into two different levels depending on whether they are married to the American soldiers or just live together.

Despite its exclusivity, for many Koreans in Itaewon, convenient access to the bases was important as it was often linked to economic activities, at least until the 1980s. So access meant not only whether one could enter into off-limits places but also whether one could get advantageous resources for economic activities. Right after the Korean War, many Koreans, despite Itaewon's bad reputation among Koreans, moved in and settled down near the army bases to work with or for the US army.

²⁷ The KATUSA (Korean Augmentation to the United States Army) aims to support the U.S. military by providing Korean soldiers who can communicate in English. They mainly serve as translators between the local populace and the U.S. army and help them maneuver in unfamiliar terrain. As all Korean males with the ages from 20 to 35 are required to serve military service, some applicants among them can apply for KATUSA. Nowadays, applicants who are qualified with English test are randomly selected on a random basis via lottery. But, until the 1980s, they were selected by English proficiency and education level so they were regarded as the educated individuals.

As my first place in Seoul had been supposed to be demolished by the government, I had to move out and my friend suggested moving into Itaewon. He was working at the army base's PX. While helping the guy selling goods, I got a chance to apply for KATUSA. Nowadays only elites like university students can be KATUSA. But, at that time, someone only finished middle school belonged to elites too. So I worked as KATUSA for several years. (Lee, Korean, 60s, male, guard)

Two sisters of my wife got married American soldiers and one brother was working as a stock manager for PX. So I began selling used books that military armies' libraries thrown away. Husbands of my sisters-in-law helped me, a familial connection. As I didn't have to pay for used books, I could get more profits than other competitors. At first, I sold the books in front of EWha Woman's university and it was very successful. As you know, at that time, it was very difficult to find foreign books but many university students and professors wanted them. Later, I could get as many as books from the armies scattered over other regions and provided them to other bookstores. (Jeong, Korean, 60s, male, bookshop owner)

Like these cases of Mr. Lee and Mr. Jeong, spatial proximity to army bases and social connections with foreign soldiers were among the most strong pull factors which lead them to settle down in Itaewon. Mr. Jeong, who has both familial connections and spatial proximity to the army base, could begin business selling English used books which were illegally provided by his brother-in-law. As foreign books were always in demand among university students and professionals at the time, his business was expanded into other areas. Likewise, although Itaewon was planned by the two governments as a camp town, individual residents were attracted by Itaewon's economic and cultural values and they also shaped the characters of Itaewon by settling down there.

4.2.2 Residential Units Only for Foreigners

There are 210 households in the *Namsan Wae-In* Apartments, 50 in the UN Villa, and 118 in the Hilltop Apartments, as well as those checked into the New *Yongsan*, Hamilton or Crown Hotels or paying cheap monthly rent in Itaewon-dong or *Bogwang-dong*. By nationality, 60% were Americans, 20% were Japanese, and 10% were Chinese, with other nationalities making up the other 10%.²⁸

When the Japanese colonial regime left, ownership of the land they occupied was mainly transferred to the Korean government. It was the Korea National Housing Corporation

²⁸ Itaewon in 1984: An Unfamiliar Foreign Zone within Seoul (1984 July 23), *Kyunghyang Sinmun* newspaper.

(KHC)²⁹ which started a business to provide residential units for foreigners during the 1960s and 1970s. The main purpose of KHC as a public corporation is to supply housing units for the vulnerable and improve their residential environment. However, during the early period for the economic development, one of their projects was to earn relatively high rental profits by providing residential buildings in a modern style to foreigners.

As it is mentioned in historical background, luxury and modern style's houses had been built in the northern and the eastern part of Itaewon. Since the early 1970s, three residential units were well known as foreigners' village, called *Hannamdong Waein-chon*, *UN village-chon*, *Itaewon Waein-chon*. The name, *chon* itself means a village in a rural area and either *Waein* (外人) or *Waegookin* (外國人) refers to a foreigners. Given the fact that these residential units were called with the suffix 'chon', it shows that, despite their modern styled units which was far from rural and traditional architectural style, the assumption of Korean society was that there would be community life among foreigners with strong membership like that of a rural village. The expectation was well described in a series of articles in a daily newspaper, entitled "New Cultural Landscape: *Waein-chon*", which introduced foreigners' lives in details in terms of how they use laundry service, how they celebrate each own memorial day, how they use a modern telephone service, and other daily activities.³⁰

Diplomats' families and international business people have settled down in these *Waein-chons*³¹. Some Koreans who can afford it have also moved in and got houses near this neighborhood. For instance, in Itaewon *Waein-chon* in 1971, there were 122 American households, 27 Germany households, 11 British households, 9 Filipino households, and

²⁹ Its official name has been changed into Korea Land and Housing Corporation (LH) after merging with Korea Land Corporation in 2009.

³⁰ Kyunghyang newspaper published 50 articles about *Waein-chon* as a part of special issues to introduce new cultural landscape from May 6 1971 to July 20.

³¹ A newspaper report mentioned that its annual revenue by renting them to foreigners was up to 600,000 dollar at that time. There were ambassadorial level of residents from Thailand, the Philippines, and Turkey and 162 households from different fourteen nations. Among them, 99 households were civilians who came to Korea with commercial and industrial activities, 35 households were ambassadors' families, and 22 households were soldiers, and the rest were other occasions (*Kyunghyangshinmun*, 1962, July 21).

other 28 foreign households. As to rental fee, as an example, one house cost 520 US dollars amounts 150,000 Korean won, which was said to be evaluated as one of the highest rental fee³². Over fifty diplomatic and consular offices settled and remained in Itaewon.

The 'UN village' built to facilitate only foreign residents in 1962 was regarded as the high standard housing. Hill Top apartment was known as the second modern style apartment built in 1968, following the first apartment which was a four-storied building designed by Japanese architect in the 1930s. At a time when the tallest building in the city was five stories high, the eleven-storied Hill Top apartment overwhelmed people by its scale. It was designed exclusively only for foreigners from the outset by the Korean government (Jang and Park 2009). The apartment of 120 households was built on the land owned by KHC. While most apartments at that time adopted *ondol*, Korean floor heating system, it adopted a central heating system. It also was the first apartment with air conditioners, lifts, a roof garden, and residential services like a hotel. One of its attractiveness for foreigners was a security service, as many of them were worried about crimes targeting mainly foreigners. Though it is not closed to Koreans since the renovation in 2003, demand from foreigners is still dominant.

Among these modern style residential buildings for foreign residents, *Namsan Waein* apartments built in 1972 left a strong impression on Koreans when it was demolished in 1994. The apartments had two high rise blocks, respectively sixteen and seventeen storied buildings, as well as fifty independent houses. The former president Park Jung Hee attended its completion ceremony and it is known that he commanded the location of the apartments at the middle level of *Namsan* mountain. When the location of the apartments was ordered, it aimed to boast the economic development of modern Korean society. However, it had a notorious reputation from civil society for destroying the

³² "Seoul's New Cultural landscape: Waegookin-chon" in *Kyunghyang* newspaper, page 7, 1971 May 08. Retrieved September 2011 (<http://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.nhn?articleId=1971050800329206022&editNo=2&printCount=1&publishDate=1971-05-08&officeId=00032&pageNo=6&printNo=7875&publishType=00020>).

landscape of *Namsan*. In 1994, the six hundred years anniversary since Seoul became a capital of Korea, one of major events to commemorate setting up the capital was the demolition of *Namsan Waein* apartment.

Demolition for creation, and recovery of damaged self-esteem. While enduring the Japanese colonial colonization and modernization, miscellaneous facilities have been encroaching on Namsan, the symbol of Seoul. The demolition will bring back *Namsan* to our citizen and let people have local patriotism.³³

All good houses here are taken by foreigners. Even though only one or two people live there, all big and luxury mansions are for them because all of them are subsidized by their government or companies. Of course, there are some Korans who live there. But many Koreans just have lived at houses in a poor condition. In this small country, isn't it unfair? (Kim, Korean, 60s, female, housewife)

Ironically, both the construction of the building and the demolition were publicly reported as significant events proving the economic and technological development of Korea. The government extensively promoted the demolition as a meaningful event and the 'bombing show' was broadcast live across the country. Though the superficial reason for demolition was to revive the natural environment, it is also understood as a declaration of 'recovering from damaged national pride' by exploding the symbols of spatial occupation by foreigners, especially Americans. Further, it led to an anticipation of the withdrawn of US army bases, which has been infinitely postponed.

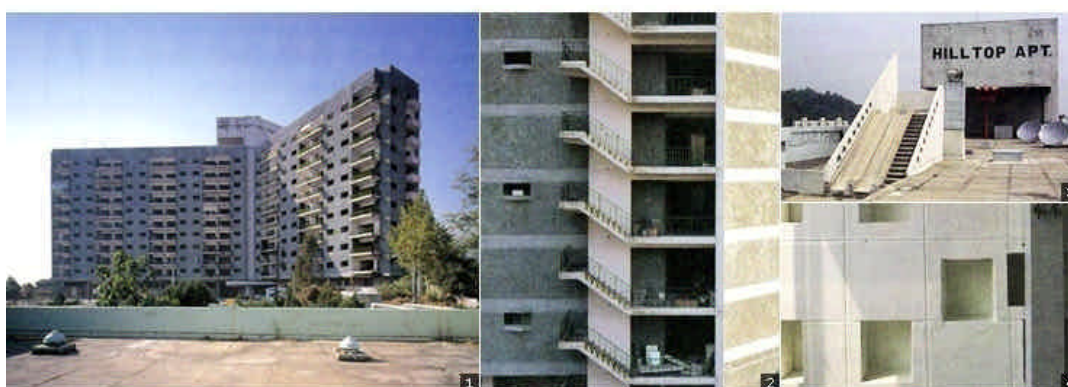


Figure 11. Hill Top apartment – the front, the side, and the roof.³⁴

³³ Event for celebrating the transference of the Capital (1994 October 18). *Donga-Ilbo*, p. 29.

³⁴ Naver website. Retrieved 20 September, 2012.
(http://navercast.naver.com/contents.nhn?contents_id=641)

Many residential units for foreigners built around Itaewon still remain, renovated and maintained as gated communities, no longer based on resident's nationality but by their social status and class. As representative exclusive residential areas, they were planned from the outset with purposes: on the one hand, it was a hospitable way of providing foreigners with modern housings; on the other hand, it played symbolic roles to prove the extent of national economic development achieved by the authoritarian government during the 1970s; further, with more practical necessity, it was a part of housing provision along with a boom of housing construction in Seoul.

Within the spatial context in Itaewon, the establishment of the exclusive residential areas around north-eastern Itaewon has resulted in contrasting scenes with those of entertainment business district located at the central part of Itaewon. Both areas were developed during almost the same period, the early 1970s. However, during the 1980s, entertainment business was in full flourish because of the hosting of the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. While many shanty houses were being modified into shops, many parts of wealthy areas of Itaewon were designated as exclusive residential districts by law to prohibit expansion of commercial facilities. The designation reflected the residents' worries about being encroached by commercial influences. So, rather than one side choose to leave, both sides have maintained their own space in a compact area. It was possible by maintaining invisible spatial boundary.

4.3 Americanized 'Ghetto'

Since Tokyo in Japan shares similar features such as ethnic homogeneity and the stationing of the US military in the central city, it would be a noteworthy to compare both cities in terms of the influences of the US army's presence. Japanese sociologist Yoshimi, in his discussion on the Americanization in Japan, argues that two 'Americas' appeared in Japan in the late 1950s (Yoshimi 2003:441): America of violence and of affluence. It was due to firstly, the spatial movement of the American army base from the urban areas such as

Ginza, Roppongi and Harajuku to Okinawa that is far from mainland Japan, and secondly the rapid economic development. On the one hand, the 'America' of Okinawa became directly linked to violence and the negative images provoking protest against military station. On the other hand, as the 'America' of the urban areas was detached from the direct association with the military force, it became a symbol of idealized affluence signified by movie, advertisement, and other cultural products. Since most Japanese became devoid of 'direct and concrete daily experience' (Yoshimi 2003:444) with Americans due to the spatial segregation of the army bases from their space, 'America' became an image that referred to 'American lifestyle,' which became more inscribed into Japanese people's consciousness.

While this dichotomous division of two 'Americas' appeared due to spatial separation, Itaewon shows the coexistence of the ambivalent characteristics, i.e. 'America' as both desire and violence. Itaewon, as space strongly influenced by the military presence and located within the urban area, is a space of the coexistence of violence and desire of two 'Americas.' It has not been insulated from the military occupation and violence, nor has it abandoned the desire toward an idealized 'America' in terms of cultural influence.

4.3.1 America of Violence: Prostitution and Crimes

'Contaminated' Place: Camp town (*Kijichon*)

Almost all women in Itaewon were *yanggongjus* at that time. At least until the 1980s, taxi drivers thought, if a woman wants to go to Itaewon, the woman is such a woman. You know, she would be a prostitute. (Lee, Korean, 50s, male, Clothing shop owner)

The US military government declared the law prohibiting licensed prostitution in 1948, which was regarded as the inhumane residue of the Japanese colonial regime as well as outdated customs of *Joseon* Dynasty. However, the prohibition itself showed that prostitution was flourishing around most army bases across Korea before and after the

Korean War (1950–1953). During the 1950s and 1960s, it was very common to find sex workers walking the streets of Itaewon or hanging around outside *Yongsan Garrison* to pick up U.S. soldiers, as can be seen in Figure 12. Though prostitution officially became illegal in Korea since the legal action, the prohibition caused an increase of personal prostitution, rather than the dissolution of prostitution. It developed into organized business later and governed by the police under the connivance of the Korean government and the US military authority. A well-known feminist sociologist Moon (1997) who has studied *kijichon*, military camp towns across Korea, describes the relations between Korean and American governments (through the U.S. military) as “sex among allies” since it was mediated and facilitated by the two governments.



Figure 12. Sex workers waiting for soldiers in Itaewon.³⁵

³⁵ “Night’s Flowers, the Actual Condition of Brothels in Seoul,” *Donga-ilbo*, page. 3, 14 Aug 1962. Retrieved 26 September (<http://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.nhn?articleId=1962081400209103008&editNo=2&printCount=1&publishDate=1962-08-14&officeId=00020&pageNo=3&printNo=12548&publishType=00010>).

The lives of Korean women working as prostitutes in military camp-towns have been inseparably tied to the activities and welfare of the U.S. military installations since the early 1950s. To varying degrees, USFK (U.S. Forces in Korea) and ROK authorities have controlled where, when, and how these “special entertainers” work and live. The first half of the 1970s witnessed the consolidation of such joint U.S.-ROK control. (Moon 1997:2)

One of the main reasons for regulating the Korean sex worker’s sexuality was to provide more ‘satisfactory’ and ‘safer’ recreational services to American soldiers, who were afraid of infection with the sexually transmitted disease (STD). As the rate of STD in Japan’s camp town was much lower than that of Korea, many soldiers being placed in Korea flew to Japan in order to spend their holiday. Considered the amount of dollars they spent in Japan, the provision of regulated place for sex business was an urgent issue for the Korean government. Dance halls and clubs which were adjacent to U.S. army bases were assigned as off-limits places to locals, especially Korean men and the U.S. military police gained control of those places. (Lee 2007:18-24) With the regulation on sex workers’ sexuality as well as spatial arrangement, American soldier’s overnight leave began to be allowed in 1957 and *kijichon* was shaped by clubs and bars as well as houses where Korean sex workers rented rooms and they could stay with American soldiers. Along with the assignment of places ‘only for foreigners’, most camp towns including some red districts were exempted from crackdown on prostitution in 1962, though the exemption was nominally abolished by residents’ protest.

Spatial confinement of sex workers was not only to regulate sex workers but also to separate Korean sex workers as well as American soldiers from ‘normal’ Korean residents. With the flourishing prostitution, the Korean government worried about its negative influences, which would jeopardize moral value in a society with strong ‘Confucian morals’.

It was the Lee Seung Man's administration. When *yanggongjus* were walking the street, it was too conspicuous. So the government made clubs behind a fire station. Be there, play there, only there. Reversely, American soldiers were not allowed to come and go around Korean residential areas at night. If they came here, military police caught them. (Lee, Korean, 50s, male, Supermarket owner)

The two-sided policies of the Korean government – promoting sex business to earn US dollars and prohibiting it because of the fear of ‘contamination’ of moral values – have spatially been embedded in red district in Itaewon, which was named “hooker hill” or “Texas hill.”

The Yongsan police station reported in 1962 that the number of *yanggongju* in Itaewon was up to nine hundreds. The concentration of brothels in Itaewon made it possible for sex workers and residents who gained economic benefits by facilitating them in many ways to coexist, thus constructing somewhat different landscape of neighborhood:

Near hooker hill, there were so many hair salons. One out of every two or three shops was hair salon. If you went there around 4-6pm, you had to wait at least two hours because many ‘*unnis*’ [in Korean meaning an elderly sister] were sitting there to set their hair done before working. A woman like us just goes to hair salon one or two times per two months, but they went there almost every day. So, for them, it's like their home and a hairdresser was like their elderly sister or mother. Besides, interestingly, at Itaewon market, the most thriving business was underwear stores. I remember aunties selling underwear said, “they don't wash their underwear. They just throw them away because too tired to wash it every day. That's why they just buy underwear whenever they need.” Can you imagine that, during the 1960s and 70s, just throw away new underwear? All products were rare at that time. Only in Itaewon, hair salons and underwear shops were thriving. (Ae-Hwa, Korean, 51, female, resident and NGO Activist)

Within a small neighborhood, complicated borderlines, which only residents and business people could sense, were drawn. For instance, Korean men except employees of off-limits areas were not allowed to go to those clubs and bars since there were often conflicts between American soldiers and Korean men. Meanwhile, as mentioned above, Korean sex workers were spatially bounded to Itaewon's hooker hill as the Korean government worried they could irritate ‘normal’ Koreans. Although no legal action was taken to prohibit their movement, the socially biased gaze by other Koreans kept them spatially being bounded.

Many sex workers who left behind here have some fear about getting out of Itaewon. They started this working when they were very young and spent most of time here. When they need to go outside Itaewon, not all the time, but often ask me to go with them. But they enjoy hanging out in Itaewon so go to Dunkin Donuts almost every day, sitting outdoor table, talking, smoking, and watching people. In Itaewon, they know old business people and they also welcome our *unnis*. (Kim J.H, Korean, 30s, female, NGO activist)

Like Ms. Kim’s explanation, sex workers have been physically and socially isolated from outside Itaewon. Within the boundary of this space, they have several places where they frequently hang out but their spatial movements are still limited.

Lt. Col. Steve Boylan, 8th Army public affairs officer, said the bars — with names such as Spanki’s, Starbutts and Tiger Tavern — have been placed off-limits until further notice for one reason: prostitution. ... Internal memos circulated to commanders on bases included pictures of the 29 bars, a detailed map and prices for various sexual services. A few bars were cited for other offenses, such as serving alcohol to minors and fire risks.³⁶

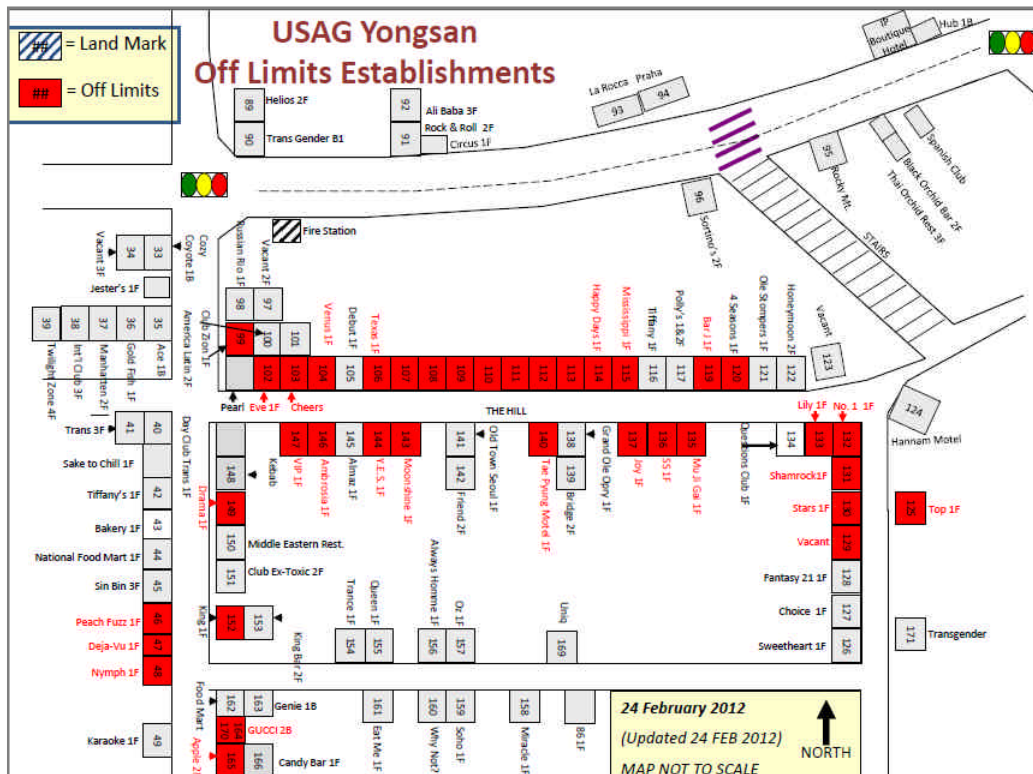


Figure 13. Yongsan Off Limits Establishments (Source: USAG homepage)

³⁶ Jeremy Kirk. “USFK declares 29 bars off-limits.” Stars and Stripes. March 22, 2003. Retrieved Sep 26 2011 (<http://www.stripes.com/news/usfk-declares-29-bars-off-limits-1.3213>).

Not only Koreans but American soldiers were also temporally and spatially regulated. As anti-sentiment against the U.S. military's installation got worse, the US military authorities declared some business establishments off-limits and set curfew namely for safety, health, or operational consideration, which can be seen in Figure 13. The listed establishments were mainly tattoo parlors, body piercing shops, and, most of all houses of prostitutions. USFK was under a curfew for nearly nine years since 2002 and ended in July 2010. However, they had to impose another curfew in 2011 after several crimes committed by U.S. service members.³⁷ The places, which once were maintained and regulated for American soldiers, have now become places where they have become least welcomed customers.

By separating what is in place (expected) and what is out of place (abnormal), common sense is spatialized, given a material and embodied form. (Hubbard and Sanders 2003:79)

In an analysis on changing geographies of prostitution in Birmingham (UK), Hubbard and Sanders (2003) assert, borrowing Cresswell's expression, that the spatial arrangement is one of important ordering devices by naturalizing distinctions between 'normality' and 'deviance'. In Itaewon, its red light district had been regulated for two purposes: firstly, Confucian morality was to spatially confine female sex workers, at the same, to protect 'normal' citizen from the degenerated sex workers; secondly, the regulations also aimed to provide a 'proper' service to American soldiers and to 'protect' them from unwanted 'disturbances' between them and Korean male customers. Although the view that Itaewon was morally 'contaminated' was commonly accepted in Korean society, the so-called Itaewon people who maintained their living in Itaewon had more tolerance for Korean sex workers.

³⁷ By Ashley Rowland and Yoo Kyong Chang. Stars and Stripes. October 5, 2012. Retrieved 05 October, 2012 (<http://www.stripes.com/news/general-has-no-plans-to-end-year-old-curfew-for-troops-in-s-korea-1.192014>).

Exceptional Crimes and Spatial Narratives

There have been a lot bad things happened. Like 1995, there was a *Hongkik* university student who was stabbed in the old Burger King. That happened so close here (his rented house in Itaewon). I remember reading about that. There was a man assaulted at the VIVA department store away back then. There was a Korean barmaid who was raped and killed by an American soldier. And there was an American doctor who was stabbed by a Korean man. I'm just saying it's a full of violence and sad things and I'm living here in so peacefully. So it's kind of contradictory atmosphere. (Raymond, Korean American, 43, male, English teacher/photographer)

Raymond is a second generation of Korean American who was born in America and came back to Korea in the late 1990s and is now working as an English lecturer at a university. At first, he settled down in the central business district but soon moved to Itaewon because he felt Itaewon had more interesting places and familiar atmosphere. Foremost, it was convenient for him to hang out with other gay friends at gay bars in Itaewon. He heard many killing incidents which had happened in *Haebangchon* as well as Itaewon from his friends and those incidents were spatially inscribed based on spots where those cases happened. For Raymond who lives in a villa for middle class, he sensed very different atmosphere when he goes to the gay hill next to hooker hill where many crimes between Americans and Koreans happened, compared to his residential area's tranquility across spatial and temporal gap.

Among the well-known incidents, the 'Burger King incident'³⁸ is persistently remembered among Itaewon residents as it happened in public place and is still unsolved criminal case. The power relation – two suspects associated with military personnel and 'innocent' Korean civilian victims – was explained as one of the reasons why the Korean prosecutor could not resolve the murder case. Before this incident, the Burger King

³⁸ The killing incident happened in 1997 at Itaewon Burger King restaurant. At that time, two guys killed one Korean undergraduate student with unknown reason. One man was the son of the US military personnel and another was the second generation of the Korean American. Both of them were just released and there was no clear explanation except the remark by police that there was no clear evidence. The movie entitled "Itaewon Killing Incident" based on this incident was released in 2009. "Making Film about Itaewon Burger King Killing Incident," MyDaily News, 20th March 2009; available from <http://www.mydaily.co.kr/news/read.html?newsid=200903201512411120&ext=na>; accessed on 25th March 2009.

restaurant was used as one of the landmarks to make appointments as it was located on the one corner of the crossroad of the main street. However, impression of that killing incident was so persistent that it gave up the original place and moved to the end of the main road. While the incident called either “Itaewon killing incident” or “Burger King killing incident”, the two spatial symbols – Itaewon associated with American military occupation and Burger King as an representative fast food restaurant connoting American cultural colonization – have intensified the structure of injustice surrounding Itaewon.

In urban setting, crimes are not uncommon but it attracted more attention when crimes were committed by foreigners, especially by American soldiers.³⁹ In a country where the possession of gun is illegal and shooting incidents are quite rare, several shooting incidents reported in Itaewon attracted more attentions. Killing incidents resulting in civilian Korean victims by American military personnel become a diplomatic problem between the two governments, provoking anti-Americanism of Korean people. Media deal with various crimes and conspicuous consumption that supposedly happen only in Itaewon due to its proximity to military army: the black market selling products flowed from PX, illegal dollar exchange, drug dealing and prostitution, and all kinds of crime related to shootings.

One Saturday afternoon, several white and black guys dressed like hippies were prowling around both sides of an uphill road. A mixed-blood Miss was talking to a white guy next to a bar. ... In front of one of the biggest hotel building, several white guys with bleary eyes were staring into the air. Needless to say, they will be drug addicts. ... The most obtrusive people here are comfort woman for American soldiers.

³⁹ “According to official Korean government statistics, roughly 52,000 crimes were committed by the U.S. troops and civilians related to the U.S. military from 1967 to 2002. When one considers that not all crimes are reported to the police, it is not difficult to imagine that there are in fact more crimes. It was only in 1992, after a half-century since US troops entered Korea, when the crimes by U.S. troops in Korea became widely publicized. ... The brutal murder of Yoon Kum E, the Korean prostitute, in 1992 is regarded as an important turning point that encouraged people to form the joint commission for counter-measures. ... The Korean people started to raise critical voices against the U.S. The most significant change appeared in 2000 when two major incidents created great controversy: the Maehyangri explosion and the illegal disposal of toxic materials. The Maehyangri incident revealed the effects of life-threatening noise pollution and serious heavy metal contamination over 50 years. Disposal of formaldehyde, which causes cancer and miscarriages, raised concerns throughout the country.” (available from The National Campaign for Eradication of Crime by U.S. Troops in Korea; Retrieved April 5, 2009 <http://www.usacrime.or.kr>)

Although other areas in Yongsan also have more or less this group of sex workers, Itaewon is the most famous place among them.⁴⁰

2 am on 23rd July, the foreigners-only Sportsmen's club was full of people. Almost fifty Koreans and foreigners were altogether dancing Go-Go. About 70 to 80 percent of them were Koreans and most of them were around in their twenty. ... One local resident said "the reason why many Koreans flock here is the expectation that this foreigners-only hedonistic district would have something more dramatic and thrilling".⁴¹

Violence and crime taking place in Itaewon did not victimize only Koreans. Since the 1990s, the majority of foreigners in Itaewon are not military personnel anymore. Many civilians like young expats working as English teachers became the majority of foreign residents. Many of those interviewees shared their stories about crimes or harassment by Koreans they had experienced.

Although many foreigners like Itaewon, they also share many crimes targeting them. I heard the story about the death of the American young guy. He was found dead in Korean public bath here. Korean police concluded that it was an accident but many English teachers didn't believe it. How many people can be dead by being suffocated in that shallow tub of public bath? He was a good English teacher so many foreigners working as English teacher helped his mother by inviting his mother and by donating money to support let her move the dead son's body. (Shannon, Korean American, 20s, female, freelance translator)

I don't want to hang out in Itaewon unless there's an important meeting. At first, I enjoyed going to Itaewon. I took dance lessons there and there is a famous Spanish bar. But when I walked down the street, some Korean men and even non-Korean men often harassed me by calling me "Hey, girl, where are you from?" or "Will you date with me?" I guess that they thought that I'm a Russian woman because of my skin and hair. They think that I'm a Russian entertainer. I think many foreign women have similar experiences of being harassed by men. (Erica, Peruvian American, 31, female, graduate student)

These two female interviewees have lived at Haebangchon since the 2000s. Both were introduced to live near Itaewon by English private institutes. Their work places were located downtown near Gangnam. When they meet Korean friends, meeting places were generally fixed among three areas – Shinchon, Hongdae, or Gangnam – since their friends prefer these places to Itaewon. Both interviewees heard similar comments from many Korean friends about their living in Itaewon, expressing sympathy towards their living

⁴⁰ New Landscape in Seoul: Village for Foreigners (1971 June 24). *Kyunghyang* newspaper.

⁴¹ Itaewon, America in Seoul (1983 July 27). *Dongailbo* newspaper, p. 3.

conditions and worrying about their safety. Some unpleasant experiences in Itaewon by themselves as well as negative reactions from Korean friends, even though they live near Itaewon main street, emotionally affected them so both mentioned that they visit Itaewon less often. However, meeting with non-Korean friends like other expats are mainly held at Itaewon.

Obviously, the awareness of Itaewon as a crime-ridden place still remains. Spatial narratives of crimes embedded on particular spots contribute to layers of local histories. So many residents interviewed have a kind of map which spots a crime ridden-districts of Itaewon.

Emotional Distance

The prevalent image of Itaewon has been a space of violence and injustice resulting from prostitution and crimes related with the presence of foreigners. The anti-sentiments towards Itaewon range from moral issues to political arguments on the removal of the US army base. Most Koreans visiting, residing or conducting businesses in Itaewon may share the same anti-sentiment toward American military occupation and their concomitant violence. Above all, the commitment of crimes and the pervasive prostitution provoked nationalistic sentiment against America:

The blatant inequalities in economic and political power that *kijichon* on residents, especially the prostitutes, have experienced from the 1950s into the 1980s have increasingly become an emotional manifestation of the growing anti-Americanism among Koreans, especially among the younger generations. (Moon 1997: 32)

The discourse of anti-Americanism gained legitimacy through anti-despotism, anti-capitalism, and anti-imperialism ideologies of the radical social movement groups since the 1980s. However, when the anti-sentiment targeted U.S. military occupation faces Korean people and their neighborhoods in Itaewon, the tone of criticism transforms into more sympathetic nuance. The emotional representation has manifested in lyrics of songs, movies, and television dramas. In the early 1970s, Kim Min Kee, a famous song writer

well known for grassroots activist songs, made a song about *kijichon* describing the fatigued prostitutes and the dreary landscape of Itaewon. This song did not judge the ‘immorality’ of sex workers but the spatial description of Itaewon and young women, who were definitely assumed as *yanggongjus*, was full of gloomy and dismal conditions.

Kijichon

(.....)

In the dark street, strangers are passing by, making noise.

Young women with heavy cosmetic are staggering on the sidewalk.

Little stars are disappearing one by one, nothing left in the sky.

What dream I will have tonight, nothing has left.⁴²

When TV drama and movie set Itaewon as the spatial background, it is always the place for main characters, who have grown up there, to leave for social upward mobility and better future. A television drama entitled *Sad Love Song (Sad Sonata)* (2004), which was popular even in other Asian countries, used camp town as its spatial background to describe two main characters’ gloomy childhood. The protagonist of the drama was a son of *yanggongju* so he was bullied by classmates and a natural ability in music went unheard. The only comforting part of living in *kijichon* was the fact that his musical talent was being nurtured by the influences from music bands playing at a clubs for U.S. soldiers. His talent was discovered only when he escaped from *kijichon* by being sent to his biological father and he started a new life.⁴³ A more recent drama *Royal Family* (2011) is based on a Japanese novel.⁴⁴ The story deals with a somewhat ‘mysterious’ incident that a black man was found dead in the central part of Tokyo, a capital city of a country which is well-known as ethnically homogeneous country. The Korean drama borrowed the main incident as back story for why the female leading character, the mother of the black man, could not help killing her own son. Many details of the actual incident have been changed to be localized. In the Korean version, the woman was an orphan earning her living by helping

⁴² Personal blog website. Retrieved September 05, 2012.

(http://blog.joinsmsn.com/media/folderlistslide.asp?uid=jaewook53&folder=5&list_id=12883902)

⁴³ Though the *kijichon* in this drama was, not in Itaewon but in another one at the *Gyeonggi* province, its spatial setting is not that different.

⁴⁴ *Human Proof 21st Century* (2006) by Morimura Seiichi, published by Kadokawa.

chores of a couple who pimped in Itaewon's *kijichon*. She was asked to become a sex worker when she grew up to be a woman. In the midst of the 'crisis', she became involved in a killing incident when a white American soldier tried to rape her. She got married to a 'good' black American soldier and went to the U.S. with him to avoid the investigation of the killing incident. But she had to come back to Korea again to avoid the continued investigation of the killing incident in America. Since returning to Korea, she erased her dark past and becomes a daughter-in-law of a conglomerate owner's family. Her shrouded past in *kijichon* becomes an obstacle when she tries to become an established member of a 'royal family' representing the upper class in Korean society. For drama viewers as well as readers of the original Japanese novel, the heroic leading character is an embodiment of misfortune resulted from the environmental condition of *kijichon*. The rhetoric of victimization of people in *kijichon* reflects the general perspective that Koreans, especially female subjects, are located in a vulnerable situation and the only way to overcome a gloomy destiny is to be spatially and socially out of *kijichon*.

4.3.2 America of Desire

Desire toward America has been constantly realized through individual behaviors in terms of the consumption of American products as well as getting social network or cultural capital through studying abroad or migration. Regardless of the political and social anti-sentiment against America, the desires at the individual level toward America have not ceased. Likewise, the ambivalent attitudes and sentiments toward 'America' have existed among Koreans. Among many attractions, the influences of American pop culture were so strong that people even could not properly 'digest' it at least until the 1960s (Shin and Ho 2008:357). Even though the military regime of Mr. Park Jung Hee promoted nationalistic culture as superior cultural heritages while criticizing the American culture as decadent ways of life, the desires of Koreans toward American culture has made it possible for Koreans to articulate American cultural influences.

American Popular Culture

Itaewon as a borderland between two nations has played a role of mediating and transforming American cultures into consumable products for Koreans, regardless its political implication as the place of ‘disgrace’ and ‘injustice’. Many camp towns including Itaewon were hotbeds for mass dissemination of American pop culture (Shin and Ho 2008:92) as many Korean musicians were employed by the US military authority to play American pop music for soldiers. Since then, many youth, who were pursuing a different style of music or dance, found Itaewon a place to hang out and learn trendy American pop music and dance. Indeed, many of them who debut as popular singers and dancers made references to Itaewon as the key place where they embraced American popular cultures.

Limits of Itaewon

However, Itaewon could not become the reference to an idealized model of America at least since the 1970s. The military government of President Park Jung Hee tried to promote national and ethnic culture during the 1970s and 1980s by limiting and depressing the influences of foreign cultures, mainly referring to Japanese cultures in terms of vestiges of Japanese imperialism as well as American popular cultures due to its ‘hedonistic’ influences (Shin and Ho 2008:95). In this sense, the process of negation of American influences was a part of maintaining Park’s political legitimacy. On the other hand, since the 1980s, American military backing of the authoritarian regime when *Gwangju* civil revolution erupted in 1982 (Yoshimi, 2003; Kim, 2008) provoked anti-American sentiment. For many Koreans, America’s dismissal of the liberal civil revolution was regarded as political betrayal. Meanwhile, the economic development of Korea infused self-confidence into most Koreans. With this confidence, many Korean residents in Itaewon began to differentiate ‘humble and vulgar’ American soldiers with ‘civilized and affluent’ American officers and other Western looking foreigners. Furthermore, with the decreased number of American soldiers since the 1990s, American influences have weakened and became less

militarized. More precisely, as American cultural influences have been spatially dispersed resulting from globalization of Korean society, the exclusive role of Itaewon mediating and disseminating American influences has been weakened.

Western Influences around Hamilton Hotel

The image of 'affluent' America has been gradually extended so any cultural phenomena related to the western influences became symbolic positive images. The northern area of the main street, behind the Hamilton hotel, has been transformed into an aestheticized or gentrified space boasting stylish boutique shops, cafés and restaurants, and newly opened art gallery. In a way, the Hamilton hotel is an extension of the US army base. It was built in 1973 to provide the American soldiers with temporary dwellings under contract with the Eighth United States Army. Its name 'Hamilton' came from the name of the American general, paying tribute to his charitable deeds in Korea. It is also the embodiment of the modern project at that time pursuing development of tourism industry. The main building was extended several times whenever big international events such as the Seoul Asian Games in 1986 and the Seoul Olympics in 1998 were held. The bulky hotel building still stands in the central location of Itaewon and many people use the building as a meeting place. With the recent attenuation of the image of Itaewon with American occupation, the hotel is eager to convert itself into a space for metropolitan culture consumption by opening restaurants where one can enjoy 'multicultural' food and staging trendy parties for clubbers and gay communities. Also, by providing the venue for annual meeting, fare-well party, birthday party, wedding ceremony like other many hotels, it comes to gradually be included into the daily life of Korean people.

As the middle and upper classes' residential areas are located behind this building, spatial continuity from Hamilton hotel to the aestheticized street as well as the luxury residential neighborhood represents Itaewon's 'revitalization' of consumption culture and 'commodified difference.' The adjacent area around Hamilton is always crowded and

congested. This area represents rather ‘Westernized’ atmosphere due to the many restaurants serving Westerners as well as Korean younger generation, with English signboards and Western style cuisine: My Chelsea, Dickens Lounge, Bermuda Triangle, Bungalow Tropical Lounge, Embassy Lounge, Holloywood Grill, La Tavola, and more multicultural names. Likewise, their spatial references are also trendy, romantic, or global spaces for youth and expats such as Soho in New York, Tokyo in Japan, and other global cities. This gentrified spatial transformation corresponds to neighboring Hannamdong’s affluence. With an increased flow of trendy and young people, the main street of Itaewon has been extended into Hannamdong. Even though the residential area prohibits the extension of commercial area, shops on the first row of the main road have rapidly transformed into luxurious boutique shops, bars, and restaurants.

4.4 Coexistence of Heterogeneity

Borders enable people to maintain physical and social distance. As such, borders are normally understood as means of dividing different communities. However, they are not just linear boundaries to divide different communities; borders themselves are spaces which belong to communities. More importantly, borders show what inclinations work among heterogeneous communities. Borders, as in-between space embracing more heterogeneous elements, connect divided spaces and provide heterogeneous communities with interstitial space. So borders cannot be defined by singular axis such as class, gender, race, or ethnicities. In the following discussion, communities’ spatial activities centered on borders are described. Bordered space shared by sex workers and Muslims shows the coexistence of western and Asian cultural landscapes. It will be analyzed to understand how these two different groups of people coexist within larger spatial construction of Itaewon while maintaining some extent of distance.

4.4.1 Western versus Muslim Influences

While maintaining American influences, the foreignness here has become more diversified into more Westerners as well as Asians as professionals, migrant workers, international students, international marriage partners, and other different status. So their coexistence has made the cognitive map of Itaewon more complicated. However, the prominent spatial transformation is the coexistence of American and Muslim influences, the ‘ironic’ coexistence of the US army base and Muslim community in Itaewon.

The 1976 was a big year. US army base had a military hospital in Incheon and they moved it from Incheon to Itaewon. They all arrived here 1976. And it's also the same year when the mosque temple was built. Seoul's the biggest Muslim temple was built also on the same year. I think that's very interesting because these both American and Moslem influences after the war on terror by George Bush ... there's very ironic ... Americans and Muslims could live side by side ... and there's no serious conflict. (Raymond, Korean American, 43, English teacher/photographer)

It was the 1970s when I was an elementary student. My school was just next to the mosque. At that time, even my mother never knew whether there was a mosque. But I often went to the mosque and played with friends. No one tell me what kind of building it is. I think many Korean residents, at that time, didn't know exactly what it was. These days, I sometimes guide my Korean friends as well as foreign friends to the mosque. Most of them were surprised by the presence of a mosque too. (Kim Ae-Hwa, 51, NGO activist)

For Raymond, a relatively new-comer who moved in Itaewon during the early 2000s, the coexistence of the US army base and the mosque looked very interesting and ironic. However, many interviewees, who have lived near the mosque for a long time like Mrs. Ae-Hwa, did not consider it as something special. Some of them did not even identify the building as a mosque until it was introduced by mass media as an ‘exotic’ architect in Seoul. However, they understand that any exceptional or something related to foreignness can be accepted in Itaewon, regardless of its political or religious characteristics. Although two facilities' spatial arrangement looks conflicting given the geopolitical situation, both have been accepted simply as something related to ‘foreignness’ in the national context. Further, while unilateral influence of the US army base has sustained significant political and economic influences on Korean society, a mosque has been viewed nothing other than

an exotic building or something unrelated to residents' everyday lives. However, since the 1990s, the two different influences from the two constructions, i.e. the US army base and the mosque, began to shape a distinctive spatial division along the main street of Itaewon. Although this spatial division seemingly results from physical boundaries and ethnicity, it reflects two different historical layers and two distinguishable cultural characteristics.

Western Influences around Sex Business District

As the trace of American military presence, the number of clubs with Korean sex workers for foreigners at 'Hooker Hill' has rapidly decreased. While there are still several bars, they have changed the 'old-fashioned' atmosphere into being more 'mutli-cultural' settings by replacing Korean sex workers with foreign female 'entertainers' from Russia, the Philippines, and other Asian countries. As this 'racial' replacement reduces the nationalistic anti-sentiment against Korean women facilitating foreigners (Kim 2005b), the customers has also become more diverse, from American soldiers to ordinary men and women.

A small narrow street is the only place in Itaewon where Korean sex workers continue their business. Only several English signboards – such as Eve, Pink, Sweetheart, Mississippi River, and different names giving an impression of old clubs – have remained enabling people recognize the street. While many bars and clubs facilitating soldiers moved to other remote camp towns, several bars have remained because they did not want to leave Itaewon.

This bar is my first one. I've never worked at other places and even come out of Itaewon. If I go to somewhere else, people will look at me. I know well this place and many people too. So I just took over this bar from the previous owner, with a cheap price. As Itaewon and our business is not like that of its hey-day, I am not afford to hire more employees. So there are one employee and me. (Ms. Hwang, 50s, Sex worker)

This street looks abandoned during the daytime and turns on their signboards only at night. As no one appears to 'hook' customers on the street even at night, only lighted signboards tells that they are opened. Indeed, all the bars have small security cameras in

front of gates watching over the street so sex workers show up only when there appears someone who looks like a visitor. The security cameras have been originally installed to watch whether the American military police patrol this street. If they find any American soldiers at these clubs, a business suspension can be imposed. However, cameras have become futile since there are few soldiers to visit these clubs recently. The military police still maintains a list of off-limits establishments including most bars in Hooker Hill. Teams constituted by two to three American military polices with one KATUSA begin their patrol at night around this district. However, only old regular customers or some people who are curious about these old bars visit this area.

In contrast to the demise of 'Hooker Hill,' gay clubs and bars are pushing far beyond the 'Gay Hill'. Although 'Hooker Hill' and 'Gay Hill' have shared the sexual and immoral image within the Korean society, the gay community's transformation from a sexual minority group to a prominent group in global consumption cultures reflect the influences of the global gay culture. In an ethnographic research on Itaewon's gay community, Cho (2003) explains that the gay clubs located in 'gay hill' developed the trendy gay culture by attracting the international gay and lesbian population who visit Korea. Performances to attract international gay communities as well as Korean gay communities extends to Thailand's drag show and bar style adopted from America or Hong Kong's famous gay clubs. More importantly, bars and clubs entitled 'transgender' is flourishing since the 2000s next to Gay Hill. As transgender clubs line the main road, they are relatively accessible, compared to gay bars located at a small alley. This street also looks empty in the daytime. Businesses become animated at night, especially on weekends as their regular customers are office workers, English teachers, and other more professionals.

Compared to the period between 1970s and 1980s, this sex business district mainly constituted of clubs and bars facilitating only foreigners are rapidly waning. Meanwhile, entertainment industry for gay and transgender is flourishing. The former is, on the one

hand, directly connected to the American military occupation and nationalistic anti-sentiment against the occupation. On the other hand, although the latter has inherited the image of sex business due to their business orientation and spatial proximity to hooker hill, gay and transgender clubs are accepted as cultural phenomenon representing gender diversity. However, in tandem with the image as an exceptional area, the street flourished with gay clubs, transgender bars, and trendy night clubs still shared the exceptionality of this area.

Muslim Influences Centered on a Mosque

The southern part of the main street has flourished with Southeast Asian population and their cultural atmosphere. This area spatially reaches to the residential area of the Korean lower class residential area. The neighborhood around Mosque is always more or less tranquil except on Friday afternoon when they get together and pray. One of main reasons why the Muslim community emerges in Itaewon, especially amidst the residential areas of lower class Koreans, is the location of the Mosque built in the 1970s. In contrast with the Hamilton hotel, the mosque has, for most Koreans, been invisible due to its location and Koreans' indifference to Islam. The mosque is located at the top of a hill and the building cannot be seen from the street as it is besieged by other buildings. At that time, only the few Koreans who majored in Arab language or those who worked in the Middle East as labor workers in the boom of the construction business in the Middle East during the 1970s knew of the existence of the mosque. Nowadays, for many Koreans, the mosque building is regarded as the site for taking 'romantic' or 'exotic' pictures because of its unique design; it has become an important tourist destination for Koreans as well as other foreign tourists when they visit Itaewon.

Since the late 1990, an increasing number of international migrant workers from various Asian countries began to arrive in Korea and many of whom are Muslims. A Muslim community emerged around the mosque, with many restaurants and shops which

sell Halal food and other groceries, catering to the small population of Muslim in Korea. Muslims visiting the mosque on Friday look like they are forming a queue from the subway station to the mosque on top of the hill.

4.4.2 Sharing Space by Dividing Time

To understand this coexistence of heterogeneous elements in Itaewon, the rhythm of activities and flows of people would be necessary. Although Lefebvre's (2004) rhythmanalysis is "more aware of times than of spaces, of moods than of images, of the atmosphere than of particular spectacles," it enables people to "listen to a house, a street, a city."(p. 229) As rhythms are temporal expressions of spaces, rhythmanalysis is not only about times but also about spaces. By following the cyclical and the linear rhythms in Itaewon, it is found that different groups of people share spaces by dividing times.

Centered on the main road, while more mundane daily activities are seen in the daytime, visitors and customers who want to enjoy nightlife change its atmosphere. Many students commuting can be seen around the main street. In Itaewon area on which this research focuses, there are several kindergartens, two elementary schools, one girl's middle school, and two high schools. Some of these schools are contiguous with districts for entertainment business, which may look inappropriate. For instance, *Bogwang* elementary school is located in the sex business district, which is also near the mosque. In its heyday of entertainment business during the late 1980s, the location of *Bogwang* elementary school facing clubs and bars facilitating American soldiers became an issue among residents and a relocation plan was discussed. However, the relocation was not realized due to multiple reasons such as lack of finance and difficulty to find an alternative site. The elementary school still remains at the same place until now, instead sex business is waning. Nowadays, it has become famous for its 'multicultural curriculum' as it has more foreign students in this school than other schools, most of whom are children of Asian Muslim families. However, many students whose parents are Westerners living in Itaewon

commute to international schools in neighboring areas by school bus. Adding to these regular schools, there are private institutes for extracurricular activities. As many business people are also residents, while they are working, their children spend their after school hours at private institutes. Students with school uniforms commuting or hanging out on the jostling main streets gives the impression that everyday life in Itaewon also is the same as elsewhere.

School buses carrying foreign students often get trapped in a traffic jam due to being mixed up with tour buses. These tour buses commonly park at the end of the main road. Since there are not enough parking spaces, street vendors on behalf of travel agents always try to secure parking lots in the main road by blocking other cars, thus causing a fuss over parking problem. Nowadays, the majority of tourists are Chinese, Japanese, and other Southeast Asians who have been mainly attracted by Korean pop culture such as television serial dramas or Korean pop singers. These tourists spend one to two hours shopping. Many of them are guided to “Guide Shopping Center” which is designed only for foreign tourists. Several empty buildings due to business recession have been renovated and transformed for guided tourists’ shopping. But many tourists are more interested in buying relatively cheaper items such as socks and shirts from the street vendors. According to changes of tourists, shops and street vendor’s items have also changed. However, in general, its fame as tourist zone is waning because of the rise of other areas such as *Myungdong* and *Dongdaemun* market with more shopping cultural attractiveness.

Business people open their shops around 10 to 11 in the morning and many foreign employees of restaurants or bars can be seen preparing for their business and buying groceries from markets or grocery stores nearby. Business meetings between Koreans and foreigners can be seen at cafés or fast food restaurants as many of them do not have their own offices. Many different kinds of women from the Filipino maid who work for foreign families, to Korean and foreign housewives with kids who spend their free time, to young females who want to shop, and to female tourists who are mainly motivated to come to

Korea by Korean dramas and Korean music are sitting at the cafes or walking the street. Also groups of transgender or sexual workers working at bars or clubs spend daytime at the cafes or restaurants that they regularly visit. As old residents at this neighborhood, they feel comfortable at these places and passersby also do not try to pay much attention to them unlike outside Itaewon. Recently, many arty and intellectual people from newly opened art studio, gallery, and other offices also appear in the main street for meeting and commuting. The public spaces where they regularly spend their time and hang out are separated but they often overlap each other.

In Itaewon, there is no public space such as public square where people can get together and take a rest. Instead, both sides of the main road are surrounded by shops and the street vendors. Between these two rows of shops and street vendors, guys in their twenties to forties are watching people touting counterfeit goods. Their shops are normally located behind the main street to avoid crackdown by police officers. They observe people on the street to pick up customers who seem to be interested in counterfeit bags and watches. The three groups of business people – owners of the road shops, street vendors, and touters – talk to each other on the main street sharing issues from their personal stories to market information. In the daytime, the repetitive activities such as commuting, buying groceries, and selling goods and tourism intermingle with each other on the main street.

When it becomes dark, students, housewives, and group tourists gradually disappear. Most street vendors and touters also leave the street around seven to eight at night as there are no more tourists at this time. Compared to other shopping areas, this closing time is very early. It shows that their fame as tourist zone has lost to other places such as *Myungdong* and *Dongdaemun's* night market. More importantly, there are still some concerns of disturbance and crimes.

As my company is near Itaewon, co-workers sometimes dine out together at newly opened restaurant there. My mother always worries about going to Itaewon and I have to let her know if I go to Itaewon. I told her that it's not dangerous anymore, not like old Itaewon but she is still stick to the old image of Itaewon. But she's never been to Itaewon before and even up to now. (R50, Jihyun, 20s, office worker)

Nevertheless, younger and trendy fashion people get together for drinking and dancing at cafes, bars, and night clubs at Itaewon. Especially between Friday night and Sunday, Itaewon is overcrowded with people who enjoy their weekend. For many Koreans, it is one of tourist zone where they taste 'original' foreign cuisine, see the only mosque in Seoul, and watch 'so many foreigners' and being overwhelmed by its number and diversity. For foreigners, they also visit Itaewon for their weekend leisure. The majority of increased people is the Westerners who work and stay here longer period. Many of them are working as English teachers either at regular schools from the kindergarten to the university or private institutes. Instead of younger soldiers, they have become frequenters in this space. As they are relatively younger in their 20s to 30 and mainly single, they are clubbing especially on Friday and Saturday night to release stress resulting from intensive working. Sunday morning is the moment for two different groups – drunken persons sleeping on the street and people who go to Christian churches – confront each other.

The porous borders are maintained by dividing the use of time slot among different groups of people, especially Muslims and entertainment business district affected by Western influences. Different activities in the day time and night time show this divided use of time. For instance, from subway station to the mosque on top of the hill, the routes most Muslims walk up the street to get to the mosque is ironically the street where adult entertainment businesses are located. However, this is not taken as serious problem for Muslims and business people. For the two groups use this space at different times. Muslims mainly use this road to pass during the day, nine to ten o'clock in the night at the latest. Meanwhile, adult entertainment bars and clubs begin their business after eleven at night till five to six in the morning. Along this route, Muslim businesses such as grocery

stores selling halal food, Islamic clothes shops, bookstores selling Islamic books, and other community centers are flourishing. Indeed, the shops they rent now were previously rented to clubs and bars. Now, these two different kinds of businesses stand side by side. One of the Korean Imams remembered the early time when he began to visit mosque.

I was an undergraduate studying Arabic language. It was the first time to come to Itaewon to participate in language course as well as in student meeting. Until the late 1980s, this street was filled with night clubs. It was famous as the place where office workers and university students came over for another drinking all night long after drinking heavily at different place. There were also so many beauty salons for female sexual workers but some of the shops are displaced by Muslim shops. (Cho, 40s, Korean Imam)

Unlike other American cities undergoing ghettoization by exodus of 'native residents' such as American middle class followed by inflows of Asian population, there is no such big scale movement of population and visible spatial reconstruction in Itaewon. The spatial division remains rather porous. For instance, many small stores selling kebob or other simple Asian food representing unique 'Asian taste' have become popular and have extended their visibility into the main street. Their customers are not only respective Asians but also many Westerners and Koreans who look for cheap and different taste. An English bookstore, owned by a couple of American and Korean women, located on the hill near the Mosque disseminate information on reading clubs activities, flea markets, and other community activities regardless of ethnicity, religion, and language.

4.5 Redevelopment Plan for 'Multicultural' Place

For city planners and private developers, Itaewon has hindrance elements which disturb urban reorganization and redevelopment in large scale. Its natural conditions such as being surrounded by mountain and river have been physical barrier for a large scale reconstruction. The uncertainty of army base's relocation is still a major hindrance to any development plan. Even as a tourist zone, narrow main road and the lack of parking lots, which are essential for tourist zone, have not been solved. In residents' mind, Itaewon is a

'long-established' area, old and country-like village as it has not changed much compared to other parts of Seoul. The representative space of underdeveloped area is a Muslim street and neighboring residential area for lower class. Even though there has always been a redevelopment plan for this area, the undertaking of the plan has just begun right after Muslim street has shaped its atmosphere.

Until the 1980s, many landed houses in this area were rented by sex workers and other Koreans who were dependent on these sex workers, providing the necessary service for them, such as beauty shops, underwear clothes shops, and dress shops. However, once most of the sex workers flew away from this neighborhood, there was no demand for these houses from either Koreans or foreigners. People did not want to rent rooms around this area, despite the cheap rental fee, because there was negative image about this space as a crime ridden district as well as being full of sex business. Furthermore, with the expectation of redevelopment plan, the landlord did not pay for the maintenance of the buildings. However, the redevelopment plan was continually postponed and this neighborhood has further deteriorated. Migrant workers from other Asian or African countries are the ones who rented houses or shops currently. Korean landlords did not have to pay extra money for house maintenance and could make money at the same time. Migrant labors could find at least some places near their workplace as many of them were employees of clubs and bars, restaurants, grocery stores, and other shops. Compared to their previous places in the outskirts of Seoul or very remote area while working for factories, they could settle at least in the central city area. In result, it was beneficial for both Korean landlords and new tenants. During its early period of inflows of Muslims, the Korean residents who have lived here for longer period felt that they were less violent and gentler than American soldiers and Korean sex workers because they did not drink alcohol and did not try to make trouble. With increasing number of new 'colored' tenants, however, Korean residents begin to worry about the ghettoization of their neighborhood and most landlords ask for sweeping redevelopment.

With its waning role as the place for American military personnel's leisure and recreation, an increased apprehension of its ghettoization into Muslim community have accelerated and concretized the deterred development plan, the municipal government plans to build apartment for middle and upper class. Considered its location in the central area from which people can easily reach any place in Seoul and the vicinity of the park and riverside, this area is assessed at high property value. The planned middle-upper class residential units can replace the Muslim community. The main beneficiary would be the middle class Koreans who own landed houses as well as anyone who can afford to buy or rent these residential units. However, a controversial issue still remains. The mosque is immovable because the city government first donated the land and the religious facility is normally exempted from the redevelopment plan by law. Coexistence of mosque and middle- upper class Koreans' will be continued.

During the 1970s to 1980s, the frequently used expressions to describe Itaewon in mass media were like: "the area of extraterritoriality," "the exotic and foreign area within the national boundary". They paid attention to its political situation and problematized its 'stolen governance' by the foreign military regime. However, since the 1990s, along with the waning of American centered foreignness and militarized atmosphere, Itaewon has become more diversified. Many Korean residents interviewed talked more about its racial 'harmony' in a positive way and foreign residents expressed comfortableness resulting from its racial heterogeneity. Even they readily borrowed the expression 'multicultural place' or 'multiracial area' to describe Itaewon.

However, there has not been a noticeable spatial transformation such as the demolition of old neighborhood or the construction of new landmark building. There are still army bases as well as other military facilities. Nevertheless, the cognitive map or the way people hang out in Itaewon has been changed much. Also it is still the place for foreignness and exotic atmosphere.

4.6 Summary and Conclusion

Itaewon was 'produced' as camp town to provide a place for leisure with American soldiers. By two governments of Korea and America, this space is externally defined as militarized space as well as foreigners' space. Many military facilities and modern style residential units only for foreigners characterized Itaewon as exceptional place in Korea. As a 'deterritorialized' space in which its governance had been more given to the U.S. military authority, for Koreans, the space was like 'Americanized ghetto,' reflecting two America, i.e., America of violence and America of desire. 'America of violence' was spatially constructed into red light district, clubs and bars, and crime ridden area. As this space more inclined to facilitate American soldiers, Koreans were somewhat alienated and this space was regarded as 'injustice' space. However, at the same time, Koreans expressed their desires to become someone who is economically affluent and culturally superior by consuming Americanness in terms of American pop songs, movies, the use of English, and other American influences. Although Itaewon provided and disseminated those American cultural influences and economic benefits to the rest part of Korean society, something from Itaewon was regarded as 'inauthentic' American legacy since its immoral image was too prevalent. Given Bauman's description on 'real ghetto' where people are immobilized due to economic difficulties and where people are socially traumatized, Itaewon can be seen as 'Americanized ghetto'. Many residents, at least until the early 1990s, were lower-income minorities like sex workers and people who were involved in illegal businesses. Only by the fact that they were located at Itaewon, they were unfairly stigmatized by many people as being 'immoral' or having something to be ashamed of. In this way, as the local economy and cultural atmosphere were dominantly influenced by the American military presence, the space became recognized as 'Americanized ghetto'. However, the expression needs to be challenged since there have been constant economic and cultural interactions between Itaewon and the rest of Korean society, as it would be manly discussed in Chapter

5 and 6.

Since the 1990s, this ‘Americanized ghetto,’ has transformed into ‘multicultural’ space. Firstly, the influences of America had been waned with a decreased number of American soldiers. In addition, Itaewon has lost its position as a single place for foreigners to stay and enjoy their leisure by other several trendy areas. Secondly, as Korea opened its gate to more migrants, the influx of foreigners has changed Itaewon’s landscape into more multicultural space. Among them, Muslim population appeared as an important group constructing Muslim community centered on Seoul Central Masjid, a headquarter of mosques in Korea. For the coexistence of heterogeneous groups, their spatial practices have become complicated. For instance, in the narrow street, different groups share a common space on different time slots. The space where different groups share and meet is a kind of boundary in which the temporal and spatial conditions make it possible for heterogeneous groups to cohabit. As mentioned earlier in chapter 2, rather than spatial occupation by a particular group, spatial distance and *clinamen* between different groups or singular individuals are more important to let them coexist. Likewise, the narrow street which Muslim migrant workers and Korean sex workers share in different time slots is one way of maintaining spatial distance between them, enabling coexist without sharing same values and identities.

As to spatial development, it was social and cultural changes in terms of flows of migrants and surrounding social and political conditions that significantly changed its spatial boundaries and spatial representations, rather than any development plan. Due to its spatial condition of height limit and the political circumstance of the continually postponed replacement of American army bases, its spatial redevelopment has been deferred, unlike the rest of Seoul. In some way, this deferred redevelopment contributes the construction of variegated communities in Itaewon. Meanwhile, by spatially concentrating foreigners in this space, Itaewon has played a role for the rest of Korean society to postpone considering the unavoidable living conditions – living with strangers – in this globalized era. Like

Harvey (1989b) and Sassen's (2000) analyses on urban community, economic condition is one of the most important factors to spatially locate particular groups of people into bounded space. For instance, economic condition is not a negligible factor to explain why Muslim community is coterminous with 'hooker hill' and 'gay hill'. Cheap rental fee of shops and houses let Muslims in Itaewon replace abandoned shops and houses where sex workers and gay/transgender bars have maintained their communities. However, external forces of socially biased recognition on minorities concentrated them – religiously minority group and sexual minorities – into 'bounded' space, and thus significantly affected their cohabitation in small area. Within this space, although smaller communities based on ethnicities or classes exist, a larger community in Itaewon has maintained community of others/strangers.

5 THE COMMODIFICATION OF 'FOREIGNNESS'

Cities are spaces for consumption and production, producing and consuming of immaterial and intangible commodities from cultural atmosphere to anonymity. In Seoul, Itaewon has functioned as space of entertainment, leisure and tourism. The most valuable and conspicuous commodity has been foreignness in an ethnically homogenous society. "Foreignness," as a symbolic good, is spatially produced and socio-culturally consumed. The implication of foreignness, in this context, does not only mean the presence of foreigners but also includes strangers with each other regardless nationalities. The meaning of foreignness, through historical transformation in Itaewon, has changed from American goods and cultural influences during the camp town period (1950–1960), to something symbolizing exceptionality and deregulation during Korean's developmental era (1970–1980), and to each ethnic group's ethnic foods and their spatial embodiments. In this process, Itaewon people have actively engaged in business activities by "learning," or "mimicking" foreignness to make foreignness or difference emerges as commodities. The representations of their activities has transformed from patriotic ardor to welcoming multiculturalism. In a recent work on entrepreneurial activities by ethnic groups (Kaplan and Li 2006), the term "ethnic economy" refers to businesses that can be categorized into a particular ethnic group's business, whose proprietorships and customers belong to a singular ethnicity and has a close proximity to the ethnic group's residential area. In Itaewon, however, many heterogeneous ethnic businesses are mixed with each other. So the relations between the subjects of businesses and the customers, or business entities and their locations are complicated, rather than a linear relations.

5.1 Camp Town Economy

During the early period (1950–1960), the dominant economic activities were related to illegal business such as sex business and smuggling goods via PX market or the ‘informal economy,’ that are ‘legal but performed beyond the ‘normal’ regulatory regime.’ (Hudson 2005:141) like foreigners-only clubs and bars. While American soldiers needed entertainment elements, Koreans were looking for means of subsistence. The commercial activities in Itaewon started from the process of finding exchangeable goods between the US soldiers and Koreans. The presence of American soldiers was a valuable resource for burgeoning markets and service industries targeting them. Many Koreans who had just escaped from war and poverty could maintain their lives by learning and mimicking what American soldiers were looking for, such as American music, leisure, and ways of life. Korean business people could find another market selling these acquired cultures and skills to other Koreans who had desires to consume ‘Americanness’. Economic participation was not limited to Koreans. Some foreigners also found business chances, mainly when they decided to stay longer, unlike majority American soldiers who were short-stay visitors.

5.1.1 Itaewon Market and Business People

From old business to gentrified business

As to business activities in Itaewon, business items have changed from selling goods to restaurant and cafe business. Until the 1990s, the main selling items were shoes, bags, clothes, leather products, and counterfeit goods. Nowadays, restaurants serving many international cuisines are replacing old business items. Consequently, the way to consume Itaewon has changed from just buying consumer goods to enjoying food as well as cultural atmosphere. The change can be seen in Table 4 and Table 5 by comparing the numbers of establishments between the 1990s and 2009. Whereas shopping establishments accounted for 75 percent of total establishments in the 1990s, the number of both services for food

and drinking exceeds the number of retail shops in 2009.

Table 4. Number of Establishments by Industrial Groups of Itaewon in the 1990s

Shopping Establishment 1,464 (75%)	Food and Alcohol Establishment 391 (20%)	Tourism Establishment 34 (1.7%)	Etc. 64 (3.3 %)
Clothes (813)	Food/Alcohol (385)	Souvenir (14)	Money Changer (15)
Leather Products (210)	Etc. (6)	Travel (8)	Beauty Treatment (17)
Bags (150)		Entertainment (7)	Inn (13)
Shoes (110)		Hotel (4)	Laundry (11)
Jewelry/Accessories (93)		Foreigners-only (1)	Public Bath (8)
Sports Goods (40)			
Tailored Suits (30)			
Antique Furniture (10)			
Etc. (8)			

Source: (Han et al. 2001).

Note: From the original table, four items (beauty treatment, inn, laundry, and public bath) which were under Food/Alcohol category have been moved to Etc. category.

Table 5. Number of Establishments by Industrial Groups and Dong in 2009

Establishment	Total	Itaewon1-dong	Itaewon2-dong	Hannam-dong
Food Services	506	184	80	242
Retail Trade (Clothes, Shoes, Leather)	494	434	25	35
Drinking (Liquor and Non-Liquor)	247	111	28	108
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	221	44	54	123
Personal Care Services (Beauty Treatment and Others)	204	54	49	101
Clothing Manufacturing	69	48	6	15
Accommodation	36	14	1	21
Etc.	1,690	487	302	901
Total	3,467	1,376	545	1,546

Source: Report of the Census of Establishments in 2009, Yongsan-gu Office.

Differentiated by their business fields, types of social organizations, and the time of the day to begin their businesses, there are two different types of business groups: the old business group and the gentrified business group. The first group was linked to the *meegun*'s existence and modernization of Korean economic development. Indeed, as many of business people in Itaewon are also residents here, they overlapped with other categorized groups of people. The old business group consists of mainly Koreans who have maintained their business since the Seoul Olympics in 1988 or even earlier, specializing in products such as leather goods, shoes, souvenirs, dresses, tailored suits, and other counterfeit goods. Many of the businesses are undergoing depression now because their main customers of either American personnel or visiting Western tourists have decreased.

At that time, just residents of this neighborhood started anything they could do to make money. These locals could speak several English words but they did not have any skills. So they started street peddling for shoe shining services, selling flowers for gifts to *yanggongju* [sex workers facilitating mainly foreigners], and other small stores selling daily necessities for soldiers. (Kim, Korean, 55, male, Jewelry shop owner)

These business people were the ones who found business opportunities by fulfilling foreigners' needs. They are the first generation of business people in Itaewon. Although they were laymen without any special skills, they became familiar with several English words which were necessary to gain opportunities to maintain their daily lives. For these business people, the common recognition among Koreans that the occupation of national territory by foreign military is no other than colonization was not as important as economic privation. Other Koreans began to follow their practices and settle in Itaewon. Like many other living in Seoul at that time, they were domestic migrants from remote provinces in Korea to the city, dreaming of success in the big city. These early settlers in Itaewon explained that there were relatively little barriers for people who had either familial ties or social network to settle in Itaewon and start their businesses. The familial

ties of the early settlers still exist.

In this arcade, many people are relatives each other. Once one of their relatives or family members began, they help and lead other relatives. So someone started their business early has been here for at least forty to fifty years. Though they changed their business items several times from leather to shoes, from club to restaurant, they never left Itaewon market. (Han, Korean, 42, female, Clothing shop)

The personal routes of an interviewee Ms. Kang, who owns a golf-wear shop now in the shopping arcade attached to Hamilton hotel, shows the races of a domestic migrant to Seoul who opened her own shop with support from relative. She was preparing for a civil service exam in a remote province when she was twenty years old. However, after giving up taking the exam, she came up to Seoul and began working as salesclerk at a clothes shop which her uncle owned until the 1980s; her uncle owned several different shops at that time. Since then, she had worked as a shop assistant at several different shops in Itaewon. With several years of working experiences, she started her own shop selling leather bags in the 1990s, changing to women's apparel, to fake branded bags, and now golf-wear. Like the case of Ms. Kang, many business people in Itaewon started as sales clerks, learning sales skills of how to attract foreign customers and how to explain products in English. Mrs. Chae's case shows that the most valuable skill to learn in Itaewon is the ability to communicate in English.

As you know, my customers are foreigners. At that time, over eighty percent of customers were foreigners, dominantly American soldiers and their families. They ask many questions even when they buy small things. Of course, I couldn't speak English at all before coming to Itaewon. I just memorized what I heard from my boss in English. When there were similar questions from foreign customers that I couldn't answer, I asked about them to designers by myself and looked up a dictionary. Though I'm not educated well, I practiced explaining in English and we're different from other sales persons. (Chae, Korean, 58, female, Souvenir shop owner)

In addition, many business people also acquired business knowledge and acumen in distribution channels and sometimes knowhow for participating in illegal business: finding foreign partners for PX market, building a stable foundation for buying fake goods from producers as well as for selling them, and sharing social networks among business

people from the same line of business. The negative image of Itaewon among other Korean became rather beneficial factors for Itaewon residents to start their own businesses. Compared to other major markets in *Dongdaemun*, *Namdaemun*, and *Myungdong*, the rental fee of shops in Itaewon was relatively lower due to its smaller market size as well as the above mentioned demerits. The lower shop rental fee and the exclusive occupation of foreign customers guaranteed the Itaewon business people more economic profits.

If there are only Korean customers, we should be more transparent, but we sell to foreigners and if the business is going well, it's like winning the lottery. (Kang, Korean, 50s, female, Golf wear shop owner)

Symbiotic Relations among Koreans and Foreigners

Itaewon business people prefer foreigners as customers to Koreans because they are able to take advantage of the foreigners, who are strangers to Korean society in terms of proper price level, quality of products, and other possible alternatives. So Mrs. Kang's characterizing foreign customers as "lottery tickets" is generally shared by business people in Itaewon. A flourishing house rental market to foreigners is also shows that Koreans can get more economic profit with foreign customers. In Korea, there is a common lease system called "*jeonse*," in which a renter pays a deposit as much or slightly lower than selling price of a room or a house, instead of paying monthly rental fee. At the end of one or two years' contract, the renter will get back the deposit. In this system, if renters can afford to prepay the deposit, they can save a significant amount of rental fee. Significantly, many Korean landlords in Itaewon rent their properties to foreigners on monthly rental and the rental fee generally becomes higher for foreigners than for Koreans. However, when Mrs. Kang metaphorically calls foreign customers "lottery tickets," she also implies that there is a higher risk and more difficulties of dealing with foreign customers.

Some people just run away without paying. It often happens. Last time, one guy came for a hair-cut. When it's finished, he complained about hair style and just ran away without paying. I think he knew that I was alone all the time and just ran away because he didn't want to pay, not because of hair style. So when some foreign males

come at night time, I feel afraid a bit. (Park, Korean, 50s, female, Hairstylist)

We know that it's dangerous to sell counterfeit goods. I've worn a silver bracelet [slang for wearing handcuffs based on their silver color] before. However, the amount of money we can make by this is significant. (Lee, Korean, 50s, male, Bag shop owner)

These explanations may sound the misinterpretation of the causal relations or bias against foreigners. The possibility of crimes that Mrs. Park mentioned is everywhere and what Mr. Lee paid for illegal business cannot be imputed to foreign customers. However, these rhetorical statements are shared by business people in Itaewon to stress the distinct characteristics of business in Itaewon.

Most of the business people belong to alliances of shop owners of similar trades. There are two main roles for the alliance. First, negotiation with the district office or the municipal government for preferential treatment related to tourism industry. As their businesses are heavily affected by tourism industry, public sector's policy to boost local business is significant for their profits. Negotiation for crackdown on counterfeit goods was also one of the main roles of alliance. This has become impossible due to rigid enforcement of regulations. As many of the old groups had time to sell counterfeit goods, this role is now limited to mitigating members' penalty or to notify other members about crackdown on counterfeits. Second, the alliances regulate members to avoid overlap of the same selling products, as well as opening and closing hours. For shops located shopping arcades, regulation is stricter than separate shops on roads because, within arcades, one shop's opening affects other shops. Although street vendors on the main street seemingly look chaotic, their businesses do not overlap too much, as the organizations for street vendors have the right to assign selling items and control the number of vendors.

Within this bounded interrelationship, the flows of commercial activities between Korean and foreigners were not unidirectional. Some foreigners also found business opportunities in Itaewon, in collaboration with Korean partners. Americans in Korea could sense Koreans' materialistic desire longing for American culture. The development of the

PX market would not be possible without the collaboration of the US soldiers or other employees and Koreans who had a route of selling American consumption goods. The story of Tom Casey, who was known as the first foreigner to start a nightclub in Itaewon as well as in Korea, illustrates the partnership between foreigners and Koreans.

Originally from Rhode Island, USA, he first came to Korea in 1968 as a sports director for the army bases in Yongsan. He remembered that, in those days, Itaewon was a little camp town with about seven nightclubs where only foreigners were allowed. With an idea of opening a restaurant suggested by one of his friends, he tried to open a western style restaurant in Itaewon while continuing working for the military. After watching the movie "Saturday Night Fever," he changed his mind and opened a disco club instead of a restaurant. This was very new in Korea. As he did not have enough money, he got investment capital from a Korean friend. He hired another Korean friend, a former employee for the military as a manager, and asked the AFKN radio DJ at the time to be a DJ at the disco club. He named the club as the "Sportsman's Club." There were music, dance floor, Western style bar and a game room, which had never been seen in Korea before. It was full every night. He had introduced unfamiliar but up-to-date club to Itaewon and Korean society, which changed night life in Seoul. During the early period, foreigners who started their own business in Itaewon were generally limited to someone who got married Korean spouse and decided to settle down in Korea. However, the number has continually increased since the 1990s. In addition, as the proprietorship and customers' ethnicities become heterogeneous, it is even getting difficult and meaningless to distinguish the ethnicity of the proprietor.

5.1.2 Learning ‘Americanness’

Practical but Second-rate English

I’ve never seen any Koreans who speak English very well like them. They’re not like other Koreans. Their English is perfect. They know well slangs like Americans and speak very fast. I love them and enjoy talking to them. (Teddy, Korean, 26, male, undergraduate)

Many Koreans believe that the ability to speak English is the most effective ways to guarantee their ascent to a higher economic and social status. One Korean scholar refers to this attitude toward English as “fetishism.” (Yoon 2007:25) English is regarded as not merely a medium for communication but also becomes the object of worship associated with all kinds of imagination and fantasy for acquiring material fortune and prestige. This fetishism has generated the situation that scores of English language tests become standards to judge one’s educational level and ability when applying for higher level education or employment. Many Koreans spend an exorbitant amount of money on learning English at private English institutions, applying for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and studying abroad. Today, it is obvious that English has transformed considerably most Koreans’ everyday life as well as social environment. As stated by Korean sociologists Park (2007):

In the whole world, Koreans spend the most amount of time in their entire life to learn English, but, at the same time, Koreans hardly use English throughout their whole life. It is one of the most uneconomical and ironical situation in Korea (P. 63).

More importantly, it is generally regarded that English is the most prominent way to further alienate the people of the lower classes who are not able to manage the high cost of private English institution and overseas study. The idea of “education exodus” appeared since the 2000s, referring to a situation in which a growing number of families leave Korea in order to provide their children with an English education. Before the 2000s, the phenomena was limited to the upper-class strata in which parents were mainly

professionals such as doctors, lawyers, or professors with high income and were able to financially support their children's English education abroad. These parents usually send their children primarily to the United States or Canada. But currently, the march of exodus has extended to the middle class, to not just students but also workers who are eager to elevate their social status by learning English.

In this situation, the fact that many business people in Itaewon, regardless of their social status and education level, can communicate in English with foreigners has made this space a profitable area.

Itaewon is the only singular shopping area in Korea that English is widely used. Business people here are very confident with their sales skill for foreign customers because even an elderly street vendor selling fruits can speak English more fluently than other qualified employees of a famous department store.⁴⁵

In an ethnically homogeneous society where the singular official language is dominantly spoken, the hosting of an international event brought about social concerns on successful hosting. According to a survey, conducted in 2009, with foreign tourists, approximately 65 percent of the respondents said difficulties in communication as the main dissatisfactory element for traveling in Korea (Guem 2009). One can imagine that the difficulty of communicating in English in 1988 would cause even greater worries for all. For the Olympics Organizing Committee, Itaewon was the possible solution to this problem and indeed it was introduced as the convenient tourist place to foreigners. As such, the use of English in Itaewon has contributed to shaping it into a particular tourist zone in preparation of international events.

Business people in Itaewon mainly learnt English from each other so their vocabularies were limited to their own business. Unlike formal and grammatically correct English, their ways of speaking sounds bumpy and informal. However, it is more important

⁴⁵ Jeong Gi Soo. 1988. "Holding the World in Seoul's Arms, 88 Olympics: Charm of the Event, Itaewon Shopping." in *KyunghyangShinmoon*. Retrieved 3 June 2011. (<http://newslibrary.naver.com/viewer/index.nhn?articleId=1988080200329201005&editNo=3&printCount=1&publishDate=1988-08-02&officeId=00032&pageNo=1&printNo=13183&publishType=00020>)

for them to be able to maintain their business with this ‘informal’ English speaking. A shopkeeper selling leather bags expressed his ironic feeling about his own English speaking:

It was very ironic for me to speak English better than my friend who had been working in Hyundai group for over twenty years. I didn’t even go to university but he did. After graduating from high school, I took over two shops in Itaewon from my father. Since then, I had to practice English speaking by memorizing frequently used words related to leather products as well as international trading because most of customers were wholesale dealers from abroad. (Lee, Korean, 50s, male, Bag shop owner)

Some business people in Itaewon often travel abroad for business but many other business people, who have been immobilized by economic difficulty, have represented themselves as “international” or “globalized” entrepreneurs or have been described as such by local media. While other Koreans are striving for upward social mobility by escaping from Korea just to learn ‘American’ English, the ‘second-rate but practical’ English of business people in Itaewon has made it possible for them to sell themselves to foreigners as well as to other Koreans.

This bookstore has become famous after I appeared on TV, and various media interviewed me. Recently, some neighbors keep asking me to keep their kids at this shop. They think that their kids can practice speaking English with our foreign customers, saying that, for lived English speaking, their kids need chances to practice English on everyday level. (Jeong, Korean, 60s, male, Bookshop owner)

I’ve seen many couples. They are not a real couple, I mean. A foreign man approaches to Korean girls, saying that he can teach English to her. Many women answer to them “yes.” too. For men, English is a very useful means to hook girls. (Teddy, Koran, 20s, male, university student)

Proficiency of English is still of great valuable in Itaewon. Like Mr. Jeong’s explanation, some Koreans expect to learn ‘lived’ or ‘real’ English from foreigners in Itaewon, in which they can meet foreigners all the time. Like Teddy’s comment, both Korean and foreigners recognize that, first of all, English speaking ability is useful resources for economic profits or social networking, generally in Korea; and Itaewon is a proper place for this transaction of immaterial resource.

Korean Musicians Playing American Pop Songs

For foreign soldiers who had been sent to a “strange” place, consuming culturally familiar things to them would be most needed to adjust to unfamiliar environment. For their comforts, initially, American entertainers came to Korea to perform for American soldiers. When it became difficult to invite their own American performers, Korean musicians displaced the Americans from the stage. This stage was soon called as “Mee-pal-gun” stage named after the Eight US army (EUSA), which hired them through Korean mediators. Korean musicians were employees of clubs and bars rather than business people, though some of them later opened their own clubs like Shin Jung Hyun (1938–), who is known as the progenitor of Korean rock music. As their performances comprised substantial parts of club business, it is also important to understand how they “learnt” American music and pop culture and how their experiences influenced the starting of Korean rock music and even pop music industry.

In order to play American music at camp shows, Korean musicians had to learn modern entertainment skills, such as ‘stage manner’ and ‘showmanship’. Cultivated by these, American music – and entertainment in general – unconditionally meant the ‘modern thing’ and the struggle among Korean musicians to obtain this modernity was very fierce. They were ready to spend much time in training and catching up with the recent developments in American pop entertainment. This entertainment training was like military training! (Shin and Ho 2008:93)

The most talented Korean musicians gathered in camp towns to be employed by the US military authorities, to perform American pop music for soldiers. They learnt by themselves how to play modern instruments and sing American pop songs with English lyrics to earn a living. During the mid 1950s, the number of clubs in Seoul and its outskirts serving for the US army numbered to two hundred-sixty and the amount of money paid for Korean entertainers was over one million US dollars annually, which was beyond the total export value of Korea at that time (Shin, Lee, and Choi 2005:25).

Looking back, there is no doubt that US military camp show had a huge influence on Koreans, especially on Korean musicians, and it is no exaggeration that the US camp show was the cradle of Korean 'pop' musicians. (Shin and Ho 2008:93)

These Korean entertainers performed at the stage of "Mee-pal-gun" are considered as the first generation of Korean rock musicians (Shin et al. 2005). Since the 1970s, with a burgeoning mass media industry, Korean musicians could find many other stages, such as radio and television shows with Korean audience. More clubs and bars became flourishing. Still, the Korean entertainers of the 1950s and 1960s have significantly affected the building of Korean music industry.

5.2 "Glorious Participation" in National Development

Hosting of an international event is widely accepted as a means for hosting country or city to boost the local economy, to introduce its culture and history to the world, and to build their own national or regional identities. For developing countries, several major international events such as the Olympics and Expos have been regarded as a rite of passage to step into the international society and to signify becoming developed countries. The Seoul Olympics in 1988, until now the most important international event staged in Korea, is frequently mentioned as a watershed moment in Korean modern history, dividing the authoritarian military governed society and more democratic and liberated society. Even though the Olympics lasted just over two weeks, during the entire period of preparation, from the moment when it was awarded to Seoul in 1981 to the opening year of 1988, the Korean society on the whole was dedicated to preparing for the international event. It resulted in the reorganization of Korean economy, politics, and culture in order to participate in the international community.

With the staging of the Seoul Olympics, Itaewon was promoted as the representative tourist site for foreign travelers, which brought about its heyday. What made Itaewon a tourist zone was its 'foreignness'. There have always been many foreign visitors

and residents, entertainment facilities, and Koreans who can communicate with foreigners, in Itaewon. In spite of its “disgraceful” fame due to sex workers, counterfeit market, and crime-ridden, Itaewon was considered as useful resource which could contribute to the successful hosting of the international event. What was supposed to be sold to foreign tourists had to be discursively rendered as something that was able to prove the superiority of Korean cultural value.

5.2.1 The Seoul Olympics

Between Economic Development and Political liberation

The Korean government sees its legitimacy strengthened internally and internationally and its trading prospects improved, and the successful Olympics wiped out the previous image of poverty and deprivation. For the people, such an Olympics ended the long sentence of national humiliation under the Japanese, the mendicant mentality of the Korean War, and the abuses that followed. (Steinberg 1989:185)

From the outset, it was evident that the hosting of the Seoul Olympics was intended by the military dictatorship to guarantee its legitimacy and to continue the economic development of so-called the “Han River’s miracle,” realized under the centralized and military controlled government. The idea of applying to host the Olympics was raised by former military dictator Park Jung Hee before his death late the 1970s. For him, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, which proclaimed Japan’s rejoining the world community following World War II (Larson and Park 1993:17), became the exemplary precedent to follow.

The next President, Chun Doo Hwan, who was also backed up by military power, applied and the Olympics was finally awarded to Seoul. To differentiate himself from the previous dictator Park and to project the impression of a more liberated nation to the world, the new government led by Chun pursued the so-called “3S” policy of promoting sports, screen, and sex [“raunchy” popular culture]. Nevertheless, because of the unchanged authoritarian regime, the staging of the Olympics was not welcomed by the civil society. In the midst of this conflicted political situation, newly inaugurated U.S. President Ronald

Regan conferred public approval on the Chun government by inviting President Chun to be the first foreign leader during Regan's presidency to visit the White House in Washington, D.C., despite General Chun and his military forces being alleged to have ordered the assault of civilians in *Kwangju*, a stronghold of opposition politics. (Larson and Park 1993:159) As a result, anti-Americanism became furious among students, opposition political groups, and many Korean civilians.

In this political turbulence, street demonstrations asking for democratization of society and withdrawal of the U.S. military forces intensified. The political conflicts caused worries and suspicion in the international society about the possibility of the hosting of the Olympics. To attenuate the tension, President Chun had to accept a direct presidential election system. In the presidential election in 1987 based on a direct election system, however, the candidate from conservative party supported by military power was elected again, just right before the Olympics. Although the military dictatorship did not yield the reins of power to opposition groups, they could not help accepting virtually all other opposition demands (Larson and Park 1993:22) to prove its political stability to the world.

There was still dissatisfaction with the staging of the Olympics among opposition groups. However, after a compromise of temporarily postponing the political issues between the military dictatorship and the opposition political groups, both sides agreed that the successful staging of the Seoul Olympics would be critical for economic development and political reform of Korean society. Furthermore, the nationalistic rhetoric toward the event rendered commitment to it a national duty that should be carried out by all citizens.

“The World to Seoul, Seoul to the World”

From its awarding and to the moment of the actual staging, it took almost ten years. During this period of preparation, a series of national projects related directly or indirectly to the Seoul Olympics, from the developmental plans for the improvements in the country's

infrastructure to the social campaign for meeting the global standard in public behaviors, made tremendous impact on an entire nation. For infrastructure development, there were the Han River development project transforming the landscape of Seoul, developing shopping malls and international hotels in downtown, and other large scale's upgrading of the street. For the social campaign, it tried to imbue more 'civilized and ordered' etiquette into citizens by observing their daily lives in public space. For the campaigns, government officials and members of the Olympics committee went out on the street to guide and check that citizens crossed within the crosswalks, queued at bus and taxi stops, and placed cigarette butts and trash in trash containers. (Larson and Park 1993:155) As most sports facilities infrastructures such as stadium, hotels, and other media broadcasting system were planned to be located in Seoul, the government's efforts to reorganize and decorate Seoul as a more 'developed' and culturally more 'civilized' city were also concentrated to the capital. In this sense, the Olympics slogan – "The World to Seoul, Seoul to the World" – expressed the desires to prove Seoul's economic development as well as the 'superiority' of nationalistic culture to the world.

Within the city of Seoul, the efforts to find the value of Korean culture mainly focused on the heritage and monumental architectures such as old palaces, historical places, and other symbols of representing Korean traditional culture. However, many historical architectures and sites had been destroyed during the Japanese colonial occupation, which replaced traditional village with modern style buildings. The destruction continued during the Korean War. The cultural heritage sites and buildings that survived are located mainly in the central part of Seoul. To praise the superiority of Korean culture, development plan for tourism therefore targeted this central area.

Compared to the central district, Itaewon does not have any historical sites or buildings representing 'superiority of Korea.' The area had been rendered as the place of 'disgrace.' Generally, Itaewon's distinctiveness had been described in a negative way: sexually depraved area, crime ridden area, deterritorialized space, and other negative

images. However, its foreignness and oral communication ability in English came to be regarded as useful resources. The hosting of the international events and boosterism of tour industry have placed Itaewon into more international situation and transformed the negativity into positive resources at the national level. In this situation, the rhetoric of patriotism was adopted by business people in Itaewon, representing themselves as the ones who participated in the national project of successfully hosting the Seoul Olympics.

We [business people in Itaewon] are like civilian diplomatic envoy. We are not just selling these souvenirs. See, I am representing all Koreans to foreigners. They will think the way I treat them means Koreanness. So I explain many details about products and try to be kind all the time. (Seo, Korean, 40s, female, Street vendor)

These business people who represent themselves as ‘patriots’ explain that they are ‘real’ patriots because they contribute to economic development by earning dollars through selling services and goods to Americans and Western travelers by enhancing the national image through ‘excellent’ services. As such, Itaewon was promoted as one of the most important tourist zones because it was not traditional but ‘international’ within the context of homogeneous Korean society.

Also they expect regeneration of this space after the relocation of U.S. army base. In a strategic report published in 2005 about a new development plan for tourism in Itaewon preparing the supposed relocation of U.S. army base, it evaluated the value of Itaewon as an important special tourist zone. For long-term staying foreigners, Itaewon is assessed as the place to relieve homesickness and to build their own communities. For Koreans, it was reported that the attractiveness of Itaewon is its ‘postmodern and avant-garde style that could not be experienced in Korea’. It also added that, only in Itaewon, people can buy very distinctive goods that cannot be found somewhere else in Korea (Park 2005:4). The stereotypical rhetoric about Itaewon has not changed and many diverse groups such as business people, city planners, and other developers still see its foreignness as resources for economic profits.

5.2.2 Producing and Selling Imitation

Imitation as Residues of Export-Oriented Industries

When I joined a group meeting in church, all five female members were carrying Louis Vuitton handbags, with different forms and designs. I asked one of aunts how all of them were carrying the same branded bags and she answered “Here is Itaewon.” The development of Itaewon market has been closely related with the developmental process of Korean industrialization. By the late 1970s, the industrial structure in Korea was highly centered on export-oriented light industry so there were many subcontractors that produced final products for global companies.⁴⁶ The principal exports were clothes, shoes, and other light products for Adidas, Nike, and other famous brands. Many Korean employees acquired skills to produce these products, making it possible to produce counterfeits of branded products. Many local factories in Korea maintained a form of bonded processing trade, which means that global companies provides raw materials exempted from taxes and Korean factories produce and export finished products to global companies. In the process of producing, the factories could save surplus raw materials by tightly cutting fabrics. Except brand logo attachment, the final products were almost the same as the original products; the former, referred to as *bose* products in Korean market, is cheaper than the latter.

As there were more foreign customers who knew well about the branded products in Itaewon, the market for these bonded products had been built and extended. Throughout the 1980s, categories of counterfeit products have extended into leather goods, shoes, watches, and other varied items. Also, with an increased demand for internationally

⁴⁶ The production of counterfeit clothes and bags was possible due to a thriving export-oriented textile industry in the 1970. At that time, the textile industry accounted for nearly over thirty percent of the total exports, providing global companies with cheap textile products, which was possible in several developing countries such as Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan due to low labour costs. Now the manufacturing bases for industrial products which needs cheap labours and less pollution regulation has moved to China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and other South and Southeast Asian countries.

acclaimed luxury brands, the popularity of *bose* products has been on the wane, meanwhile, the market for counterfeit products called ‘imitation’, produced with the intent to take advantage of the superior value of the imitated product, has been extended tremendously. As to the main buyers, there were more wholesale and retail traders from other Asian countries such as Japan, China, Russia, and other Central Asian countries until the 1980s; nowadays, there are more individual customers. In a report on “The Condition of Distribution in Itaewon,” published by the Korean Intellectual Property Office in 1987, it was estimated that almost forty percent of all shops were selling counterfeits.⁴⁷ As such, among other things, counterfeits market has significantly affected the development of Itaewon market, the spatial arrangements of commercial facilities, and the awareness of their own business in Itaewon.

Between ‘National pride’ and ‘Disgrace’

As to production and consumption of imitations, business people have ambivalent attitudes, both of which are in conformity with the degree of national development. For the aspect of consumption, shopkeepers treat their customers as trendy persons who know the value of luxury brands. Further, by showing them the Japanese catalogues that introduce the latest luxury brands, customers are naturally identified with the Japanese consumers who are widely known as the mania groups for luxury brands. However, the more important reason to show the magazines written in Japanese to customers is to let them point out the preferred item from the magazine because they cannot display imitation goods on the shelf in preparation for crackdown. As such, the identification with the Japanese consumers gives good excuse for Korean consumers to purchase immigration goods: it is not for economic difficulty but it is for fashion sense.

However, when they talk about the production aspect, they categorize the process

⁴⁷ For Itaewon shopping, foreigners look for “counterfeits” while knowing its fakeness (1988 March 24). *Donga-Ilbo*, p. 11.

of imitation production and the physical location of the production into something representing developing countries' backwardness. In East Asian countries, the central location of counterfeit industry traced the route from Japan to Korean, Hong Kong, or Taiwan, and then later to China. One of business people explained that several conditions such as lower labour costs, lack of legal protections for intellectual property rights, and less concerns about pollution make it convenient for counterfeiters to establish their production systems. These conditions listed above are considered to show stages of national development. As such, the relocation of many factories producing counterfeits from Korea and Hong Kong to China since the 1980s and, consequently, the flourishing markets and industries related to counterfeit products in China is rendered as an example to prove the developed economy of Korea by Itaewon business people. For instance, as leather manufacturing factories exhumes contaminated water, many factories were moved to China to avoid the stricter regulation about environmental pollution in Korea during the 1990s. Indeed, many business people in Itaewon who own factories have moved their factories to Chinese provinces, looking for lower labour costs and less strict penalty for infringement. According to them, they taught the skills to Chinese workers but the quality of fake products was not as good as the imitations produced in Korea. However, they could not make profits and had to come back after closing their business in China. They pointed out the low quality of skills of Chinese workers and resulted shoddy imitations as the main causes of closing factories. Even now, while looking at China's much bigger counterfeit market, they blame the Chinese government for not strengthen its crack down on fake products.

Even though shopkeepers selling those counterfeits know that it infringe intellectual property rights, the skill of imitating branded products has been praised as the good example of artisan's skill by themselves. It also fit the 'superiority of Korean culture'

that the government emphasized to infuse nationalistic pride into the Korean people. However, throughout the 1980s, the international pressure asking the strengthening of its crack down on the counterfeits has intensified. The Korean government had to show its effort to respond to the international requests since countries such as America, France, and other developed countries asking stricter regulation were the important export markets for Korean heavy industries. These countries indirectly imposed sanctions on the imports from Korea through import restrictions and antidumping lawsuits. The Korean government therefore needed to regulate the counterfeits market, not only for protecting intellectual property rights of those luxury brands but also for protecting national heavy industries which were regarded as leading industries. Even though Itaewon was not the only place to sell counterfeits, people had an impression that the good quality of imitation could be found in Itaewon and this kind of belief and its popularity even among foreign customers had made Itaewon as the main target of crackdown.

Itaewon shopping malls have gone through a hard time since it has been pointed as a special zone for surveillance by the government. Prior to the Seoul Olympics, the government has enforced crack down on the counterfeits of the luxury bands and has increased squads. So, rather than enjoying the increased demands, the market has become depressed. However, it is the counterfeits which have made Itaewon shopping malls internationally famous shopping district.⁴⁸

With intensified crackdown following the staging of the Seoul Olympics, the fake market appeared to have dwindled; however, the market still maintains its ability to meet growing demand for counterfeit items. Until the 1980s, the main consumers were foreign wholesale and retail traders and smaller number of individuals who were knowledgeable more about brands products. Nowadays, the consumption of luxury brands products has become more popular than before. There were several sellers of counterfeits who were arrested or investigated but many of them are still related to this business. One of

⁴⁸ Why crackdown starts now (1988, August 26), *Maeil Kyungjae* newspaper, p. 3.

shopkeepers selling imitation goods mentioned that, “Now, Itaewon has become too transparent to do business.” As such, the two sides of increased demand and intensified crackdown surrounding the flourishing counterfeits market have become a dilemma for the business group as well as the government. For the business people, however, it is not easy to give up this market.

My brother-in-law is selling imitation bags. He even went to jail for that several times. My sister and his parent tried to stop him but it did not work. He keeps saying that he has no skill other than selling counterfeits. He is usually hanging around the Hamilton hotel to hook women looking for a fake Louis Vuitton bag. Of course, the business is not as good as before. But he will not stop it as long as there are people looking for counterfeits. (Kim E.K., Korean, 40s, female, clothing shop owner)

Indeed, many shop owners in Itaewon own their own factories to make imitations. They are experts in making high quality of products. So several associated business people are trying to launch our own brand. Some of them are already selling leather bags with their own brand. The quality of these bags is good but customers still prefer to buy counterfeits, rather than buying unknown branded goods. (Kim, Korean, 55, male, Jewelry shop owner)

Like explanations by Mrs. Kim and Mr. Kim about business people selling counterfeits, these merchandisers share the social sense of protecting the intellectual property. They have already created their own brand and designed. Mr. Kim, as an established business man in Itaewon, has been concerned with creating Itaewon’s own brand name. They used to design new brand names for locally produced items, mainly for bags and clothes, but it was unsuccessful. As a result, like Mrs. Kim’s brother-in-law, many of business people continue to sell counterfeits and they will not give up this market, as long as people look for counterfeits. The business guarantees more profits. More importantly, the common sense among business people in Itaewon that high quality of counterfeits shows their excellence of producing products seems to be greater than sense of guilt.

As a tourist zone, the staging of the Seoul Olympics contributed to foster a ‘growing openness and globalness in Seoul’ (Kim 2004:71). As a result, the Korean society became exposed to more and varied foreign influences through traveling and studying abroad, advanced telecommunication technology, and increased transnational flows of

goods and people. However, with the increased foreign influences on the Korean society since the Seoul Olympics, foreignness and difference as the exchangeable value in Itaewon appeared less attractive. There were two big international events, i.e., the Seoul Olympics in 1988 and the Korea and Japan World Cup in 2002. Compared to the immense success in Itaewon during the Seoul Olympics, the reputation of Itaewon as the foreigners' tourist zone during the World Cup had eclipsed. Furthermore, overinvestment in a wide range of social infrastructure caused economic depression on the whole and it seriously affected Itaewon. Moreover, the new development plan to boost tour industry by the Seoul municipal government has focused on the central city of more historical sites. However, the district office of Yongsan-gu, a larger district including Itaewon, still tends to sell foreignness of Itaewon and is trying to participate in the Seoul city government's urban development plan by promoting Itaewon's new attractive elements, i.e., gentrified spots.

5.3 Multicultural Economy

Since the 2000s, Itaewon has started to be recognized and represented as 'multicultural' area. The change is significantly affected by its demographic change of decreasing number of American soldiers and increasing number of foreigners with various backgrounds. Cities are spaces for both economic and socio-cultural exchanges of material/immaterial commodities. In most global cities where an increased confrontation with strangers becomes unavoidable conditions (Bauman 2010), diverse ethnic groups have emerged as notable economic subjects by ethnic economies transforming urban landscapes. In Korean society which is still ethnically homogeneous, Itaewon has become the most 'proper' place where diverse ethnic groups start their own business, which sells their 'unique' cultural values to other people or facilitate their own ethnic group.

In a recent work on entrepreneurial activities by ethnic groups (Kaplan and Li 2006), the term "ethnic economy" mainly refers to businesses that can be categorized into a particular ethnic group's business, whose proprietorships and customers belong to a

singular ethnicity and has a close proximity to the ethnic group's residential area. However, Kaplan's ethnic economy tends to limit the scope of economic activities within a singular ethnic group, rather than understanding dynamic interactions among divergent ethnic groups including people of host society. The narrowly defined ethnic economy only results in naturalizing ethnic identities and intensifying distinction between different ethnicities. The ethnic economy taking place in Itaewon also shows somewhat similar consequences; many shops and restaurants appropriate either national identities or ethnic identities. However, the complicated structures of business partnerships and strategies among various ethnic groups will help to extend the narrow meaning attached to ethnic economy.

5.3.1 Old and New Businesses

We have "World Food Street" and "Antique Furniture Street." At night, people enjoy fever together with foreigners. Perfectly tailored jacket can be made within 24 hours, completing foreign customers' satisfaction.⁴⁹

Some old business such as tailor shops, dress shops, and leather clothes shops have survived and improved their images into trendy designer's shop. For instance, tailor shops, whose businesses enjoyed their heyday between the 1970s and 1980s by catering to Westerners who have difficulty in finding proper size clothes, have found younger people as new customers. Except for a few affluent and elderly men, tailored suits have not been popular and the market has been replaced by the popularity of ready-made suits. However, younger generation has recently begun looking for tailored suits of unique design with relatively cheaper price to differentiate them from other people who buy ready-made clothes. While old business people 'proudly' decorated show windows with pictures of American generals or American entertainers who visited their shops until the 1990s, the newly renovated shops show 'simple and modern' style interiors and their signboards

⁴⁹ From an official website of the Itaewon Special Tourist Zone Association (<http://Itaewon.or.kr>) Retrieved May 23, 2012.

emphasize the designer's sophisticated hand-made suits. Another famous and old-fashioned shop was a dress shop, which sold colorful stage costumes to sex workers and clubs' entertainers. Although many dress shops have disappeared, some of them found new groups of customers with an increased popularity of leisure activities. Many dancing programs held by local community centers and amateur musicians' performance on the stage need a dress culture which is not familiar to Koreans. While their main customers were limited to entertainers based on Itaewon in the past, their current customers are middle class enjoying their leisure. Along with these changes, these shops actively utilize the Internet to promote their businesses by uploading photos of dresses and maintaining online shopping mall.

In tandem with transformation of Itaewon into trendy place, the number of branded shops is increasing now. Before when counterfeit goods were pervasive in Itaewon, branded shops like *Nike*, *Adidas*, and other local branded shops, avoided opening their shops, worrying about the deterioration of their brand images. However, with an increase of branded shops, people are concerned about the transformation of Itaewon into a "non-place" (Augé 1995), a transient place which lacks any characteristic, becoming a homogeneous place at a global level. In contrast, some people welcome the increase of global branded shops, interpreting it as a sign of 'normalization' of a 'disgraceful' place, expecting the rise of property value. Now, a mixed scene of old and new businesses on the Itaewon main street means that they are competing each other. However, it seems to be obvious that the number of new businesses is rapidly increasing; one of salient business categories is cuisine business.

5.3.2 Cuisine business

I think we [Itaewon] became uncompetitive for the clothes market, compare to *Dongdaemun* or *Myungdong* market. But we have many foreign restaurants. It's very unique. Only in Itaewon, you can see a variety of cuisines from French food, to Indian, to Turkey, and to authentic Moroccan cuisine. (Kang, Korean, 30s, male, civil servant)

Like Mr. Kang's explanation, a rising business sector is restaurant business. The street behind Hamilton hotel is flourishing with newly launched restaurants and bars since the early 2000s. There were more shops selling clothes, bags, and fake branded goods as well as several Korean restaurants for Korean business people; however, they are leaving due to increased rental fee. Instead, many restaurants and bars are replacing the old businesses, claiming themselves as representatives for authentic national foods. So their signboards often emblemize 'nationality' to promote their restaurants such as *Little France*, *Swiss Chalet*, *Little India Seoul*, *Usmania*, *Mogul*, *Saigon Grill*, *My China*, and many other restaurants with names of country or city. People in the restaurant business point out two attractive points for choosing Itaewon as their business place. Some of them prefer to its distinctive characteristics in terms of foreignness, globalness, and, at the same time, its old-fashioned atmosphere. Others choose Itaewon as it is evaluated as the last place in which it is less commercialized with the potential for being highly commercialized within several years. For them, their spatial references are *Hongdae* area in local level, where arty restaurants and cafes are famous among youth in local level or New York in global level, representing urban consumption with cultural tastes.

My teacher has managed a famous French restaurant in *Hannamdong*. I attended her cooking class and we decided to open smaller restaurant in Itaewon together. You know, the main street of Itaewon is already full with fancy restaurants and the rental fee goes up. So I just picked up this place in Itaewon2-dong. People are really surprised at this location surrounded by houses. It is in the middle of hidden small alley. But this restaurant is already very small with one table. What I needed was some unique atmosphere. When I open this restaurant, some foreigners living in this neighborhood were more curious about my restaurant than other Koreans and they just entered to talk to me. I like this kind of interactions. (Kwon H.J, Korean, 30s, female, French restaurant owner)

Generally speaking, Koreans seem to like sweet and complicated bread. But I like to bake very simple but healthy bread. My business in *Ilsan* wasn't good and many friends suggested opening a shop in Itaewon, saying that "there are many foreigners who definitely will like your bread." (Park, Korean, 40s, male, Bakery owner)

Ms. Kwon and Mr. Park have wanted to start their business in Itaewon since they have expected customers with unique cultural tastes are concentrated in Itaewon. Ms. Kwon's restaurant serves French home-style cooking with one table. As there are already many French restaurants in Korea that serves more or less expansive and serious cuisine, she expects that she would be able to find more customers who can enjoy simple home-style French dishes. In addition, like her restaurant with only one table whose concept is to serve limited number of customers, Itaewon is preferred to by some entrepreneurs who pursue experimental ways of new business. A bakery shop owned by Mr. Park, as quoted above, shows the experimental try can work in Itaewon. He moved the bakery shop from *Ilsan*, a northern part of Seoul with many middle class residents, to *Hannamdong* in Itaewon, expecting new customers. Within a few months since moving to Itaewon, like his friends advices, the bakery shop has become famous among foreign residents and Korean customers also have been increased. This reasoning also applies to entrepreneurs, who open restaurants and bars, serving ethnic foods like Mexican, Moroccan, Brazilian, and other various ethnic foods. Except each own ethnic group, when they expect other foreigners as well as Koreans who are not familiar with ethnic foods but are interested in these foods, entrepreneurs prefer Itaewon as the place for business.

Compared to old business which showed somewhat unilateral relation between American soldiers as consumers and Korean business people, new business groups have reflected multifaceted relations: regardless of nationality, both Koreans and foreigners maintain their business. In ethnically homogeneous society like Korea, a majority of foreigners are migrant workers and 'foreign brides' whose residential status are unstable and vulnerable. In result, they are being depicted as inactive subjects, who are economically and socially dependent on Koreans. However, many foreigners are

participating in a wide range of economic activities: small shops selling necessary items in neighborhoods; culinary businesses and tour industry in central urban areas; and global trades and entertainment industry. During the early time when smaller number of migrant workers was spatially bounded, a few shops owned by Koreans facilitated migrant workers' needs by selling necessity items to them such as food ingredients and international phone cards. Later, with an increased number of 'foreign' workers, residents, and tourists, the influences of ethnic economy have spread beyond bounded spatiality. The influences appear on the central urban areas to facilitate not only their own ethnic groups but also Koreans as well as other ethnic groups who are pursuing international cuisines and cultural experiences. These various economic activities involving various ethnic groups affect the transformation and reconstruction of urban landscapes in many ways, thus affecting urban living conditions for everyday lives; these various forms of economic participation are taking place in Itaewon most. In this sense, foreignness is still an important element to make Itaewon a flourishing commercial zone. Foreign restaurants represent themselves as providers of 'authentic' ethnic foods to their own people, Koreans, and other foreigners. Municipal government is also promoting this "multicultural" services and goods to compete with other shopping areas.

5.4 Summary and Conclusion

This section reviewed how foreignness has become the most valuable and conspicuous commodity in an ethnically homogenous society. This foreignness is spatially bounded in Itaewon and has historically transformed from Americanness to multicultural characteristics. As such, the meaning of foreignness has been continually changed.

The externally defined image of Itaewon as foreigners' space has developed into a commercial area with its main exchangeable value of foreignness. In its early period until the 1980s, foreignness mainly referred to conspicuous Americanness in the ethnically homogeneous Korean society. American soldiers consumed American cultural products

produced by Koreans, such as American popular music played by Korean musicians and night life facilitated by Korean business people. These Koreans learnt and mimicked foreignness, mainly Americanness. These cultural influences catalyzed the rapid dissemination of Americanized ways of life to Korean society. As such, for Koreans, the material and the immaterial cultural products from American pop music to English itself, symbolizing 'affluent America,' became consumable products.

During the 1980s, with staging of big international events, foreignness of Itaewon became highly commercialized, transforming the place into the first special tourist zone in Korea. On the one hand, foreignness in Itaewon in terms of infrastructural elements which favored foreigners, from shop keepers who serve foreign tourists in English to friendly atmosphere towards foreigners, transformed Itaewon into special tourist zone. On the other hand, Koreanness was commercialized for foreign tourists and many Korean business people performed the role of patriots selling Korean products to foreigners, including counterfeit goods. Unlike other central part of Seoul with preserved heritage such as palaces, historical relics, and national monuments, the immaterial Koreanness and foreignness were commoditized.

From the late 1990s, with influx of various foreigners, multifaceted foreignness has shaped Itaewon business into 'multicultural economy' attracting heterogeneous people as consumers. While there was a stereotyped relationship between Koreans as providers and Americans as consumers until the early 1980s, the division has been attenuated. The current 'multicultural economy' in Itaewon has been mainly shaped by its historical traces, i.e. a foreigner's place. However, it is also planned and promoted by a local government office to sell Itaewon as tourist zone. In recent times, the coexistence of old and new businesses reflects the changing features of economic situation in Itaewon.

The establishing business relationship does not guarantee any amicable interactions among different groups of people. However, it would, at least, work to decrease the unknown or groundless fear toward each other. For most Koreans, Itaewon

has been the “stolen territory” by foreign military authority symbolizing American occupation. However, it has also been the place for various groups of people to be attracted by foreignness and difference among themselves. While there have been crimes, tragic incidents, or unjust treatment, the business activities in Itaewon show how differences have been socially and culturally consumed, as well as how these attributed differences have worked as means of communicating with each other. Here, communication does not mean reaching a consensus. In selling and buying foreignness and differences among heterogeneous groups, there is no need to share same values and identities. As such, economic activities and cultural exchanges in Itaewon as a market place have played a role to interlink heterogeneous groups, enabling them to maintain some social distances.

6 NEIGHBORING WITH 'STRANGERS'

The foreigner, the one who, putting the first question, puts me in question. (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000:3)

Itaewon has been understood as foreigner's space. However, this clichéd expression have intensified the biased Korean's perspectives on Itaewon that it is pre-determined for all kinds of foreigners like a 'melting pot' in an 'ethnically homogeneous' society. As such, foreigners in Itaewon have been taken for granted, rather than putting the belief on homogeneity of the Korean society in question. If it is a foreigner's place, for instance, who are those many Koreans in Itaewon? More importantly, is it possible to identify foreigners in Itaewon as a singular group, simply because they are spatially concentrated on the same area? For instance, the constitution of foreigners has been continually transformed from predominantly American soldiers to Japanese tourists, from Western tourists to Muslim business people, from English teachers to many individuals with different backgrounds. So it is more important to trace the transient compositions of population in Itaewon and to understand inter-relations among different groups, rather than to presume that it is a foreigner's space. For research on communities in Itaewon, foreigners are not special objects to be solely questioned but all Itaewon people regardless their nationalities should be questioned and they should be able to raise questions to the Korean society.

In this chapter, the notion 'community' does not follow the general meaning of community that people share either common identities or same values, which bind them as a homogenous group. Multiple axes – nationalities, races, religions, class, occupations, and spatial proximities – cut across various groups of people and any singular element cannot be an organizing principle for communities. There is no representative group of foreigners

that can enjoy privilege. There is no conflictual relation between two presumed oppositional communities. So the compositional transformation of communities has not been caused by influx of one community and following exodus of an oppositional community, but it has been significantly affected by complicated political, economic, and social circumstances at local and global contexts. For instance, Muslim community in Itaewon is neither a singular community nor can it be defined by religious belief. Complicated inter-relations are laid within Muslim community and its oppositional community is neither Americans based on global conflicts nor Christian/Protestant community based on religious belief. Each section of this chapter deals with a different groups. However, the division and its dividing factors are set not because each group maintains consolidate identity but because each group shows respectively chasm within a group while maintaining distinctive characters; consequently, this chapter aims to show why and how they cannot be defined and fixed as a single community.

6.1 'Meegun' as Enemy and Friend

When I was a middle school student, for English homework, I had to record a conversation with English speakers. As my school was next to US army base, it was not difficult for students to come by American soldiers on the street. But my friend and I didn't want to interview them. Instead, we wanted to meet 'real' foreigners who speak English in a nice way. At that time, parents and elderly people in my neighborhood often said that we shouldn't be involved with any occasion related with soldiers because they're dangerous to girls. So I've never talked to them personally. Back to my homework, we went to one of the biggest bookstores in Seoul, where smart and safe foreigners seemed to hang out. Luckily, we could meet a Harvard student. (Park H.J., Korean, female, 30s, Photographer)

For Koreans, all foreigners are called as *waegugin* (a foreigner, 外國人). When many foreigners are repeatedly being exposed to this appellation in this 'homogeneous' country, it becomes not a neutral word but a signifier announcing that foreigners are very different from Koreans and even strange to Koreans. At least until 1980s, most *waegugins* in the Korean society were considered to be Americans, more specifically American soldiers called in Korean 'meegun'. Itaewon was a well-known place where people could

frequently run into *meegun*. Though the number has been less than 40,000 in Korea since the 2000s,⁵⁰ in Itaewon, they have been living as distinctive *waegugins* among other foreigners. Like Ms. Park, who had spent her teens and 20s in *Haebangchon*, says it was not difficult to come across many *meeguns* on the street. However, she was told by school teachers not to hang out at Itaewon-dong and remembered that some students who often hung out there were treated as delinquent teenagers. So, when she needed to interview any English-speaker for her homework, instead of talking to neighboring *meeguns*, she went to the central part of the city to meet more ‘gentle and smart’ foreigners rather than ‘masculine and rough’ *meeguns*. Though she has never talked to them, she naturalized the negative character of *meegun* like other Korean people in Itaewon. During the interview, she termed the situation as an ‘uncomfortable cohabitation’ at the time, between the late 1980s and early 1990s.

When I lived in *Haebangchon*, there were some American soldiers who rented houses from Korean landlord. Though nowadays there are more colored people as renters for the worst quality of houses like *banjeeha*⁵¹, at that time, American soldiers’ families rented one of the expansive houses in my neighborhood. The next house of mine rent one floor only to Americans so I could see many foreigners but they just stayed for one to two years. During the weekday, their place is like Only on Sunday or Saturday, I could see them and it was always very noisy. From lunchtime, they played radio or tapes of American pop songs very loudly and had a kind of party at a balcony. Big dog was together with them. When I passed by the house, the dog aggressively barked at me. I felt offended because those soldiers and their girl friends or whatever just laughed when the dog barked. (Hae Jin, Korean, female, 33, Private instructor)

⁵⁰ The highest number of American soldiers in Korea was approximately 325,000 during the Korean War in 1950. Since then, the size of military decreased to 63,000 in 1964 during the Vietnam war. Once again in 1977 when the Carter administration announced the evacuation of the US armed forces, it decreased to 42,000. Since the 2000s, the number has become less than 40,000 and it records 28,500 in 2012. (Source: various newspaper article)

⁵¹ *Banjeeha* is a semi-basement house. Where many houses are located on the hill side, semi-basement floor can be made and its one-side facing the front-side looks like the first floor but the back-side of the floor is blocked with walls. In crowded Seoul, the municipal government recommended landlords to make semi-basement floors to supply more houses. But its condition is not excellent as a house, its rental fee is relatively lower than other floors. In *Haebangchon*, this type of semi-basement were widely used for either cottage industry factories or rental houses for Korean lower-classes. These days, more foreigners such as Africans, Russians, and Asians rent out semi-basement floor as its rental fee is cheaper, replacing Korean renters.

Although there was hardly interaction between *meeguns* and other residents, the politically unbalanced relationship between Korea and the U.S. penetrated into personal relations. American soldiers always symbolically reminded Koreans of the ‘unjust’ American military occupation. Since it was easy to recognize soldier’s identity based on the military uniform and short hair style, they were being treated as symbolically national agent of the U.S. military authority which is occupying Korean territory. Respondent Ms. Hae Jin’s comment above shows well how the political relation at the national level was embedded in personal interpretation of her neighboring *meeguns*, though it was partly caused by noisy situation and barking dogs.

Meeguns are treated as temporary visitors and strangers who come today and leave tomorrow, since most soldiers’ service term does not exceed one to two years. Furthermore, as every aspect of their lives – housing, transportation, children’s schools, religious activities and leisure activities – are supported and mediated by army, there are not many opportunities for both soldiers and Koreans to interact each other. For instance, many of them are required to live in housing being offered by army and off-post housing is granted only when personal request is accepted.⁵² Back to the 1960s and 70s when there were more soldiers, many of them used to rent a room and let a girl friend, likely a sex worker, live there, according to old residents in Itaewon. In this relationship, the ideal case was for Korean women to leave for the U.S. and get American citizenship, i.e. the ‘American dream’ of Korean women (Kim 2004). Along with the decreased number of U.S. soldiers as well as the economic development of Korea, this kind of international couple has decreased.

However, not all of U.S. soldiers leave, some stay longer or settle down in Korea, especially when they are married to Korean spouses. Some of them keep working for military and others change their job into English instructor, business owners, and various

⁵² U.S. Army in Garrison Yongsan (<http://yongsan.korea.army.mil>), Retrieved 22 February, 2012.

other jobs. However, it does not mean that they will interact with other residents. Mrs. Kim's case shows well how much of her husband life is spatially and socially limited to the army base. He is a mathematics teacher for children of soldiers' families and the school is located inside the *Yongsan Garrison*. As his salary and housing subsidies are under good condition, he decided to live at Korea and he remarried to Korean woman, Mrs. Kim in 2009, through the introduction by other Korean staff in the camp. The common religion, Christian, was also an important factor to be considered when they decided to get married. As their living condition is good and Mrs. Kim strongly wants to stay in Korea, they do not have plan to live in the US. However, as the husband's daughter and son are both attending universities in the U.S., they stay in the U.S. and do not intend to come to Korea permanently. Though her husband has stayed in Korea for over ten years, his relationship is limited to families and co-workers within camps. Mrs. Kim always accompanies her husband to attend church service outside the camp on Sunday mornings but he hardly talk to other people. In the church this couple attends, there are many Filipinos who lead a special service for English speakers. However, many of the family of an American soldier-husband and a Korean wife do not actively participate in the preparation of service like Filipinos, who lead and join choir activity and actively support a minister, but just attend it mainly because it is facilitated in English. Otherwise, like Mrs. Kim, when the social network of Korean wife has strongly built, these couples attend services in Korean.

My husband just attends this main service (it is conducted only in Korean) even though he doesn't understand preach. He can attend service at the church within the army base. ... the service is also good but I don't have many friends there. (Hae Sook, Korean, female, 40s, English teacher)

Even though she did not clearly mention the reason why her husband does not attend the English service at the church, Mrs. Kim expressed the uncomfortable feeling toward attending the English service, which was seemingly dominated by Filipinos. In this situation, rather than language convenience, the group to which Mrs. Kim belongs seems

to be the more importantly considered.

The existence of *meegun* has symbolically characterized Itaewon as camp town. However, along with the decreased number of American soldiers as well as transferring of them to the other regions, the representative meaning of their existence has waned and the meaning of *waegugin* has been replaced by more diverse foreigners such as English teachers, who are younger ‘civilians,’ and Muslims with various ethnicities and nationalities.

6.2 Muslim Community

In modern history of Korea, the earliest Muslims arrived were dispatched Turkish soldiers and officers for the Korean War (1950–1953). They remained as part of the peacekeeping force after the armistice (Lippe 2000:97) and taught Koran to some Korean refugees, though the history of Turkish Muslims is almost forgotten. The presence of a central mosque in Itaewon since the 1970s enabled Muslim communities to emerge. While the construction of the mosque was realized under the cooperation between the Korean government and Islamic countries, there were few Muslims. The appearance of Muslim community took almost twenty years. It started with the increased influx of Muslims as migrant workers, spouses of international marriage, international students, and business people. If the religious belief is removed as their common denominator, there are cleavages among different groups within Muslim community, given the institutional orientations, ethnic differences, and other social and cultural backgrounds each maintains.

While the increased migrant Muslims are consequences of globalization across Asian countries, Korean Muslims are somewhat unfamiliar phenomenon in Korean society. On the institutional level, there are two different types of institutions: Korea Muslim Federation (KMF), which is predominantly operated by Korean imams, is an officially acknowledged institution; on the other hand, there are small community centers, which are maintained by migrant Muslims. The two different institutions play somewhat different

roles to maintain Muslim communities. More detailed explanation will be shown in a following section. Within the context of the presence of foreigners in Itaewon, Muslims are basically accepted as an antipode of American soldiers since both are conspicuous foreigners in this area. More precisely, while American soldiers were a dominant existence symbolizing the past of Itaewon, Muslims have become an important group constituting new expat groups. Given the conflictual circumstances that globally constructed between the US and Islamic world, there is growing concern about Muslim community. The tensions surrounding Muslims in Itaewon is, however, externally constructed mainly by conservative Protestant groups. As residents, entrepreneurs, or regular visitors, Muslim communities are not temporary visitors but important groups, whose spatial practices and economic activities are grounded in Itaewon.

6.2.1 Muslims in Korea

Although it is difficult to set the concrete figure of Muslims in Korea, a newspaper article⁵³ gave an estimate based on the number of foreign residents provided by Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Based on the percentage of Muslim population in total population of each country to which migrants belong, the ratio is applied to foreign residents in Korea. According to the estimation, there are approximately 137,000 Muslims, which accounts for 10% of foreign residents in Korea. Of the total Muslims in Korea, ninety-two thousand (67%) are foreigners who are supposed to stay in Korea as visitors either for a short-term or long term stay. The remaining forty-five thousands (33%) consist of Korean Muslims, either naturalized Koreans mainly through international marriage or simply native Koreans. Of ninety-two thousand foreign Muslims, 35 % are from Southeast Asia, mainly from Indonesia, 30% are from Central, Asia predominantly from Uzbekistan, 25% are from South Asia, mainly from Pakistan and Bangladesh, and 10% from African countries such

⁵³ Song, Kyoung Hwa and Soo Chan Ahn. 2011. “ , ? (How Many Muslims are in Korea?),” in *Hankyore* Newspaper. Retrieved 5 June, 2011 (<http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/SERIES/298/478232.html>).

as Nigeria. As to Korean Muslim, 13% (6,000) of them are foreigners but some of them naturalized as Koreans or others married to Koreans. The remaining 87% (39,000) of Korean Muslims are native Koreans who became Muslims by themselves.

Foreign Muslims

For the early 1990s, there were so many Muslims looking for jobs. They covered the Ewha market street so it turned black color. During IMF⁵⁴, some of them left because they also could not find jobs like many other Koreans. After IMF, they became less but these days they are increasing again. (Lee, Korean, 50s, male, Clothing shop owner)

As early mentioned in previous sections, many migrant workers from other Asian countries came to Korea when immigration regulation, which was less exploitative, were relaxed. Like Mr. Lee's description, during the early 1990s, many migrant workers looking for temporary jobs gathered and filled in a narrow street of *Ewha* market located behind the main road in Itaewon. Given that most migrant workers were supposed to be assigned to specific workplaces from the outset, those migrants looking for jobs were assumed to be illegal migrant workers. They might be the ones who found Itaewon as a proper space where they could find jobs than factory work since there was an incipient form of Muslim community centered on Seoul Central Masjid. Since the 2000s, the camp of illegal migrant workers disappeared but the number of Muslims as either residents or business people has increased. One main feature of Itaewon's Muslim communities is that the majority of them are business people facilitating other migrant workers and sojourning employees.

I came first to Korea in 2009. I worked for an electronic company, twelve hours a day but, in Tunisia, it was only eight hours. So after quitting the company, I came to Itaewon to find a job. I was just walking the street and a man, now my boss, recognized me from Tunisia. He suggested working for his bakery. He found me a room to stay so I'm staying with a friend from Syria. He is working at the same bakery too. (Lamzi, Tunisian, 20s, male, assistant baker)

⁵⁴ Many Koreans simply call the first financial crisis from 1997 to 2000 IMF because the symbolic meaning of IMF (International Monetary Fund) was so overwhelming that IMF itself became symbolized financial crisis.

A young Tunisian guy, Lamzi, started as a factory worker in Korea but ran away from the workplace so became illegal, as he ambiguously mentioned it. By flying to China and entering Korea, he renewed his visa. As he did not want to be a factory worker again, he was looking for a job in Itaewon since Itaewon was already known as a proper place where foreigners could find a job and some social networking of Muslims existed. While looking for a job, he came across a Turkish bakery owner in the main street of Itaewon and the owner hired him because they shared 'brotherhood' in terms of religion and region commonness, according to Lamzi. When he explained about himself, however, Lamzi stressed that Tunisia belongs to Europe, not Africa and added that he is not a sincere Muslim and even does not care about religious practices. It can be assumed that, as he sensed from repeated experiences that Koreans tend to look down on Africans, he might want to be seen as European than African. Indeed, there is Nigerian's community in Itaewon but, compared to other foreigner's communities, it is known as the most closed community and is notorious for being implicated in crimes. Regardless of the truth, the negative image of Africans seems to affect his representation toward Koreans as well as other foreigners. As to the religious element, many migrants from Islamic countries seem to share the common sense that Muslim identity can provide more resources in terms of job opportunities, places to stay, and other useful information for 'survival' in Korea.

I have no rival on this field. I started trading halal meat three years ago. I got a license for slaughter in Korea. I'm the only foreigner with that license. There is one Korean team which deals with halal meat but they cannot compete with me. I provide halal meat to almost all restaurants serving halal food in Itaewon and some portions of halal restaurants in Pusan. ... Indeed, it's my first time to learn Arabic. I was too busy to learn it. Now I'm attending this class to learn Arabic language and could meet many friends here. (Ali, Pakistani, 40s, male, halal meat provider)

Mr. Ali started providing halal meat to many restaurants in Itaewon. Without a settled office, he delivers various parts of lamb and beef that are slaughtered by the halal way by himself with his own car. Besides regular supply, he often receives urgent delivery orders especially on Fridays to Sundays, the busier days of the week for restaurants. So his

daily schedule is somewhat irregular and Saturday is the busiest day. However he was attending an Arabic class provided by 'Islamic Book Center' on Saturday and has been repeating the same beginner's course several times. In Pakistan, he worked as a mechanical engineer and said he did not have spare time to learn Arabic language. Only right before starting his own business, he began to attend the class in Korea. However, he seemed to be less interested in mastering language than meeting people and building business relationships with other 'students.' Many students attending the language lesson are either tentative customers or good informants who can introduce their friends, who are planning to open restaurants. For other Muslims, it is also useful to get acquainted with Ali as he knows well the circumstances of many restaurants: why a newly opened restaurant is in trouble, which restaurants need new chefs or employees, and what kinds of legal requirements they need to start businesses. In the middle of the class, prayer time occur and male Muslims pray for half an hour but he goes out to dinner with other non-Muslim students at one of restaurants where he provides halal meat. During the dinner, he also meet casual acquaintances. These kinds of occasions often happen along the Islam Street centered on the central mosque.

Among us, there was a saying that someone who often goes to Itaewon will become poor soon. Many friends go to Itaewon during weekend. At first, it was for praying at a mosque but they start hanging around and found several places where they can enjoy. So they easily spend money and the amount of transfer home is decreased. (Lamzi, Tunisian, 20s, male, assistant baker)

As such, compared to other migrant workers engaging in manufacturing, Muslims in Itaewon mainly maintain their own business or are employed by restaurants, grocery shops selling products imported from other Asian countries, travel agents, and other service industries. Generally speaking based on interviews, though owners of business tend to live outside Itaewon, employees predominantly stay at lower priced old houses rented under owner's name, consequently they are spatially tied to their workplace. Meanwhile, the owners who settled down in Itaewon earlier than other Muslims are playing key roles

as mediators, who help other Muslims adapt and sometimes get economic benefits by providing cheap houses and lower salary with longer working hours.

Although more Pakistanis are engaged in restaurant business than other Asians, many different ethnic groups of Muslims are mixed without a majority group. Religion is one of indispensable factors that bind them as a community but it is a somewhat loose factor. Religion is already embedded in their bodies as habitual behaviors and common sense. Regardless of the strength of religious beliefs, a reactive identification resulted from the negotiation with Koreans' biased attitudes toward 'Southeast Asians' tends to combine many Asians into 'Muslim community.' Although there is a diverse range of ethnicities as well as nationalities among Asians in Itaewon, most of them have been considered as a singular Muslim community based more on appearance than their real religion. For instance, a Korean anthropologist Song (2007) explains that many restaurants owned or managed by Pakistanis promote themselves as restaurants serving "traditional and royal" Indian food. One of Indian interviewee also complained that he could not find 'real' Indian food in Itaewon as many restaurants entitled 'Indian' hire Pakistani chefs and serve fusion style food. However, for most of Koreans, the differences between Pakistani food and Indian food are not significant and the owners also notice that 'Indian' food rather than 'Pakistani' food sounds more authentic and familiar. In addition, many restaurants known for Indian food mostly serve halal food in order to facilitate more Muslim customers. As such, there are double standards for facilitating Korean customers and other various migrant Muslims. While some successful restaurants combines the double standards well so they attract Korean and migrant Muslim customers together, other restaurants do not consider Koreans as their main customers. In sum, within the Muslim "community," although religious belief provides a shared identity and play a role of binding them as a community, many 'colored' Asians are simply identified as Muslims based on their ethnicities by Koreans and they also negotiate their identities with Koreans by manipulating their identities as "Muslims". As such, the misrepresentation and

misinterpretation between Muslims and Koreans have affected the construction of Muslim community in Itaewon.

Korean Muslims

I went to Saudi Arabia as a construction worker from 1979 to 1984. Before leaving, we were sent to the central mosque in Itaewon to be educated about Islam for a week. Things like we should not glance at women, alcohol is not allowed, and so on. ... [Whispering] You know, among us, one or two workers became Muslims when they came back to Korea. (Lee, Korean, 60s, male, Guard)

The way he described his experiences in Saudi Arabia was like tracing back in his memory the most 'adventurous' moment: illegally brewing alcoholic beverages, watching public execution, visiting beautiful mosque buildings, and other secret moments. However, when Mr. Lee mentioned converted Korean co-workers, he whispered even at his own place with no one else except his wife. The reason why he whispered is that many Korean Muslims still do not want to explicitly reveal their religious identities. In Korea, the location of Islam is close to being oppositional to Western influences than simply one of many religions. However, there have been some amounts of minority Korean Muslims and the Central Mosque in Itaewon have accommodated all the worshippers in various ways.

Like Mr. Lee's co-workers, some construction workers in Arabic countries became Muslims during the construction boom in Middle Eastern countries during the 1970s and 1980s. In Korea, in tandem with the Middle Eastern boom, departments of Arabic were continually opened in universities from the 1960s to the mid 1980s, beginning in 1965 when the first department of Arabic programs established in a Korean university.⁵⁵ It is not known how many of the graduates from these universities have become Muslims but many of them are working in fields related to Islamic influences as diplomats, sojourning employees of Korean companies, interpreters, scholars, and other leading roles. Among them, scholars who studied in Arabic countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Kuwait, and Iraq

⁵⁵ Currently, there is Dept. of Arabic or Dept. of Arab Studies in four universities. Each university open the department respectively : Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in 1965; Myongji University in 1976; Busan University of Foreign Studies in 1983, and Chosun University in 1985.

introduced Islam in terms of history, language, and arts and their ways of living, more from the cultural perspectives than religious perspectives. However, their social networking stemming from department of Arabic at universities is so strong that, for instance, many imams in the Central mosque are being filled with converted alumnus of those universities.

While the economic motive resulted in the first generation of Korean Muslims, the second wave is affected by the increased international marriage. According to the statistics on Muslim population in Korea mentioned above, the number of migrant Muslims who married to Korean spouses (4,157) is almost equal to the number of Korean spouses who became Muslims (4,000). This is likely because conversion is a formal condition for most of marriage in Islam. Since these Korean Muslims are mainly converted for marriage, their religious activities are not active. So, except some devout Muslims, many Korean Muslims are not visible and hardly visit the Central mosque. However, as will be shown in a next section, the activities of those couples between Korean Muslim wives and foreign Muslim husbands are relatively conspicuous because of their business in Itaewon.

Nowadays, even without any relations with Muslim spouses or working and studying experiences in Islamic countries, a growing number of native Koreans have identified themselves as Muslims, though the number is very small. Some of them said they encountered Islam through Muslim friends whom they met while traveling or staying abroad, otherwise through the Internet. Others became interested in the religion itself after experiencing different religions such as Buddhism, Protestantism, and Catholics. A newspaper article announced that the new situation of Korean youths' conversion to Muslims began since the 2000s. It introduced a twenty-six year Park Dong Shin as a representative young Korean Muslim.

He was a musician of an indie band in Hongdae clubs. In 2002, he also joined a hip-hop group and the group released a music album in 2006. However, music didn't help him to solve hunger and he made his living by doing manual labor at a construction site for some time. At that time, he felt being abandoned by his own family, friends, and the whole world. In 2009, he read a book about Islam by chance. Out of curiosity, he went to the central mosque. Two months later, he became a Muslim by confessing Shahada.⁵⁶

During my research fieldwork, I came across Mr. Park very often when I visited the Islamic Book Center. Without remuneration, he was working for the bookstore in exchange for a shelter to sleep. As he was the only staff who speaks Korean, he mainly facilitated Korean customers: recommending guide books based on their level of knowledge of Islamic culture and religion, managing timetable of Arabic classes, and maintaining a website for Korean Muslims. As the book shop is located on the way to the Central Mosque, many Korean visitors, about 20 to 30 visitors per day, to the mosque came by the shop. He endeavored to explain the Islamic values to visitors and to eliminate prejudice against Islam. After working at the book shop for several months and then later singing adhan at the Central mosque for some months, he opened his own community center named "Islam Information Center" in front of the Central mosque. Like Park's case, the younger generation tends to be active in exploring various religions, in which they can find more comfort and consolation.

I went to Africa as a volunteer member of KOICA [Korea International Cooperation Agency]. I could meet many people there and after coming back to Korea, I feel very stuffy as all my friends already graduated or found jobs. But I wanted to find something else and became interested in Arabic cultures and Islam. (Song Y.H., Korean, 29, male, Undergraduate)

In my neighborhood, there are many migrant workers from Southeast Asia. And I'm working as accountancy for a company having many migrant workers. After listening many about Islam from them, now I'm considering converting from Protestants to Muslims. There are many similarities between two religions so I'm already familiar with Islamic values and Islam seems to give me more comforts when I feel lonely and difficult. ... Of course, my decision is likely to upset my parent so I haven't talked to them about this. (Min Hee, Korean, 20s, female, Accountancy)

⁵⁶ Choi, Yeon Jin. 2011. " 26 , (A twenty-six youth Islamic Evangelist, Hoping to Abolish Prejudice)." in Chosun Ilbo. Retrieved 5 June 2011 (http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/02/21/2011022100027.html)

Many young Korean Muslims explain that the impact of revealing their religious identities to other Koreans is comparable to the extent of impact of “coming out” as gay or lesbian during the 1990s when ‘homosexuality’ was treated as incurable disease. For them, almost every moment is endless process of negotiation whether they will reveal their religious belief or just hide it. For instance, Min Hee wore a hijab only during the Arabic class at the book center and later she began to wear it from the moment when she got off subway at Itaewon station to the book center. With hostile responses from families and friends, the existence of the central mosque, the book center, and Islam Street of Itaewon provide more amicable environment to them. These Korean Muslim youths are less spatially fixed than other residents or business people in Itaewon but the symbolic importance and influences of Itaewon with the Central mosque is significant to their religious belief and identity construction.

6.2.2 KMF vs. Islam Book Center

Seoul Central Masjid (SCM) in Itaewon is led by Korea Muslim Federation (KMF)⁵⁷, which is the only official Muslim missionary organization in Korea. Unlike the general belief that Mosque would play the central role of taking care of Muslim community, KMF tend to have closer link with the Korean government than the Muslim community itself. This is partly caused by the government support in providing public land for the mosque. It was the Agency for National Security Planning (NSP), not the Ministry of Culture, that took charge of communicating with the KMF during the early period of construction, choosing the land for the construction of the Mosque, and managing the mosque.

⁵⁷ The KMF has eight branch offices at main cities all over the country and sixty *musallahs*, which is small and temporary place for mass. The KMF of Seoul Central Masjid in Itaewon maintains sub four communities for students, youth, adults, and women. Among these sub communities, women’s group mainly focuses on Korean female Muslims who got married to foreign male Muslims ‘to help their difficult living situation for religious lives and to give them more chances for the participation in mosque attendance.’ (From Introduction of KFM’s activities http://www.koreaislam.org/intro/intro01_2.jsp: accessed in 13th April, 2011) This targeting shows that there most female Muslims are Koreans who have been proselytized to Muslim.

Among the current employees, all of them are Korean Imam except one Korean female accountant. A Korean imam explained that they tried to hire an accountant from Muslim community but it was not easy to find a Muslim who understand the Korean accounting regulations to handle the paperwork. Looking at the imams' backgrounds, many of them graduated from the same university that has an Arabic language department. The KMF also collaborates well with the Korean government. They provide the Ministry of Statistics with data of the number of Muslim population, their original countries, and their social networking. For instance, when there was an incident of Korean Protestant missionary group being kidnapped by extremist Muslim terrorists, the Korean government asked KMF to dispatch their imams to the controversial area as mediators to obtain help from local religious leaders who could influence the situation. On the mundane level, a local policeman on patrol regularly shows up at the mosque. The policeman in charge of Muslim street is an alumnus who graduated from the same university of the majority of imams, so it is somewhat convenient for him to grasp the general situation of Muslim community in terms of illegal migrants, possible existence of terrorists, and other occasions worthy to be vigilant. In a way, the mosque is under the constant surveillance so as not to provide an asylum for illegal migrant workers among Muslims.

The KMF's counterpart is also the top officials of Islamic countries. The KMF holds regular meetings with ambassadors from twenty Islamic countries to listen to their demands for Muslim community as well as comments on operation of the KMF. The meetings are inclined to focus more on demands from middle or upper classes than representing Muslim population in Korea such as students, marriage migrants, and migrant workers. For instance, the main issue raised by a meeting in 2010 was the building of a primary school for Muslim children. The KMF has maintained only a kindergarten program called "Prince Sultan," which teaches kids regular programs such as arts, physical activity, science, and Arabic language. These programs are taught in English except Arabic language class and the monthly tuition fee is quite expensive, approximately 200 dollars

for Muslim kids and 330 dollars for non-Muslims, which would not be affordable to average Muslim families of migrant workers. In this sense, the primary school, Prince Sultan, is mainly for affluent families who want to educate their kids in Islamic religious values, Arabic language, and English as essential conditions for international ways of life.

The following activities of the KMF also show that their interests are more concerned with Koreans than Muslim community of migrant workers, marriage migrants, and students. The Arabic courses provided by the KMF are mainly for Koreans who are interested in Arabic language and culture. Two to three Korean Imams participate in teaching and a Syrian businessman managing trading business between Syria and Korea voluntarily teach Arabic speaking course. Based on over forty students' responses collected during the class, half of them just want to learn it for travelling to Arabic areas in future. Travelling becomes one of the prerequisite experiences for tasteful persons to have different and unique 'global' experience. In that sense, travelling to the Western countries is not as unique as travelling to the Arabic countries. The rest of them have more practical reasons to learn it. For instance, one of attendees was managing a travel agency specializing in the Middle Eastern countries, so she needed basic language ability to meet business partners from these countries. Imams also introduced her to personnel from embassies of the Middle Eastern countries, enabling her to build social networking. Some young graduates were preparing to work in Saudi Arabia and others in their thirties to forties were planning to do trading business in the Middle Eastern countries. So the participation in Arabic class held by the KMF was not only for language acquisition but also for building social network with imams who could introduce their acquaintances to them. As such, even though the official purpose of holding the Arabic class is to enhance more 'balanced' or 'unprejudiced' understanding of Islamic culture, the programs provided by the KMF did not provide any relevant contents to registered Korean students. In that sense, the organization aims more to extend economic and social influences of Korea to Islamic countries, rather than introducing Islam to Korean society.

Compared with the KMF, the bookstore named “Islamic Book Center” is playing a key role as a community center. The owner is a Pakistani married to a Korean woman. This bookstore is located at the entrance to the way to the central mosque. With two floors, each separated floor has their respective roles. The ground floor is decorated as a bookstore selling various versions of Korean and many books related Islamic cultures, history, and arts. Except occasional customers, this space is for socializing among business people near the bookstore. They frequently come by this place to chat, sip coffee or tea, or ask to watch over their shops or restaurants while they are temporarily away. It is also known as the only Islamic bookstore to people who are interested in Arabic language. When non-Muslims visit this bookstore, the owner and staff spend much time to introduce Islam and Islamic cultures to those ‘strangers’. On the basement floor, it has one classroom and larger space for praying. Arabic language classes are being held here and the programs are more diverse and religious. The constitution of students is half Koreans and half foreigners and many of foreigners are the migrant workers. Although the migrant workers are Muslims, they did not have chance to learn Arabic language before so they were learning it here in Korea. It shows that the class held by the bookstore provides not only the chance to learn Arabic language but also the space for making social bonds with other Muslims. This community is more religious and makes more efforts to proselytize non-Muslims than the KMF. For instance, time schedule of classes overlap with time for praying. When praying time comes, a teacher temporarily stop lesson and persuade students to attend praying so even non-Muslim attendees get chances to attend the religious activity or just to take a look at it. When there is no class and during the weekday, this basement becomes a place for female Muslims to socialize with each other and to pray together.

For Muslim population in Seoul, the central mosque would be the most important place to lead a religious life, to socialize with each other, and to share information. However, the KMF dominantly led by Korean imams does not seem to embrace a majority of Muslim population from other Asian countries. Compared with the KMF, the privately

owned Islamic Book Center is playing more central role to support Muslim community in Itaewon. Considering the interaction between the KMF and the Islamic Book Center, the imam at the KMF said that he hardly knew about the latter's activities and he regarded the center as 'too religious' a group. As shown above, the KMF mainly organized by Korean elite Muslims are more closely connected to government level of Korean and Arabic countries. On the other hand, the privately owned book store is playing a key role to support migrant Muslims. Like this, though the role of the mosque is somewhat inclined to one side, the symbolic importance of the Central mosque is significant to all Muslims in Korea.

6.2.3 'Proxy War' or 'Imaginary War'

I often went to the mosque to play with friends because it was next to my elementary school. I didn't know what that building is for back then. It was just another playground for us. Parents also didn't care about it. (Ae-Hwa, Korean, 51, female, NGO Activist)

Turkey's Muslim soldiers were a part of UN Allies and American military forces. In that sense, at least until the 1980s in Korean society, Islam and Muslims were not considered as oppositional parts against the US military. Especially in Itaewon where all kinds of foreign elements have been supposedly situated, the location of a mosque as well as the presence of Muslims was accepted as being in 'natural order'. Like Ms. Ae-Hwa's description, the mosque was part of daily lives of neighbors without provoking any antagonistic sentiments from residents, simply connoting one of foreignness. The moment when antagonism against Muslims began among Koreans would be around the 2000s when the number of US military soldiers gradually decreased and more migrant Muslim workers appeared in Itaewon. The 'coincidental replacement' of the two kinds of conspicuous foreigners, from American soldiers to migrant Muslims, has led Koreans in Itaewon to misinterpret the causal relationship between the two unrelated moves. As such, the frame of "the egression

of American soldiers and the arrival of Muslims” operates as interpretive frame for the economic and socio-cultural transformations in Itaewon, with a tone of lamenting the heyday of Itaewon in decline, ascribing it to Muslims.

The local and global circumstances have affected the worsening image of Muslim community in Itaewon. In local conditions, the economic structure and arrangement in Itaewon have contributed to the shaping of the interpretive frame mentioned above. Many commercial sectors have set to facilitate American soldiers by providing alcohols, sex business, and entertaining night life. However, with the decreased number of American soldiers, those businesses have declined and Muslims have filled with empty shops.

My businesses were better when there were the American soldiers and many young girls who facilitated them. But this neighborhood is now their world. The Muslims open their own supermarkets, snack bars, and restaurants. They do not buy anything from Koreans, even rice, they eat different rice from ours. (Korean owners of a rice shop, 50s)

Muslims have established their own places such as restaurants, marts, grocery shops, and other various kinds of commercial facilities since they could not expect what they need from shops by Korean business people. The replacement has also reversed the taken for granted roles, i.e. foreigners as consumers and Koreans as facilitators. As Muslim community in Itaewon actively engages in business, they participate in economic activities both as consumers and facilitators. As a result, the idea that business facilitating foreign customers can get more profits, which was prevalent among Korean business people like a quote of a rich shop owner’s mention above, is no longer monopolized by Korean business people.

Korean Wife and Muslim Husband

The presences of Korean women who married Muslim men and have maintained business in Itaewon, particularly restaurants, are conspicuous as they have played significant roles to prosper the business oriented Muslim community. Given the stereotypical idea of migration as ‘males as migrant workers and females as brides for marriage migration’ in

Korea, the gender balance for marriage migration among Muslims to Korea shows the reverse proportion. Many of the marriage couples are between a Korean woman and a Muslim man. The easier accessibility to social resources of a Korean wife has made it feasible for the international marriage couple to enter into business area in Korean society. As a dual-income family, while a wife maintains shops in Itaewon with other foreign workers, many of them often have the same ethnicity or nationality with the owner's husband, the husband separately maintain his own business such as trading or managing alternative restaurant in a different place.

I can't understand why these Korean women, who seems not to have any problems, got married to men from Southeast Asian countries. They are poorer than us and look ugly. (Korean man, 40s, real estate agency)

In the past, there were Korean women who got married to American soldiers here. It was understandable because they are from a developed country. But how these women could get married to this Muslims, even they are wearing a veil. (Korean woman, 40s, supermarket owner)

For many Koreans in Itaewon, who have witnessed marriages between American soldiers and Korean women, these Korean women with Asian Muslim husband seem to be considered as the extension of Korean who married to Americans, many of them as sex workers. While these women, regardless their jobs or social statuses, were accepted as the 'understandable' cases where they marry Americans because those marriages were believed to guarantee socially and economically upward mobility, marriage to an Asian Muslim is looked down on. There are two main reasons for this: Koreans have a biased idea towards Muslims from other Asian countries, as Asian Muslims are assumed to be poorer than Koreans; second, Koreans assume that Islam forces Korean women marriage partners to become Muslims. So the Korean women are regarded as being 'irrational' to choose 'poorer and more violent' Muslims as husbands, on the one hand; there still is a conservatively judgmental attitude against a woman who get married to foreigners, on the other hand. The female owner of the restaurant serving halal food mentioned that the attitudes of Koreans towards the Korean woman with Muslim husband are more unfriendly

than towards foreign Muslims. This unfriendly demeanor towards those women in Itaewon would be because, like the above mentioned reasoning, the image of those Korean women is connected to sex workers who married to Americans. Furthermore, this sexualized image combines with negative images of Islam, which implies uncivilized and hostile images in Korean society. However, their dynamic participations in business have significantly affected the construction of Muslim community in Itaewon.

The global conflictual circumstances between the US and the Islamic world have also affected the tensions surrounding Muslims in Itaewon. The vigilant attitude and surveillance toward Muslim community has been provoked by Protestant groups. Since the September 11 attacks and kidnap of Korean missionaries in Afghanistan, the mosque in Itaewon has gotten attention. One conservative Protestant organization⁵⁸ has been continually disseminating the message that Islam is a serious threat to the national security of Korea.

However, Muslims as residents have received somewhat positive reputation from Korean residents in Itaewon. Based on the early interviews conducted in 2008, most interviewees described Muslims as ‘more gentle and cleaner’ than American soldiers, though the positive evaluations still are based on the comparison with American soldiers.

When there are more American soldiers, I had to clean out empty bottles and garbage that they threw away a night before on the street in front of my house every morning. And there were many incidents that drunken soldiers became violent. Now, it is more peaceful and safer because Muslims do not drink. (Lee, Yoon, Kim, and June 2008:70)

⁵⁸ The Christian Council of Korea (CCK), an association of leaders of Protestant Churches, was established in 1989 with 55,000 affiliated churches in 2012. In fierce opposition to Islam, they produced a video clip entitled “Islam Comes Crowding” in 2008 and disseminated it to many affiliated churches. In the clip, they revealed the reason why they object to Islam in Korea like this, “As Islam pursues to Islamize Korea... we need to be prepared about the endangering of national security. ... Islam is not a religion of peace because they are conducting atrocious terror targeting anonymous people. Now the future of us and our descendants are up to our efforts to stop Islam.” (Source: “Under the name of God: Protestant Church Next to Mosque,” Hankyereoh Newspaper from http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/478851.html; accessed on 19 May 2011)

In practical sense, in lower class residential area, the new Muslim arrival has been replacing the empty houses and shops where American soldiers and sex workers rented. As such, Muslims have maintained the economic life in Itaewon, rather than deteriorating the neighborhood. The hostile recognition on Muslim community among Korean residents in Itaewon mainly resulted from the economic reason, not because of religion. However, on the superficial level, religion is still the most important binding factor of Muslim community.

Protestant Church Community and Business Competition

A well-known French anthropologist Guy Sorman (2010) mentioned that the most impressive landscape in Seoul is the many crosses gleaming red light on the top of churches. Like his impression, there are many Christian churches and Itaewon is no exception. Religion scholar Kim (2005a) mentions that the Korean society acknowledges diverse religions at the national level so Korea is multi-religious society where various religions coexist without any restriction. However, it would be more accurate to say that the Korean society has been so rapidly secularizing that religious values do not heavily affect the everyday life of Koreans. In a certain way, the two traditional religions, Buddhism and Confucianism, are still influential among Koreans, not as religious principles but as traditional customs. However, it is also well known that the Protestant churches have rapidly prospered in the Korean society since it was introduced by the American missionaries around the early twentieth century.

Among the main reasons for the so-called Korean Protestant success, I have found that evangelical Protestant Christianity, particularly its Pentecostal form, which arose in the 1950s following the Korean War (1950-1953), successfully draws upon ancient forms of Korean shamanism as well as introducing modern American capitalistic materialism. (Kim 2006:149)

In Kim's explanation, there are two reasons for the success of the Korean Protestant: its articulation of traditional values and customs into Protestant principles and

its adoption of American capitalistic materialism. Among several churches in Itaewon, the Methodist church located at the western end of the main road has been there since the early 1950s. Many members of this church are local residents as well as business people. For many Koreans, the practicing of any religions is rather individual choice than a strict value to follow. So it can be said that many business people in Itaewon, except the religiously sincere persons, are joining churches to associate with other business people. Indeed, they get help from each other by getting information about new empty shops, trendy selling items, or other various business information. So there is a continuous negotiation between more religious managerial staff and 'normal' believers about the time for service. Normally, many churches in Korea have morning service everyday and have the main service on Sunday morning from nine to eleven. For business people putting a higher priority on business, attending these two services limit the chances to start their daily businesses, especially when there are more people during the weekend.

Another characteristic of Protestant churches in Korean is their 'enthusiastic' missionary works. Freston (2001) mentions that, among the non-Western countries, South Korea is playing a central role for evangelicalism, both in numerical strength and missionary-sending importance (p. 61). When a missionary group was kidnapped by extremist Muslims in Afghanistan, setting aside the tragic side of the incident, their activities of trying to proselytize Muslims was criticized by many Koreans as an example of "spiritual imperialism" (Kim 2005a). Like other churches, the one in Itaewon also has programs sending missionaries to other countries. The areas have been limited to China and Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia. Recently, they are considering sending missionaries into Arabic countries.

The more important issue related to religion in Itaewon is, in tandem with the recent movement by conservative Christian groups against Islam, that the Itaewon church has more often preached sermons blaming Islam for the possibility of Islamization of Korea, expressing the worries about the Muslim community. However, the blame on the

Muslim community is concerned more about their salient spatial 'occupation' on Itaewon than religious conflict itself. The spatial occupation includes: the establishment of their own business, visibility of Muslims with their traditional and religious costumes, and the popularity of the Central Mosque attracting more visitors. There has been no conflict between these two religious groups since the mosque's construction in Itaewon.

Coexistence between Muslims and Korean residents has become unstable recently due to the anti-Islamic movement by the Protestant groups. More religious missionary groups began to consider the area around the mosque to be religiously 'dangerous' space so they sometimes 'secretly observe' the mosque and neighborhood to see what is happening here. However, this movement at least in Itaewon may not be affected by religious beliefs. In Itaewon, people believe that the reduced influence of the US military resulted from the increased number of Muslims and this transformation has caused the economic stagnation in Itaewon. Furthermore, as many believers of the church are related to the US military camps, such as marriage couples between the American soldiers and Korean females, Korean employees working for the US camps, and other social networking, they also consider the Muslim community as one of the negative elements for their economic stability.

As such, the economic difficulty is the more important factor in attributing to the Muslim community as the main reason for deteriorating business in Itaewon than religious belief. Here, the extent to which a certain group is welcomed by other groups depends more on its commercial value than its nature of ethnicity or nationality. The racial discrimination itself does not result only from racism but also from the extent to which they interact at the commercial arena.

6.3 'Expats' as New 'Foreigners'

It is not easy to exactly express the meaning of expats in Korean language. It never means 'someone who is expelled outside his/her own country' so please don't believe the literal meaning provided by Naver [Korean portal website providing dictionary service]. On the contrary, it refers to someone who has migrated into foreign country for adventures or jobs and maintains liberal life. We prefer being called as 'expats' to being called as '*waegugin* (a foreigner)', which demarcates unnecessary distinction between 'us' and 'them'. (Burgeson 2009:27)

While, *meeguns* were brought to Korea by the circuit of residue of the Cold War era, the influx of foreigners who called themselves as 'expats' belong to flows of global labour market. The term 'expat' generally refers to professional foreigners, most of whom are Westerners. This excludes migrant workers who constitute the low-ended labour force supporting global elites (Sassen 2000). In spite of its exclusiveness, in this section, the term expat will be used to refer to foreigners who identify themselves as expats because they prefer expats to *waegugin* meaning foreigners. The term is not well known in Korea. In Korea, the term began to be used among Westerners' communities through magazines and websites, which many Westerners read. The term expat applies to three distinctive groups of foreigners: officers working for either embassy or international company and their attached families; English teachers from the Western countries, who come to Korea with E-2 visa, issued to 'eligible' foreigners to teach English in Korea; and lastly some exceptional professionals with colored skin.

Many Koreans believe that foreigners hang out in Itaewon and it is foreigners' place but many expat interviewees respond that their main places in their lives are somewhere else. Only when they meet other international friends' group, they choose Itaewon as a meeting place because the geographical location of Itaewon is the most convenient for all members to reach from scattered areas. So when I asked interviewees about their spatial boundaries, many of them answered that their daily activities are centered on their workplace and home, not Itaewon.

My office is at the city hall. When I meet my boyfriend or friends, we mainly hang out at Shinchon, Gangnam because they work at or go to university there. I just picked Itaewon as the place to live because there are more rooms for monthly rent. At first, I went to the main street of Itaewon several times but not anymore. When I was waiting for my friend, some guy did some sexual harassment to me. Because I look like Korean, that kind of foreign guys approach to me, saying that he can teach me English. (Shannon, Korean American, 20s, English teacher)

I lived in Haebangchon more than one year because I'm familiar to this neighbor. When I came to Korea six years earlier, my employer rent a whole flat for English instructors to provide housing. But the institute was located in Gangnam and I spent most of my weekend at Hongdae because there is more fun. Only when I wanted to dance salsa, I went to Itaewon because there was the only good salsa dance club. (Erica, Peruvian American, 31, female, Graduate student)

Currently, there are an increased number of foreigners with E-2 visa. More than half of them are from America and Canada, novices at working who have just graduated or are still students. As they are not military soldiers, there is no reason for them to be bound to Itaewon. As Shannon and Erica said, they do not maintain any community membership attached to Itaewon. As young generation, they share more cultural atmosphere of *Shinchon*, *Hongdae*, and *Gangnam*, which are known as places for youth, shopping, and entertainment.

For Koreans, among three groups of expats, English teachers inherited hedonistic image of American soldiers, but the image is less violent. With insufficient number of 'qualified' English instructors, many foreign instructors employed especially by private institutions would endure long working hours from early morning to late night. For employer's convenient management of the instructors, many private institutions rent houses in Itaewon to accommodate them since it is convenient to commute to the institutions and, Korean managers assume that Itaewon would be comfortable for foreigners to stay. Even if some foreigners who have become acclimatized to the Korean society leave Itaewon and move to other area, with friends or co-workers who still stay there, Itaewon remains a place for them to hang out together.

Most expats in Seoul may be a bit crazy, at least I was. The whole week is full of classes at institutions and private tutoring. I had to inhale gas emitted from the buses and had to eat tteokbokki [cheap street food] to survive. In every weekend, we drunk through the night and had a party, rather than taking a rest, and ate rice and *kimchi* at a snack bar in the morning. But I did not work as hard as like other English lectures of ELS whom I know. (Burgeson 2009:36)

Like Burgeson's description of his and her friends' daily lives, the working conditions of English teachers are very not that ideal. As many classes are scheduled in the early morning or late night to fit the students, many of whom are office workers and university students, their working hours are extremely early or late and even irregular. 'English teachers' have come to inherit the 'dangerous' image of American soldiers due to a series of media reports which dealt with drug related parties or sex crimes committed by foreign English teachers, raising questions about their qualifications as teachers. For instance, some photos taken of groups of young people dancing together at a party held in clubs in *Hongdae* street, a district famous for its youth culture, were exposed to mass media by an unknown photographer. Those photos were interpreted as indicative of how hedonistic English teachers are dangerous to Korean women. Since those reports and criticisms from conservative groups of Koreans, the image of most foreign English teachers comes to be described as sex criminals. So, for many Koreans, the image of soldiers and English instructors shared the same negative images: hedonistic, dangerous, economically and socially lower class.

Many experienced bloggers have lived here for several years. Some of them got married to Koreans and have many Korean friends. Some will be fluent in speaking Korean. But their influences won't be noticeable as long as their messages are written in English. ... Expats' communities here are indeed fragmented. (Burgeson, J. Scott et al., 2009: 167-188)

Under this circumstance, several foreigners have tried to voice their positions by the submission to a newspaper published in English or posting on personal websites. However, there is no community that plays a central role to represent their positions and opinions toward Koreans. As Burgeson succinctly puts it, there are many diverse and separate

groups that it is easy to constitute communities or organizations in the current situation, even when they communicate mainly in English. Here the criticisms on parties held in *Hongdae* street is interesting. While more parties among foreigners and Koreans have been held in Itaewon, the parties that happened in Hongdae street brought more furious criticism. A well-known cultural critic, Lee Dong Yeon, once described the transient route by foreigners from Itaewon to *Hongdae* street:

Hongdae Street has suddenly become a new place for the US soldiers' nightlife substituting the role of Itaewon on the skids permeated with the aura of colonial modernity. (Lee 2004:182).

It shows that, while the existence of foreigners in Itaewon regards as usual, their presence beyond the spatial boundary of Itaewon can be easily connected to nationalistic sentiment.

Still, many foreigners have some affinity with Itaewon since the place is a relatively comfortable place to hang out for them. The emotional attachment is not that strong and the attachment is simply centered on a few spots. So they do not identify themselves with Itaewon and do not share any ideal goal toward this space.

I don't often hang out this neighborhood. I just pass the street when I commute from home to subway station. When I tell my friends that I'm living in Itaewon, all of them make sound "Oh", "Ugh". But it's not that bad. My neighborhood is also good. There is a shop selling bakery utensils near my house. I cannot find this kind of shop elsewhere in Seoul. (Shannon, Korean American, 20s, English teacher)

My Korean friends sometimes advised me not to go some street in Itaewon because some spots can be dangerous. But I don't care too much about their advices. I like Itaewon because it's very close to *Namsan* Mountain for jogging and transportation is very convenient to go any direction. This place is more multicultural than the rest of Seoul. (Simha, Indian, 34, male, Office worker)

Simha is an Indian marketer working for an Indian software company and chose to live in Itaewon by himself though company suggested another housing located at Gangnam. The reason is mainly environmental conditions such as Namsan Mountain and Han River, convenient transportation. He is actively participating in local cultural activities with his Indian wife, to experience Korean culture before they go back to India. His social network

comes from company, local communities organized by local library and other leisure activities, rather than spatiality. For instance, many Indian restaurants are in Itaewon but owned by Pakistani and Bangladeshi. So Simha does not enjoy going to those ‘Indian’ restaurant, instead he often goes to a Mexican restaurant managed by Korean and said that that the restaurant’s taste is very close to Indian Kebab. The Mexican restaurant is famous among many Itaewon residents, regardless of ethnicities. The scene, which American soldiers, Korean students, Indian office workers like Simha, and other various foreigners sit and eat side by side, would be possible especially in Itaewon yet. In that sense, the spatiality of Itaewon is still unique and important.

Gangnam (downtown located across Han River which is famous for shopping and entertainment for young people) makes my nose sting with its too urban atmosphere, my university neighborhood smells like the country side, and Itaewon smells like something not-Korean. (Teddy, 20s, university student)

Teddy’s sensory metaphor about three different places shows that other areas are excessively full of Korean things but Itaewon grabs all non-Koreanness. Teddy is an undergraduate majoring Arabic language in a Korean university. Before coming back to Korea, he has lived in Saudi Arabia since all his family migrated to Saudi Arabia. At first when he entered university, he stayed at a dormitory but could not adapt to its strict rule and Korean senior’s ageism. So he moved out and rented a room at *Gosiwon*⁵⁹ in Itaewon. As he is familiar with Islamic culture and Arabic language, he often visits the mosque in Itaewon, participating in social meeting. Also, for his military service, he applied for KATUSA and participated to Iraq War as an interpreter soldier. So Itaewon was, for him, the most comfortable place and was full of resources. While staying around different areas in Seoul, he found that Itaewon was the most suitable place for him.

⁵⁹ It rents small cage style room with one bed, small table, and other basic furniture to people. Also people need to share bathroom and kitchen but it provide residents with basic meals. Unlike other landed house asking refundable seed money, Gosiwon does not ask seed money so people with low budget for short term staying rent a room.

6.4 Imaginations of Young Artists

Neighborhoods mentioned above, 'gentrified' spots are concentrated in Itaewon1-dong and Hannam-dong along the main street and Itaewon2-dong called *Kyungridangil* just across the road from the US army base. In general, gentrification means urban transformation of central area which was once deteriorated and abandoned. The most salient result is displacement of lower classes by upper middle classes, reflecting structural changes in economy from industrial manufacturing to post-industrial businesses (Smith 2002; Zukin 1991). As many scholars elaborates well on displacement of residents in gentrified areas, gentrification eventually results in raised property values which makes it possible for upper-middle classes who can afford to purchase properties to find new places or remain at their own homes in gentrified areas. In modern Korean society, gentrification has meant a wide range of urban redevelopment plans mainly initiated by public sectors. Since the 1960s and 70s when Seoul became a "spatial machine" (Cho 1999: 128) to embrace a surge of internal migrant population from the countryside into the capital, mixed classes including squatters shaped the capitalist urban social fabric of Seoul. With accelerated industrialization, division of classes had deepened and the economic and social differentiation began to be spatially realized. Lower classes neighborhoods including squatters who illegally occupied public and private sites in the large urban areas became targets to be 'improved' and evicted. On the ground of attempting to "beautify" or "improve" the city and neighborhoods, government-initiated housing renewal projects have been implemented since the 1970s (Ha 2004: 381).

Many urban sociologists analyzing Korean urbanization process see these urban redevelopment projects, especially Joint Redevelopment Projects (here after JRP) since the 1980s, gentrification of Seoul. Those JRPs were initiated by the central government but largely depended on private developers' financial participation in partnership with dwelling-owners (Shin 2009:906). This way of redevelopment aimed at building high-

density new apartment units by sweeping the whole districts, rather than improving or renovating dilapidated and old houses. The socio-spatial consequence of JRP projects had been gentrification of dilapidated low-income neighborhoods by displacing nearly 80% of original residents. This market-oriented gentrification constructed highly homogeneous units of high-rise flats. In South Korea, like Shin's comment (2009: 906), the whole sale redevelopment has been a dominant urban renewal strategy.

Compared with this general mode of gentrification in South Korea, there has been no such a gentrification which results in replacement of lower class by upper-middle classes. However, several low-income neighborhoods like Bogwang-dong face overall redevelopment plan so these areas will be gentrified. Demolition and evacuation of dilapidated housing has begun and most residents have already left their places. However, Itaewon is highly commercialized area which has never remained empty. Many old shops are continuously being refilled by newly started business led by migrants and young artists. In addition, the presence of the US army bases has deterred any large extent level of redevelopment plan. Some landlords complain about postponed relocation of the US army bases out of Yongsan-gu in Seoul because it hinders a possible increase of property values after redevelopment and following speculation in real estate. So the areas, which are full of commercial facilities, show a different mode of gentrification.

6.4.1 “Nostalgia without Memory”

The unpredictable conditions for speculation in real estate due to continually postponed relocation of US army bases have made possible the coexistence of the past and the present of Itaewon. This situation imbues younger groups of artists with social imaginations toward Itaewon as being highly globalized and culturally affluent. For young artist, the cultural heterogeneity of Itaewon gives also a shared belief that any different ways of lifestyles can be tolerated in this neighborhood, based on the historical fact that Others like foreigners in ethnically homogeneous society as well as socially marginalized

people such as sex workers, gay and transgender, have settled down here as inhabitants and business people. There are many small different groups of artists and individual artists and there is no group playing a central role to lead gentrification of Itaewon. However, their presence in Itaewon are creating sporadic spatial transformation by renovating houses, shops, and galleries, which is enough to give an impression that Itaewon's spatial landscapes and everyday lives are aesthetically transformed.

As to gentrification, Sharon Zukin (1991) defines young and bohemian style groups of people as "critical infrastructure" (p. 215), who provide an aesthetic critique and share information about their own consumption culture. In the times of mass production and mass consumption, taste for the 'real thing' becomes a strategy of social differentiation. When Zukin analyzed gentrification of Soho, in New York, the real thing referred to two elements: the authenticity of the past and the uniqueness of new design (Zukin 1991:203). It would mean something that is reminiscent of the historical sentiment, regardless it is virtual or imaginary, and that, at the same time, provokes trendy and international senses. In that way, Itaewon would be one of the best places in Korea which provide historical sentiment of the Cold War as well as the various international elements. While many local residents try to escape from its past of flourishing sex industry and military atmosphere, the new groups with cultural tastes are trying to capture cultural values of Itaewon from some remaining Japanese colonial style houses to American pop culture's atmosphere which has been accumulated in narrow alleys and shanty shops.

During the fieldwork in 2010, several groups who are aware of the cultural values of Itaewon and who want to play a critical role in the spatial restructuring of this space were found. These groups have appeared since the mid 2000s as important players for mediating spatial and economic regeneration in Itaewon. Although they are of highly diverse backgrounds, what they share is the fact that they do not share its historical past of Itaewon, which was significantly dependent on the US army bases and 'disgraceful' past in terms of flourishing sex industry and violence. Here their emotional attachment toward

Itaewon can be called “nostalgia without memory” (Appadurai 1996:30). What these younger generations have in their minds about Itaewon does not root in historical past of Itaewon but it mainly comes from socially constructed images which have been mediated by mass media or appropriated by individual experiences. Newly constructed images of Itaewon are divided into two kinds: on the one hand, deterred redevelopment makes it possible for old inhabitants to live at remain shanty houses and shops, which give an impression of ‘villageness’ within a central city. Compared to blocks of apartments covering Seoul where most of younger generations have been grown up, landed old houses and dilapidated buildings with historical traces present to newly settled young artists a sentiment of villageness; on the other hand, racially and ethnically diverse atmosphere in Itaewon is easily linked to multiculturalism. So youth who have traveled or lived abroad tend to explain cultural landscapes of Itaewon as ethnic and cultural diversities of global cities like New York, Paris, and London. These elements provide artists with social imaginaries that this space guarantee tolerance and does not exclude artistic lifestyle and activities.

For instance, a small gallery café opened in 2009 is located at the narrow street of shabby houses and old clubs on the way to the Central Mosque. The owner is an artist who just came back from France. The gallery café renovated an old dress shop, which sold stage costumes and dresses for performers as well as sex workers. In the rear street behind Hooker Hill, there are still several dress shops selling dresses, which are no longer selling dresses to sex workers but to someone who needs stage costumes like stage players as well as amateur performers. The gallery’s owner could rent an abandoned shop since the dress shop’s businesses have waned along with Hooker Hill’s decline. When he chose this place for a gallery, he considered its historical context as the place for ‘strangers’ or ‘outsiders’, which reminded him of Montmartre hill in Paris where artists and ‘prostitutes’ cohabited. For him, this interpretation of this space transformed its ‘inglorious’ past into cultural value, not as the detrimental factors for the property value. Compared to the established

museums or galleries, the gallery cafe displays artworks of independent artists and its exhibition are experimental. He would be considered one of the critical infrastructures who excavate the cultural values of the old street with historical traces of 'Hooker Hill'. Since the opening of the prestigious art museum Leeum in 2004, many smaller galleries and boutique shops appeared in Hannamdong. While these luxurious galleries find their places in the eastbound main road, which is coterminous with middle-upper class residential areas, smaller independent galleries tend to find abandoned shanty shops or houses located in rear alleys. Although there are spatial distances between two different kinds of galleries, they share a growing cultural atmosphere and they also contribute to produce the atmosphere by themselves by producing new spaces.

6.4.2 Artists' Community: "Itaewon Jumin Diary"

A project "Itaewon Resident Diary" is lead by nine young artists, most of whom live in Itaewon. Core group members, alumni of the same College of Arts, have imagined living together after graduation. As designers, photographers, writers, and other various kinds of professional artists, their workplaces and houses are dispersed in Itaewon neighborhoods. They chose Itaewon to work and live together since geographically its accessibility from all directions of Seoul is convenient. Furthermore, its cultural attractiveness such as many foreign residents, old houses and shops, and various cafes and pubs, was interesting to them. For this young generation, those items from abandoned shops to garbage on the street are being used to describe their mundane lives in Itaewon and these activities have become objects of arts. As residents, each does perform his/her own project utilizing resources in Itaewon or creating visual works. For instance, a recycling artist collects items from other residents' garbage to transform them into artworks. A tailor, who recently opened his own shop in *Hananmdong*, takes photographs of his customers. He dresses them up with a new suit he made and then let them choose their memorable or favorite place in Itaewon. It is a way of connecting his designing clothes and places. As Itaewon

was famous for tailored shops for foreigners who could not find right clothing size, tailor shops facilitating trendy young consumer seems to inherit the historical legacy. A professional singer for *pansori*, one of the Korean traditional music genre, teaches *pansori* to local residents at her house. One photographer opens a restaurant with one table at his own house in Itaewon so clientele who make a reservation can hold a party at someone else's house. What this project team practice in common, regardless of their areas of expertise, is to provide their private spaces to 'strangers' like neighbors and anyone who are interested in their projects. Private spaces like a room, kitchen, or memorable places become important elements to represent their projects and are mediated to communicate with strangers.

As to their ways of communication, they utilize a wide range of media to communicate with local residents and represent themselves as residents of Itaewon to the public. They launched, at first, their website and social network pages, and then published a book of essays with photos about their project called "Itaewon Jumin (inhabitants) Diary", and later performed their project at the stage located at the municipal government building. To let local residents participate in their project and communicate with them, this group regularly opens a flea market on the top floor of their own houses. In the flea market, any local residents can open their shops and several shop owners in Itaewon are participating. They also hold classes which each member can provide their own talents, which is called "*Jumin* School". However, based on participants and the way they organize meetings, more young people from other areas, who are connected via the social networking services like Facebook than real residents, actively participate. They share more similar lifestyles which pursue aesthetically motivated lifestyles and are easily connected to the use of the internet. Those people in their 20s and 30s are socially connected and their spatial spots are dispersed in Seoul such as Hongdae district, Gangnam, and other areas in Seoul. However, the identification of themselves as "Itaewon Jumin (inhabitant)" and their locatedness in Itaewon defines themselves "critical infrastructure"

as Zukin describes those people who have a cultural sense of places. Although they do not generate a wide range of social impacts on Itaewon's everyday lives, their dispersed and sporadic activities shows the possibility of slow but meaningful transformation of Itaewon without rapid redevelopment and provide alternative imaginations of this neighborhood.

In tandem with their activities, there are more groups who represent themselves as cultural communities. Another project team is preparing to renovate a three-stories building into complex cultural spaces composed with café, gallery, and workshop place for designers, photographers, and other different kinds of artists. For this case, the building's owner has commissioned a project team, constituted with scholars and artists, to renovate the building.

In Mah (2012)'s ethnographic research on industrial cities where are undergoing regeneration, she found that uncertainty about future and prolonged regeneration defines the lives of people living regional cities where have been situated between destruction and recreation. There is no stark break with past, rather juxtaposition between the past and the present is spatially embodied. Unlike metropolitans where financial resources are concentrated and rapidly circulate, many regional cities with declining industries are at a standstill. Given gentrification which has become a "generalized urban strategy for municipal governments in consort with private capital in cities around the world"(Smith 2002:441) since the 1990s, Mah, therefore, argues that neoliberal economic development model which rapidly replaces a manufactured-based economy to a post-industrial knowledge and service-based economy (Mah 2012:201) is not proper remedy for old manufacturing cities. While many urban sociologists overwhelmingly pay their attention to metropolitan cities and their spatial strategies at the global level, this research pay attention to deindustrialization and concomitant spatial transformations combined with cultural meanings and lived experiences of residents. She also points out the importance of social imaginaries of residents to regenerate their own neighborhood, rather than depending on stark spatial transformation.

In this sense, what characterizes the project team “Itaewon Jumin Diary” is their imagination ability of Itaewon. Their imagination of everyday life in Itaewon transform Itaewon’s past as a camp town which was and is still remembered as being ‘dangerous’ and ‘contaminated’ military area into a neighborhood where is aesthetically affluent and culturally vibrant. The identification of themselves as Itaewon’s residents (Jumin) and their spatial strategy of opening their private places to the public also help to change most Korean people’s biased opinion toward Itaewon. In addition, as to local government’s roles in Itaewon, it has been more about regulating the flourished illegal activities in Itaewon: crackdown of fake branded goods, regulating prostitution, finding illegal migrant workers, and other many illegal activities. Most financial subsidies have been allocated for the promotion of tourism and commercial activities. More importantly, as the presence of the US army bases prevent large scale redevelopment plans in Itaewon, local government’s role in terms of urban development is limited at this stage. However, many business people and residents in Itaewon do not seem to expect rapid and stark transition led by the local government since the local government’s roles have been limited to the regulation.

6.4.2 Itaewon Freedom and African American Music Influences

A recent case from popular music is also worthy to be noted. A popular song entitled “Itaewon Freedom” has been released by a project group in 2011. The group of three guys has been culturally nourished at Itaewon: Park Jin Young, a famous producer and CEO of JYP [a famous entertainment company in Korea] assimilated American Hip-hop and dancing while enjoying night clubs and music bars in Itaewon; secondly, an independent musician based on clubs in *Hongdae* street; lastly, a famous comedian. The independent musician and the comedian is doing music band and is popular among youths. Temporarily, Park Jin Young teamed up with UV for this song “Itaewon Freedom.” Both of them enjoyed night life at famous night clubs in Itaewon. Although there are many musicians and dancers who were culturally nourished by music scenes in terms of night clubs and

dance clubs, this team is the first young musician, who publicly expresses the influences of Itaewon's night life.

The music video's spatial background borrowed the style of *London Boys'* music video for *Harlem Desire*.⁶⁰ By inserting the phrase "We love London Boys' Harlem Desire" at the end of the music video clip, they express their homage to African American music scene. To express Itaewon as spatial background, stereotyped images of people – an American soldier, a Western female dressing up like sex worker, and African looking female with ethnic costume – appear. The three singers also dressed up disco style pants, wear wigs, and have black face to imitate African American, like members of London Boys. The spatial background of music video expressed the Itaewon main street in which there are tailored shops, an American franchised burger restaurant, and several shops with English signboards. The lyric is like this:

What do you do these days when you are bored?
What do you do when things get dull?
Where do you kill time?
There are too many people in *Gangnam*.
Too many people are in *Hongdae*.
Shincheon just isn't quite enough.
I will tell you everything. I will say everything.
A new world. Tell me where that place is.
There is music and there is love.
There is a world. Tell me.
...
Itaewon freedom. Those shining lights.
Itaewon freedom. A world full of youth.
Youngsters go to the Grand Park.
Elderly go to nursing home.
Kids go to kindergarten.
We go to Itaewon.⁶¹

In this lyric, compared to *Gangnam*, *Shincheon*, and *Hongdae* representing youth culture, Itaewon is described as being different from other downtowns, where young people can enjoy music and freedom. The last half of music video shows the scenes in

⁶⁰ *London Boys* were a British/Germany dance-pop duo who mainly performed between the 1980s and 1990s. One of their song, *Harlem Desire*, is a single released in 1987 positively describing Harlem's culture.

⁶¹ Music Video on YouTube "Itaewon Freedom English Subtitles" Retrieved March 12, 2012 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjSJUnJUzSI>).

which the three singers appeared on the real main street of Itaewon, dancing with street passersby. With the popularity of this song and music video, UV was named an honorary ambassador for *Yongsan-gu* in May 2011 by *gu* office.⁶² Every element contained in this music video references old-fashioned styles of the 1980s and negative images of Itaewon such as African Americans who were racially discriminated by Koreans, sex workers, and disco music representing sub cultures imported from America. However, these young musicians have transformed these negative elements into something that Koreans can consume Itaewon's cultural landscape by looking back the past of Itaewon with nostalgic feeling. This music video signals an arrival of the moment that the unpleasant past of Itaewon has gone and Itaewon became a place where all people can visit and enjoy its cultural atmosphere.

6.5 Summary and Conclusion

In theoretical review, I proposed 'community of strangers' as a new perspective about community. It implies that community does not share singular identity among its members, but shares time-space. Of this community, people do not force other people to share the same identity. Instead, they maintain spatial distance, which help them exist as singular plurals. Itaewon is known as a community of foreigners or strangers in Korean society. In this sense, Itaewon is a good reference to examine how community of strangers is possible. So, this chapter aimed to show how Itaewon residents of heterogeneous backgrounds are living together while maintaining some social and spatial distances. Among foreigners, four major groups of people – *meegun*, Muslim community, exptas, and young cultural groups – have shown because their presences have significantly affected the construction of cultural landscapes as well as economic conditions in Itaewon. However, there is no clear boundaries dividing these three groups of people, furthermore, each group does not

⁶² Diodeo Internet news site. 2011. "UV of Itaewon Freedom named honorary ambassador for Yongsan-gu." Retrieved June 10, 2011 (http://www.diodeo.com/comuser/news/news_view.asp?news_code=59954).

maintain a singular identity within themselves.

Until the 1980s, the most distinctive foreigners were “*meeguns*” in Korean, literally meaning American soldiers. As a short-term visitor who was supposed to leave Korea after one-year’s service, their interactions were limited and their spatial movement was mainly bounded within Itaewon camp town. However, the presence of *meeguns* significantly affected the shape of Itaewon into camp town, which was known for night life. In addition, they participated in economic activities by providing material goods, shaping illegal PX market. Through international marriages, they also became as temporary or permanent residents.

Since the 1990s, more various groups of foreigners have appeared in Itaewon. Muslim community is based on a same religion but its ethnicities are very heterogeneous, even including Korean Muslims. For Muslim community in Itaewon, the ‘coincidental replacement’ of the two conspicuous foreigners, from American soldiers to migrant Muslims, resulted in some tenuous relation between Muslims and Korean business people. Initially, there was no antagonistic response from other residents toward Muslim communities until the 1990s. By sharing the street at which many night clubs and gay/transgender bars are located, in some sense, Muslim community cohabits with other Korean residents. As they replace shanty and abandoned houses, which were filled with sex workers and other lower class, by renting them with cheap price, Korean landlords could get economic benefit. However, the external circumstances such as the September 11 and kidnap of Korean missionary team by extreme Islamic terrorists have tarnished the image of Muslim communities. In addition, their active economic participations in Itaewon provoked anti-sentiment from Korean business people toward them. Based on the biased view of Korean business people, they believe that Muslim communities caused their economic recession.

While *meeguns* appeared in Korea under the circumstances of the Cold War era, Westerners and ‘colored’ professionals who identify themselves as “expats” have emerged

under the globalization era. These groups prefer to be called as expats to avoid dichotomous division between “foreigners” and “Koreans” in ethnically homogeneous society. However, they also differentiate themselves from lower class people by excluding other migrant workers mainly from Southeast Asian countries. In Itaewon, they settle in middle class residential areas, and work as English teachers or office workers. Along with them, recently, younger groups of cultural tastes have appeared as cultural producers in Itaewon. For them, Itaewon is not a space of ‘injustice’ but a place where they can feel double feelings: local and old-fashioned, and, at the same time, globalized and trendy. These younger generations, regardless of ethnicities, have transformed Itaewon as into more heterogeneous places, by replacing historical traces of camp town.

Many scholars and commentators refer to the double edges of community: inclusive and exclusive characters based on either similarities or differences as the organizing principles for communities. This indivisible characters both inclusion and exclusion retrospectively deals with ‘us’ and ‘them’ in terms of strangers within ‘our’ society. However, as can be seen in Itaewon, where everyone is a stranger to each other, no single group enjoys greater privilege. There are multifaceted feelings toward each other from harmonious to antagonistic sentiment. Itaewon is not a place for harmonious ethnic communities. Antagonistic attitudes and sentiments towards different groups of people definitely exist. Korean business people attribute Muslims to Itaewon’s waned economy. Some of them express racist remarks against ‘colored’ foreigners, by comparing ‘affluent Americans’ with Muslims who maintain their own businesses. However, as no single group is playing a role as hosting group, it is more important concerns for them to maintain equilibrium.

7 CONCLUSION

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time, and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. (Foucault 1986)

Historically speaking, Itaewon represents the interstitial time and space between modernization and globalization of Korean society. It developed into camp town right after the Korean War. Since then, while the rest part of Korean society has gone through modernization, Itaewon has remained as a place for leisure and entertainment for foreigners. However, it participated in modernization of Korea by earning U.S. dollars through facilitating American soldiers in terms of sex business, night life, and residential units for foreigners. In this way, its space and time embodied modernization process. Since the 1990s, Itaewon has become more multicultural space with an arrival of various foreigners, while the American military influences have been waned. In an globalized era, foreignness, which were spatially concentrated in Itaewon, has become less exclusive in Itaewon, thus causing the spatial and socio-cultural transformations in Itaewon.

Many scholars in Korea have dealt with Itaewon from narrow perspectives, either nationalistic view lamenting its colonization by American army forces or multiculturalism exaggerating its foreignness. However, reminding of Foucault's (1986) heterotopia, which shows a "relational disruption in time and space" (Johnson 2006:78), the space of Itaewon can be understood as a heterogeneous space based on the fact that Itaewon raises questions about the presence of foreigners in Korean society, in which a pervasive belief among the Koreans that ethnic homogeneity is the natural order to maintain a nation. In this research, Itaewon is not suggested as an idealized community of variegated ethnic groups, but it presents a fruitful site to explore how spatial and socio-cultural factors shape communities of heterogeneous groups in urban areas.

7.1 Spatial Boundary and Distance

In many literatures of urban studies, spatial environment is one of the most important elements to define community's boundary. As explained in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, its geographical importance of Itaewon since the Chosun Dynasty had shaped it as a militarized area and its spatial character significantly affected on its transformation into a camp town facilitating the US army since the Korean War. In this view, drawing boundary surrounding Itaewon was important to distinguish this area from the rest part of Seoul. However, in this research, I tried to deconstruct this imaginary spatial boundary of Itaewon to understand how Itaewon has been culturally and economically intertwined with other areas and how smaller communities within Itaewon communicate with each other.

Until the early 1990s when American soldiers were still a majority of foreigners in Itaewon, the spatial division followed a racial and class differences: on the one hand, army bases were an exclusive island and foreigners-only bars and restaurants selectively welcomed foreign customers, while excluding Koreans. However, with an increased migrants and decreased American soldiers, more heterogeneous residents and visitors in Itaewon induced different spatial arrangement in Itaewon. In a high-density and compact space, it has become indispensable to share space and time to be remained in Itaewon. Several groups, which seem to be conflicting, have become coexist: the US army bases and the mosque, Korean sex workers and Muslims, lower-income class and upper middle class, and Christians and Muslims. As explained in Chapter 4, these different smaller communities maintain spatial distance in many ways. For instance, Muslims and Korea sex workers share the same street by dividing time-slots. Or many residents in Itaewon have each own cognitive map (Suttles 1972), letting them each place and attached narrative to the places.

Itaewon is not a community which shows 'harmonious' communal interactions among different ethnic communities. There are various types of interactions and

communications from business partnership and competitions, ethnic and religious tensions, and cultural exchanges and exclusiveness. In an ethnically homogeneous society, these groups have spatially located themselves as residents as well as business people by depending on its symbolic meaning, i.e. multicultural space. While these groups coexist with one another, spatial boundaries can be seen but the boundaries became the places where they confront, interact, and distance.

7.2 Community of Strangers

In the conclusion to this research, I want to return to the questions which were raised earlier. For theoretical consideration, I criticized conservative and traditional views on community, which assume that community is organized by sharing the same identity. When this idea is applied to ethnic community, which has become pervasive existence in global cities, it assume that ethnic community also share the same ethnic identity and it is necessary for ethnic community to maintain clear spatial boundaries for their own cohesion. However, replying on Nancy's (1991; 2000) philosophical considerations on community, I proposed the notion 'community of strangers', in which no one becomes host group but everyone is a stranger to each other. It does not mean that they do not share any sameness. Rather than the sameness comes from social and historical construction such as ethnicities and national identities, the ontological commonness, such as shared time-space and finitude as human beings resulting from death, makes community exist.

From this view, I examined how Itaewon spatially and socio-culturally embodies community of strangers. There are many heterogeneous communities. However, rather than it is internally constructed, it is externally defined as communities. For Koreans, the spatial concentration of foreigners in Itaewon made them believe it is foreigners' community regardless its internal dynamics. Many people also regard Muslim populations in Itaewon as a singular religious group. But, within them, there are many different ethnic groups including Korean Muslims. Even their organizations are divided into several

different institutions from a formal association to a small community center. In addition, as Itaewon is highly commercialized area, it does not play a central role for community gathering. Instead, it provides a temporal space for different groups of people. For instance, even though there are many Filipinos as employees of clubs and bars, their community is located at another part of Seoul. In this way, Itaewon is community of communities which are externally defined. However, it is still the most comfortable place for foreigners where they can communicate and interact with each other.

More importantly, unlike other urban communities in global cities where the distinction between hosting group and strangers are clear, there is no host group in Itaewon. Until the 1980s when the American military occupation was pervasive, the influences of American soldiers were significant for both business activities and its cultural landscape in Itaewon. However, nowadays, there are heterogeneous groups of people and no one argue their privileges. Even Koreans are just a part of communities since their business depends on the presence of foreigners. Although their interactions among different groups are not dynamic, the fact that they economically depend on each other makes them being attentive of maintaining a proper spatial and social distance, not to cause conflicts. So community of strangers like Itaewon shows that, even without sharing a singular identity, community exists. So what characterize Itaewon as community are the inter-relationships among various smaller communities. The external forces surrounding Itaewon simply define Itaewon as a foreigners' place or ethnic community. However, having focused on how smaller ethnic or cultural communities interact or distance each other, I could find that smaller community coexist within imaginary boundary of Itaewon by socially and spatially distancing each other, at the same time, by sharing the external defining forces toward Itaewon itself.

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